

STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL  
UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW



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Dear Mr Shevlin,

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the Scottish Government consultation on the Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill. We have concerns about the impact on Higher Education the bill will have, and have outlined those concerns in the following document. I hope that our feedback is considered in detail and that the views of the students that we represent are fully considered during the consultation process.

Glasgow University Students' Representative Council represents the interests of over 25,000 students registered at the University of Glasgow to the University and nation. Council comprises up to 45 elected students who meet throughout the year, and is a fully independent representative organisation being non-affiliates of NUS (National Union of Students).

Sincerely,

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GUSRC President

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## **Post-16 Education (Scotland) Bill response from Glasgow University Students' Representative Council (GUSRC)**

### **1. Section 2 – Higher education institutions: good governance**

We have serious concerns about the wording of this proposal. While good management must be encouraged, we feel that processes are already underway to improve management as a result of the Von Prondzynski Governance Review. Requiring an institution to comply with principles of good management that “appear to Scottish ministers to constitute good practice” is vague, and could vary significantly depending on which government is in power. The autonomy of universities has contributed to the excellence of higher education in Scotland, and the working environment of universities in Scotland may be impacted if staff feel their jobs may be under threat based on the whim of a Scottish Minister.

There is also the potential to disenfranchise students with this proposal. Students sit at top level committees at universities across Scotland, and are able to affect the decisions made. The same cannot necessarily be said about Ministerial meetings and the Scottish Cabinet, and so decisions from ministers could go against the wishes of students.

### **2. Section 3, 9B (2) & (3) - Widening access to fundable higher education**

While we do welcome action being taken to ensure widening access at our higher education institutions in Scotland, there is little mention in the proposals about working with the higher education institutions to create the widening access agreement. Currently it is implied that only Ministers will need to specify what is in the “agreement”. Without involving the higher education institutions in creating the agreement, student representatives would also have little chance to make input into the WP agreements.

### **3. Section 4, (3b) – Fee cap: students liable for higher education fees**

We do not believe these proposals go far enough. We do welcome the acknowledgement that fees should not go higher than fees elsewhere in the United Kingdom, however we would strongly recommend that the cap be set so that the total fees a student pays over their course of studies is not higher than the total fees paid at universities in the United Kingdom. As Scotland mostly has four year degrees, the fees should take this into account. We would therefore like to see a total cap of fees set to £27,000.