

TEF OFF POLICY

Title:	TEF Off – ARU Against Marketisation	Date of Group Chat:	20-22/04/20
Proposer name:	Matt Hayes	Role:	President
Secunder name:	Emily Long		

Union Notes:

- 1) Since 2012, the maximum annual Undergraduate tuition fee has more than tripled and, although not compulsory, most universities charge this. In 2016, the government also chose to remove maintenance grants and replace them with loans. [\[1\]](#) Universities are also free to charge what they wish for Postgraduate courses.
- 2) In 2019, the government published a review Post-18 Education and Funding known colloquially as the “Augar Report”. [\[2\]](#)
- 3) The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) was introduced by the government following the 2015 General Election and subsequently made mandatory for all universities in the UK. Metrics include NSS, graduate employment outcomes and retention rates. Furthermore, a pilot of “subject-level” TEF was conducted in 2019. ARU was not part of the pilot but, nonetheless, ran their own mock subject-level TEF assessment.
- 4) After outcry from universities and students’ unions, the government commissioned an independent review of TEF. The results of this are due to be unveiled in summer 2020. [\[3\]](#)

Union Believes:

- 1) Education is a public good and a right not a commodity or a privilege. As a public good, the UK government should pay for it. All students deserve access to sufficient funding, including living costs, in order to succeed.
- 2) Both current forms of TEF are not fit for purpose. Using graduate employment outcomes as a metric disadvantages small-and-specialist institutions or those with a particular focus on Arts or Humanities as these careers tend to have lower salaries. A simple Gold/Silver/Bronze award does not encourage prospective students to look into what institutions are actually being ranked on. Moreover, the “subject” groupings will never exactly map onto the structures of different universities meaning that you may end up with a subject group that crosses schools or even faculties. This therefore renders the ranking effectively meaningless as you are combining the metrics from two vastly different areas and doesn’t actually tell the prospective student anything useful at all.
- 3) The fact that postgraduate courses can differ so wildly creates an inherent class system whereby less wealthy people are priced out of attending more ‘prestigious’ institutions. This, in turn, creates a system whereby less ‘prestigious’ institutions are seen as providing a lower quality of PG education.
- 4) TEF requires a huge amount of staff and student hours, time which might be better spent initiatives that are more meaningful to students.

Union Resolves:

- 1) To hold a stance that TEF and subject-level TEF are not, in their current forms, fit for purpose.
- 2) To work with NUS to lobby for a government funded National Education Service.
- 3) To lobby against any potentially negative outcomes from the Augar report and TEF review that might disadvantage students at ARU.
- 4) To hold a stance that postgraduate fees should be capped at a similar level and rate to undergraduate fees

Policy Summary:

ARU Students’ Union believe in a market-free higher education sector that is accessible to all.