

Consultation on recurrent funding for 2021-22. Response from Goldsmiths, University of London

Question 1: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to distribute a greater proportion of OfS recurrent grant through the main high-cost subject funding method?

Tend to disagree

The proposed overall approach fails to recognise the high-costs of operating in London, compared to the rest of the UK. The high-cost funding method is being more narrowly defined, with subjects in the C1.2 category receiving reduced funds, which as subsequent answers outline risks provision in subject areas the Government and OfS have stated a desire to see continued provision in.

Question 2: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to split price group C1 in order to implement a reduction of 50 per cent to the high-cost subject funding allocated to subjects in the performing arts; creative arts; media studies and archaeology?

Strongly disagree

The consultation document notes, in paragraphs 22 & 23, the contribution of courses in the performing arts, creative arts and media studies, to society, culture and to widening participation. It is further noted that despite these courses being costly to deliver, to providers and to the Government, there is a desire for provision in the C1.2 category to continue.

Reductions in Government funding to those courses in the C1.2 category, when consider in tandem to the removal of London Weighting and within the context of proposals made by the Augar Review to which the Government has not yet formally responded to, suggest it will be incredibly challenging to maintain provision.

As an institution Goldsmiths excel in the arts, design, media, communication, social work and teaching amongst a wide-range of other creative and humanities subjects. Throughout

the pandemic all of these disciplines have contributed strongly to the national response and will be key to the nation's return to full health. All three of Goldsmiths academic Schools will have a net reduction in Teaching Grant allocation of more than 50%.

The impact on access to creative higher education for Home students is potentially serious. 46% of Goldsmiths UG students come from London and 8% from the south-east, many coming from the country's poorest boroughs. The rationale that international student fees can cross-subsidise Home students access to C1.2 courses is unsustainable and risks reducing Home students access to creative higher education, particularly as the creative industries talent pipeline is especially reliant on London higher education.

Question 3: Notwithstanding your answer to question 2, if we were to split price group C1 as proposed, to what extent do you agree with our approach to implementing this?

Tend to disagree

Question 4: To what extent do you agree with our approach to counting students from the Crown Dependencies in our funding allocations for 2021-22?

Tend to agree

Question 5: To what extent do you agree with the proposed approach to remove the targeted allocation for students attending courses in London?

Strongly disagree

The cost of higher education provision in London is 14.1% higher than the England average. Land and building costs in inner London are more than 3 times the national average, while average academic staff costs in inner London are between 12-14% higher than the national average, in part owing to providers contractual, and moral, responsibility to pay a London allowance to staff.

It costs at least 20% more to achieve a decent standard of living in London, compared to the rest of the UK, and in some cases it can be as high as 50%. This is mainly due to the high costs of housing, transport and childcare.¹

¹ Research from [Trust for London](#)

The removal of London Weighting is a direct cost to London-based providers who will still be providing additional remuneration to staff and incurring the additional costs of operating in London. Services which students rely are likely to be affected as institutions seek to make savings in non-fixed costs.

With our home borough of Lewisham being among England's poorest areas the withdrawal of this funding looks more like 'punching down' than 'levelling up'. Our activities generate £91m for Lewisham and support 2,500 jobs in the borough and any cuts to London Weighting will only make it more difficult for us to help our local community recover from Covid-19.

We estimate these changes will see us lose over £2m in funding every year, particularly impacting the funding for teaching creative courses, many of whose graduates go on to work in the creative industries that the Government's own figures show are worth £111bn a year to the UK economy.

We should be investing more in universities in England's poorest boroughs and more in the graduates who make sectors such as Britain's film and television industries a £20.8bn a year success story.

Question 6: To what extent do you agree with the proposed approach to remove London weighting from the formula-based student premium allocations?

Strongly disagree

The reduction in funding for higher education providers as a result of London Weighting's removal has a significant impact on annual budgets and planning. For such a significant decision to be implemented with less than a full year's notice, to allow incorporation into planning, is inappropriate.

The proposed approach is particularly inappropriate in the context of COVID-19, given the additional resources higher education providers have allocated to support students and staff during the pandemic. Goldsmiths has spent over £1m on direct COVID-19 costs to make the campus safe, as well as incurring significant loss of income from accommodation and conferencing.

The immediate removal of this funding adversely affects London institutions at a time of acute vulnerability for the sector.

Question 7: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to provide £40 million to support Uni Connect activities in 2021-22?

Tend to disagree

The £20m reduction in funding is a concerning signal about the OfS and Government commitment to widening participation in higher education.

Question 8: To what extent do you agree with the proposal to distribute an additional £5 million through the existing student premiums in the proportions shown in paragraph 65, and to earmark this £5 million to be spent on student hardship?

Tend to agree

The funding is welcome, though the utility and impact of the small amounts are limited.

Question 9: To what extent do you agree with the proposals to distribute £15 million to address student transition and mental health, through a combination of competition and a new formula-based student premium?

Tend to agree

The funding is welcome, though the utility and impact of the small amount is limited.

Question 13: Do you have any comments about any unintended consequences of these proposals, for example, for particular types of provider or for particular types of student?

For London-based providers with expertise in creative higher education (broadly subjects in the proposed C1.2 category) the reductions in funding will be significant and their immediate removal starkly felt. The link between creative higher education, the creative industries and London does not appear to be recognised by these proposals.

Before the pandemic the UK's creative industries contributed £111bn to the economy in areas like film, television, marketing and advertising. These are some of the subjects that the government now also propose to cut financial support for. This huge economic contribution - in a growth sector largely London based – cannot be sustained by small specialist colleges who cannot provide the kind of investment and teaching opportunities needed for a strong, sustainable talent pipeline.

The concentration of creative industries in London means that the sectors talent pipeline is receiving a double cut, through the removal of London weighting and the reduction in grant funding for key subjects.

Question 14: Do you have any comments about the potential impact of these proposals on individuals on the basis of their protected characteristics?

As outlined in answer to Question 2, all three of Goldsmiths academic Schools stand to lose more than 50% of grant funding compared to current levels. This is a significant reduction in funding that will affect student experience and support at a provider whose students are drawn largely from the UK, where 21.1% of students have declared a disability and 47.5% of students are BAME.