It is an honour to present this written evidence in re Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill as introduced to the Scottish Parliament on 27 November 2012 by the Hon. Michael Russell, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning.

For the proposed addition of section 9A to the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005 the words: ‘which appear to the Scottish Ministers to constitute good practice in relation to higher education institutions.’ Provide in a sense liberty to the Ministers to define the ‘good practices’ as a subjective realm. It must be noted that good practices may be presented as a secondary document or as a reference to the practices, to be adopted by higher education institutes. No definition of ‘good practices’ has been provided and has been left open-ended.

Section 4 of the Bill, proposed addition 9C to the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, the following is requested to be added as Section 9C, sub section 3(c): ‘that the amount of fees payable by an international student attending any course of education provided by a post-16 education body in any particular academic year does not exceed the maximum amount of fees which that person would by virtue of any enactment be liable to pay if attending any higher education course provided elsewhere in the United Kingdom during that year and an equality of fees is observed among all post-16 education bodies, the upper limit of which shall be determined by the Scottish Ministers’.

Requested amendment to Section 23B, subsection 3(b) to read as follows: ‘its students’ association, ensuring appropriate representation of all groups.’ As emphasized in the Scottish Ministers powers to impose conditions on funding for underrepresented groups, this must also apply here to ensure that all have the ability to raise opinions.

Request that a new section be added to the bill, at appropriate position, to allow the Scottish Ministers to advise the University management or college bodies to consider changes in curriculum delivery and pedagogical methods to ensure universities embrace new technologies and realms such as distance learning.

Request that for funding and international students, the funding conditions be imposed such that they are fair and equal for all international students and do not strictly adhere to the Scottish Government’s International Framework and the priority countries. International students come from various economic backgrounds and where an economically stronger country does support the Scottish Government Economic Strategy; students from poorer countries do present a reasonable percentage of the body. See letter PE1429/C to the Scottish Parliament Public Petitions Committee.

http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/S4_PublicPetitionsCommittee/General%20Documents/PE1429_C_Petitioner_07.08.12.pdf