Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill

The Scottish Parliament’s Finance Committee invites organisations and individuals to submit written evidence setting out their views on the financial implications of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill.

The Bill

The Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill (“the Bill”) was introduced by the Scottish Government on 16 June 2015.

The estimated financial implications of the Bill are set out in its accompanying Financial Memorandum (FM). A copy of the FM can be found at page 13 of the Explanatory Notes.

The Financial Memorandum

1. The FM states that the principal purpose of the Bill is to—
   “enable a framework of higher education governance that is more modern, inclusive and accountable. It will strengthen existing governance in the higher education sector in Scotland, ensuring it remains fit for purpose.”

2. Specifically, the Bill makes provision to require HEIs to appoint a chair in accordance with a process laid out by ministers in regulations.

3. HEIs will also be required to include in their governing body—
   “the person appointed as chairing member, two directly elected staff members, one member nominated by academic and related unions, one member nominated by administrative, technical or support staff unions, two students nominated by the students’ association/union, and two graduates of the institution nominated by a graduates’ association.”

4. The Bill also replaces the current definition of academic freedom in section 26 of the Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005, “with a view to strengthening it and making explicit the freedom to develop and advance new ideas and innovative proposals.”

How to submit evidence

The Education and Culture Committee is lead committee and has issued a separate call for evidence in relation to the Bill’s policy provisions.
The Finance Committee invites you to respond to the attached questions by **Friday 21 August 2015**. All responses should be sent electronically (in MS Word - no confirmatory hard copy required) to finance.committee@scottish.parliament.uk. Written responses will be handled in accordance with the Parliament’s policy for handling written evidence received in response to calls for evidence.

**What happens next?**

All written evidence received will be considered and you may be invited to provide further information to the Committee in oral evidence. As a result of the sometimes tight deadlines for Parliamentary scrutiny of a Bill it is possible that any invitation to give evidence might be extended at relatively short notice.

Should you have any queries in relation to this, please do not hesitate to contact the Committee clerking team on Tel: 0131 348 5451
Finance committee questionnaire

This questionnaire is being sent to those organisations that have an interest in, or that may be affected by, the financial implications of the Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Bill. Estimates of the Bill’s financial implications are set out in its accompanying Financial Memorandum (FM), which can be found at page 13 of the Explanatory Notes.

In addition to the questions below, please add any other comments you may have which would assist the Finance Committee’s scrutiny of the FM.

Consultation

1. Did you take part in any consultation exercise preceding the Bill and, if so, did you comment on the financial assumptions made?

2. If applicable, do you believe your comments on the financial assumptions have been accurately reflected in the FM?

3. Did you have sufficient time to contribute to the consultation exercise?

Costs

4. If the Bill has any financial implications for your organisation, do you believe that they have been accurately reflected in the FM? If not, please provide details.

5. Do you consider that the estimated costs and savings set out in the FM are reasonable and accurate?

6. If applicable, are you content that your organisation can meet any financial costs that it might incur as a result of the Bill? If not, how do you think these costs should be met?

7. Does the FM accurately reflect the margins of uncertainty associated with the Bill’s estimated costs and with the timescales over which they would be expected to arise?

Wider Issues

8. Do you believe that the FM reasonably captures any costs associated with the Bill? If not, which other costs might be incurred and by whom?

9. Do you believe that there may be future costs associated with the Bill, for example through subordinate legislation? If so, is it possible to quantify these costs?