

Consultation on recurrent funding for 2021-22

Introduction

We would like to collect your name and email address so that we can contact you in the event that we need to clarify any of your responses. This information will not be published. Please note that, if you choose to provide us with personal information as part of your consultation response, you will need to consent to us processing your data in line with the privacy notice outlined above.

I consent to the OfS processing my personal data in line with the privacy notice outlined above.

Contact details.

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In what capacity are you responding to the survey?

To provide an official response on behalf of a higher education provider, organisation or representative group

Information about your organisation

Name of higher education provider or representative group

British Association of Film, Television, and Screen Studies

Unless you indicate that you would prefer your response to be confidential, we may quote sections of your response when we publish a summary of responses to this consultation on the OfS website (and in alternative formats on request). This may include a list of the providers and organisations that respond, but will not include personal data such as individual names, email addresses or other contact details. Individuals and organisations will not be identifiable in our consultation response. We will not publish individual responses. Are you happy for passages from your responses to be published on the OfS website?

Yes, I am happy for my responses to be published.

Funding for high-cost subjects

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to distribute a greater proportion of the OfS recurrent grant through the main high-cost subject funding method? (See paragraphs 15 to 36.)

Strongly disagree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

As outlined in our response to Question 2, there is a robust case to be made in rejecting this proposed cut. Our fundamental disagreement with this proposal is based on the segregation of subject areas and the intention to devalue the teaching and research funding of Arts subjects in HE.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to split price group C1 in order to implement a reduction of 50 per cent to the high-cost subject funding allocated to subjects in the performing arts; creative arts; media studies and archaeology? (See paragraphs 15 to 26.)

Strongly disagree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

The proposal, while acknowledging the cultural importance and enrichment the Arts provides in economic and social sectors, is erroneously based upon the flawed outlook that one form of study simply trumps another, without serious and due consideration to the wider impact such decisions will have on students, staff, and socio-cultural education. There is no evidence that these proposed cuts have been examined in terms of equality and access for disadvantaged students, rendering the study of the Arts, should the proposed cuts be implemented, to be only available to an elite few. This will have a detrimental effect on the need for more plural and inclusive access to cultural production in UK society. It will disproportionately affect Post-'92 institutions, whose student populations are statistically more likely to have a fiscally precarious or first-generation student background, and whose diverse and valuable contributions to Arts will be fiscally disenfranchised. This proposed measure will not only have lasting and damaging consequences for its named fields, including Film Studies, Television Studies and Screen Studies, but will also enact a wider discourse of limiting access for Black and Minority Ethnic students.

The report recognises that "Graduates in the proposed price group C1.2 subjects also play an important role in supporting important parts of the UK employment sectors, economy and cultural life... While, therefore, we recognise the particular importance of subjects in the proposed price group C1.2 and want provision in those subject areas to continue to be widely available, we believe they are nevertheless lower priority for OfS funding than other high-cost subjects". This proposal is in direct contradiction with the essential and much sought after transferable skills base of students and researchers within this discipline category by employers. That creative critical thinking, innovation and practice of the disciplines within this category fuel one of the largest contributions to UK GDP (£117 billion in 2018 - equivalent to £306 million every day) and the sector growth is approx. 7.4% year on year (5 times larger than growth across the UK Economy as a whole) does not correlate with the proposed relegation of our fields as belonging to a 'lower priority' band. Ref source DCMS (Feb 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uks-creative-industries-contributes-almost-13-million-to-the-uk-economy-every-hour>).

The importance of the subject areas with which we are concerned is underlined by the widespread evidence of large and rapidly increasing employment in sectors of the economy related to film and media, communications, drama, journalism, and digital arts. Furthermore, the British Academy has identified the need for further support for the Arts and Humanities sector to work in dialogue with STEM subjects to create STEAM —incorporating the Arts as an essential catalyst for ideation and design fundamental to all disciplines — to meet our shared challenges in climate change, global pandemics, the growth of populism and to expand media literacy and communications. 'The challenges the world is facing [...] need the insights of the arts, humanities and social sciences as much as those from science, technology and engineering. The importance of a highly qualified and versatile labour force for productivity and economic growth cannot be underestimated. Our evidence shows that arts, humanities and social science graduates are central to this ongoing and long-term requirement.' (<https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/1888/Qualified-for-the-Future-Quantifying-demand-for-arts-humanities-social-science-skills.pdf>)

BAFTSS strongly opposes the splitting of the C1 group and the proposed cuts to recurrent grants for the arts subjects listed therein in the strongest possible terms.

Question 3: Notwithstanding your answer to question 2, if we were to split price group C1 as proposed, to what extent do you agree with our approach to implementing this? (See paragraphs 27 to 28 and Annex B.)

Strongly disagree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

The splitting of the groups into two substrata would be, in our membership's view, inherently wrong and based in a misunderstanding of the value and investment needs of our disciplines. We are gravely concerned with the methodology proposed whereby division of fiscal support is based on an ill-informed understanding of the funding requirements of each subject (subjects vary widely in terms of need of provision for studio or archive-based work, access to technology, training, specialist materials or practitioner spaces), and the proposed blanket cuts reflect this misunderstanding. In order to ensure the highest possible standards in our subject fields, access to necessary provisions must be maintained. We therefore strongly suggest that the allocation of programmes into price levels, and the consequential capital allocations, should depend on a detailed programme by programme examination of actual capital investment needs as has been previously undertaken by HEFCE. BAFTSS' view is that such assumptions about funding criteria and the splitting of funding allocations for Arts disciplines listed should be informed by detailed evidence of costings and subject-specific allocations for necessary funding to maintain our world-leading teaching, research, and practice-based reputation in HE and our robust economic contributions to the UK economy, and not based on politically driven decisions.

Question 4: To what extent do you agree with our approach to counting students from the Crown Dependencies in our funding allocations for 2021-22? (See paragraphs 34 and 35.)

Tend to agree

London weighting

Question 5: To what extent do you agree with the proposed approach to remove the targeted allocation for students attending courses in London? (See paragraphs 37 to 48.)

Don't know / prefer not to say

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

We have a variety of responses to the London Weighting of courses, given that our membership is national and that our remit is to look at a fair distribution of courses across the UK HE landscape. We would be hopeful that any change to the London Weighting would result in a more equal distribution of Arts support across the country, as a preferable outcome, while acknowledging that London costs are at a premium cost.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree with the proposed approach to remove London weighting from the formula-based student premium allocations? (See paragraphs 37 to 48.)

Strongly disagree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

We strongly disagree with any costings that would affect teaching-intensive universities within the London region or any shift in funding that could disadvantage first-generation or low income students accessing HE education in the London region. We also strongly object to any cuts to the London weighting that would affect teaching, services, facilities and pay to run these institutions.

Funding to widen access and support successful student outcomes

Question 7: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to provide £40 million to support Uni Connect activities in 2021-22? (See paragraphs 59 to 63.)

Don't know / prefer not to say

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

We believe a more nuanced approach is needed to ensure that the gaps between the most disadvantaged and the most privileged.

Question 8: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to distribute an additional £5 million through the existing student premiums in the proportions show in paragraph 65, and to earmark this £5 million to be spent on student hardship?

Strongly agree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

We welcome the additional funding to support all aspects of student hardship and to aid access and support in their HE studies.

Question 9: To what extent do you agree with the proposals to distribute £15 million to address student transition and mental health, through a combination of competition and a new formula-based student premium? (See paragraphs 67 to 71.)

Tend to agree

Other recurrent budget proposals

Question 10: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to maintain in cash terms the rate of funding for the nursing, midwifery and allied health supplement, which will increase the total budget to £27 million? (See paragraphs 74 to 75.)

Tend to agree

Question 11: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to maintain in cash terms the rate of funding for overseas study programmes, but base the allocation on the higher of relevant student numbers in either 2019-20 or 2020-21? (See paragraphs 76 to 78.)

Strongly agree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

We strongly support UK students in the expansion of their studies, which should include access to international study abroad programmes, replacing the Erasmus + scheme.

Question 12: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to maintain in cash terms the budgets for other targeted allocations as proposed in paragraph 79?

Tend to disagree

Please provide an explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

It is not clear in the consultation documents how this will benefit (or disadvantage) Arts subjects. We propose more clarity and nuance on this in the consultation.

Modelling the impact on providers

Question 13: Do you have any comments about any unintended consequences of these proposals, for example, for particular types of provider or for particular types of students?

We believe that the proposal to cut and defund arts subjects will have a damaging and lasting effect on the UK's international reputation in the Arts. Furthermore, it will have irrevocable damage to the international standing of UK Higher Education and the world-leading research offered in Arts and Humanities subjects, as evidenced by research citations and metrics. The UK occupies a world-leading position in terms of its 'soft' cultural power, its production and communication standards, and its prominent cultural influence in international arts fora including, but not limited to, global screen and artistic industries, film and television productions, and media communications. This cut is ill-conceived and does not demonstrate understanding of the economic, cultural, and vibrant industries in which the UK has demonstrated global expertise with appropriate funding measures. The UK's academic and artistic reputation is in grave danger of permanent decline under the proposed funding cuts.

Equalities impact assessment

Question 14: Do you have any comments about the potential impact of these proposals on individuals on the basis of their protected characteristics? Protected characteristics are defined in Part 11 of the Equality Act as: age; disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation. See: www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/part/11/chapter/1.

The proposals will inevitably impact most severely upon those least represented and cause undue and increased difficulty in accessing work in the arts and the UK's creative industries. As outlined in the consultation, while the arts comprise of students that "are less likely than average to be mature (aged 21 or over) or to come from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background", the proposed cuts ensure that, by making access to these industries more challenging and with reduced funding and opportunities, this will exacerbate issues of access for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic students, first-generation students, and students from less privileged backgrounds. It will negatively impact students on the basis of their protected characteristics and will disproportionately limit opportunities, accessibility, and representation on the whole in the arts community.

Terms and conditions of grant for 2021-22

Question 15: To what extent do you agree with the proposed changes to terms and conditions of grant for 2021-22? (See paragraph 97.)

Tend to agree

Please provide a brief explanation for your answer. If you believe our approach should differ, please explain how and the reason for your view.

We do support the additional provision to aid the student hardship fund and to fund mental health support.

Any other comments

Question 16: Do you have any other comments on the proposals in this consultation?

We urge the OfS to consider the detrimental effects the proposed cuts will have on the cultural fabric and economic contributions listed in the subject list proposed for bifurcation in the report, and strongly urge the office to consider the collective voices of the various subject associations, practitioners, educators, and students within our shared disciplines in rejecting this proposal and its detrimental outcomes. We believe that educationally appropriate funding that encourages cross-disciplinary coalitions, such as those recently undertaken by the AHRC (The Pandemic And Beyond: The Arts And Humanities Contribution To Covid-19 Research And Recovery - <https://ahrc-blog.com/2021/03/23/the-pandemic-and-beyond-the-arts-and-humanities-contribution-to-covid-19-research-and-recovery/>) will greatly aid understanding the value of our disciplines have working with STEM subjects - to emphasise the importance of STEAM — rather than divisively and blindly defunding one to fund another. It is misguided to label and split C1 subjects into 'greater' or 'lesser' categories of 'strategic importance', especially at a time when the social, cultural, and economic contributions made by all listed are at the core of our world-leading cultural industries and are key to the UK's post-Covid19 economic recovery.

BAFTSS would be happy to share discipline-specific expertise to the committee if desired and would provide greater disciplinary nuance, world-leading research, and educational guidance on any areas within our remit of Film, Television and Screen Studies, and as Arts and Humanities practitioners, educators, and researchers.