

## Universities and the Outcome of the EU Referendum

[REDACTED]

- We have reassured current EU students and those beginning their courses in coming months that it is 'business as usual' with regard to their tuition fee status.

[REDACTED]

- We have already confirmed **tuition fee funding** to support EU students already studying here, or preparing to start this year, **will remain in place for the full term of their course.**

[REDACTED]

Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education & Skills

## **Position of EU Students Post-Brexit**

### **Purpose**

1. Following a request for briefing on 4 April, to provide background information that can inform correspondence from Scottish Ministers to the UKG seeking clarity on the position of EU students (and staff) in Scotland post Brexit, and address specific concerns raised by the Scottish higher education sector following the triggering of Article 50.

### **Priority**

2. **Routine.**

### **Background**

3. In the request for advice, the following areas were highlighted:
- the potential impact on the viability of some post graduate taught and research courses (including in particular subjects) if the ability to attract PG EU students is lost or curtailed;
  - the potential impact on UK research council studentships starting from 2018-19 and other EU related matters e.g. Erasmus exchanges;
  - the ability of current and potential PG EU students to stay on and work in Scotland and the UK after completing their studies before and after potential Brexit;
  - the future fee status of EU students after Brexit. Specifically, can SG give any assurance on this without similar assurance from UKG.
4. On the 24<sup>th</sup> March 2017, DFM announced the continued SG commitment to pay tuition fees for eligible EU students starting their degrees in 2018/19 for the duration of their course. This has been well received by the institutions and the wider higher education sector.
5. While this announcement provides a degree of security for EU students in relation to fees in the short term, there remains uncertainty on the status of EU nationals in Scotland and the UK post Brexit.
6. The creation of the new Strategic Futures Group will provide SG with a forum to consider the short and longer-term implications of the outcome of the EU Referendum and how these might be managed or mitigated to best effect. The membership of the group is currently being finalised and we anticipate the first meeting will be held in May 2017.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- ***How and when EU students' fee status will change following Brexit – can SG give any assurance on this without similar assurance from UKG – what info have we from UKG on the options around the level of fees that might be charged and how might that impact our competitiveness internationally.***

➤ Scotland can, theoretically, offer EU domiciled students free tuition indefinitely, regardless of the policy pursued by the UKG for England on the same issue. However, if the future immigration format heralds a system making it harder for EU nationals to study or work in Scotland, that would inhibit the effectiveness of any Scottish fee setting policy for EU nationals. As things stand, we have no updated information on UKG policy intentions on future fee setting for EU students in England after Brexit. This is most likely a result of the lack of clarity (from the Home Office) on the immigration status of these students after Brexit

Universities Scotland (US) have confirmed they would support a funded policy that enabled EU students to be treated more favourably than other international students for fees purposes. This would help to maintain our relationships with our closest neighbours and could contribute to the diversity of PG subjects Scottish universities can offer.

US want to explore with the SG, what different models of association between Scotland and the EU could mean for the fees status of EU students, for instance if Scotland became part of the European Economic Area.

[REDACTED]

**From:** [REDACTED]

**Sent:** 05 October 2016 08:16

**To:** Deputy First Minister and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills; Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science; [REDACTED] Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science

**Cc:** Cabinet Secretary for Finance and the Constitution; Minister for Childcare and Early Years; Minister for Parliamentary Business; [REDACTED] DG Learning & Justice; EU Referendum; [REDACTED] Director of Advanced Learning and Science; [REDACTED] Director of Financial Management; [REDACTED] DG Finance Mailbox; [REDACTED] Lord Advocate; [REDACTED] Communications DFM & Education

**Subject:** RE: 041016 SG Debate: EU Referendum: Education - Opening Speech - Potential Announcement

[REDACTED]

Thanks. Officials have been informed by UKG contacts that the UKG intends to provide an updated statement of reassurance for EU nationals applying to commence degree courses in England from academic year 2017-18.

In effect, this would likely mean that EU students currently applying through UCAS would know that if they started a degree in England in 2017-18, their fee status would remain the same through all three years of their course. With the last year of such a course in 2019-20, it is likely that these degree courses would finish after Brexit. Universities in England, as well as those in Scotland, have been pressing for such a reassurance.

[REDACTED]

It appears likely that the UKG statement could be released today or tomorrow. **However, we will call contacts this morning to obtain an update on timing and final content.** As we have not yet seen the UKG draft statement, it is possible that the reassurance offered will be more limited in nature e.g. fee loan will be available up until the point of Brexit only. This would seem unlikely, as it would very likely be rejected by the English HE sector as only partial and therefore unhelpful.

[REDACTED]