I graduated in 1958 and consider the governance process of HEIs in Scotland to have developed over that period of 57 years and not to be in need of far-reaching reforms. Although my experience is mainly of one HE institution, the University of St Andrews, I am fairly sure that the differences between institutions are not substantial.

The Committee of Scottish Chairs under Lord Smith of Kelvin launched the Scottish Code of HE in 2013. In July 2014 a review showed that HEIs were making good progress in implementing the code. The Committee is committed to reviewing progress next year and compliance with the Code is a condition of grant from the Scottish Funding Council. It seems, therefore, that sufficient pressure already exists to encourage any HEIs whose governance procedures are deemed inadequate to meet current standards to update these processes.

The proposal that ministers could intervene would leave it open to any future administration to force changes without parliamentary scrutiny, which is quite undemocratic.

This response is couched in fairly general terms because I consider the general approach to be one of trying to solve a problem which does not exist or, possibly, a minor problem which could be solved by procedures which are already in train.

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