

## **UK HE in Transition in a Changing World: An Institutional Perspective on Transformations at the University of Huddersfield in Interesting Times**

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***Nigel Phillips** has been a university administrator for twenty years, following time as both a chartered accountant and an archeologist. He has headed planning and student records teams at two universities in the north of England. He has a particular interest in widening participation and social inclusivity. In 2007 Nigel participated in a UK AUA study tour of New Zealand, leading a small team focussing on student recruitment, retention and widening participation. This has left him with a continuing interest in these issues in New Zealand.*

The UK has made significant changes in student funding in recent years, with a move away from direct government support to one where students will pay high fees to universities and further education colleges, backed by government loans repaid over 30 years. Fees from 2012/13 will be around three times their previous level, and approaching the fees often charged to international students studying in the UK. This change looks likely to transform the market in England, and across the UK, with a far more volatile market for student recruitment. The government philosophy behind this is that student choices as *customers* will drive improvements, and alter the range and blend of provision available. Allied to this have been changes in the standard information provided to all applicants, moves to alter the application process, and attempts to differentiate the sector into a clear high cost elite, and a lower cost cheaper localized sector.

The presentation will briefly overview these changes, and their broad impact to date upon the recruitment of UK, EU and international students. Consideration will be given to the likely future impact of these changes, particularly upon the patterns of recruitment of students, the types of student experience provided, and whether increased student choice will in practice be delivered. The impact of these changes upon recruitment of international students will be discussed.

It will then focus on the responses to this changed environment within a single institution – the University of Huddersfield. Huddersfield is an institution of around 20,000 students with a broad teaching range, set in a town of 146,000. The University has moved from a predominantly teaching focus to embrace research as a means of increasing its prestige and aiding the recruitment of staff and students. International recruitment has increased, and plans are to sustain this. The institution is developing a stronger brand, and the tensions around brand as a concept in HE will be briefly described. The campus has been transformed, with new buildings, fresh social space, and new facilities to aid changing teaching. The means by which changes have been introduced so far, and how more volatile times may affect the institution will be explored, as will the particular impact upon support staff.

A discussion of whether these changes may have wider impacts outside of the UK will conclude the presentation.