The state of the HE sector

by

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Introduction – themes of talk

- What is Higher Education for?
- What do we mean by marketisation and privatisation?
- The impact of marketisation and privatisation
- Funding, fees, REF and TEF
- Jobs, pay and pensions
- Workloads and performance management
- How do we defend educational values and provision? How do we defend jobs and conditions of employment?
What is Higher Education for?

- Humanistic values surrounding education
- The development of human beings
- The education of citizens for a democratic society
- Enjoyment in learning
- Advancement of knowledge and science
- Contribution to a better society, economic regeneration, social welfare and social justice
- Preparation for employment (not employability)
What do we mean by marketisation and privatisation?

- How is a market created in higher education?
- Can a degree be a commodity?
- Can education be bought?
- **How many forms can privatisation take?**
  - Charging fees/students as ‘customers’
  - Selling qualifications, ‘buying learning’
  - Outsourcing/sub-contracting of areas of work
  - Growth of private for-profit providers of Higher Education
The impact of marketisation and privatisation

- The impact on the status and role of students – the rise of the customer discourse
- The National Student Survey
- Growth in the number of posts with ‘business’ and ‘management’ in the job title
- The decline of collegiality and democratic governance
- Discourse around ‘business’ not ‘service’
- Changes in employment status and conditions for some groups of workers
Funding, fees, REF and TEF

- Removal of much public funding from Higher Education in England
- Imposition of tuition fees – What proportion of the student loan will be paid back?
- Increases in student fees
- What happens as the cap on student fees is lifted?
- REF – increased selectivity of research funding
- Impact of REF on academic writing and publishing
- TEF, record keeping and pedagogic freedom
What would UCU members like to see in terms of rewarding and valuing good teaching?

- De-casualisation of the workforce;
- More time on our work plans for small group and individual time with students;
- Promotion for good teaching;
- Support for HEA membership and staff development activities in HE pedagogy.
What is the Government agenda on TEF?

- Linking of increased tuition fees to TEF scores
- Even further marketisation and privatisation of the sector
- Increase in number of private for-profit providers of Higher Education
- HEIs entering and leaving the sector more rapidly
- What are the implications for staff and students and for the status of degrees? Not all students are geographically mobile.
How should UCU respond?

- The problems of privatisation
- Employment conditions in private for-profit providers – no academic freedom, often lower pay rates, fewer holidays and longer teaching hours
- The need to unionise the private sector of Higher Education
- Implications of TEF for workloads and pedagogic freedom
- The damage done by league tables
- Risk of institutional and departmental closures – loss of jobs and educational provision
Jobs, pay and pensions

- Threats to jobs – re-profiling of workforces
- Temporary and part-time employment
- Zero hours’ contracts
- Squeeze on pay – 14.5% shortfall since 2009
- The 2015 pay award of 1%
- Grade drift and attempts by employers to revisit the national framework agreement
- Pensions – defending the right to retirement
- USS, TPS, valuations, move to CRB schemes
Workloads and performance management

- Workload pressures and performativity
- The uses and misuses of workload allocation models
- What is a reasonable workload?
- Need for supportive staff development not micro-management
- Abuse of capability and disciplinary procedures and probation
- The excessive focus on ‘excellence’
How do we defend educational values and provision?

- Work with other defenders of education, e.g. Campaign for the Public University, academic subject associations etc.
- Work with students and student unions
- Defend academic standards
- Campaign for resources to deliver quality education not to write reports about education quality
- Defend access and widening participation
How do we defend jobs and conditions of employment?

- Negotiating good redundancy avoidance and redeployment agreements
- Winning ballots and industrial action
- Educating members about contracts and workload allocation models
- Building local campaigns on workload reduction
- Negotiating to end casualisation of the workforce
- Joining with others to fight austerity
Defeating the Trade Union Bill

- Defend the right to strike
- The 50% voting requirement treats abstentions as no votes
- Without a right to strike there is no meaningful collective bargaining, only collective begging
- Defend the right to picket
- Support workers in struggle