
WE DON'T WANT THE TEF

The government are planning to introduce league tables for teaching.
When they introduced these for research they were a disaster.

STUDENTS WANT BETTER TEACHING

but a REF for teaching won't make any improvements. As research funding becomes more and more scarce, the REF has led to intense competition between universities and the bullying of junior academics. We fear the TEF will do the same.

THE SYSTEM IS BROKEN.

The dysfunctional relationship between teaching and research in universities is well-documented by scholars such as Angela Brew and Mike Neary. The current model excludes students from membership of the academic community. Furthermore, the division between teaching and research threatens the very idea of the university, as some politicians have suggested that the two activities could be split between universities: for example, the University of Sheffield might become a research institute, while Sheffield Hallam becomes a teaching centre.

MONEY DOESN'T IMPROVE TEACHING.

Introducing a financial incentive to teaching will only make this problem worse. The divide between teaching and research will grow, and the quality of teaching will drop. Money can't solve the problem: structural change is needed. Audits like the TEF give the impression of improvements while pushing the situation close to unsalvageable. Instead of the TEF we need research-engaged teaching; instead of audits, we need greater university autonomy.

WE DON'T WANT HIGHER FEES.

The government have suggested that institutions will be rewarded for their teaching "excellence" with the opportunity to increase their fees. No student wants higher fees. We want **free education, for everyone**. Higher fees at elite institutions will exclude those who are already marginalised. Black, working-class communities will be most affected.

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LIKE ANY AUDIT, UNIVERSITIES WILL GAME THE TEF.

Higher Education policy commentators have said that the TEF needs to be “ungameable”. This simply isn’t possible. Using metrics for analysing performance is the only cost-effective way to carry out such an audit. However, teaching quality is not something which can easily be converted into metrics. It doesn’t lend itself well to conversion into numerical data.

SUPPORT ACADEMIC STAFF.

Perhaps most importantly, there are serious fears over the impact the TEF will have on academic staff. Increased pressure will lead to staff being overworked. The greatest burden

will fall on PhD students and junior members of staff. Currently PhD students are effectively paid below the minimum wage and their workload is incredible. More work and more pressure is simply unacceptable and unsustainable.

THE TEF IS PART OF A WIDER PLAN

which seeks to place the burden of austerity on the young, the unemployed and the disabled. The financial incentives for TEF performance is an attempt to distract from the swingeing cuts implemented by this government. The audit is a poor attempt to make students feel valued in an environment which increasingly leaves us disillusioned and disheartened.

AUDITS DON'T IMPROVE EDUCATION. WE DON'T NEED AN OFSTED FOR UNIVERSITIES. REJECT THE TEACHING EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK.



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