**At-a-glance: Universities White Paper**

**BBC Related Stories**

* [**Universities to compete on places**](http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-13927710)

A look at the government's proposed changes to higher education in England, as it publishes a White Paper setting out ministers' vision for the future of the sector.

The document sets out the landscape for higher education as tuition fees rise to up to £9,000 per year.

**Competition and student numbers**

* The White Paper aims to create a "more dynamic sector in which popular institutions can grow and where all universities must offer a good student experience to remain competitive"
* From 2012-13, universities will be allowed to recruit as many students as they like with the grades AAB or higher
* In 2012, a "flexible margin" of 20,000 places will be available for universities charging £7,500 or less - these will be allocated to reward providers who offer good quality and value for money
* In subsequent years, the volume of student places for which universities can compete will increase "to drive quality and value for money"
* An overall cap on the numbers of students who will receive government-funded loans will be retained
* The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) will "have a new role as promoter of a competitive system"
* HEFCE is to advise on the creation, from 2013/14 of additional university places, funded by charities or employers, at no cost to the taxpayer - there must be fair access for these, regardless of ability to pay

**Tuition fees**

* Students will be able to pay back their loans early, but the government is consulting on how this can be done "without undermining the progressive nature of the system overall"

**New providers**

* Legislation to ensure "that all HE [higher-education] providers can secure government support via students' loans on an equal footing, so long as they meet common quality standards" will aim to remove entry barriers for new providers
* Government will simplify the regime for obtaining and renewing degree-awarding powers
* Use of the title "university" will be reviewed "so there are no artificial barriers against smaller institutions"
* Plan to "decouple" degree-awarding powers from teaching - which would mean bodies could set and award degrees without teaching them, or new institutions could teach degrees awarded by other bodies

**Student experience**

* Universities will have to publish directly comparable data for prospective students in 16 areas - including teaching hours, accommodation costs, and employment rates and future salaries of graduates by course
* Data will also be published, by course, showing the qualifications held by previously successful applicants
* Universities will be "encouraged" to publish information about the teaching qualifications and expertise of teaching staff
* Universities will be expected to publish online reports of student surveys of lecture courses, "aiding choice and stimulating competition between the best academics"
* Universities and colleges will have to publish details of how they spend tuition-fee income
* There will be fewer routine inspections of universities for quality, but more powers for inspections to be triggered if students raise concerns about teaching standards
* Measures will be taken to make graduates more employable, such as working with employers to develop and "kitemark" courses, boosting enterprise-skills training for students, and reviewing university-industry collaboration - including seeking to reverse the decline in sandwich courses offering a year in industry

**Social mobility**

* The Office of Fair Access (Offa) will have its resources increased and monitor the plans and targets universities must set for attracting students from disadvantaged backgrounds if they want to charge more than £6,000 fees
* The head of Offa will report to government this autumn about further sanctions and powers to support the body in its work
* Offa "will continue to have a duty to protect academic freedom, including an institution's right to decide who to admit and on what basis"