

Extension of free tuition for EU students welcomed

Edinburgh MSP, Gordon Macdonald, has said that “Scotland remains open and welcoming” following an announcement from the SNP Government that free tuition for EU students will be extended beyond 2021 despite ongoing Brexit uncertainty.

He explained that EU citizens who study a Further or Higher education course in Scotland in the 2020/21 academic year will be charged the same tuition fees and will get the same fee support as Scottish students for the entirety of their courses.

This offer of tuition fee support will stand even if current legal obligations to EU students cease to apply when the UK exits the EU – making Scotland the first nation in the UK to offer this commitment.

EU nationals accounted for more than 75,000 college enrolments between 2012 and 2017, and, since 2000, Scotland’s colleges have benefitted from around £210 million of direct EU funding.

Additionally, Scottish universities have the highest proportion of EU students in the UK (9% of students are EU domiciled) and the number of EU staff at Scotland’s higher education institutions has increased by over 18% since 2014 – with around 27% of university research staff hailing from the EU.

Commentators have warned that many of the 15,000 UK citizens studying for qualifications in the EU may suddenly find

themselves liable for international student fees, medical care and travel insurance after Brexit.



Gordon Macdonald MSP outside Edinburgh Napier University and Edinburgh College.

Welcoming the announcement, SNP MSP for Edinburgh Pentlands, Gordon Macdonald, said: "The SNP recognise the enormous contribution that EU students as colleges and universities in Edinburgh make to our local community.

"Despite the uncertainty of Brexit, this announcement sends a strong message to EU citizens who are thinking of studying here that Scotland remains open and welcoming.

"Leaving the EU will see Scotland's colleges and universities miss out on millions of pounds of EU funding with those on exchange programmes like Erasmus also losing out.

"I'd like to make clear that EU citizens will always be welcome in Edinburgh."