

Scottish Affairs Select Committee Report on the Student Immigration System

Last week the Scottish Affairs Select Committee issued a fairly critical report on the UK Government's [changes to the Student Immigration System](#). The report highlights the negative impact of the proposals on Scottish universities and their ability to recruit non-EU overseas students.

Overseas students are hugely important to our university, both in terms of what they bring to the wider educational experience at Aberdeen and as an important additional income stream. With Universities Scotland, I have therefore been lobbying hard over the past year regarding the negative impact some of the proposals could have on our international student recruitment. As part of this, I was pleased that the Select Committee visited Aberdeen in April to hold its evidence taking session on the issue and that I had the opportunity to give evidence at that meeting.

In my evidence, I welcomed the fact that the UK Government had significantly revised its original proposals to take account of concerns from universities across the UK but also stressed that we continued to have concerns about a number of the remaining proposals, particularly in a Scottish context. I noted for example the important contribution that many of our international students make to the energy industry. It is encouraging that the Select Committee report shares that view. The Home Affairs Select Committee has also recently issued a similarly critical report regarding the changes in a UK context. We can only hope the UK Government will accept the need to further revise the proposals.

International Development Committee

Earlier in July, we welcomed another group of MPs to the University when the International Development Committee visited to hear from a number of Aberdeen academics who are engaged in work on international development. We have a really exciting story to tell here and it is important to get that message out, so I was pleased to see the MPs leaving with a clear view of the very important work that we are leading on in this area. In my discussions with the Committee I argued that research funding in the field of development science should be based only on absolute excellence.

Rest of UK Fees and Scottish Government Review of Higher Education Governance

Colleagues will recall I wrote to you regarding the above two issues in early July. These will be discussed by an extraordinary Senate on Tuesday 16 August which in turn will inform a further discussion at Court where the final decision on the University's position regarding both questions will be taken. The consultations on governance and fees can be found below and I'd encourage any colleagues with thoughts on either issue to pass these on to their Senators or to me so that there can be a full debate at Senate.

- [Consultation on Governance](#)
- [Consultation on Fees](#)

Finally, the end of the academic year was marked as usual by the graduations which were a great success. It is easy to be *blasé* about the ceremonies because they happen every year but I can't emphasise enough how important they are for the graduates, their partners and families, and that they leave feeling positive about the University. I'm grateful to everyone who works so hard to make the ceremonies a success but equally to everyone who has in their own way made a contribution to the education of these students during their time here.