Graduate Endowment Abolition (Scotland) Bill

The EIS welcomes the opportunity to present written evidence on the general principles of the Graduate Endowment Abolition (Scotland) Bill.

The EIS supports the abolition of the graduate endowment charge as set out in the proposed Bill.

The EIS found the explanatory notes which accompanied the Bill very helpful in understanding the rationale for the abolition of the GE and the financial implications to doing so, i.e. the loss of income to the Government of around £17m per annum from 2008 onwards.

The EIS notes from the policy memorandum that the GE has failed to deliver the aim of introducing a new system of student support designed to remove barriers to widening access and participation as the increased debt burden remains a barrier to access. The EIS is again reassured by the policy memorandum that the Graduate Endowment Abolition Bill will have absolutely no implication for funding for our higher education institutions. However, the EIS remains concerned that insufficient funding is available to HEIs to ensure adequate resources are available for widening access initiatives that successfully encourage students to enter higher education and retain them until course completion.

The EIS would look to the Education Lifelong Learning and Culture Committee to monitor whether the abolition of the GE contributes positively to opening up access to higher education on a more equitable basis and to recommend appropriate action should it not do so.

As referred to above the EIS found the policy memorandum and financial memorandum which accompanied the Bill helpful in providing information on the intentions of the Bill.

The EIS found the consultation the Government carried out prior to the introduction of the Bill helpful and commends this approach to decision making which the Scottish Government has followed since devolution.