



ENTERPRISE & SKILLS REVIEW: JOINT STATEMENT BY NUS SCOTLAND, UCU SCOTLAND, AND UNIVERSITIES SCOTLAND

This statement should not be seen as the totality of any one signatory's position on the review, its outcomes, or next steps and outstanding concerns. Rather it represents a minimum baseline for our collective position. Individual signatories and organisations may have additional and broader views, and outstanding issues and concerns, which we will address as Phase 2 progresses.

Our organisations represent a broad range of students, staff and university leaders.

Together, we are committed to being strong partners with government to promote Scotland's sustainable and inclusive economic growth.

As part of that, we support the Enterprise & Skills Review's priority of Scotland taking its place in the top quartile of OECD countries for productivity, equality, wellbeing and sustainability.

We are committed to constructive engagement with the Scottish Government during Phase 2 to help the Review achieve its objectives.

We have a particular shared interest in how the funding and regulation of higher education will relate to the 'proposed new Scotland-wide statutory board to co-ordinate the activities of HIE and SE, including SDI, SDS and the SFC'.

We welcome Ministerial assurances that the Scottish Government intends to respect the autonomy and academic freedom of universities. We value that commitment: the freedom of higher education institutions and the people within them is crucial to a society in which varied perspectives and diverse initiatives are respected. International analysis has shown that responsible autonomy is a key determinant of the success of any higher education sector. For us, the autonomy of higher education institutions is derived from the status of higher education institutions and the relationship they have with Government, NDPBs and other key bodies.

With that in mind, there are issues that we believe will need careful management in Phase 2 of the Review. These include:

- Making sure that there is a statutory expert body with a remit to decide how best to target public support for universities; and with the capacity to challenge both Government and universities about how to achieve the maximum benefit from investment in higher education.
- Making sure that this expert body has a remit covering the breadth of universities' contribution: important aspects of this such as widening access to higher education, providing an excellent learning environment for students, and carrying out fundamental

research fall outside of even the broadest definitions of ‘enterprise and skills’ but are of crucial importance to universities’ missions and contribution.

- Keeping decisions about what universities should teach and research independent from government, respecting the Haldane Principle – and supporting the teaching and research contribution of staff whose activities are not easily categorised as ‘enterprise and skills’.
- Ensuring we have a funding and regulatory structure that fully supports universities to promote Scotland’s interests through their international roles, as at present, as well as concentrating on the improvement of Scotland’s productivity.
- Avoiding the risk of universities’ reclassification as part of the public sector by the Office for National Statistics. This is under review at present and any increase in government’s power to direct universities would increase the risk of reclassification – which would be catastrophic for universities’ capacity to attract investment to Scotland.

We look forward to exploring structures that address these issues while building on a shared commitment to a closer alignment between the different actors who can contribute to increasing Scotland’s productivity and innovation.