

Nick Hillman OBE,
Director,
Higher Education Policy Institute

08 July 2025

Issues facing the Higher Education sector in Wales

Dear Nick,

We have been looking at the issues facing the higher education sector in Wales. While this started as a planned single session looking at proposed cuts at Cardiff University, it has broadened out in scope. As part of this work, we have heard from Medr, Cardiff University, UCU, Unison and NUS Cymru. We have also written and received responses from all the Welsh higher education institutions. More information about this inquiry is available on our website:

<https://business.senedd.wales/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?lId=45325>

We have also been following with a keen interest the work our counterpart committees in other legislatures have been doing on the higher education sector. While some issues are specific to the Welsh context, many of the challenges are also faced by the sector across the UK.

The challenges we have heard directly about include:

- Tuition fees not keeping pace with the costs of delivering courses;
- Significant reductions in international student enrolments;
- The impact of 'higher-tariff' universities turning to the home market to address financial challenges
- Participation issues in Wales



- HE funding model;
- Impact of competition law in creating barriers for collaboration;
- Inflationary cost pressures, particularly around energy costs;
- Increases in national insurance and pension contributions; and
- Research funding not meeting the full costs of research.

We are keen to hear about the possible solutions to the issues currently faced by universities, in Wales specifically, in particular from an impartial perspective. As a think tank specialising in higher education, would you be in a position to respond in writing with your thoughts on the solutions to the issues currently facing the sector?

If you need any more information about the Committee's work in this space, please do not hesitate to contact our Clerk, Naomi Stocks naomi.stocks@senedd.wales

We would be grateful if you could respond by 2 September.

Yours sincerely,



Buffy Williams MS
Chair
Children, Young People and Education Committee

Croesewir gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg neu Saesneg.

We welcome correspondence in Welsh or English.