

Royal Agricultural College

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31st March 2011

Distinction and Diversity
in Higher Education

GUILDHEM



‘At the beginning of the last century, the power of nations might have been measured in battleships and coal. In this century it's as likely to be graduates.’

BBC March 2011

A bigger picture...

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- Clear OECD evidence - strong international trend for more people to go to university. Average net entry rates increased from 40% in 2000 to 57% in 2008, (UK rate increasing from 48% to 57%) – every country increasing net entry rates over period.
- Average graduate will earn over £100,000 more, net of tax, than similar individual who achieved university entrance qualifications but did not go into HE - premium holding up in spite of recession.
- A strong employment premium – as other employment rates decline.
- Not just an economic premium. Graduates more healthy, more active in community more likely to pass on generational benefits to children
- Reputation, diversity, strength of UK HEIs is increasing.
- UK degree awarding powers valued at between £175 and 250 million

Wise words...?

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'If fees were to go up, the Government would have to lend people the money to pay for them – and that would push up public spending. It's not just that students don't want to pay higher fees: the Treasury can't afford them. So the arrangements we have now are clearly unable to respond to the current economic climate.'

David Willetts June 2010 (but speaking before Browne – commenting on the system introduced in 2004).

Is this really a higher education market?

- Will institutions compete on price, reputation or distinctiveness (or all)?
- Is student demand elastic or inelastic?
- HE, FE (and HE in FE) policy and growth?
- ‘Rebalancing the economy’?
- Localism, LEPs and local politics
- Is this a single market system or more varied (by place, sector and student)?

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'Cold spots' by provider

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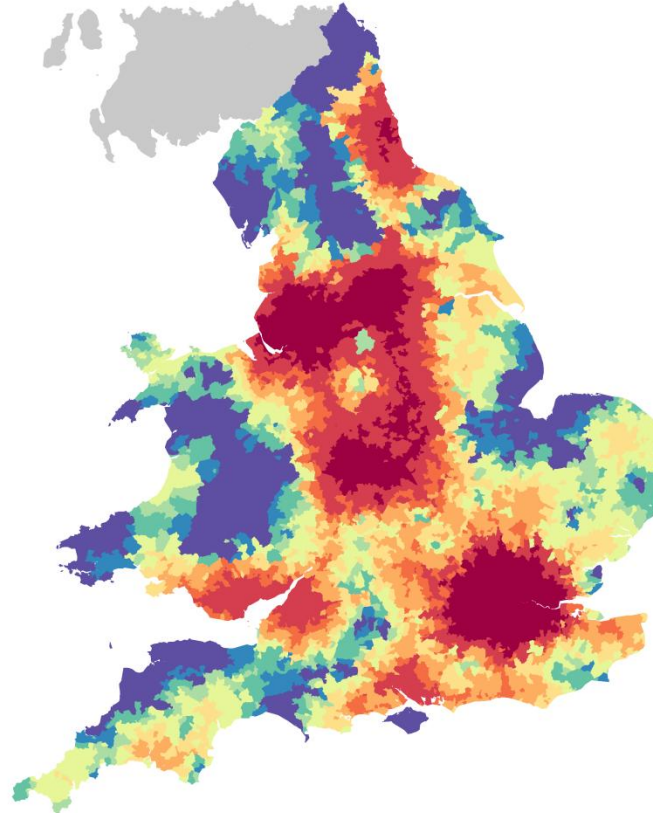
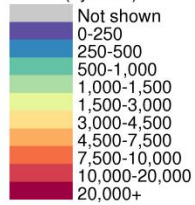
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HEFCE Common Evidence Base: Context Statistic, Local Study Places

Local Study Places

Undergraduate entry places accessible for local study

Local Study Places (by ward)



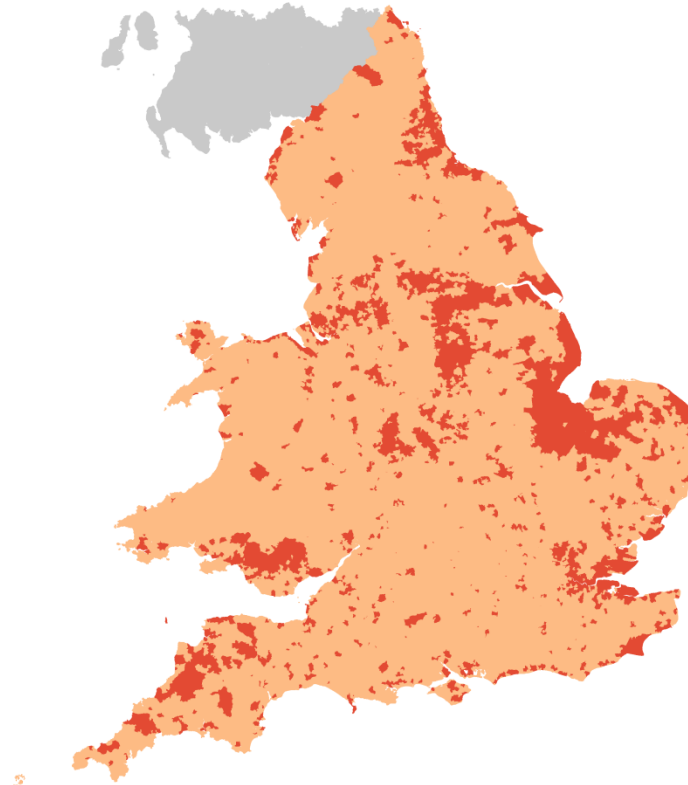
'Cold spots' by qualification

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HEFCE Common Evidence Base: Context Statistic, wards with low levels of HE qualifications

Wards with low levels of HE qualifications
(in lowest 40 per cent by mature population)



To be used in conjunction with the New University Challenge documentation at www.hefce.ac.uk
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Choropleth colours based on schemes from www.coldspotter.org
Mark Corver, Analytical Services Group, Higher Education Funding Council for England, February 2009
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Students have changed...

- 43% participation (less than US, Canada, Korea....)
- Third of students are part time
- Third are 21 or over
- 40%+ study within 25 miles of home
- Large growth in young part time (eg at Open University)

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Some key strategic issues

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- How much will institutions charge – what is evidence so far?
- OFFA, Access Agreements and the NSP
- How to assess market functioning and market failure?
- Specialist concerns – land based subjects, teacher training, art and design... less margin for error
- Demand may reduce in short term – especially in WP universities – may be more numbers to play with...
- Lack of links to place and sector in policy
- Is view of student experience out of date? Does it create long term problems – can (any) government fund a mass HE system on a deluxe model...

HE White Paper and other issues still to be determined

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- New providers – how, what, where? (including HE in FE, private, mergers, takeovers etc)
- Student numbers – control, demand?
- ‘Off quota’ or ‘Core and Margin’ numbers – participation, innovation - is there room to manoeuvre?
- External accreditation (especially HE in FE), degree awarding powers?
- What might government do to put pressure on pricing – or to claw back funds if fees are too high?
- Research, HEIF, OGD spend?
- *Is this a fixed system and will it last?*