

research - a fact that has been met with apprehension among some stakeholders at home and overseas. International students bring significant educational, social and cultural 0.004 Tc 0.004 T

The UK's international reputation is undermined

The declining unit of resource and subsequent potential impacts on quality, risk undermining the UK higher education sector as a national, cultural, social and economic asset on the world stage at a time when international competition has never been tougher. Coupled with the lack of transparent, up-to-date information about English higher education providers in the current system, international concerns about the quality of the English - and, by proxy, the UK - higher education sector are potentially exacerbated.

Recommendations

Below are some high-level principles for policymakers that should frame any discussions and policy development about higher education, funding and quality:

- The delivery of high-quality education requires a long-term sustainable funding model: Policymakers should work with mission groups, sector representative bodies and others to develop a stable and sustainable funding environment that enables long-term planning for providers. This stability is crucial for maintaining quality as it allows for the sustained investment in staff, facilities and research that are necessary for high-quality education. Policymakers should work with the sector to develop a costed higher education strategy which addresses the long-term ambitions for the sector, how the sector can contribute to economic growth, and how this could be funded.
- New initiatives and government priorities need to be fully funded: Government policy developments or priorities, such as artificial intelligence in education or the Lifelong Learning Entitlement, should be accompanied by ring-fenced, sustainably funded support for teaching quality enhancement so that providers can adapt and enhance their provision to embrace changes and support the right graduate skills. This could be delivered through an independent, expert quality body such as QAA.
- Diversification of income streams should be supported by the policy environment : Policymakers should create a policy environment that supports alternative income streams, such as international student recruitment and international partnerships, while maintaining a focus on the quality of provision. This might include:
 - adopting a positive, collaborative global outlook to maintain the UK higher education sector's international reputation overseas
 - aligning the English quality system with internationally recognised and agreed good practice to increase transparency into the quality of provision; a system with risk-based, periodic touch points would allow a better understanding of how the financial environment correlates with the quality of provision over time
 - avoiding decisions during the graduate route review which would further harm the UK'