Glasgow Caledonian University welcomes the opportunity to provide comment on the Graduate Endowment Abolition (Scotland) Bill to the Education, Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee of the Scottish Parliament.

Glasgow Caledonian is recognised as a national leader in widening participation in higher education. The University has 16,000 students on campus in Glasgow, with almost one-third of students coming from disadvantaged backgrounds with no tradition of higher education.

We are committed to deepening access and to reaching out to everyone with the potential to benefit from study at Glasgow Caledonian University. We support any measure which removes real or perceived barriers to participation and therefore support the proposal to abolish the current Graduate Endowment Fee for students who graduate in 2007 and thereafter. We believe that this will benefit current and future students. Our students also welcome the proposal, and we were pleased to submit a joint response to the Scottish Government’s consultation, signed by both the Principal and the Student President.

Glasgow Caledonian University welcomes the commitment laid out in the Policy Memorandum and the Financial Memorandum accompanying the Bill that there will be no impact on the fees, grants and bursaries currently paid by SAAS and that there will be no implications for university funding which will continue to come from existing budgets. We wish, however, to take this opportunity to highlight the continuing need for additional investment in the Scottish higher education sector to ensure that we can extend the benefits of higher education more widely in society and also to ensure that we can compete internationally to attract well-qualified staff and students. We believe that universities in Scotland should be recognised as playing a significant role in the economic, cultural and social development of the communities they serve.