EQUALITIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE

WIDENING ACCESS TO SCOTTISH UNIVERSITIES FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

The Equalities and Human Rights Committee of the Scottish Parliament is considering the Scottish Government’s proposed budget for the financial year 2017 to 2018. Over the course of its work programme, the Committee will consider many issues regarding equality policy and the various protected characteristics set out under the Equality Act 2010, such as age, gender, sexual orientation and so on.

On this occasion the Committee has decided to focus this call for evidence on the experience of disabled people and British Sign Language (BSL) users.

Specifically, we’d like to hear from disabled people and BSL users in Scotland about your experience applying to a Scottish university, or attending a Scottish university. A list of Scotland’s 19 universities is available below.

The Committee would also welcome input from families, carers, groups or organisation which seeks to promote and support the rights of disabled people and BSL users in Scottish society, as well as anyone else with an interest in this issue.

Background

In the current financial year Scottish Government is spending around £640 million of public money supporting Scotland’s 19 universities. In return for this funding, universities agree to deliver on certain policy targets set by the Scottish Government, which the Government believes is important. Public funding is delivered through a government agency known as the Scottish Funding Council.
Each year the Scottish Funding Council reaches an agreement with each of Scotland’s 19 universities on the targets to be met in return for funding. One of these targets is to ensure universities widen access to undergraduate places for people who may otherwise find it difficult to attend a university.

**What we need your help with**

The Equalities and Human Rights Committee wants to explore whether this policy is working for disabled people and BSL users in Scotland.

The Committee is looking to learn about the experience of disabled people and BSL users in applying to, and/or studying at, one of Scotland’s 19 universities as an undergraduate student.

As a disabled person or BSL user—

**Question 1:** Tell us about your experience of applying to a Scottish university, whether you gained a place or not? What could be changed about the applications process to ensure equality of opportunity?

**Questions 2:** If you have studied at a Scottish university as an undergraduate, were there any barriers which stopped you taking full advantage of your time at university, please tell us about them? (for example, access extracurricular activities, using all university facilities, joining student life etc.)

**Question 3:** If you studied at a Scottish university did you achieve the qualification you wanted? If not, tell us why you think that was (for example, did any barriers hold you back from achieving your full potential etc.)

**Question 4:** Did studying at a Scottish university help to improve your chances of successfully gaining employment, please tell us about your experience?

Please tell us about of any other comments you feel are relevant to the inquiry.

The call for views also available in British Sign Language at: (the BSL call for views will be available here by 19 October)
Also, see our YouTube video on the call for views: (the YouTube video will be available here by 18 October)

How to engage with us?

Before you send us your views, please see our policy on how we treat the information you send us.

This policy is available in British Sign Language at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u6vJOPj0GIE

This policy is available and as an MP3 audio file at: http://www.parliament.scot/Audio_files/TreatmentOfWrittenEvidenceMP3_20141112.mp3

How to send us your views

You can send us your views, in writing or in video format, by emailing them to equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot

You can write to us at:

Equalities and Human Rights Committee
Room T3.40
The Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh EH99 1SP

If you need to contact the Committee

If you have any questions about the process, or wish to discuss the options for making a private or anonymous submission—

You can email the Committee clerks at equalities.humanrights@parliament.scot

You can call the Committee clerks on 0131 348 5223 or 0131 348 6040.

We welcome calls using the Text Relay service or in BSL through contactscotland-bsl.org/
For more information on the Committee’s work

You can find us on Twitter: @SP_EHRiC

You can find us on Facebook: www.facebook.com/scottishparliament

If you have any general questions you also can also text us on 07786 209 888

You can ask questions online through live chat: www.parliament.scot/live-chat

Scotland’s university sector

Scotland’s has 19 universities. They are—

Aberdeen University
Abertay University
Dundee University
Edinburgh Napier University
Edinburgh University
Glasgow Caledonian University
Glasgow School of Art
Glasgow University
Herriot Watt University
Queen Margaret University
Robert Gordon University
Royal Conservatoire of Scotland
SRUC, Scotland’s Rural College
St Andrew’s University
Stirling University
Strathclyde University
The Open University
University of the Highlands and Islands
University of the West of Scotland