

This section of the Handbook sets out the higher education context within which the University is operating and within which the University's Strategic Plan has to be delivered.

The Government's most recent statement on the strategic direction of higher education in the UK is contained in the White Paper entitled *Higher Education, Students at the Heart of the System* published in June 2011, the Executive Summary of which is reproduced as **Section 1(ii)**. (A copy of the complete document can be obtained from the Clerk's office). The White Paper emphasises the Government's intention to:

- reform funding;
- deliver a better student experience;
- enable universities to increase social mobility; and
- reduce regulation and remove barriers for new providers.

These reforms will ensure that universities are held accountable for an improved student experience. The asserted aims of the HE White Paper published in June are to:

- ensure better information for students before they apply, better teaching while at university, greater transparency in areas such as feedback on their work and better preparation for the job market;
- review how university-industry collaboration can excel. The review will look at how the decline in sandwich courses can be reversed;
- encourage universities to engage actively with employers to accredit or "kitemark" courses to indicate to students that they are valued by them;
- make universities more accountable to students on teaching quality, who can trigger quality reviews where there are grounds for concern;
- review the extent to which Student Charters are adopted and whether they should be made mandatory in the future;
- free up student number controls by making around 85,000 places contestable among universities in 2012/13: through unrestrained recruitment of high-achieving students who typically get AAB grades, and by creating a flexible margin of places to reward quality providers charging an average of £7,500 or less for tuition;
- ensure that the Office for Fair Access is properly resourced so that it can go further and faster to drive fair access for students from lower income families and widen participation;
- enable a wider range of providers to join the sector to offer more choice for students;
- promise less regulation and bureaucracy for universities.

**Section 1(iii)** links to the HEFCE publication *Higher Education in England 2015 - Key Facts* which provides an overview of some of the main trends and changes affecting higher education in England.

**Section 1 (iv)** links to a brief history of the University.

**Section 1(v)** is the University's Strategic Plan 2015-2020 approved by the Board of Governors in 2015.

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