

University of Edinburgh to charge £9,000 a year for a degree

Student leaders at the University of Edinburgh have said that the decision by the University to charge students from elsewhere in the UK a total of £36,000 for a four year degree will be disastrous for the institution and for students.

The University has announced that from 2012/13 it will charge students from England, Wales and Northern Ireland £9000 a year to study in Edinburgh, making a degree at the University more expensive than studying anywhere else in the country. EUSA is concerned that the decision will lead to fewer students from elsewhere in the UK coming to study at Edinburgh.

However, following pressure from students as part of the "Education is Priceless" campaign, the University has decided to use 54% of the new revenue it generates from these tuition fees on bursaries for the poorest students. Students whose household income is less than £16,000 will be entitled to receive a £7,000 a year bursary from the University on top of what they receive from the Government.

Matt McPherson, EUSA President, said:-

"Today is a dark day for students. We believe the University has made the wrong choice in charging students more than anywhere else in the UK for a degree. Indeed, at a level of £36,000, an Edinburgh degree is now one of the most expensive in Europe if you're a student from England, Wales or Northern Ireland.

“However, it is thanks to the strength of the Students’ Association that the University has offered the best bursary scheme in the UK, and we welcome those bursaries, but we must not forget that the money to provide them is coming from students’ pockets.

“Over the past week, EUSA received hundreds of letters from students across the University urging Court members to keep fees as low as possible, to have the same level of fees across the University, and to make sure that at least 30% of fee income goes to bursaries on widening access principles. The University of Edinburgh today had an opportunity to set a precedent for lower fees in Scotland, and it’s hugely disappointing that they chose not to take up that opportunity.

“We are deeply concerned that the decision made today will put off capable students from applying to Edinburgh through aversion to debt, barring them the chance to even apply for those bursaries. We will now take our campaign, united with the National Union of Students, to the Scottish Government, when the issue is debated in Parliament. We call on universities across Scotland to come out and support their students in that campaign, to ensure that access to education is based on the ability to learn, not on the ability to pay.”

Graeme Kirkpatrick, Depute President of NUS Scotland, said:

““A £36,000 degree is both staggering and ridiculous. The average cost to study at Oxford and Cambridge is less than £25,000, which while still eye-wateringly large, pales in comparison with this. And that’s before you add additional debt for the extra year of living costs for the four-year degree in Scotland.

“This is nothing less than cashing in on students from the rest of the UK, and giving the signal that Edinburgh University is more interested in the money you can bring, as opposed to your academic ability. The reputational damage this could do, not only to Edinburgh but to the whole of Scottish higher education, should not be underestimated.”