WALES
CYMRU

RESPONSE TO:
Support for postgraduate study and part-time engineering, technology or computer science degrees

Contact Details:

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The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents almost 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.

UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world.

UCU was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators' employment and professional interests.

We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on Support for postgraduate study and part-time engineering, technology or computer science degrees.

A. Support for postgraduate study

Question 1 – Do you agree that support should be provided for postgraduate study?

Agree	x	Disagree	☐	Neither agree nor disagree	☐

Supporting comments

Lack of financial support should not be a barrier to education at any level, if we are to achieve a more prosperous and equal Wales.

Question 2 – Do you agree with the support package as outlined? Is there any aspect you would change? Why?

Agree	☐	Disagree	☐	Neither agree nor disagree	x

Supporting comments

UCU fundamentally oppose the student loans system, however we value the desire to make post graduate study available to a wider audience.

We are concerned though that this may have the effect of decreasing accessibility as the prospect of a 'double debt' may prove to be a barrier.

Question 3 – Do you think any particular groups would be disadvantaged by this policy?

> In the light of the recent announcement by HEFCW that they will cease to fund part time post-graduate provision, we have concerns that the significant number of women choosing this route into post graduate study, will be disadvantaged.

B. Previous study and support for part-time study

Question 4 – Do you agree that it is beneficial to extend eligibility to statutory support to students with equivalent level qualifications on these engineering, technology or computer science courses?

Agree	**x**	**Disagree**	☐	**Neither agree nor disagree**	☐

> This would help graduate who wish to change career, particularly with the anticipated increase in longer working lives.
>
> It will also provide a means for people to keep up to date as technology and employment requirements change.

Question 5 – Do you think any particular groups would be disadvantaged by this policy?

> Continuing work will need to be done to address gender stereotypes in Engineering, Technology and Computer Sciences, otherwise this policy is likely to fund a male dominated area.

Question 6 – Are there any other courses you believe should be considered for future inclusion in this scheme?

Although employers seem to require employees with higher skills in Engineering, Technology and Computer Sciences; education is not only about gaining skill for employment. Care needs to be taken not to marginalise non-STEM subjects such as Art and Humanities, which are an equally important part of our culture and economy.

In terms of meeting the aims of the Future Generations Act, we should remember that we also need to advance the potential of those who do not have and aptitude for science and technology.

Question 7 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: