



The Scottish Parliament
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

EDUCATION AND SKILLS COMMITTEE

Rt Hon Amber Rudd MP
Home Secretary

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Dear Ms Rudd

The Education and Skills Committee of the Scottish Parliament has been scrutinising the provisions of the Higher Education and Research Bill, in order to assess their potential impact in Scotland. This has included a focus on the Teaching Excellence Framework. Witnesses from Universities Scotland, Royal Society of Edinburgh, UCU Scotland, NUS Scotland, Scottish Funding Council all gave written and oral evidence to the Committee. I attach links to the *Official Report*, associated written submissions and correspondence from the Scottish Government for your reference.

The Committee is aware of the continued representations from the Scottish Government to the UK Government in relation to the potential impact of this Bill in Scotland and the need to reflect and protect the specifics of what is a very valued Scottish system.

The Committee was struck in its evidence session how unified witnesses were in their views on how the Bill needs to be amended, and how these views align with the Scottish Government's efforts.

We wish to add the weight of the Committee's support to these efforts, to ensure the Bill reflects and protects the unique and valued higher education system in Scotland.

Teaching Excellence Framework

Scottish universities operate in an extremely competitive environment at UK and international level meaning the TEF presents Scottish Universities with a dilemma on whether to opt-in to the system, since being able to demonstrate having the highest levels of quality and student satisfaction is important to bringing in students from

elsewhere. The likelihood, it was suggested, is that universities would feel a huge pressure to take part in order to protect their positions on the international stage.

Witnesses suggested the TEF will influence the ability of institutions to bring in more overseas students. Alastair Sim from Universities Scotland highlighted serious concerns from his organisation in this regard:

There is also an underlying worry....what will happen if the Home Office—in our view, it is inevitable—decides to link TEF gradings to our entitlement to recruit international students. As far as I am concerned, every institution in Scotland is robustly quality assured and I do not think that there is any justification whatsoever for using TEF ratings to determine whether we are allowed to recruit international students. There would be a serious risk if the Home Office was to do that.

Given the value of international students to Scottish universities, the Committee wants to add the weight of its support to the concerns raised by key Scottish stakeholders. Specifically, the Committee seeks assurances from the Home Office that the TEF will not be used in the way Universities Scotland fears.

Yours sincerely

**JAMES DORNAN MSP
CONVENER**

Official Report and Evidence Received

Official Report

The Official Report of the Committee's evidence session on 16 November 2016:
<http://www.parliament.scot/parliamentarybusiness/report.aspx?r=10635&mode=pdf>

Submissions

The received the following submissions in relation to the LCM:

First Tranche

- [National Union of Students Scotland \(235KB pdf\)](#)
- [Scottish Funding Council \(260KB pdf\)](#)
- [The Royal Society of Edinburgh \(273KB pdf\)](#)
- [University and College Union Scotland \(109KB pdf\)](#)
- [Universities Scotland \(420KB pdf\)](#)

Second Tranche:

- [The Royal Society of Edinburgh \(2MB pdf\)](#)
- [Scottish Funding Council \(233KB pdf\)](#)
- [Universities Scotland \(212KB pdf\)](#)

Correspondence

The Committee received a number of letters from the Scottish Government in relation to the LCM:

- [Letter to the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science to update on Committee's consideration of the LCM \(26KB pdf\)](#)
- [Letter from the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science in response to the Committee's request for perspective on submissions received - 11 November 2016 \(1.4MB pdf\)](#)
- [Letter from the Minister for Further Education, Higher Education and Science enclosing a letter from the UK Government - 15 November 2016 \(812KB pdf\)](#)