



## Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (Further Implementation etc.) Regulations 2019

House of Lords - Debate Summary

06/06/2019

Motion to Approve

Viscount Younger of Leckie, Government Spokesperson for Higher Education, tabled a motion to approve the Higher Education and Research Act 2017 (Further Implementation etc.) Regulations 2019. He outlined that they made amendments to; replace now defunct bodies or repealed legislation, reflect the diversification of education providers, and reflect "the movement from a funding-based system with quasi-regulatory elements to a formal regulatory system based on registration".

He further confirmed that these regulations would enable registered HE providers that are charities to become exempt from registration with and direct regulation by the Charity Commission, with the OfS acting as the principal regulator.

Concluding his address, he affirmed that the "Government firmly believe that the higher education regulatory system must be one that can protect effectively the interests of students in the short, medium and long term".

Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Higher, Further Education and Skills, Baroness Garden of Frognal described the regulations as a "uncontroversial" but queried how university staff from post-1992 universities could remain eligible for the teachers pension scheme and local government pension scheme, arguing that their exclusion would result in universities using squeezed budgets to offset potential losses.

Commenting on the Augar review, she also queried whether the Government would provide commensurate funding if fees were reduced to £7,500 per annum.

Opposition Spokesperson for Higher and Further Education, Lord Bassam of Brighton, described the regulations as a "tidying up" exercise.

He queried by 19 colleges nationwide, offering HE courses, were still waiting to be registered with the OfS only months from the commencement of the new term. He further intimated the oppositions acceptance that in a "marketised higher education system", a robust regulatory framework was essential.

Moving onto Augar, Bassam asked; "The Augar review recommends that the Government should adjust the teaching grant attached to each subject to more accurately reflect its perceived "value" to students and taxpayers. Given that a key aim of the Higher Education and Research Act is to improve student choice, do the Government consider that such a policy would undermine that principle?"

He further inquired whether the Government would heed recommendations to change the measure of disadvantage used in student premiums, to capture individual-level socioeconomic disadvantage, as suggested in the Augar Review.

Viscount Younger acknowledged and welcomed the support for the regulations. On the question of pensions, he commented that the decision to fund schools and not universities in 2019/20 was "based on the strongly positive response to our consultation proposal and the fact that schools and further education providers are most directly funded by government grants".

Commenting on the Augar review, he emphasised that the Government needed to look at the 53 recommendations "in the round".

Motion agreed.