

Assembly Communications – Outreach

Finance Committee – Inquiry into Higher Education Funding

Transcript of Web-chat

This document contains a transcript of the web-chat held by the Finance Committee on 21 November 2013.

Web-chat 1 – Welsh students in Welsh Universities

Finance Committee

Bore da, Good morning. Croeso i gwe-sgwrs Pwyllgor Cyllid Cynulliad Cenedlaethol Cymru. Welcome to the National Assembly for Wales Finance Committee web-chat.
Finance Committee

Chris Lorch

Bore da and good morning to you as well

Carys Thomas

Good morning

Finance Committee

Mae croeso i chi gyfrannu yn Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg. Caiff unrhyw gyfraniadau a wneir yn Gymraeg eu cyfieithu i'r Saesneg. You are welcome to contribute in Welsh or in English. Contributions made in Welsh will be translated into English.

Stephanie Richards

Morning

Jenna Keenan

Good morning everyone

Finance Committee

Mae Cadeirydd y Pwyllgor Cyllid Jocelyn Davies yn bresennol. Rydym yn bwriadu dechrau'r gwe-sgwrs am 10. Jocelyn Davies, the Chair of the Finance Committee, is present. We intend to start the web-chat at 10.

Byddwn yn gofyn cyfres o gwestiynau ond mae croeso i chi gyfrannu unrhyw bryd. We will be asking a series of questions but feel free to contribute your views at any point.

Jenna Keenan

are we allowed to bring things up at the end that we feel should be mentioned but havent been discussed already?

Melanie Howard

Good morning all



Finance Committee
Jenna - yes, that is fine.

Finance Committee
Mae pawb a fydd yn cymryd rhan yn y gwe-sgwrs yn bresennol. All the participants are present.

Chris Lorch
What is the first question please?

Finance Committee
Pe baech yn gorfod talu'r ffioedd dysgu llawn (hyd at £9,000), a fyddai hyn wedi cael unrhyw effaith ar eich penderfyniad i wneud cais i fynd i'r brifysgol/coleg?

Would having to pay the full amount of tuition fees (currently set at £9,000 a year) have any effect on your decision to apply to go to university/college?

Jenna Keenan
Definitely for me. my family aren't in a position to help at all financially. i am having to pay that upfront every year and its near killing me having to work full time as well as studying full time

Melanie Howard
If the Welsh Assembly had not been subsidising the fees i would probably not have gone to university at this time.

Carys Thomas
Yes,if I had to pay the full amount for university then I probably wouldn't have gone. There is no way my parents could of helped me.

Chris Lorch
If I had to pay the full amount I would not do a course unless I fully believed I would succeed well in, many people may be put off the idea of university should they have to pay the full amount. Certainly I would.

Finance Committee
Jenna - how are you coping with this workload?

Stephanie Richards
Although I still would have gone it would definitely make me delay my decision and go to university at a later time which I feel could have had a negative effect on my future career

Melanie Howard
As a mature student i did not have the option to ask my parents for help, my consideration was weighing up the debt that i would have upon graduation with the potential of good paid employment after my degree in this difficult economic climate

Chris Lorch
I agree with Melanie, I think I would have to have gone to university at a much later time in order to save up money, maybe as late as my mid-twenties



Stephanie Richards

I am facing the same problems as Jenna; it is very hard keeping up a job while trying to study and also trying to gain relevant work experience

Finance Committee

When did you become aware that this financial support was available to you?

Jenna Keenan

Not very well!!! because I'm doing a clinical degree I'm in uni 9-5 every day then having to go to work until 1-2am to try and earn enough money to pay for it so am constantly exhausted and it is definitely affecting how much study i can do.

Melanie Howard

I have also had to get a job this year as financially I cannot sustain undertaking the degree and living!!!! it is having a big impact on my studies - i think working and studying is not ideal

Stephanie Richards

Can you specify what financial support you are referring to?

Finance Committee

The Welsh Governments tuition fee grant

Jenna Keenan

I don't receive the welsh government tuition fee grant unfortunately

Stephanie Richards

I was informed whilst still in school

Finance Committee

Why not Jenna?

Carys Thomas

Not until I reached sixth form and looking at universities

Jenna Keenan

Because it is my second degree the cut off was 3 years. My course is 5 years long and everyone on it gets the grant for 5 years

Finance Committee

I see, thanks for clarifying Jenna

Jenna Keenan

I think when deciding when and who to give the grant to it should be more specific so everyone is eligible for help for the same amount of time. Either let everyone have it for 3 years or let everyone have it for 5.

Melanie Howard

I think most student worry about the financial implications of studying and living today and the fee situation has made everyone question more what they are getting for their money



Finance Committee
Who told you about the tuition fee grant?

Chris Lorch

I had to consider whether I would quit my job about an hour away from university, and gamble at the chance of getting one nearer university. I kept my original job in the end, which is turning out to be the best option. I heard about financial support from my school, we had a workshop based on it. However many of my friends say they did not have much information about the grants and had to do most of the work themselves, I never had this problem though. With my grant I did not receive as much as others as my parents have a higher yearly wage, but as many others have said, their parents money cannot support them in university, and they will be the ones paying off their loan, not their parents.

Chris Lorch

My school told me about the grants.

Stephanie Richards

I think someone from Student Finance came in and did a presentation, informing us about what support was available to us

Jenna Keenan

I had to find it out myself by looking online and speaking to finance departments at university

Chris Lorch

We had a workshop on it, and some of our lessons in 6th form were based around financing and loans.

Jenna Keenan

My LEA were very confused about what help i would get and totally misinformed me which has left me in a worse financial situation than if i had moved to England to study!

Carys Thomas

Any information about grants we had to find ourselves-the teachers told us about them but how to apply for them

Finance Committee

Can we ask why you chose to study at a Welsh university? What were your top 3 considerations?

Melanie Howard

I think the problem with the access to information as i understand it is that everything to do with applying for grants extra is going to be centralised - this means that it becomes impersonal - i am lucky that our local office has some fantastic staff with better knowledge than the main student finance office who often gave conflicting advice.

Chris Lorch

The university I applied to offered the degree I wanted, I liked the overall qualities of the university. My grades matched what the university wanted



Jenna Keenan

The uni is recognised as being good for the course i wanted to study, i thought if i studied in wales i could stay and be more likely to get a job here because i would have already worked for the welsh NHS during study, student finance and my local LEA told me it would be financially the best option (which turned out to be completely the opposite)

Carys Thomas

For me it was because I wanted to stay closer to home, I wanted to keep my job while in university. So many of my options had to be in travelling distance by car or train.

Chris Lorch

That is another reason for me, I needed to stay close to home to keep my job, although the other three I mentioned were the more important ones.

Stephanie Richards

Cost of living was a major consideration for me, I knew I would be unable to support myself in an area with a high cost of living, closeness to home was also important as I knew I could not afford expensive train fares. Also I loved the university upon visiting it and it provided a very good accredited psychology course

Melanie Howard

For me it was personal reasons for staying where i live and at this time i did not consider any other universities. I know the university and the department and felt confident that i would be able to financially sustain my course - whereas going away would probably have not been viable

Finance Committee

How many of you still live at home during your studies?

Jenna Keenan

I have no option but to live at home

Melanie Howard

As a mature student i live at my own home

Stephanie Richards

I live in a shared house

Carys Thomas

I'm still living at home, just because it was the cheapest option for me

Stephanie Richards

But I am considering moving home next year

Chris Lorch

I live on university campus during the weekdays, but I have to travel home late on Fridays to work Saturday and Sunday, then I must catch an early bus to get back to university to attend my lectures.

Stephanie Richards

I often do the same as Chris



Finance Committee
Chris and Stephanie why do you travel home every weekend?

Jenna Keenan
Why don't you just get a job near uni? then you wouldn't have to worry about the added expense and time having to travel home all the time

Finance Committee
Would you prefer to live away from home during your time at university if money was less of an issue?

Jenna Keenan
I definitely would. It's a nightmare trying to study at home when everyone has finished work and is relaxing for the evening making loads of noise

Chris Lorch
I have a job near my home town, although it means traveling far, I end up earning money to use during the week at uni, unfortunately there are not many jobs near my university, and my job at home gets very busy during the summer, winter and Easter breaks, which means I will earn good money during those holidays.

Jenna Keenan
It wouldn't be so bad if i had my own room but have to share with two of my sisters so have no quiet space to work in

Melanie Howard
I am just wondering how many involved in the chat have taken out the full student loans to cover living costs and fees. I have two daughters currently in university and as i am in the same boat as them they have to have the student finance available or else they could not go. I cannot financially support them. I just see it as a cost that enables us all to get a degree in an area we love that hopefully will lead to a good job. I remember the days when you did not have to pay fees and got a free grant that did not have to be repaid but then this was when very few people went to university - the government policy has changed with so many more people doing to university.

Stephanie Richards
To work. It is almost impossible to have a job on weekdays as my course is demanding and I do a lot voluntary work and work experience which is essential to excel in the career path I am aiming for. I currently work in *[name of employer]* in Swansea close to my university and they aren't flexible with me at all and consequently my university work is suffering. Therefore after Christmas I will return home to work as they are flexible with me and pay a lot better and I feel comfortable and not stressed working there

Chris Lorch
I get a student discount on the bus home so a trip there and back only cost me £7.20 and during the weekend i can earn £80, I feel if I could get a job in university or if my financial issues were not a problem I would live on the uni campus for a longer duration.



Carys Thomas

Yes, it would have been much easier for me to live in halls this year instead of travelling everyday. But I couldn't ask my parents to lend me money because it's not possible in my situation. I also get the full amount of the grant, but i also need to work in order to make ends meet. If i was living in halls my situation would be worse.

Finance Committee

Thanks both

Jenna Keenan

Even when receiving the full loan and assembly learning grant, unless you have well off parents you have to work because the funding available isn't enough to cover the cost of living

Chris Lorch

A lot of my friends have the same problem as Stephanie, they have to fit their hours around their course which results in very early working hours or very late ones.

Stephanie Richards

And I'm sure like myself Chris you are exhausted

I completely agree with Jenna

Jenna Keenan

My work is pretty flexible so i have to stay there but it is so badly paid that you have to work crazy hours to even make a small dent in the fee amount and end up living off 3-4 hours' sleep a night

Stephanie Richards

There is no possible way that I could survive without having a part-time job

Carys Thomas

Same here, i work very early hours of late hours after uni, Like today I've been to work early this morning and going to uni in a bit, it's a long day.

Melanie Howard

i think the issue is the cost of just an undergrad degree is bad enough but really to set yourself apart you now need to do a masters etc. to set yourself apart - because so many people are coming out of university with a degree you have to do more - this means the potential costs are huge - which young person wants to possibly come out with near a £100k debt if they do a degree and a PhD.

Jenna Keenan

Me too carys, in uni on clinics 9-5 then having to get to work for 6 and stay there til 1-2am then be back up at 7 to start uni again. It's impossible to find time to study in between

Chris Lorch

Jenna, you have a good point however many people with wealthy parents find their parents don't support them as much as what people may think, granted there are people who get support from them, but many of my colleagues and I find that we don't get help from our parents and due to their income, our grant cannot cover our costs of living.



Finance Committee

Do you think Welsh students in English universities should get the same financial support as those studying in Wales?

Jenna Keenan

I appreciate that not everyone gets help from their parents, however on my course only 2 of us have a job and we are both struggling big time to fund it

Melanie Howard

I am concerned that the Welsh Assembly Government cannot sustain the current fee situation and what implications this has on the Welsh economy?

Jenna Keenan

I always thought the grant was an incentive to keep talent in Wales. If it was available everywhere it would be more likely that people would go away to study and not bring that talent back to Wales

Melanie Howard

At least a few years ago you only had reduced fees if you stayed and studied in Wales. Currently you are paying for students to study anywhere in the world with little potential of that knowledge base every returning to Wales being minimal.

Finance Committee

Melanie, can you tell us more about your last point?

Jenna Keenan

I agree with Melanie

Melanie Howard

It has been a blessing for me having two daughters studying in England but not good for the Welsh economy

Stephanie Richards

Well I think it is a difficult question as there are number of courses which aren't available in any Welsh university, so those students have no choice but to study in England and therefore may struggle financially

Jenna Keenan

if Welsh students move away to study they are likely to stay and work in the area where they study or somewhere nearby, the likelihood of them moving back to Wales is small

Finance Committee

Melanie, do you think they will stay in England when their course ends

Stephanie Richards

I agree with the points made by Jenna and Melanie



Chris Lorch

If the loan would not cover Welsh students studying outside of Wales, then Welsh universities would have a large population of Welsh students, this would mean more competition for other non-Wales students who would be equally talented and would discourage many non-Wales students from competing to get into Welsh universities. However, the Welsh economy will suffer should the investment into Welsh students studying in other countries not pay off by them not getting a job in Wales.

Melanie Howard

Wales needs to ensure that a skilled workforce remains in Wales to facilitate the economy both on research and enterprise - if you pay for students to study outside Wales it is not so likely they will return as the amount of relevant jobs are not available and if you wish to have a good career in a particular area you have to move accordingly

Melanie Howard

Yes because the chances of them gaining employment in the areas they want are not available in their home town
Sad but true

Finance Committee

Did any of you consider studying outside of Wales?

Jenna Keenan

The point made by Chris about increasing competition for non-Wales students isn't really an issue because so many people want to study in England anyway

Melanie Howard

Not for undergrad but I will if I go onto do post grad

Chris Lorch

I agree with Melanie strongly, too many people are taking these loans and grants for granted, I know many people who have got their loan and are avoiding paying it back, and after so many years it is removed? The loan should have to stay with someone for life until it is paid off in order to ensure the Welsh economy does not suffer from their investment

Stephanie Richards

I considered it but quickly realized it would be a lot harder to support myself financially

Jenna Keenan

I did and found out after accepting my place to study in Cardiff that I would have been much better off financially if I had moved to England. When I calculated it I would have been roughly £36,000 better off if I had moved to England

Chris Lorch

I applied for Liverpool university, but felt it was too far from home, and it would mean a definite change of employment.



Finance Committee

Jenna, could you expand on your last point?

Do you feel you are getting value for money from your current course?

Jenna Keenan

I had applied to do a graduate entry dentistry course in England. when i discussed my options with student finance and my local LEA i was told that i would still get the welsh assembly learning grant, that i would get a full loan and that i would get a maintenance grant if i stayed in Cardiff. If i moved to England i would have had an increased loan and maintenance grant. Based on the information provided i stayed in wales and found that i don't get a loan for fees, don't get the welsh assembly learning grant and get next to no maintenance loan

Melanie Howard

What Welsh universities have to do is ensure that they offer what students want but are of the caliber of other universities - we only have one Russell Group university in Wales - perhaps the quality of higher education in Wales is the issue - if you are going to a good university with excellent teaching and research - get a good degree in a university that has a track record in grad student employment - you would not begrudge the £9k fee it you got the education you deserved and paid for

Stephanie Richards

I'm also proud to be Welsh and think we have some fantastic universities in Wales and wouldn't want to miss the chance to study here. And being better off financially is a big bonus.

Chris Lorch

Yes, my course is enjoyable and I feel I will do well in it.

Melanie Howard

It is harder for anyone who has a first degree and wishes to study further or in a different area

Jenna Keenan

I know that, however studying further shouldn't have that much of a difference financially regarding studying in wales or England

How can it be so much cheaper to move to a different country than to stay in the family home?

Finance Committee

Is there anything else you want to raise with us?

Melanie Howard

I am sorry we have some fantastic universities in Wales but not all are good that is why the Welsh Assembly has merged some and is looking for other to work more closely collaboratively. It is a difficult time in higher education and you only have to look at the league tables to see where alot of Welsh Universities are at - however, i think the potential is there.



Stephanie Richards

I do really enjoy my course and I feel that I will gain a very good degree setting me up for my career. However, I do not feel that being in lectures for a maximum of 10 hours a week is worth £9000, and there should be better access to resources such as journal articles

Jenna Keenan

I think when deciding about the learning grant it should be for a fixed period. If you study medicine or dentistry you get it for 5 years. if you do a 3 year undergrad degree and want to study further and do a masters/phd the help stops at 3 which isn't really fair. It should be available to everyone for the same amount of time

Chris Lorch

Many people think there should be a minimum grant that will support people living away from home, this grant should be enough to cover food costs and should be exactly the same for every student, no matter their parents income. this is a major issue raised by many people in my university.

Melanie Howard

I hope the Welsh Assembly government can find a way to support those students who want to go to university and also post grad education - but keeping the knowledge base in wales is important for the economy - excellent education is a priority but perhaps the agenda promoted by government is wrong - university is not for everyone but there are not many other options available to young people today

Jenna Keenan

Judging funding based on household income doesn't take into consideration how many people that money is shared between either so someone earning 20grand a year gets way more financial help than someone from a household earning 35k a year where 2 are in un

Melanie Howard

The cost of living is high whether at home or away

Melanie Howard

I agree with Jenna

Chris Lorch

At the end of the day the majority of students will be paying for their own loan, their parents won't pay for it. Also many manage to get out of paying off the loan, this should defiantly be changed so if you take the loan, you have to pay it off eventually.

Melanie Howard

Personal circumstances are not always taken into consideration in the manner that it should because you are in a system that cannot treat you as an individual to that level

Finance Committee

Thanks to you all for your contributions



Melanie Howard

The question is what if there is a change of government and they go back to free higher education - where does that leave the poor souls who went to university when government required you to pay

Thank you too for the opportunity - most interesting to hear everyone's views

Jenna Keenan

Can't see that happening ever!!

Melanie Howard

You never know

Carys Thomas

I've actually got to go to university now, thank you for letting me participate.

Finance Committee

We're going to have to draw this discussion to a close

Stephanie Richards

I feel that there should be a big push to provide more information about student finance to prospective students. Many people just don't know the facts about student loans/grants due to a lack of education on the matter, and this can result in many people not going to university at all or getting themselves in a big mess whilst at university

Jenna Keenan

Thank you for picking me to take part too. it was good to fight for postgrads!!

Finance Committee

You are welcome to e-mail us with any comments you want to make which you didn't get to make during this session

Stephanie Richards

Thank you for involving me in this session

Chris Lorch

Ok thank you for letting me be involved in this discussion much appreciated

Finance Committee

We will sending evaluation survey, on how you felt this went and we will keep you updated on the progress of the inquiry and share the report with you once the Committee has concluded its work

Melanie Howard

Many thanks

Jenna Keenan

Great, i look forward to reading it



Stephanie Richards
Thank you very much

Jenna Keenan
Are we ok to go?

Finance Committee
Yes!
Thanks Jenna!

Melanie Howard
Bye everyone and good luck with your studies

Finance Committee
Thanks
Diolch, pob lwc

Jenna Keenan
You're very welcome



Transcript – Web chat 2 – Welsh students studying at English Universities

Finance Committee
Bore da a chroeso i'r gwe-sgwrs
Good morning and welcome to the web-chat

Catherine Jones
Good morning

Cadan ap Tomos
Bore da!

Finance Committee
Bydd y gwe-sgwrs yn dechrau cyn hir. The web-chat will begin shortly.

Mae croeso i chi gyfrannu yn Gymraeg neu'n Saesneg. Caiff cyfraniadau Cymraeg eu cyfieithu i'r Saesneg. You are welcome to contribute in Welsh or English. Welsh contributions will be translated to English.

Alexander Walne
Good morning

Catherine Jones
Good morning

Finance Committee
Pe baech yn gorfod talu'r ffioedd dysgu llawn (hyd at £9,000), a fyddai hyn wedi cael unrhyw effaith ar eich penderfyniad i wneud cais i fynd i'r brifysgol/ coleg?
Would having to pay the full amount of tuition fees (currently set at £9,000 a year) have any effect on your decision to apply to go to university/college?

Alexander Walne
I applied for the academic year before the tuition fees increased, so not at all

Isabella Hughes
Completely! It would make me question whether the ultimate end result was worth going in the first place. It would seem much more accessible to find a job. Though I am aware this is difficult. Staying at home would seem a much easier alternative

Catherine Jones
No. I chose to do a degree to further my career opportunities and without a degree (bsc biological sciences), i would not have the same chances and also the amount i could earn would be considerably lower,so even with interest, it is definitely still worth doing

Cadan ap Tomos
Not at all. I know the way that the repayments system is structured means that I'll never have to repay the fees until I can afford to do so, and I do believe that students should be given more of the burden of paying for their own tuition rather than it coming out of general taxation.



Catherine Jones

I think it depends on which degree you plan on doing and the employment chances after graduation as well

Finance Committee

Pa opsiynau eraill y byddech wedi eu hystyried (os o gwbl)? Gwaith, unrhyw gwrs addysg arall? What other options would you have considered (if any)? Employment, other education course?

Isabella Hughes

I think in relation to what Cadan says I completely agree. But then I would argue that I am not entirely certain of the repayment system and if they are going to increase it then there needs to be a growth in information in regards to this

Finance Committee

Thanks Isabella

Isabella Hughes

I would have considered taking a gap year and gaining experience teaching English abroad (though i am aware this is a personal choice) I most likely would look at employment that would mean i could get training in a specific area

James Blundall

No, I would still attend university as to get anywhere in architecture these days, it is almost mandatory to have a masters in architecture. And so the fee would be a secondary concern.

Finance Committee

hanks James

*thanks

Cadan ap Tomos

In addition to university, I was considering going straight into work in the field I want to work in, which would not necessarily need a degree to do so.

Alexander Walne

full time employment, opportunities in travel i.e. working abroad

Finance Committee

Cadan, what field would that be?

Catherine Jones

For the career i wish to enter, a degree is compulsory, so i had little option when choosing to do a degree. As a independent student, finances is a massive concern, however mainly in regards to having equal chance as students with money, during my course. This is still not the case and I am restricted in where I can study and certain options (year in industry or abroad) are out of the question

Cadan ap Tomos

Haha, political campaigns



James Blundall

I did consider the route through apprenticeship but came to realise, after speaking to future employers, they said that although an apprenticeship will give you experience, university would make me more employable.

Finance Committee

Catherine - what kind of career do you want to enter?

Catherine Jones

Clinical scientist for the NHS or secondary science teacher

Finance Committee

Thanks Catherine

42% of Welsh students studying outside of Wales said that if the tuition fee grant was only available to Welsh students studying in Wales, they would have changed their plans and only applied to Welsh universities/colleges.

Would this have had any effect on your decision to accept an offer to study at an English university/college?

Mae 42% o fyfyrwyr Cymreig sy'n astudio y tu allan i Gymru wedi dweud pe bai'r grant ffioedd dysgu ar gael i fyfyrwyr o Gymru sy'n astudio yng Nghymru yn unig, y byddent wedi newid eu cynlluniau i astudio y tu allan i Gymru ac wedi gwneud cais i brifysgolion/ colegau yng Nghymru yn unig.

A fyddai hyn wedi cael unrhyw effaith ar eich penderfyniad i dderbyn cynnig i astudio yng ngholeg/prifysgol yn Lloegr?

Isabella Hughes

For me personally, yes as living costs are very high and i'm not sure I could have funded my accommodation. However, this would not affect my application but it would affect the ultimate decision of where I would choose to go

Cadan ap Tomos

No. Because as I said, the repayments system means that it would not have an immediate effect on my finances. The tuition fees grant do not affect living costs, therefore the money isn't actually helping me at a time that I need help - that is, while I'm still a student.

Catherine Jones

Not really. I chose to attend the best uni for my course to get the best out of it, The debt amount isn't a concern to me now, as the repayments are only paid when i can afford it, and without the degree, chances are i would never earn 20K+ in my lifetime so it's still advantageous. My major concerns are affording to live while studying, which i can only just manage to do, with the help of an overdraft

Cadan ap Tomos

I'm in a bit of an odd situation where, because I fall under the criteria for extra help under my university's Access Agreement, I get £2,000 off my tuition fees every year - but this doesn't actually benefit me because that comes out of how much TFG I get, not how much I actually end up paying. Just means my uni is losing out on £2k a year from the Welsh Government.



Alexander Walne

No, with this being a drawback in theory it would not have altered my decision to study at an English university. I felt compelled to go out and see what is on offer. Given the degree of tuition my university offers it was almost enough to make up my mind - that and the location. Alternative support is available.

Finance Committee

A oedd eich dewis o gwrs i astudio ar gael ym mhrifysgolion/colegau yng Nghymru?
Sut ydych yn teimlo am yr amrywiaeth a dewis o gyrsiau sydd ar gael i'w hastudio mewn prifysgolion a cholegau yng Nghymru?

Were your chosen courses available to study at Welsh universities/colleges?

How do you feel about the range and choice of courses available at universities and colleges in Wales?

James Blundall

I agree with Isabella, it would not have affected my application, but would have affected my final decision, but as there is only 1 university in Wales offering an RIBA approved architecture course, my options would have been extremely limited if it had.

Isabella Hughes

My course was only available in Lampeter. (I study Anthropology) and I wanted to aim high in where I applied. I considered changing to apply for European languages to go to Cardiff but ultimately the courses were a better fit and ranked a lot higher in England and Scotland

Catherine Jones

My course is available in Wales, however the uni I am attending is a better course with better employment stats.

Cadan ap Tomos

There are plenty of Politics courses in Wales, and in fact a course in Aberystwyth was my reserve choice on my UCAS form.

I do think though that the range of courses in Welsh universities generally, and the range of good quality ones within them, is severely limited. It constantly surprises me that, for a nation with a large agricultural sector, there's nowhere in Wales where you can study veterinary medicine.

Catherine Jones

The range of courses in Wales is not as good as it should be

Finance Committee

Catherine - in what way? How could it be better?

Isabella - what do you mean by better fit?

Alexander Walne

My chosen course is available in Welsh universities, I was satisfied with the range of courses the universities in Wales had to offer (could be better). However all Universities excel differently. This affected my final choice.

Finance Committee

Thanks Alexander



Catherine Jones

As i am from north wales and a mature independent student, the options in north wales for my course is poor, and i couldn't have applied to most as i didnt do alevel chemistry. my local uni (glyndwr) is pathetic in offering science degrees

Finance Committee

A ydych yn teimlo bod eich cwrs yn darparu gwerth am arian? Do you feel your course provides value for money?

Isabella Hughes

In order to study a social anthropology course it had stronger departments elsewhere and the courses interested me

Finance Committee

Thanks for clarifying Catherine

Catherine Jones

yes. I have professors who are leaders in their fields and i really feel that i am being taught to a very high standard.

Cadan ap Tomos

I'm satisfied by that it does in terms of the quality of teaching, the resources offered by my university, and the opportunities I get here in terms of meeting people and exposure to debate.

Isabella Hughes

I feel having a 4 year degree i get everything I can out of the course as i feel the added year provides me with more time to settle into the course and university. I also feel going to such a highly ranked university internationally I gain better employment prospects. I would personally like, more teaching hours and more one to one support from departmental staff

Alexander Walne

I study creative music technology at Falmouth University, the level of tuition I receive in the modules that I cover I feel are of great value for money. Most of my tutors have a direct line to the industry and all have substantial experience in the field. Resources and facilities are excellent!

Finance Committee

Mae nifer o fyfyrwyr wedi dweud y dylai'r grant ffioedd dysgu gael ei roi i bob myfyriwr sy'n huanu o Gymru beth bynnag yw eu hamgylchiadau ariannol. Fodd bynnag, mae Prifysgol Caerdydd a Phrifysgol Glyndŵr yn cwestiynu a yw'r polisi presennol yn gynaliadwy yn yr hir dymor.

A ddylai grant ffioedd dysgu Llywodraeth Cymru gael ei gynnig i holl fyfyrwyr sy'n huanu o Gymru, beth bynnag yw eu hamgylchiadau ariannol? Neu a ddylid targedu grwpiau penodol? Beth yw'r ffordd orau o wneud hyn?

A number of students expressed that the tuition fee grant should be given to all Welsh domiciled students irrespective of their financial circumstances. However, Cardiff University and Glyndŵr University question whether the current policy is sustainable in the long term.

Should the Welsh Government's tuition fee grant be given to all Welsh domiciled students irrespective of their financial circumstances? Or should it be targeted to certain groups? What would be the best way of doing this?



Catherine Jones

Yes i would agree on wanting more 1 on 1 time and more feedback from tutors, which would have helped ease the transition into higher education in my 1st year as there was an overriding feeling of not knowing if i was doing things correctly and aiming at a high enough level in my first year

Isabella Hughes

I feel like people should have access to it. But i would highly approach this with caution. For those who need it most it is really important that by rolling it out in general won't affect the amount they get and the sustainability. And I would also want to know what other areas this will affect by putting extra money into this?

Cadan ap Tomos

The Tuition Fees Grant shouldn't exist at all. The support for students is needed in their living costs, not subsidising something that doesn't affect them while they're studying. Because of the way it's structured, it ends up pouring Welsh money into English universities, at the detriment of Welsh institutions who are having their direct funding cut.

Finance Committee

Thanks Isabella, that is something the Committee is looking at during the inquiry
*this

Catherine Jones

No i think that the money should be means tested and therefore there would be more money to give (for living expenses etc) to those students who really need it and that would encourage more people to feel that it is more accessible an option to take, if academically able to attend uni

Finance Committee

Thanks Cadan, does anyone agree/disagree?

Isabella Hughes

Hmm it is an interesting point. I completely agree that it is the living costs which are the most trivial. But i'm not sure taking away money from the tuition grant is a fantastic idea. It is of great benefit to many

Catherine Jones

The tuition fee amount did not concern me when considering uni...being able to afford food/accommodation/books while studying etc was a major factor!

Alexander Walne

I used my grant to purchase highly recommended resources i.e. software, books, equipment ... all have been a great help throughout the duration of my degree. This have given me great respect for the welsh financial system, the support they have given me regardless of whether I go to a welsh or english university greatly improves my chances of succeeding



Cadan ap Tomos

It isn't benefiting me now, and it won't benefit me much later - apart from when I'm in a higher paying job, and be able to afford to pay money, I'll have less of it to pay. In times of austerity, and with limited money around, the money should be spent where it is needed - that is, plugging funding holes in Welsh universities, and helping students with their living costs.

Catherine Jones

I think the grant should be means tested and not restricted to institutions in Wales, as it would restrict poorer students in their choices and would not allow them to possibly go to the best uni available, which they could if they were richer

Alexander Walne

I agree

Finance Committee

Mae Cyngor Cyllido Addysg Uwch Cymru yn amcangyfrif y bydd yn gwneud tua £50 miliwn mewn taliadau grant ffioedd dysgu i sefydliadau Addysg Uwch yng ngweddill y DU ar gyfer myfyrwyr sy'n hanu o Gymru ac yn astudio y tu allan i Gymru.

A ydych yn cytuno neu'n anghytuno y dylai Llywodraeth Cymru dalu i fyfyrwyr astudio yn Lloegr (wrth ystyried yr hinsawdd bresennol)?

A ddylai'r grant ffioedd dysgu gael ei neilltuo i fyfyrwyr o Gymru sy'n astudio yng Nghymru yn unig? Os felly, a allwch feddwl am unrhyw eithriadau?

The Higher Education Funding Council for Wales estimates that it will make around £50 million in fee grant payments to Higher Education institutions in the rest of the UK for Welsh domiciled students who study outside of Wales.

Do you agree or disagree that the Welsh Government should pay for students to study at universities in England (given the current climate)?

Should the tuition fee grant be reserved for Welsh students studying in Wales only? If so can you think of any exceptions?

Isabella Hughes

I assume you're including Scotland as well

Finance Committee

Sorry Isabella, yes we are!

James Blundall

I believe that all courses that lead into a profession are value for money, even if the fees were £9000 as without university the success of getting a job / highly paid job in your field is significantly reduced. I think the subsidy isn't really of great help whilst studying, as it will not affect us whilst in University and studying a course at university is almost the only way to get a career in most fields these days.

Cadan ap Tomos

Restricting the Grant to students in Welsh institutions would severely limit choice, and if that were to happen there would at least have to be exceptions for courses that weren't offered in Wales (such as veterinary medicine). But, as I said above, the current system that's pouring money into England isn't sustainable, and as Cardiff and Glyndŵr Universities have said, it's harming them financially.



Isabella Hughes

I think there should be some funding!! But if that means that it is tight then there obviously needs to be some serious concerns in rolling it out to everybody. Though i would emphasise in a push in bettering university in wales. I feel that it is important to support any student whether they decide to go to Cardiff or Aberdeen.

Catherine Jones

No. welsh students, regardless of wealth or lack of it, should be able and encouraged to attend the best uni that they can get into, whether that be oxford,kings, edinburgh or glyndwr!

Alexander Walne

Regardless of the current climate, I think restricting grant payments to welsh domiciled students who study in wales would be greatly unfair. You'd be promoting welsh universities to welsh students, which is all well and good, but you may not be giving them much of a choice.. especially students who come from a poorer background!

Cadan ap Tomos

That's not to say that I think there shouldn't be complete parity in what's being offered - a student studying in Wales should get the same support as a student studying across the border, in every case.

Finance Committee

Thanks everyone

Mae rhai myfyrwyr yn teimlo y dylai fwy o wybodaeth cael ei rhoi i bobol ifanc am gyllido addysg uwch a pellach.

A oes angen i Lywodraeth Cymru hyrwyddo'r grant ffioedd dysgu i fyfyrwyr yn well ymysg myfyrwyr posibl, neu a yw myfyrwyr sy'n hanu o Gymru yn ymwybodol ohono ond dal yn derbyn opsiynau heblaw am brifysgol?

Sut y cawsoch wybod am grant ffioedd dysgu Llywodraeth Cymru?

Some students felt that more information should be given to young people about further and higher education funding.

Does the Welsh Government need to publicise the Tuition Fee Grant to potential Welsh students more effectively or are Welsh domiciled students aware of it and still choose options other than university?

How were you made aware of the Welsh Government's Tuition Fee Grant?

Isabella Hughes

I think I was made aware by the local council giving assemblies at my school which was affective but i think more could be done

Catharine Jones

definitely!! the majority of students were not fully aware of it and were scared by horror stories of £££££ debt in the national papers when the fees increased. Many were shocked when i told them in exact info about fee grants and loans as well as the assembly grant, which many did not know much about.

Cadan ap Tomos

There is a huge lack of misinformation about higher education funding in general, and I don't think a lot of people know what the term "Tuition Fees Grant" means. A lot more needs to be done to explain what the system actually means to students and their finances, and that it isn't actually all doom and gloom as people expect it to be.



Catharine Jones

One of my friends in college (AAA student) was not going to attend uni due to her being a single mother and mature. The scare stories put her off, it was only when i sat her down and went through the details with her that she realised she could afford it and is now in a top uni heading for a top career, and coming to live back in wales after graduating, bringing her spending powers and expertise with her

Finance Committee

Thanks everyone, do you have any other points you want to raise?

Alexander Walne

I wasn't actually made aware until I was carrying out my UCAS application, solely through word of mouth). Much more can be done to explain to potential students of how the finance system actually works. I too did get my fair share of doom and gloom stories.

James Blundall

I believe restricting the funds to students studying in wales is slightly unfair, it not only limits the choice for welsh students in courses available, but also limits the experiences available to those who feel the grant is necessary have always been vaguely aware of the grant but found myself having to go out of my way to find out further information as it was not made clear to me by others. Saying this, I attended university before the fee increased so it could be argued it wasn't necessary.

Finance Committee

Thanks James

We will draw this web-chat to an end unless anyone has anything else they would like to raise?

Catherine jones

No thank you

Alexander Walne

No thank you

Isabella Hughes

No thank you

Cadan ap Tomos

Don't think so.

Isabella Hughes

Will we be able to know the outcome?

Finance Committee

Thank you for taking the time to take part in the web-chat, we will be sending you a link to an evaluation survey to tell us what you thought of today's session. if there's anything else you want to tell us, feel free to send it to us by e-mail

Yes Isabella, we will keep you updated on the progress of the Committee's inquiry

Alexander Walne

Thank you for this opportunity



Finance Committee
And send you the report once the Committee has concluded its work

Cadan ap Tomos
Will that be to all of us?

Isabella Hughes
Fantastic, look forward to it. good luck and thank you

Finance Committee
Yes it will

James Blundall
The finance and grants available to me have been extremely helpful in the day to day costs of being a student and having to live off my own back. I the grant is great in the long run, but the biggest problems facing the students i know is how to get by during university.

Finance Committee
And to you, good luck with your studies
Diolch pawb

Isabella Hughes
Diolch

Catherine Jones
Thanks

James Blundall
Diolch yn fawr, gobeithio bod hwn wedi bod o werth a hoffaf clywed beth sydd yn digwydd o ganlyniad. Hwyl

Finance Committee
Diolch James

James Blundall
Dim probs :D

