

University tuition fee increases: the influence of increasing fees on students entering Higher Education; student and staff expectations; and the potential revolution in the culture of Higher Education

A case study within an English post 1992 University

by

James Neil Pugh

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Abstract

In September 2012 English universities witnessed a near trebling of their tuition fees for full-time undergraduate courses. This resulted in the fee levels for English domiciled students rising from £3,000 per year, to an average of £8,580 per year (UCAS, 2012). In conjunction with the tuition fee increases was the growing accountability for universities to publish and demonstrate their performance to students, in areas such as teaching quality and post-graduation employment rates. This policy change was implemented in the context of government expectations that institutions would compete for students partly through offering competitive tuition fees. The policy was accompanied by national publication of information about the student experience at each institution.

These substantial changes in English education provided a unique opportunity to carry out research which investigated staff and student expectations within higher education following the rise in tuition fees. The primary data collection was carried out within the academic year of 2012/13 which provided a natural experiment that allowed comparison of the students who began their studies in the academic year starting 2012 on increased tuition fees, and the students who had started their studies in the previous year and who continued to pay the lower rate of fees.

The research was undertaken within an English 'post 1992' University and supplemented by one Further Education (FE) college which offered degree awards. The selection of an FE college, which franchised its degree courses from the University, enabled a comparison between the views of students choosing to study Higher Education in a Further Education college (HE in FE). Student surveys captured nearly 700 student responses from the two organisations. In addition, 97 completed surveys from university staff and five interviews with senior university staff were recorded.

A recurrent theme within the investigation was the analysis of two differing student identities; the student as an investor and the student as a consumer. The study provided evidence that students choose to study to improve their future earnings. This motivation

was reflected in the influencers they had on choosing their university. Alongside this, students were also taking on the persona of students as consumers. This was reflected in the expected rises in standards and reported rises in institutional complaints. Overall both academics and students expected change within the higher education industry and in institutional cultures. In turn these had implications for developing policy, organisational planning and future research.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to:

Belinda, Neil and Nicola for teaching me the spirit of family and their unquestioning support when I chose the path less travelled.

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Chapter 1 Introduction

Following the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Browne Report (an independent review of higher education funding and student finance) in 2010), tuition fees for full-time undergraduate courses in English universities nearly trebled in 2012. This resulted in the fee levels for English domiciled students rising from £3,000 per year, to an average of £8,580 per year (UCAS, 2012). Whilst tuition fees had been rising over the previous decade, this represented the most controversial rise in fees. To enable payment of the higher tuition fees a new contingent loan system, based on a long-term payment system for students, was introduced. In conjunction with the tuition fee increases was the growing accountability for universities to publish and demonstrate their performance to students, in areas such as teaching quality and post-graduation employment rates. The substantial changes in English higher education funding and student finance provided a unique opportunity to carry out this research.

This introductory Chapter is structured as follows:

- 1.1 Aims of the investigation
- 1.2 Research questions
- 1.3 Context of the investigation
- 1.4 Scope of the project
- 1.5 Research design and methodology
- 1.6 Chapter summaries

1.1 Aims of the investigation

The research set out to investigate the impact of increasing tuition fees on students, academic staff and institutional culture, in a case study University and a franchised Further Education College. A key aim of the research was to develop understanding of the expectations and motivations of students', following tuition fee increases. This involved the examination of the impact of fee increase on student's motivation to attend higher education, and the review and analysis of whether motivations could be linked to different

student fee regimes. In addition, the research aimed to interrogate the impact of fees on the initial decision-making process of attending university.

In order to better understand the student decision-making process, the research investigated sensitivity towards tuition fees and explored what students considered to be important information, which supported them in their decision to undertake study at a particular institution. The research studied the impact of increasing tuition fees on the case study university as an organisation and its resulting emerging culture. The analysis of data and emerging findings and conclusions would enable academics and key stakeholders, within the institution, to review student expectations and motivations. This could then be utilised to evidence and support potential changes and developments that that could be undertaken to meet these expectations and motivations.

Finally, given tuition fees had not risen to the same extent in further education colleges, as they had in universities (during the time of the investigation), the research aimed to enhance and develop understanding of the differences between university and further education in the areas discussed above.

1.2 Research questions

In order to add new knowledge to this field of investigation the research aimed to answer the following three questions:

1. How does the level of tuition fees affect the decision to participate in higher education?
2. How does the level of tuition fees affect students' expectations of their experience in higher education?
3. What effect did higher education leaders believe the rise in tuition fees in England in 2012 would have on students' expectations?

1.3 Context of the investigation

A recurrent theme within the investigation was the analysis of two differing student identities; the student as an investor and the student as a consumer. Whilst it was acknowledged that these were not the only identities which a student possesses (e.g. learner, scholar, apprentice etc.) these were adopted within the research to represent the different approaches made within the application and recruitment phase of applying to university.

As detailed and explained in section 1.3.1, students demonstrating behaviours of investors could be seen in the application of investing their time, efforts and money in their higher education, in order to gain higher financial returns in the future. Such reasoning is captured within Human Capital Theory, attributed to the works of Becker (1964), Blaug (1976) and Jones (1993). In order to understand the background of graduates benefiting from their degree, section 1.3.1 provides context of higher education policy regarding participation and fees to explain the sector context.

The theme of students as consumers is introduced in section 1.3.2 which explains how institutional and course performance indicators, in addition to other factors, are important for students when making their decision where to study. The discussion draws on current literature and research which investigated the factors students found important in applying for their award (Renfrew et al, 2010; Kandiko and Mawer, 2013). As this section included understanding of what applicants found important within institutions, the context of organisational culture discussed in section 1.3.3 provided a theoretical platform for understanding organisations.

The study uses these two themes to frame research on students' decision if to study. Chapter 2 reviews theory and evidence on 'the student as investor'. Chapter 3 reviews theory and evidence on 'the student as consumer'. These chapters suggest that more needs to be known about relationships between students and staff, expectations and the decisions made by universities, particularly with regard to fee setting. The theme of 'student as investor' focuses attention on students' expectations about the financial benefits of university: is it

worth paying this much (linking to research question 1)? The theme of 'student as consumer' focuses attention on the theme of 'student as consumer': what will I get for my money (research question 2)? Research question 3 focuses on higher education managers' perceptions about the challenges of managing students' expectations.

1.3.1 The changing landscape of higher education tuition fees

Policy documents regarding undergraduate tuition fees, in countries such as the US, England and Australia, have been linked to the predictions of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and estimates of average rather marginal returns of a degree. Whilst the returns of gaining a degree, often referred to as 'the graduate premium', were not fixed, research suggested there was a large average financial benefit of participation (Barr, 2002; Walker and Zhu, 2011; Britton et al, 2016a). In addition, participation in HE may increase social and cultural capital and lead to better health and well-being (BIS, 2006). Moreover, endogenous growth theories (Becker 1964; Romer, 1994) argued that economic growth depends on the level of investment in human capital.

Walker & Zhu (2011) estimated that a rise in the maximum tuition fee from £3,000 to £7,000 would reduce the rate of return from studying a degree by between 1-3% and that, on average, this suggested that applications to university would be affected very little by a fee rise of this magnitude. Evidence from recent applications to UCAS (2016c) seem to support Walker and Zhu's (2001) predictions.

However, returns to education for any particular individual are difficult to predict (Dickson and Harmon, 2011). Examples could be seen in the Fiscal Studies Report (2016a) which detailed the variation in graduate wages by subject studied. Students' choices have some predictable effects, but these predictions are subject to quite a lot of uncertainty. Chevalier (2011, p.1197) noted the imperfect knowledge of applicants in the decision-making process and but also suggested that "higher fees are likely to make students more aware of financial implications of their choice". This research suggests otherwise. Whilst students appeared to make decisions to study based upon a return to investment and were increasingly motivated

by employment and university quality related university performance, there was no suggestion during interviews that students were gathering that level of data during the application process.

1.3.2 Impact of tuition fees on student identity

The student as an investor

Rising tuition fees for students shifted the cost burden of higher education from the state to the students. This might have been expected to make students more concerned about the financial implications of the higher education choices they were making. The fee rise might have encouraged students to see their identity more strongly in terms of an investor in their financial future. Students making a substantial financial commitment and investment in higher education, in order to receive higher rates of return in future salaries and social benefits, were the key concepts covered in Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) and form the underlying theoretical perspective within Chapter 2.

Students as consumers

Davies (2012) described the role of government in the past as being the purchaser of higher education, in that the government would buy the goods and services of higher education from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), on behalf of students. The new fee regime positions the government as informants of students' higher education choices. The changes in policy (as discussed in section 1.3.1) meant that students were faced with growing responsibility of deciding 'if, what and when' on government informed data. In addition, to increase income, universities employed professional marketing campaigns to attract students. These further target students, enticing them into university and providing students with yet more information.

Chapter 3 explores these issues and reviews what students regarded as important in the decision-making process. As universities tried to influence students' decisions in order to encourage them to apply, this appears to have impacted on their internal organisational culture.

1.3.3 Impact of rising tuition fees on higher education institutions and their organisational culture

The works of Bourdieu (1993) and Reay et al (2005) introduce the concept of institutional habitus as a theoretical platform to analyse organisations in the way decisions are made and approaches taken, rather than the resulting decision – the ‘how they do it’ rather than the ‘what they do’. Whilst referring to institutional habitus, Chapter 3 uses Schein’s (1985) three-stage model of organisational culture as an organising construct. A cyclical relationship between his levels: ‘Surface Manifestations’ (artefacts, ceremonials); ‘Values’; and ‘Basic Assumptions’ (Relation to environment, human activity and relationships) is presented. Schein’s (1985) model suggested that the resulting observed culture – the surface manifestations, was a result of an organisation’s basic assumptions which shaped the value system within it.

1.4 Author’s positionality and reflection

This section provides a personal reflection of the author’s positionality and therefore is written in the first person. This section is included as the author has a professional role within Higher Education for over 15 years, including over the period when the research was conducted. This section explains how these experiences have helped and hindered the author’s role as a researcher in this field.

Throughout this research I have been employed as an Education Studies academic within Higher Education and experience gained in this employment fostered my interest in the topic and my initial perceptions of the experiences and problems addressed in this research. At the beginning of the project, my role was linked to cross faculty recruitment and, therefore, I had a lot of dialogue with admissions teams and academics. In the lead up to the changes of fees I was aware of an increasing tension amongst those colleagues. The tension was fuelled by uncertainty about the reactions of students, other HE institutions and the public to the impending rise in tuition fees.

The original plans for the research were to have greater focus on the aspects of the changing culture within the institution, which followed on from my interest in organisational culture stemming from previous post-graduate research. However, working within HE and experiencing how academics and institutions were trying to gauge students' expectations drove the research into a much stronger focus on research questions 1 and 2, as explained in section 1.2.

At the time of conducting the data collection I was a junior manager and I had little previous interaction with senior managers or direct experience of organisational decision-making processes. Therefore, when I conducted interviews it was as someone with little power or organisational influence. Nonetheless, I appreciate that senior managers may have been reluctant to divulge to me any information that put them or the institution in a bad light. This type of problem is endemic when researching decision-making at high levels in organisations and must be considered when interpreting the data.

During the writing-up stages of the project I was promoted to a new role of Head of Education. This has meant that I have had direct working relations with university middle and senior leadership. I believe that this change has increased my familiarity with the discourses in higher education regarding fees, the student experience and student choice. This has inevitably affected my interpretation of the evidence from senior managers, since I now view their responses from a position of greater familiarity with the pressures that constrained the managers in their thinking and decision-making. Of course, that does not mean, necessarily, that they saw their circumstances as I would have done. I have tried throughout to maintain a distance from the data so I could portray what I believe my informants told me about how they saw what was happening. The professional knowledge gained as an insider is a blessing and a curse. It has helped me understand but I have needed to guard against the presuppositions and limitations of my own understanding.

1.5 Scope of the research

This research is a case study of one English Higher Education Institution. Data were collected during the first year (2012/2013) of the implementation of a substantial increase in

undergraduate tuition fees. The university was a 'teaching intensive', 'post-1992' university. Since this university also awarded degrees to students who had been taught in partner FE colleges, data were also collected from one of these colleges. The selection of the FE college, which franchised its degree courses from the University, enabled a comparison between the views of undergraduate students choosing to study in a Further Education college (HE in FE) although aiming for the same qualification as peers studying at the university. Chapter 4 sets out the rationale for choosing these particular institutions for the case study. The student population investigated as part of the research included a substantial percentage of the University's total full-time undergraduate student body. The college (HE in FE) was chosen as it was the university's largest full-time undergraduate courses franchised partner.

The university was formally a polytechnic and received its degree awarding powers in 1992. In the academic year 2010/2011 it had an onsite student population of 10,638 students, over two main campuses and was a member of the Million+ Group – the self-titled 'Association for Modern Universities in the UK, and the voice of 21st century higher education', (MillionPlus, 2017). The University had 1,003 full-time learners across its UK partnership network, making this a substantial student population for the university. The institution was ranked within the lower quartile in the Guardian league rankings (www.theguardian.com/education/table/2011/may/17/university-league-table-2012). Chapter 4, section 4.3.1, tables 4.2 and 4.3 provide a detailed breakdown of the samples and subject areas involved. In summary these were: business, computing, English, and law.

The FE College included in the research is based within the same county as the University. The College offers a range of pre-HE courses, both vocational and academic, such as A-Levels. Utilising data captured in the college OFSTED (2012) report, the College had just over 3000 full-time and 2000 part-time Level 3 and below learners. There were 71 full-time and 287 part-time HE in FE students registered during the 2012/13 academic year. The College was a franchised partner of the University discussed above. The franchise relationship meant that the University was a preferred, but not sole, provider of validated courses which could be taught by College staff at the College.

1.6 Research design and methodology

Undertaking this research in the academic year of 2012/13 took advantage of a natural experiment (see section Chapter 4, section 4.2.1) which allowed comparison of the students who began their studies in the academic year starting 2012 on increased tuition fees, and the students who had started their studies in the previous year and who continued to pay the lower rate of fees.

Using the online survey tool Qualtrics, a student survey was used to collect data in response to research questions 1 and 2 (as listed in section 1.2), whilst a staff survey and follow up interviews were used to answer research question 3. The decision to use student surveys is outlined in Table 1.1 (which is replicated in Chapter 4, section 4.2) but essentially gathering a larger proportion of student data via surveys appeared the most reliable and valid approach. Similarly, a survey administered to academic staff was considered to be the most appropriate way to gather data from busy professionals. Following the collection of survey data, several senior staff were interviewed. They were identified on the basis of their seniority and responsibilities to provide explanations of the institution's expectations and decisions.

Table 1.1: The mixed methods approach utilised to collect data

	<u>Student Surveys</u> – HEI and HE in FE students (cohorts beginning study in 2011 and 2012)	<u>HEI Academic Staff Survey</u>	<u>Senior Academic Staff Interviews</u> (HEI and HE in FE)
Student participation in HE <i>(Research questions 1 and 2)</i>	Experience: a) reasons to study and invest within education b) likelihood of attendance and price sensitivity c) influences on where to study		
Students' expectations of their experience in higher education <i>(Research question 2)</i>	Experience: a) student facing services b) organisational improvements c) organisational cultural	Experience: a) academic staff perceived student expectations b) organisational practice c) organisational cultural	Experience: a) organisational perceived student expectations and attitudes b) organisational practice change c) expected change to academic role d) expected organisational cultural change
Academic beliefs of student expectations <i>(Research question 3)</i>	Experience: a) perceived student expectations b) student participation c) sector culture	Experience: a) perceived student participation b) sector practice c) sector culture	Experience: a) sector responses b) sector practices c) sector culture

1.7 Chapter organisation

This section provides a brief outline of each of the Chapters within the thesis, including their purpose and aims.

1.7.1 Literature review (Chapters 2 and 3)

The literature review has been split into Chapter 2 and Chapter 3. The split reflects the acknowledgment of two differing perspectives within the project. The differing identities of students are identified and broken down into two themes: students as investors in higher education and students as consumers of higher education. Approaches to how the author search for the literature, terms used, sources identified and the rationale for these are included at the start of each chapter.

Chapter 2 provides an account of how students can be seen as investors of higher education. Based upon the principles of Human Capital Theory, Chapter 2 explain how students may identify the process of gaining a degree as an investment in their future earnings and productivity. This chapter also provides an overview of student participation in higher education and describes how recent changes have seen an increase in student tuition fees. The final sections of Chapter 2 explain how changes in the sector have led to an increasingly stratified landscape of providers of higher education, with particular reference to higher education offered within further education colleges.

Chapter 3 explains the concepts surrounding the student identity as being a consumer of higher education. Chapter 3 explores the growing trends of consumerism within higher education and how differing quality metrics are being used to enable perspective students to compare institutions and awards. The final sections of Chapter 3 discuss theories of organisational culture and how these can be applied to universities.

1.7.2 Methodology (Chapter 4)

Chapter 4 provides a more detailed account of the scope, research design and methodology of the research. Chapter 4 describes the mixed methods approach used in the research, with students and academic staff having participated in surveys and interviews. As outlined in section 1.5 the initial research was conducted during 2012, at the same time as the

introduction of higher fees, which enabled the researcher to capture changes within the sector in a naturally occurring experiment.

1.7.3 Results (Chapters 5 and 6)

Following the structure of the literature review which was split into two chapters ('the student as an investor' and 'the student as a consumer'), the results have also been split between two chapters. Chapter 5 presents results on the influences upon student choice when entering higher education, including sensitivity to changes in the new fee regime introduced for students starting their awards in September 2012. This included discussion of price sensitivity, using elasticity of demand, which was calculated across the measured intervals to show the different levels of elasticity and inelasticity across the fee range and within different groups of students. The Chapter also analyses variables which were associated with student choice and their choice of institution. Linear regression models were used to show relations between student characteristics and also their reaction to changes in fees, thus building upon the earlier part of the Chapter.

Chapter 6 presents evidence from the survey and interview data from academics. This provided insights into the beliefs of staff within the university and FE College. This included senior staff interviews on how institutions prepared for fee rises and how, even in the short time after implementation, academics believed that the student body, the institution and the sector were changing. The later stages of the chapter show comparisons between survey responses from staff and students on how potential changes may manifest themselves within universities; for example, expectations that teaching will improve following fees increases. Finally, the chapter presents data on expectations and beliefs that students and staff had of wider sector changes.

1.7.4 Discussion (Chapter 7)

Chapter 7 discusses the research results in light of the literature reviewed in earlier Chapters. This discussion highlights findings that were similar to results from previous

research and identifies ways in which this study adds to the literature through its focus on a substantial change in fees, a shift in the 'informed student choice' policy and the adoption of Schein's perspective on organisational culture.

1.7.5 Conclusions (Chapter 8)

The final chapter provides conclusions in relation to each of the initial research questions. The chapter explains how the research builds on previous studies and outlines the contribution to knowledge. The chapter finishes by suggesting some implications of the research for the institutions within the investigation, other institutions and policy.

Chapter 2 Literature Review

The student as an investor

This chapter provides an account of how the tuition fee burden in England has shifted over time from state to student. In this context, the chapter examines relationships between tuition fees and benefits to the individual and society. It explores and critically analyses issues surrounding the changing nature of student participation in Higher Education in light of rising tuition fees and how students' choices can be driven from their identity as investors in their own future. The Chapter pays particular attention to relationships between tuition fees, participation, expectations and the student experience within England.

Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) provides the underpinning framework for the chapter. The first part of this chapter (Section 2.1) explains the Human Capital Theory account of participation in Higher Education as an investment decision; its predictions about the effects of tuition fees on participation; and reviews these effects from the standpoint of efficiency, economic growth (endogenous growth theory), and equity. Section 2.1 provides a framework to explain why individuals choose to invest (financially and non-financially) in Higher Education as a means to access higher paid employment. Finally, Section 2.1 briefly reviews other theories of student choice (Signally, Screening and Behavioural Economics).

Section 2.2 provides an historical account of the changing Higher Education policy landscape (including student recruitment) since the 1960's. This section examines four themes in the development of government policy. Each theme is set in its historical context. Although the themes and time periods overlap, it is possible to identify changes in emphasis and to point to periods when each theme emerged into the foreground of policy making. This is broken down into the following sub-sections:

2.2.1 1960- Increasing the emphasis on HE for economic performance

2.2.2 1980- Increasing participation and diversity

2.2.3 1996- Tuition fees and quality control

2.2.4 2010- Tuition fees, student choice and competition

Section 2.3 explains the influence of Human Capital Theory on tuition fees in England. The discussion examines the benefits of becoming a graduate, both financially and socially. This section also explains the financial implications of the 2012 increases to student tuition fees.

The final sections of the Chapter (2.4 onwards) outline the ongoing challenge of widening participation of those attending Higher Education. This includes the review, explanation and analysis of an increasingly stratified industry (partly a by-product of increased student tuition fees) and the role that Further Education colleges have in teaching and awarding Higher Education courses.

The second part of the Literature Review, Chapter 3, builds upon this by reviewing student participation within English Higher Education in terms of consumption rather than investment.

To examine the research background for the first research question (Section 1.2), I examined the policy and research literature related to the application of human capital theory to tuition fees and participation in higher education. The first strand of the literature review focused on policy documents. Given the focus of this research on the rise in undergraduate tuition fees following the Brown Review in 2010, this search started with documents related to this policy shift (e.g. Browne, 2010; BIS, 2011). In order to set this policy change in context, I then searched for documents related to previous policy developments such as the Robbins Report in the 1960s and the Dearing Review in the 1990s. These documents and associated commentaries provided the basis for section 2.2. The Browne Review uses human capital theory (Becker, 1964, Mincer, 1973) to shape its recommendations, so the literature on the application of human capital theory to participation in higher education was a natural starting place. There is a vast literature on this topic so it would never have been possible to examine all that has been written. I focused my literature search using searches for “university participation” “higher education participation”, “tuition fees” and “human capital”. I also followed up research on the returns to higher education participation in the UK.

Table 2.1 shows a summary of the literature searched in ordered of which this was undertaken (between 2011 and 2017), providing the method of literature search and the rationale.

Table 2.1 Summary of literature search on the student as investor

Sequence	Focus of search	Method	Rationale
1	Policy documents and commentary related to the tuition fee increase implemented in 2012/13	Search of government web sites and accompanying Google scholar used to search for sources on tuition fee increase referring to England. Repeated during the course of the research to capture more recent publications.	This policy change provided the initial stimulus for this research
2	Reactions to the 2012/13 tuition fee increase	This aimed to find current reactions to the changes taking place within universities. Sources such as Times Higher Education Supplement, WONKHE.com, Guardian Education and the BBC Education website proved to provide more up to date reaction and discussion than books and journals	Gaining up to date reactions to the changes taking place in universities and social reaction.
3	Human Capital Theory to tuition fees and participation in higher education	Firstly, began with the core theorist in this field to understand the principles behind the theory – Becker, 1964; Blaug, 1976 and Johnes, 1993). Google Scholar searches on the theme of Human Capital linked to higher education participation. Where possible, searches would look to include references to the authors work above	The principle of Human Capital Theory enabled the concept of viewing the student as having an identity as an investor within their own future and therefore choosing to financially invest in studying in order to reap a greater financial reward.
4	Stratification of higher education and challenges of widening participation	Searching policy and Google Scholar texts for links to the stratification of higher education. Searching for the role of government in attempts to widen participation, over the decades covered in sections 2.2 and 2.5	This area enabled a broader scope to provide contrast between the HEI and FE College and how the higher education market place is diversifying.

2.1 Theoretical perspectives on participation in higher education as an investment decision

This first section of the literature review introduces Human Capital Theory and investigates and how it can be used to frame higher education choices. This section also explores how higher education policy has been influenced by Human Capital Theory, most notably in the 2012/13 rise in tuition fees for students. The discussion has three themes: Human Capital Theory at the individual level; the externalities of Human Capital Theory; and finally Human Capital Theory at the macro level.

2.1.1 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory portrays individuals as investing in their education to increase future earnings and other benefits (Becker, 1964; Blaug, 1976; Johnes, 1993).

The theory transposes analysis of investment in physical capital to investment in personal development for the labour market (Johnes, 1993). This theory provides a framework which can be used to understand and explain the role of education in the economy. Mincer's work in the 1970's demonstrated how the benefits of Human Capital could be measured by relating observed wages to length of participation in education (Mincer 1974, Hanushek 2013). Mincer found that white males not working in agriculture earned a 7 per cent increase for each additional years of education (Stevens and Weale, 2004). Other studies (Qin et al, 2016; Walker and Zhu, 2003) have produced similar results in finding additional education provides higher wage returns.

Human Capital Theory suggests that an individual's education increases their productivity which in turn determines their earnings. Human Capital Theory assumes that those investing in themselves are doing so to maximise their financial return which determines personal satisfaction. In the words of Johnes (1993, p.5), 'Education exists because it provides a utility'. The theory also assumes that individuals make well informed choices on the basis of knowledge of the cost of their education (e.g. time and fees) and predicted increased

earnings resulting from their investment. Thus, Human Capital Theory is based upon two fundamentals; firstly that the individual is able to make rational choices regarding their future; and secondly that the individual is well informed, thus making rational choices based on a well-informed knowledge.

Johnes (1993) provides a basic Human Capital model, which can be used to make several predictions. Firstly, it shows that the earlier in life the educational investment takes place the greater the overall return. Although wages tend to increase for individuals as they mature, Becker (1964) argues that investment in younger individuals sees increased earnings in their later careers. The overall return from investment, or net lifetime benefits or net present values (NPV) can be calculated by subtracting lifetime costs of personal investment – such as a degree (including foregone earnings and tuition fees) from the additional earnings (including pensions) which result from such training (e.g. being a graduate). Whilst this is discussed further in section 2.1.6 it is noted that Walker and Zhu (2010) point out the lack of UK based research and literature on rates of return from HE participation and that previous studies have been based on US findings.

Human Capital Theory suggests that if the rate of interest rises then the demand for education will be lower. This is because a rise in the rate of interest diminishes the worth of future earnings relative to the cost of borrowing in order to finance current study. It follows that the rate of return for the individual, taking account of additional future earnings, tuition fees and lost earnings whilst studying (Champan and Lunkaew, 2015), highlighting the difference between the graduate premium and the rate of return. The graduate premium, or graduate wage premium (Davies et al, 2014) only takes account of the difference between graduate earnings and what would have been earned if the individual had not gone to university.

Whilst basic versions of Human Capital Theory assumes individuals have perfect knowledge of the returns from their investments, the theory can accommodate ill-informed decision-making. Inaccuracies in prospective students' knowledge of potential earnings have been observed in undergraduates over estimating their first salaries (Bachan, 2014).

Jerrim (2011) found comparative inaccuracies between wage expectations of UK undergraduates. Overall, Jerrim (2011) showed that on average UK full-time Higher Education students overestimate their starting salaries by 15%. If 'marginal students' (Davies et al, 2009) are equally prone to over-estimation of graduate earnings then they suggest that perhaps too many students will enrol in higher education.

Even if students make well-informed decisions when choosing to enter Higher Education, Human Capital Theory predicts variation in the benefits to the individual (Blaug 1976). This is evident in the Britton et al (2016a) work which notes that Higher Education does not provide a uniform financial and cultural return for all graduates. This highlights the complex decisions making process about why, where and how to study. This is amplified by the different levels of information and advice available to applicants. Putting aside the themes of reputational brand universities and the complexities of league table rankings for the moment, merely understanding the benefits and disadvantages of these modes of study can be a difficult task, especially for the unorthodox higher education student – e.g. mature student, first generation student.

Students who Milesi (2010) refers to as students on 'non-traditional educational trajectories' and also students coming from backgrounds of low social capital, arguably highlight those groups and individuals who not only have to ask questions of the worth of Higher Education, but may have a lack of understanding of the benefits of attending university in the first place. Given recent changes in Higher Education tuition fees students will have a challenging task in judging the cost benefit of study. Lawrence (2002) ascertains that the relationship between 'education and social positioning' is pivotal. That is to say, parents who prepare their children in fields of reading, cultural knowledge and discussion are preparing them for the culture of higher education. Alternatively other parents may be influencing their children away from such culture, in terms of their academic support and their perceptions of the economic value of Higher Education.

A recent Institute for Fiscal Studies report (Britton et al 2016a) found the difference in earnings of graduates between courses. An example from the work reported is 'For

medicine, male graduates earn a premium of £21,000 at the median over graduates taking the subject that attracted the lowest earnings, namely creative arts', (Britton et al 2016b, p.3). Moreover, graduates from lower socio-economic backgrounds are on average earning lower than graduates from higher socio economic backgrounds. Crawford and van de Erve (2015) estimate that lower socio economic background graduates earn 6% less than others after accounting for other factors. This suggests that gaining a degree does not level the socio-economic differences in earnings. With current fixed ceiling prices on degrees, discussed further in section 2.2.4, students should be increasingly aware that their investment is likely to result in differing financial returns. Although, whilst the financial system is working smoothly and expectations are accurate then no individual will face an income constraint in borrowing to go to university since future income will provide sufficient security to borrow (UCAS 2016a), as explained in section 2.2.4.

The benefit of higher education and the graduate premium builds on the extensive work on degree returns of Walker and Zhu (2013), which shows the life time effect of having a degree are increased financial return of 28% for men (increase of £168k) and 53% (£252k) for women, when comparing to students with the equivalent of 2 A levels. Whilst their work shows less impact of subject discipline they do that subject such as economics, law, and business and management show occurrences of very high returns. Walker and Zhu (2013) also showed the significance of degree classification achieved; with students graduating with a higher second class honours or higher earning £76K (men) and £85k (women) more than those with lower degree passes.

Davies et al (2014) found that individuals who are more confident in their ability to earn higher wages and have higher estimation of the graduate premium are more likely to attend university. Consistent with Human Capital Theory they found that students who possess the higher expectation of the graduate premium are those from backgrounds where their parents have higher educational backgrounds. Davies et al (2014) suggested that this may be due to these students having better information on becoming a graduate and therefore have a higher confidence in their ability to make this judgement.

Research into Cypriote students (Menon's, 2008) shows how human capital theory also explains the actions of high school students who choose employment over Higher education. Using logistical regression methods from data over two studies, the work indicated that decisions are influenced by the individual's perception of rates of return from their personal investment into either study or immediate employment.

Students already in employment, and studying on a part-time basis, offer a differing example of how students are undertaking part-time degrees in order to increase their future earning potential. Callender (2014) explained that this return, although worth studying, is below the earnings that can be expected by a full-time student on a similar course. The reduction of students choosing to study part-time (HEFCE, 2014) can be linked to a number of issues, but whatever the reason this may show an indication that potential applicants are rethinking the overall cost benefit of higher education. Furthermore, the magnitude of these risk factors can increase for certain groups of individuals, for example students from middle class backgrounds are more likely to have gained higher social and capital culture along with a better understanding of higher returning industries, again this is consistent with Human Capital Theory (Davies et al, 2014). Consideration of the economic return after studying is a significant factor highlighted by Davies et al (2013). They noted how males and non-white students are more likely to choose degrees which have better employment prospects.

2.1.2 Human Capital Theory, tuition fees, efficiency, equity and growth

This section addresses how tuition fees affect student decisions on participation. Since Human Capital Theory, in its simplest form assumes perfect foreknowledge, individuals will choose to go to Higher Education if future salary more than compensates for current costs. Students will not be constrained by the current income of their household since they can borrow against future earnings. They will therefore be affected by the rate of interest that is charged on loans. But in a perfect capital market every student will have equal access to borrowing and, therefore, the system will be fair since there is equality of opportunity. The argument would follow, that if there are no tuition fees then too many will go to

university since they are not taking the cost of providing Higher Education into account in their decisions; which in turn would bare higher costs to the state.

Research (BIS, 2006) shows that participation in Higher Education also brings wider benefits for graduates and others. Figure 2.1, adapted from BIS (2006, p.6), provides examples of graduate benefits impacting upon the individual and society.

Figure 2.1 Examples of non-financial graduate benefits

Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater social cohesion, trust and tolerance • Less crime • Political stability • Greater social mobility • Greater social capital
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greater propensity to vote • Greater propensity to volunteer • Greater propensity to trust and tolerate others • Lower propensity to commit (non-violent) crime • Better educational parenting • Longer life expectancy • Less likely to smoke • Less likely to drink excessively • Less likely to be obese • More likely to engage in preventative care • Better mental health • Greater life satisfaction • Better general health

The research which developed this list of benefits (BIS, 2006) acknowledges that these could be linked to the social economic background status of those who study within Higher Education, rather the process of higher learning. Brown and Sessions (2004) found that an

educated population are 'less likely to smoke, to drink or to use illicit drugs' (p.58). Morretti's (2004) work showed that the percentage of graduates in US cities is correlated with growth in the wage of non-graduates; in other words a city employing higher levels of graduates is good for society as in turn it increases the wages of non-graduates in the same city.

Figure 2.1 shows that social benefits of education can be varied. Examples being those linked to increasing productivity; those linked to reducing costs to society e.g. higher employment could result in less social welfare; and finally increasing social interaction e.g. active in community development (Weisbrod, 1962). In summary a graduate does not only personally benefit from their own higher education, but so does society.

In economic terms, Figure 2.1's 'benefits to society' would be labelled as externalities; and benefits to the individual would be labelled 'private benefits'. Figure 2.2 and Figure 2.3 show how marginal private and social benefit from enrolling in HE is expected to change as the student population increases. Marginal private benefit (MPB) is the benefit which accrues to each new entrant to higher education. Even when MPB is zero (where it crosses the horizontal axis) the average benefit to students is well above zero. Public welfare is maximised when the additional cost of one more entrant to HE (MSC) exactly matches the additional benefit to society (MSB).

In Figure 2.2 the MSC (or unit price for each student to study) remains constant whereas Figure 2.3 shows MSB and MPB plotted against a more accurate MSC which represents the rising costs of tuition as the quantity increases. This is based upon the premise that a smaller and elite student body would have a lower cost of tuition as they would require less support and guidance from academics. As participation rises the need for supporting a greater diversity of academic ability also rises.

Figure 2.2 Diagram illustrating MPB and MSB against a fixed rate of MSC

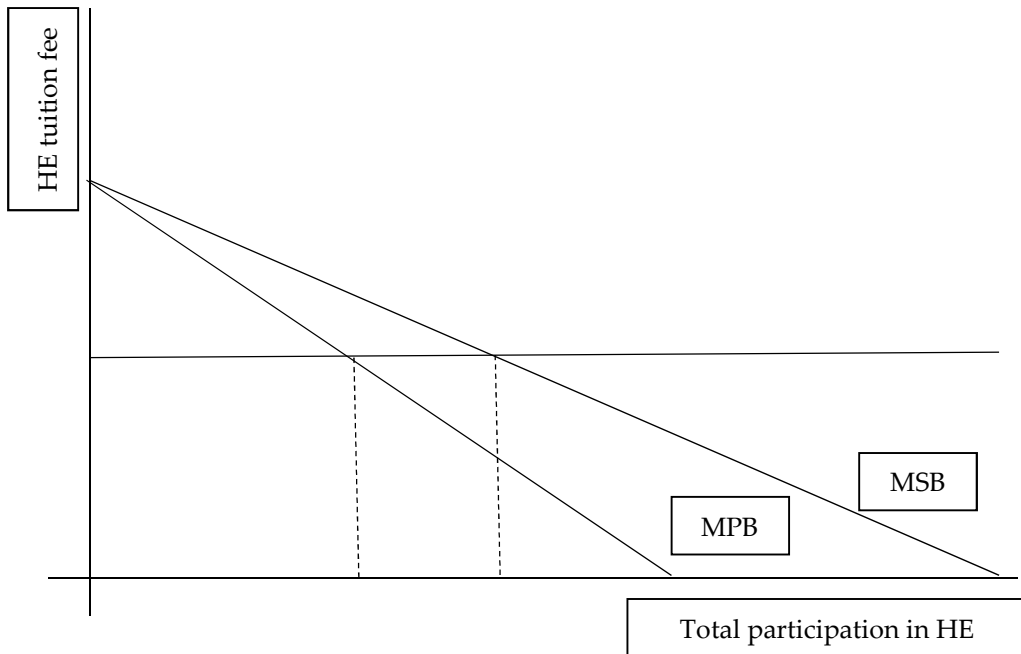
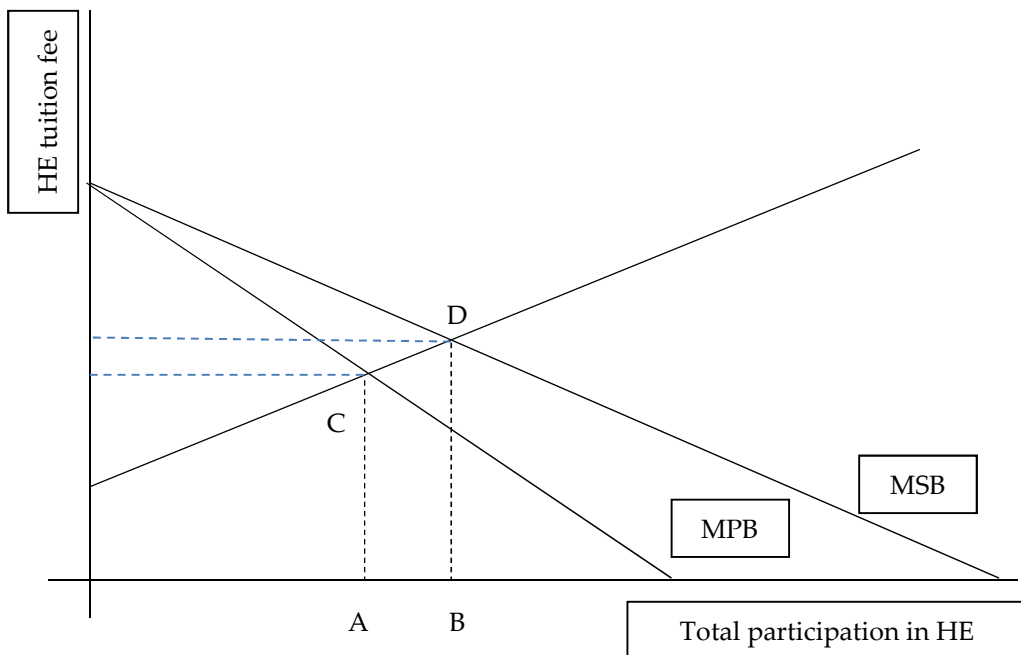


Figure 2.3 Diagram illustrating MPB and MSB against an increasing MSC



Optimal participation rates, as seen in Figure 2.2 and 2.3 would be at the intersection of MSC and MSB (Point D). This should provide an efficient and fair provision if there is a perfect capital market. Otherwise taxpayers (including non-graduates) will be subsidising participation in higher education leading to a regressive redistribution of income. Therefore this MSC and MSB intersection also represents the optimal fee level for students.

If fees were removed, and arguably participation was increased, then the MSC would be increase at a higher rate and be subject to state payment. This would mean that as MSC would continue to rise, as the MSB and MPB decline. The overall cost to the state, and therefore taxpayer, would outweigh the social benefit.

2.1.3 Endogenous growth

Whereas neoclassical theory suggests that economic growth depends on investment in physical capital or technology, endogenous growth emphasises effects of investment in human capital on economic growth. In the words of Romer (1986, p.1003): 'While exogenous technological change is ruled out, the model here can be viewed as an equilibrium model of endogenous technological change in which long-run growth is driven primarily by the accumulation of knowledge by forward-looking, profit maximizing agents'.

This principle has positioned participation in education and the quality of outcomes from education at the heart of national development. However, it is the contribution of education to knowledge and understanding for employment that matters for this policy stance. 'Cognitive skills of the population – rather than mere school attainment – are powerfully related to individual earning, to the distribution of income and most importantly to economic growth' (Hanushek, 2013, p.204) International acceptance of this argument has encouraged governments to view increasing education as an essential element in competition between national in a globalised economy (Adnett and Tuplova, 2008; Altbach, 2016).

The development of endogenous growth theory has deepened, rather than initiated, policy makers' interest in education work, Beveridge's 1942 Social Reform Act identified the need for greater education setting a foundation for the later in the Education Act (1944), otherwise known as the Butler Act, providing universal schooling across the UK. One of the key functions of the Act was developing a nation's young in order to raise skills, knowledge and capacity in order to drive economic growth and personal substance.

2.1.4 Screening and Signalling

One alternative theory to Human Capital is the Screening Hypothesis. This explains the process of employers screening applicants on the basis of their education credentials which are used as a 'proxy for inherent ability' (Spence, 1973). When hiring a new worker a company is unaware of the productivity of the individual, but they are aware of their education and attainment. The recruitment process, associates uses educational attainment. The recruitment process therefore, uses educational attainment as an indicator of innate ability.

When students realise that firm's use education as a screening device in recruitment they have an incentive to try to signal their ability through the acquisition of more education. Signalling theory suggests that as one group gains education or qualifications, then others will also follow in order to 'acquire more education also as to continue to signal that they are different' (Walker and Zhu, 2003, p. 146). Therefore, Signalling Theory is a particular example of the screening model. Signalling implies that education serves 'no socially useful purpose', (Johnes 1993, p.19), and increases in participation in education are, therefore, a waste of resources. However, the screening hypothesis suggests that education benefits employers by making it easier for them to identify workers who will be more productive.

Screening and signalling theories provide a basis for concern about 'over-education'. According to Devereux and Fan (2011) graduates are now carrying out the roles previously held by non-graduates. As the percentage of young people becoming graduates increases, signal value of being a graduate diminishes. Devereux and Fan (2011) continued to explain

that where mass expansion of Higher Education had taken place, for example in England cohorts of year groups born between 1970 and 1975 employers could have downgraded their expectations of graduate abilities. This would suggest that those born within times of education expansion could face greater challenge in benefiting from the investment made when choosing to study. Students now pay a lot of money to become what could be considered to be 'over educated' and therefore for some they are over investing within that area of personal development. This view predicts a negative relationship between expansion in HE participation and the size of the graduate premium. Therefore, the question for many would be, at which point am I at my maximum pound per educational investment Vs pound per financial return?

Whilst some studies suggest that there is a shrinking of the graduate premium, due to the increase of graduates (Brynin, 2012), others show the complexities of the situation in predicting this. Examples of this complexity can be seen in the work of Blundell et al (2016) which consider working patterns, immigration and new technology. In their research they predict that: 'future increases in the proportion of graduates in the UK will tend to reduce graduates' relative wages, unless some other skill biased technology becomes available', (Blundell et al, 2016, p.8). However, the paper ensures that it does not exaggerate their prediction. This is likely as they explain their work describes 'historical wage trends for different groups, rather than estimating the true causal impact of degrees on individual's wages' (p.8). In this they state that the increases in the UK and US of graduate has not seen any substantial reduction in relative wages. In addition they note (as in section 2.1.2) the benefits of gaining a degree for the individual, including lower risks of redundancy. These types of studies show that for perspective students trying to forecast and compare the rate of growth or shrinkage in both graduate and non-graduate professions is a significant task.

2.1.5 Behavioural economics; Prospect Theory, loss aversion and the framing of HE decision-making

Whereas Human Capital Theory assumes rational thinking and informed decision making, Behavioural Economics anticipates non-rational human decision making is inherit.

Fundamentally, it concerns itself with how individuals predict and evaluate gains and losses in purchasing decisions.

One prominent strand in behavioural economics is Prospect Theory. Prospect Theory suggests that choices are made relative to a particular frame of reference rather than according to absolute net benefits (Kahnemann & Tversky 1979). For example a lower certain gain is preferred to a larger uncertain gain whilst a higher uncertain loss is preferred to a smaller certain loss (e.g. Page et al. 2007). As Samon (2014, p.2) explained, this occurs as individuals 'dislike losses more than we like and equivalent gain: Giving something up is more painful than the pleasure we derive from receiving it'.

Prospect Theory suggests that individuals fear not being able to progress in their careers and earnings due to not participating in higher education. Thus, loss through tuition fees is preferred to the potential larger loss of not getting employment in a desired field. Whilst noting, the rewards of graduate levels are not only framed as a national advantage, but one which has grown with globalisation, becoming synonymous with developing national work forces.

In the context of university participation, researchers have offered several different possibilities of how choices are framed by individuals. One approach has been to treat social economic status (SES) as the key frame of reference. On this view, parental employment and income are the frame for expectations of young people. Students from lower SES backgrounds will be less persistent in educational choices than (loss-avoiding) young people from higher SES backgrounds (e.g. Vossensteyn 2005, Becker & Hecken 2009, Malloy 2013). Diamond et al. (2012) suggested that this effect will be reinforced by variation in patterns of social capital. In England, a large proportion of the peer group of a higher SES student is likely to leave the home locality to go to university. However, a large proportion of the peer group of a student from a lower SES background is likely to remain in the locality. Therefore, the certain loss of locality-based social capital is higher for students from lower SES students. Loss aversion will discourage them from applying to university. This analysis suggests that students from low SES backgrounds will be more sensitive to tuition fee

increases than high SES students. Changes in the value of the outcome from going to university will be less important to high SES students than the certain loss if they do not go. However, up-front price subsidies should substantially mitigate any reduction in demand for HE by loss-averse students from low-income backgrounds when 'sticker-price' tuition fees rise (Gandhi, 2008).

Breuer & Soypak (2015) examined the effect of framing intertemporal decisions in terms of matching (gains or losses from an endowment) or choices (in which there was no fixed initial endowment). They found loss aversion was substantially lower when there was no initial endowment. Second year undergraduates who spent a year paying the lower level of fees may be more likely to regard higher fees in terms of a loss (matching) than first year undergraduates who have moved directly into the new fee regime. Sheibenne et al (2015) examined tendencies to employ attribute- or exemplar- based approaches to the evaluation of consumer products. Applying this distinction to investment decisions, Human Capital Theory presumes that individuals adopt an attribute-based approach to distinguish between options according to net present values. Second year undergraduates who had spent a year paying the lower rate of fees had an example of their previous purchases to use as an exemplar. Whilst first year undergraduates would, by and large, have been aware of the change in tuition fees, they may have been more likely to adopt an attribute approach, given the difference in experience between the two year groups.

Net Present Value of Higher Education

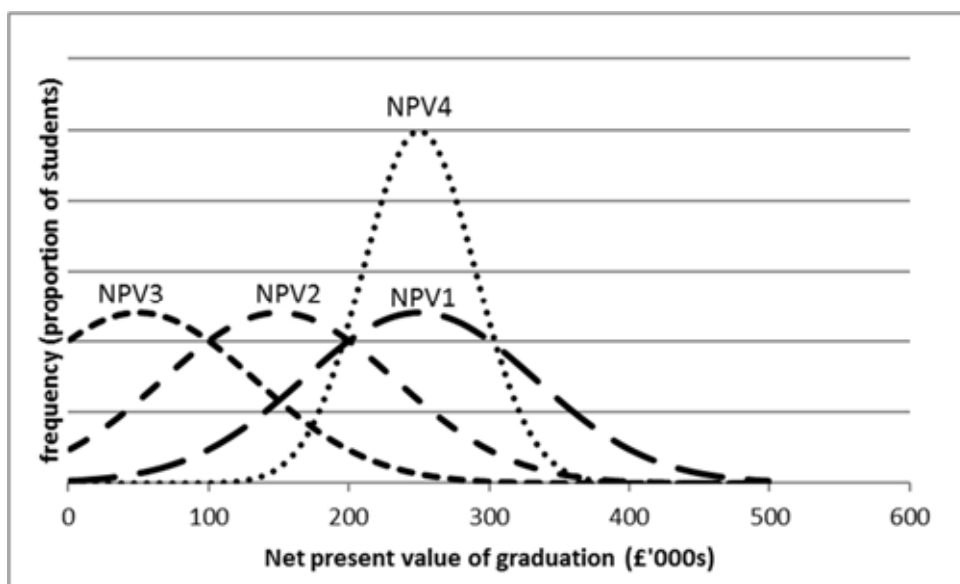
Langelett et al (2015, p.112) argued that the demand for higher education is based on capital investment, therefore students need the 'present value of expected benefit' to outweigh the present costs. Net lifetime benefits or net present values (NPV) of higher education can be calculated by subtracting lifetime costs of a degree (including foregone earnings and tuition fees) from the additional earnings (including pensions) which result from being a graduateⁱ. This calculation takes account of the extent to which an individual values current benefits and costs more highly than those that will accrue in the future (discounting). The effect of a rise in tuition fees on student demand for higher education will depend on the number of

marginal students who believe that their graduate NPV was positive before the fee rise and negative after the fee rise (Davies et al. 2009).

Figure 2.4 models NPV for students paying differing fees. To simplify the analysis it is assumed that students' only source of financial support during their studies is from bank lending at commercial rates. Also for simplicity the analysis assuming that students are rational to the extent that their expectations align accurately with current evidence from graduate labour markets and that they can accurately predict their future position on the distribution of graduate earnings. Graduate salaries in England have a roughly normal distribution, albeit with a somewhat long upper tail (see for example Crawford & Vignoles 2014). If the NPV had a similar distribution, then it would look like NPV1 in Figure 2.4 and an increase in tuition fees would shift it to the left (NPV2) with the consequence that some students (shown by the area of NPV2 to the left of the vertical axis) would move from a positive to a negative NPV. If another fee increase (of a similar size) caused a shift from NPV2 to NPV3 the fall in student demand would be greater than the fall in demand due to the shift from NPV1 to NPV2. Successive fee increases would have increasing impacts on student demand until the modal point in the distribution is reached.

However, the distribution of the NPV could look quite different from the distribution of graduate earnings. If relatively low earning graduates would have been relatively low earning school leavers, then their graduate premium could be similar to that of other graduates. If there was little variation in the size of the graduate premium the NPV distribution could look like NPV4. If an increase in fees shifts NPV4 to the left (as in the shift from NPV1 to NPV2), then there would be hardly any effect on student demand.

Figure 2.4 Estimates of the distribution of net present value of graduation



A combination of a fee increase and financial aid for students from economically disadvantaged families changes the shape of the NPV. Imagine a fee increase which shifts NPV1 to NPV2. Given the associations between economic disadvantage and lower school grades and between school grades and the graduate premium, then financial aid will reduce the reduction in NPV experienced by students on the low (leftward) side of the distribution. This will lead to convergence of the distribution towards the middle meaning that NPV1 will shift towards to something between NPV2 and NPV3. The potential effect of the fee rise on student demand will be ameliorated. Income contingent loans carry a potential to further increase the concentration of the NPV distribution around the mean if low earning graduates only pay off part of their loan, as exemplified by estimates of the distribution of the NPV 4 provided by Walker & Zhu (2013, p.58-59).

The discussion above assumes that students' expectations of the NPV are accurate. This is quite a challenging assumption given that NPV estimates vary substantially with assumptions about future economic growth and structural change in the economy (Conlon & Patignani, 2011). Nonetheless, some studies (e.g. a study in the Netherlands by Webbink & Hartog, 2004) have reported that undergraduates have accurate expectations of graduate salaries, although their evidence also suggests that beliefs about the range of salaries was inaccurate. UK students' expectations are more pertinent to this study. Jerrim (2011) found

that UK undergraduates tended to be over-optimistic about future earnings. In addition, expectations of school students (who are on the cusp of making decisions about participation in higher education) are more relevant than the expectations of undergraduates who have already made their choice. Over-estimation of the graduate premium is likely to reduce students' responsiveness to tuition fee increases. However, less than a third of the students surveyed by Davies et al. (2014) reported that they were either confident or very confident in their prediction of graduate earnings. If it was therefore assumed that two thirds of applicants were not confident in their predictions on graduate earnings, thus further fee cost rises cause lead to lower participation.

2.2 Higher education policy tuition, fees and participation

This section discusses the chronological development of policy within the Higher Education sector. This provides an analyses policy reaction to national economic growth; the impact upon widening participation and the cost of Higher Education to the public purse.

2.2.1 1960- Increasing the emphasis on higher education for economic performance

In 1963 the Robbins Report concluded that to operate within a global market the Higher Education student population must increase. Given the labour market requirement for higher skilled and educated workforce, a move to raise participation resulted in governmental funding increases to enable expansion across the sector. The number of universities (and the mainstream funding) nearly doubled in the 1960s; rising from 25 institutions to 45 whilst public funding expenditure on higher education rose from £168 million to £268 million per academic year, with an additional £167 million on post-school education and teacher training colleges (Deem et al, 2007).

Human Capital theorists would support this vocational expectation, which could lead to Higher Education being concentrated around subjects that produce higher earning graduates. Whereas others may defend the need for a wider variety of subjects to be taught allowing research and development into lower returning sectors.

There was a moderate rise in 18 to 20 year participation rising from 8.9% to 13.8% between 1965 and 1972 during this expansion period (Deem et al, 2007). Higher Education in the UK, albeit for a significantly smaller proportion of an indeed smaller population, had been seen as a universal good for the development of individuals and the state; so much so that fees and grants were provided for students to attend. During this period of low participation the state was able to fund higher education and the costs of students' tuition fees. Stevenson and Bell (2009) point out the tensions felt by policy makers who acknowledge the economic importance of education as a public good, but at the same time are held back in its financial funding and investment due to 'global economic constraints limit the ability of national governments to generate revenue from progressive taxation ' (p.10). More simply, the government aimed to spend less money paying for students to attend higher education. That said, from works such as Barr's (1998 and 2002) it is evident that fully state funded higher education does not redistribute wealth and that it mostly serves the advantaged, discussed later within the chapter. This reduction in funding per student coupled with relaxation on any limits of student enrolments created a climate where increasing undergraduate recruitment was financially beneficial and desirable for universities (Devereux and Fan 2011).

These benefits, in particular in financial return to graduates, are predominantly retained by those most advantaged in society. Speciale (2011) noted that whilst Higher Education has been paid out of the public purse, the major beneficiaries are the better-off. Despite policies which have attempted to redistribute the balance of the benefits of Higher Education, most predominately the widening participation agenda (discussed further in Section 2.6), Higher Education in England has remained a privilege and benefit of the upper and middle classes. The argument follows that state-funded higher education therefore has resulted in greater human capital inequality, which in turn leads to greater income inequality.

2.2.2 1980 - 1995 – Increasing participation and diversity

By the 1980s the number of universities had grown to around 60 institutions, including the campus university (e.g. Keele, Exeter) develop alongside those referred to the plate glass institutions, rather than only the old red brick universities. With concerns of slowing recruitment of undergraduates in the 1980's, linked to Britain falling behind international comparisons of participation (McKay and Rowlingson 2011), further growth within the industry took place during the 1990s (Mangan et al 2010).

In 1992, polytechnics were awarded university status, such that they could award their degrees and they were set outside of the Local Educational Authority control. This new breed of university was arguably more teacher led and certainly managed differently; 'bureaucratic and managerial history as formerly local-government', (Deem et al 2007, p 65). Until the 1992 change these institutions did not receive core funding for research, (Deem et al, 2007).

During the 1980s those studying within HE institutions was approximately 6% of 18 year olds. Partly due to the combination of polytechnic change, often referred to as the end of the binary system, and the changes to the pre-16 education which had introduced the GCSE qualification with an increase in grades and as a result more students staying on for A-Level type qualification; student numbers surged during the 1990's; and so in turn the cost burden to the government increased (Devereux and Fan, 2011). Initially, during the period between the early 1980's and early 2000's higher education had moved from an industry serving the elite few to a model of mass post schooling education aimed at 50% of the population (Elias and Parcell 2004).

The Conservative governments during the 1980s and 1990s did not match fund the student increase to financial increase into universities (Collini, 2012). As a result the sector was in a position where both universities and student found themselves lacking in funds (Barr and Crawford, 1998). Barr (2002) explained that students were poor because the systems in place (loans and grants) were not enough to live on; whereas universities were poor as central

government funding was far behind the rest of the EU. Universities were themselves under pressure to change for a history of being governed like schools and other public organisations to more like commercially run businesses along with CEO (Collini, 2012), to which similar models had been applied to state schools by the same government in the early 1990s with the beginning of the demise of the Local Education Authorities.

A student loan scheme was created in 1990 which allowed students to borrow money to pay for living expenses. The concept was that the loan would never fully cover all costs, assuming parental contribution or other income. The loans were based on a mortgage like repayment system once students were earning. This was a fixed repayment scheme and thus students paid a set amount no matter their income once above a set minimum (Barr 1998). When the 1998 fees were introduced the loan system was changed. New fees ushered in a new income contingent loan system which provided a variable payback system dependent upon graduate's salary level.

2.2.3 1996 – Tuition fees and quality control

There is evidence that the expansion of Higher Education during the 1980's and 1990's created a developed workforce for a changing market. Universities UK (2013b) claim that between 1994 and 2005, the accumulation of graduate skills accounted for one third of all growth in average labour productivity. Deverux and Fan (2010) use OCED figures to measure the increase between 1988 and 1996 at a 93% increase in HE participation, which tells us that the 'largest expansion in education attainment occurred for cohorts born between 1970 and 1975' (p.1153). Elias and Purcell (2004) created a classification of occupations for the graduate labour market using data gathered between 1993 and 2000. Their four point classification list shows where 'traditional ' and 'modern ' graduate occupations have been in place since the 1960s 'new ' and 'niche ' graduate occupations are growing in areas of employment which see an increasing amount of graduate level employment required. These include professions and industries such as: marketing and sales, welfare, probation officers, nurses, leisure and sports managers and hotel

management. Specific degree courses in these professions can certainly be seen being offered and championed with the post 1992 universities.

In the new millennia participation was rising to 42% of 18 year olds (Foskett 2011). Over the course of several hundred years the perceived elitism of university had arguably been diluted and seen assessable by new classes of students. In 2004-5 spending across the UK's 168 institutions (including small specialist separately) had risen to £17.7 billion and participation rates between 17-30 year olds had swelled to 42% in England and 49% in Scotland (Deem et al, 2007). To summarise, the past 40 years had seen an increase from 8% of 18 year olds entering Higher Education to over 42%. McGee (2015) commenting on the same trend seen in the USA over the same period refers to this as the 'equivalent of a higher education gold rush' (p.13), noting the growth on institutions in size, income and reputation. Interpretation and justification of this 34% increase can be celebrated and criticised in equal measure; but whatever our final judgement on this it is true that studying at a university is no longer for the privileged alone; although that is not to imply that higher education for the masses is an enlarged duplication of elite Higher Education (Scott, 1998). This refers to the difference in approaches to learning undertaken by Higher Education Institutes, e.g. class size, physical time spent in classrooms etc. It can also be said that perceptions of the value of degrees from differing universities and institutions is variable, for example a degree from a higher ranking university is better than a degree from a further education college. These themes of brand university and league rankings are discussed further in the Chapter 3, the second part of the Literature Review.

The Dearing Committee formed in 1996, published its report 'Higher Education in the learning society' in 1997 (UK National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education). Part of its recommendations which were accepted as the introduction of £1,000 flat rate tuition fees in 1998. Prior to this students received free tuition and potentially (income-tested) a government funded maintenance grant for associated living costs. Despite ending the notion of free Higher Education critics, such as Barr (1998) were critical of the flat fee, suggesting that variable fees could allow variation within the higher education marketplace and drive up quality.

During the New Labour era targets of 50% participation rates were set alongside increases in populations of underrepresented groups (Bathmaker 2016). Although the incremental increases in the overall costs to the individual student may make this a greater challenge over time.

A further change, following the 2004 Higher Education Act, was introduced in 2006 which resulted in the majority of undergraduate awards charging £3,000 arguably ending the and government means tested subsistence grant system; whilst introducing the tuition loan to the England (Callender and Jackson 2008, Deem et al, 2007), a Labour party implementation which was contrary to their election pledge two years prior that they would not impose top-up fees (Blake, 2010). Although widespread fear within the University system that participation rates would fall, Universities and Colleges Application System data showed a trend of growth in university applications. Both the original £1,000 contribution and the 2006 'top-up' fees were designed to be repaid by earning graduates via their income tax and based upon their earnings, namely income-contingent repayments. A key attribute of the income contingent loans is that they remove possible liquidity constraints, making access free at the point of entry and repayments dependents on subsequent income levels (Barr 2002) would suggest that this makes higher education free to students but charges graduates. The recommendations in the Dearing report were based on judgements that graduates earned 11 to 14 per cent more than non-graduates.

Student quantity controls were introduced when Student Number Controls (SNC) were issued by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) which dictated the overall numbers of new intake each university could recruit in 2009. The quantity control limited the numbers of students entering higher education and to place a ceiling on the cost burden to government. These regulations controlled the overall numbers starting university and therefore the number of those applying for tuition loans. Universities had the challenging task of making enough offers to secure student enrolment to balance the spread sheets, without over recruiting (and going over the allocated SNC) and being heavily fined.

Not only were student number controls in place, which limited institutions freedom in the size of its intakes, but targets were also set on institutions to make the acceptance of students achieving AAB grades in their A Levels (or similar) more attractive.

2.2.4 2010 – Tuition fees, student choice and competition

The Browne Report (2010) which led to the 2011 White Paper, set out reforms for higher undergraduate fees (Browne and Carasso, 2013), greater competition within the sector and a strengthening of the student consumer ideology. This report was one of the most anticipated and sector changing reviews since the work of Dearing (1997) and Robbins (1963) beforehand.

Tuition fees were trebled to shift the financial burden of undergraduate tuition primarily on to the students. Although no upfront transaction of payment is taken, graduates pay via an income contingent income tax payment system which is set so those earning more pay the most. Since the repayment framework came into place for 2012/13 student entrances, prospective students have been aware of the costs of their studies. The conscious choice to study and invest significant time, and now substantial financial capital, has altered the decision making journey for students and future generations of participants.

The Browne Review (Browne, 2010) used Human Capital Theory and estimates of the graduate premium, to argue that HEIs should be able to charge fees at a market rate subject to an increasing levy on each additional thousand pounds of fees per student above a threshold level of £6,000. In 2012/13 the government raised the maximum annual fee to £9,000 and there was a modest increase in price differences between institutions. Two-thirds of HEIs charged the maximum fee, and a quarter charged between £8,000 and £8,999¹. These changes resulted in the average tuition price in England being £8,574 (UCAS 2012). Each tuition fee change only applied to first-year undergraduates in the year when it was introduced. The average annual loan for undergraduate tuition fees rose from £3,220 in

¹ Figures available at <http://www.theguardian.com/news/datablog/2011/mar/25/higher-education-universityfunding#data>. Further Education Colleges (offering undergraduate courses for the first two years of a degree) also charged lower fees and are not included in this calculation.

2011/12 to £8,050 in 2012/13 (Bolton 2014). Walker and Zhu (2011) estimated that a rise in the maximum tuition fee from £3,000 to £7,000 would reduce the rate of return to studying for a degree by between 1-3% and that, on average, this suggested that applications to university would be affected very little by a fee rise of this magnitude. Using Walker and Zhu's method, the increase in maximum fee to £9,000 in 2010 would be expected to reduce the average rate of return by more than the 1-3% band they suggest. In their later work they confirm the importance and 'favourable investment for government as well as students' studying in higher education is (Walker and Zhu 2013 p.61).

With each fee change there was also an adjustment in financial aid. In 2011/12 students could apply for a non-means tested loan to cover tuition fees. Repayments of this loan after graduation were triggered at a threshold income of £15,000. Separate arrangements provided means-tested loans and grants to cover maintenance costs. In 2012/13 the maximum loan available to cover tuition fees rose to £9,000 and the graduate income threshold for loan repayments rose to £21,000. Separate arrangements for means-tested loans to cover maintenance costs continued but with a lower maximum parental income threshold for eligibility. In addition, a National Scholarship Programme was introduced to provide grants for maintenance costs for students from lower income families (HEFCE 2012b). One reason for expecting students to react differently to the debt implications of higher tuition fees is that only about half of them were likely to ever fully repay their debt (Morgan, 2014). Another reason is that students have different attitudes to debt (Harrison et al, 2015).

There is limited evidence about the impact of the increase in tuition fees. Harrison et al (2013) quote PUSH (2009 and 2013) indicated that the average debt of a graduate rose from £20,000 to £50,000. Following the 2015 budget proposals of removing student maintenance grants with loans, the Institute for Fiscal Studies (2015) predicted that the poorest 40% of students would graduate with debts up to £53,000 from a three year course.

Unlike the loans introduced in the 1990s, tuition fees were now set at income-contingent differentiated levels in line with those brought in during the 1998 changes. Students taking tuition fee loans since the 2012 increases differ to those before them. Post 2012/13 starting

students scheme is titled Plan 2, with Plan 1 being those subject to fees prior to the 2012/13 changes. Plan 2 graduates earning below minimum threshold will not pay anything, whilst graduates earning over £35,000 pay back, £105 per month (UCAS 2016a), until the loan is paid off or after 30 years where the remaining balance is written off. The repayments are collected by the graduate employer, which will then make an annual payment to HR Revenue and Customs (Student Loan Company, 2016). Figure 2.5 below shows the repayment scale:

Figure 2.5 Student loan repayment schedule (2016)

Annual income before tax	Monthly salary	Monthly repayment
Up to £21,000	£1,750	£0
£22,000	£1,833	£7
£25,000	£2,083	£30
£30,000	£2,500	£67
£35,000	£2,916	£105

Further discussion and analysis on a broader range of influencers on student choice on entering Higher Education can be found in Chapter 3 of the Literature Review.

Despite initiatives to increase participation in higher education, it is clear that student debt associated with studying has steadily increased prior to the introduction of higher fees. Crawford and Jin (2014) writing for the Institute of Fiscal Studies predict that with the inclusion of higher tuition fees students graduate with debts in excess of £40,000 (double the amount seen under the old fee scheme), will still be making repayments in their 50's, unlike the previous graduates who would have paid off debts in the their 30s. Bachan (2014) concludes by suggesting that different students expect to have different levels of debt, for example females, those working part-time and non-white students expect to have lower debts than their counterparts. He also identifies that students expect a high return on this debt in terms of their earnings expectations following graduation, which supports the premise Human Capital theory of choosing to study to increase future earnings.

Harrison et al (2012) provided a typology of students' attitude to debt providing six categories of students: debt-positive, debt-savvy, debt-resigned, debt-oblivious, debt-anxious and debt-angry. Although the study uses a small sample size, this work does offer some insight into the perceptions of students on the debt they are accumulating whilst studying. Again, especially for students who are debt-positive and debt-savvy the concept of studying to invest in their future earnings is again prevalent. Whereas Adnett and Tulpova (2008) reference Callendar and Jackson (2008) who found that lower social class students were more likely to be turned away from higher education due to the fear of debt. Harrison et al (2013) also discuss a sense of debt acceptance amongst students, although they point out that there the process of forming attitudes towards the debt associated with higher education is a complicated process built upon many factors; one of which is the student's perception of Higher Education being an investment into their future. Davies (2012) discusses this in terms of human capital and relates the investment of fees and debts to that of future earnings; showing connections between these and their influence on how students choose their subject and institution.

Employment after graduation is now a measurable key performance indicator for universities and courses. Examples of which can be seen in the league ranking of universities (via the Destination of Higher Education Leavers survey) on their student employment after six months of graduating – both at employment level and graduate employment level. And secondly an example of an emerging corporate lead measure on LinkedIn, the professional employment based social networking site. LinkedIn has a dedicated University ranking page (for business related subject areas) which ranks universities on the professional employment trajectory of its alumni <https://www.linkedin.com/edu/rankings/gb?trk=edu-hp-nav-rnk> (accessed October 2014). Although the data may not have a robust methodological approach nor ethical basis, it is clear that such social networking sites have access, via self-disclosure, to a vast and complex data set, making them able to produce models of benefit from higher education. Universities UK (2013b) they predict by 2020 over 80% of new jobs created will reside in 'occupations with higher concentrations of graduates'; thus reconfirming the need and justification for universities, higher education and maintaining increased levels of participation in terms of a demand for graduates.

Not only did the 2012 recommendations see implementation of increased fees, it also increased the opportunity for price differentiation. Until now, by and large most higher education institutes were charging the same £3000 fee. Few institutions failed to attract larger cohorts by reducing the £3000 fee, and therefore the price was stabilised and fixed across institutions and awards (Adnett and Tlupova, 2008). Browne (2010) on the other hand increased the scope for price differentiation between universities, and within universities for different awards. All universities (and colleges) could charge up to £6,000, 'or if they meet conditions on widening participation and fair access' could increase the charge to £9,000 per academic year (Universities UK, 2013a). Internal price differentials could be argued for materials and resource intensive awards. Despite the opening of the price differential gate, in practice the initiative was short lived. As student numbers were capped for new entrances, HEIs with average fees less than £7,500 could bid for surplus numbers, a bid to improve widening participation. Therefore some HEIs did just that. The reduction in fee, a potential £1,500 per year, did little to persuade the applicants in their choice where to study and a year later the majority of HEIs were charging closer to the £9,000 per year fee. The minimal influence on charging less than £3,000 years before seemed to have been replicated at the higher fee rate.

Evidence of which can be seen by the following examples of universities which espouse such Human Capitalist agendas to prospective students: Plymouth University claims to be the Enterprise University (<http://www1.plymouth.ac.uk/enterprise/Pages/default.aspx>) whereas the University of Hertfordshire vision is to be 'internally renown as the UK's leading business-facing university ' (<http://www.herts.ac.uk/about-us/corporate-governance/vision>) (accessed May 2016).

On average graduates of Higher Education earn more than non-graduates. The financial gap between graduates and non-graduates is called the graduate premium. Browne (2010) suggested that on average graduates earned an additional £100,000 over their lifetime compared to non-graduates with only A level qualifications. The Department for Business

Innovation and Skills (BIS, 2016) give the 2015 differential at a higher rate between graduates and non-graduates; stating the difference to be £9,500 per year, although the gap for the 'younger population' (21-30 year olds) was slightly lower at £6,000 per year.

Given the size and diversity of Higher Education participants these simple averages do not provide adequate details for differing groups. More recently Dearden et al (2014) break down the pay differential by subject. Their work shows that subjects such as medicine, engineering, economics had industries which produced higher wages for graduates compared to others. Their work also showed that graduates from higher earning backgrounds go on to earn more than those from lower earning backgrounds. Males were earning £8,000 and females £5,300 more than those from lower earning backgrounds after ten years from graduating. In addition to subject, attainment of degree classification at graduation also shows some evidence of effecting graduate earnings. Using data from students graduating in the early 1990's, Naylor et al (2015) show that in the past a good degree (those graduating with a higher second class pass or higher) gave a 5% premium after one year from graduation, rising to 8% after 6 years.

Graduates also enjoy lower levels of unemployment than non-graduates. The Department for Business Innovation and Skills (BIS, 2016) states that the working age unemployment rate for graduates was 3.1%, compared to 6.4% for non-graduates in 2015. For the young population of graduates unemployment was measured at 4.9% compared to 8.6% for non-graduates.

Like previous reviews into higher education the Browne report (2010), titled 'Securing a sustainable future for higher education' acknowledged the need for increased and committed funding to the sector. However unlike others, for example Dearing (1997), this report suggested that full time tuition fee funding would come from students and graduates rather than the state (Brown and Carasso, 2013). By altering the funding stream not only would changes enable students to drive up competition between institutions, it would also enable for newer private providers to enter the higher education market offering undergraduate awards at competitive fees.

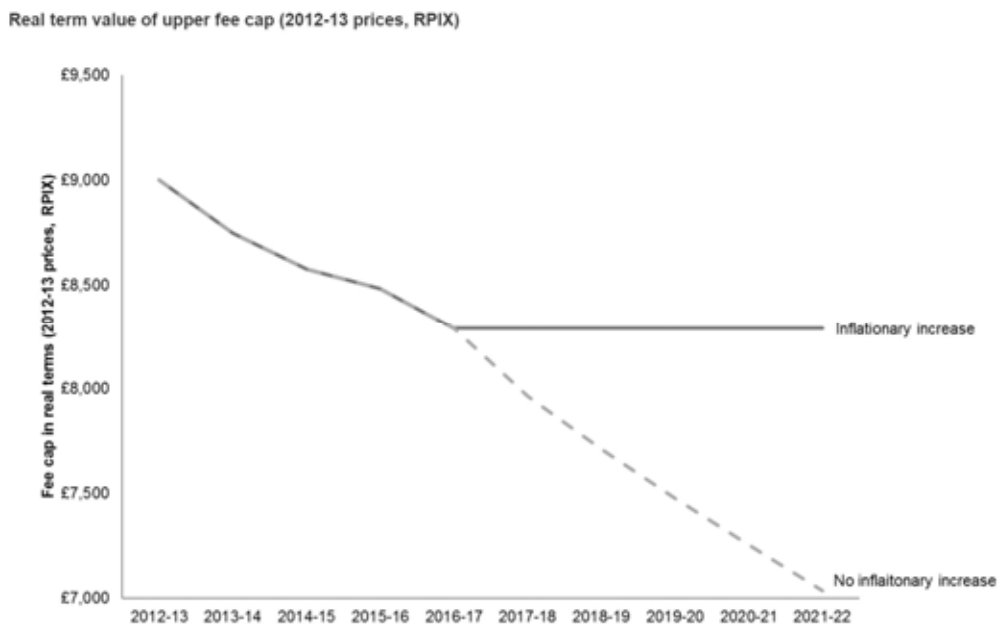
Student numbers caps were not removed until 2015. Increasing fees for students was a move to make Higher Education cheaper for the government. Under the repayment scheme, new higher fees won't see a short-term government benefit as the repayment threshold is so large (Barr, 2012).

A further example of risk and uncertainty is evident in the tuition fee loans being subject to interest rates (Retail Price Index, RPI, plus 3%, Student Loan Company, 2016). Subject to the financial market these rates can vary. This variation in interest on their tuition fees leaves students uncertain of the total repayable amount. Connington (2016) in the Telegraph reported an expected increase in the RPI from 0.9pc to 1.6pc in September 2016 to impact upon students and graduates subject to the post 2012 fee increase. Given that graduates repay their loans at a rate of 9pc above an earning threshold of £21,000, if RPI continues to increase then graduates earning lower wages will be in a position where they will only be paying back the loan interest rather than the original sum borrowed.

In addition to the evidence seen in changes to tuition fees, the increase in the demands on universities to focus upon vocational skills and graduate employability also showed how Human Capital theory has, and is, shaping the sector. Section 2.1 discusses Devureux and Fan's (2010) work which demonstrated how graduate jobs have been linked with developments and growth within the expansion of Higher Education. Grubb and Lazersson (2004) noted how higher education was a gateway and owned a 'virtual monopoly' of access to professional employments and status, and also higher paid jobs. University league tables, which aim to rank institutions in their effectiveness, include weightings to graduate employability. This means that universities and all tertiary education settings will not only want to gain student recruitment from offering vocationally linked awards, but also that these graduates are likely to find employment. It is this relationship between recruitment and graduate outcomes which Grubb and Lazerssoon (2004) attribute the quote: 'Higher Education is inescapably vocational', (p.57).

The financial difficulties for HEIs is more exaggerated when the increasing Retail Price Index is mapped to stable tuition fees. This is illustrated in Figure 2.6, which shows that with no increase in tuition fees since the implementation of higher fees in 2012, universities are experiencing a ‘real’ deficit in their income because of inflation.

Figure 2.6 – Real term value of upper fee cap (Tam, 2017)



Tamm’s (2017) diagram above shows that inflation costs will not increase university income to the original 2012/13 levels, but will stop the ongoing loss of income seen at present.

Whilst the data above shows why universities are in favour of inflationary income increases, fee paying students will be less inclined to see any further increases in fees.

2.3 Reaction to the government responses of funding higher education

Resistance to the 1997 fee introduction were relatively minor, compared to those seen in 2010 protesting against full fee paying students. The Browne report (2010) ushered in a new era, and arguably the most significant in the industry’s history, whereby students began to pay an average of £8,600 per year for an undergraduate award, with institutions capped to £9,000 per year fees. The introduction was met by student and academic protest. Anger seen

in the 2010 London protest clearly showed a reaction of disagreement and distaste for the introduction of fees. Brown and Carasso (2013) note the harsh criticism and anger towards the Liberal Democratic Party making up the minority of the coalition government going against their previous election pledge to not increase undergraduate fees. Whilst students and parents argued against the large debts which would be accumulated alongside study, academics argued on the impact of participation and fundamental changes to the higher educational industry. Holmwood (2011, p.11) stated:

‘Whereas the success of the Robbins reforms was to ‘universalize’ the aspiration to higher education, the current government’s response is now to privatize higher education and thereby to reduce the opportunities to fulfil those aspirations’.

Holmwood’s (2011) use of the term ‘privatize’ is deliberate and widespread. In the past the marketization of higher education had been growing within England, the need for large student cohorts by many of the new universities was clear in advertising campaigns and Clearing² type recruitment activities. In contrast it could be argued that Holmwood’s use of the term privatisation shows generalisation and a lack of critical analysis of the situation. The ownership of universities in the UK and their public/private label are issues which can provide debate and confusion. Universities are no doubt heavily reliant on the public purse in terms of funding for research and teaching. Yet governments do not employ university staff nor do they own the assets or land.

Stanfield (2009) confirmed the private nature of universities by writing: ‘all share the following characteristics: legally independent corporate structures; charitable status; and accountability through a governing body which carries ultimate responsibility for all aspects of the institution ‘ (p.39). This independent governance is seen in most English private schools, and thus worth recognising the historical dependence on government for most of their income and still dependent for domestic teaching income to the extent that student debt is underwritten by the government. Stanfield (2009) continued to point out the dangers of blurring of public/private label for universities claiming that it had undermined their

² Clearing – a recruitment activity which takes places just prior to the new academic year starting. Students without a university offer or place can phone directly through to universities and be offered (or not) a place within a few minutes.

autonomy from government pressures. In addition to autonomy it can also be claimed that this blurring weakens the relationship with universities stakeholders – the public, students and its staff. Claims that HE were becoming increasingly privatised were countered by the argument that it was always been privatised; and therefore using the term is wrong. Universities are not changing constitution or governance reform due to fee increases and therefore, not matter how unclear the ownership of universities has been, it remains the same. Despite the terminology Holmwood's message is sure to resound with teaching academics as universities face increasing competition for funding domestically and from abroad, which results in a corporate like approach in the day to day business. This in turn could be perceived as a privatisation of the higher education and echoes back to Holmwood's (2011) writing.

There is a growing change in the relationship between student and academics, from student to customer. Mansell (2009) argued that this change was noted in the 2009 Nuffield 14-19, which reported that education was acting more like corporate business in its outlook on delivering learning with acceptance of performance reviews, aims, targets and audits and therefore replacing the learner with consumer; it then follows that this relationship will progress into Higher Education. With increasing fees this student consumerist ideology (within the academics at least) seems to be taking a firmer grip. Therefore rather than 'privatization' of higher education, it may be more accurate to use acknowledge the increased 'marketisation' of higher education in recent years; which entail the complex work of quasi markets, consumerist behaviours and potential fundamental changes in the relationships between universities and its students; essentially the shift from student to customer. Furthermore, this change in tuition fee burden could allow for neoliberal market competition which in turn raises standards of education whilst ensuring that the industry finds differential offers of study, price and support for students' needs (Barr, 1998). Part 2 of the Literature Review in Chapter 3 provides further analysis of this change.

Moving the cost burden from state to student adds a further tension to universities and their place within society. The pressures upon universities and higher education institutes to provide a graduating workforce which gives an advantage in the national and global

workforce (a global benefit of education), but the very economic system in which these graduates requires forced taxation payments for the opportunity to study (Stevenson and Bell, 2009). Furedi (2009, p.14) noted that at state level the conundrum continued further:

‘...while the potential of education to solve society’s problems is overestimated, its capacity to inspire children to engage with intellectually challenging issues is underestimated’.

As new fee regimes have bedded in, growing criticism and concerns over the financial well-being is raised. McGettigan (2015) gave predictions that annual student loans were at £10 billion and expected to rise to be £14 billion by 2018/19. Despite initial assumptions of 70% of the loans would be repaid, recent figures put this estimate closer to 55%. The remaining 45% not being repaid due to end of term (after 30 years) or graduates not earning above the repayment threshold. This drop (70%-55%) equals approximately £1.5 billion less for the government, in this case the department of BIS (McGettigan, 2015)

2.4 Higher Education participation rates following fee increases and the impact upon universities

Gauging the response to the new fees from perspective students has been hard to predict and map for universities. In 2011, knowing that the 2012 fee increase would take hold, the increase in applications to the Universities and Colleges Application System reached 669,956 strong; its highest rate. A year later an expected drop in applications was recorded at 618,247 a 7.7% reduction. The latest 2013 application data (June 30th) shows some levelling off with 637,456 applications resulting in a 3.1% increase on the previous year (UCAS, 2013). This data provides the magnitude of people applying to enter higher education, terms as an applicant. Not all applicants enter higher education; either because they are rejected or other reasons such as they change their mind. Those that do enter are termed as enrolments and therefore enter into some form of financial contractual agreement with their university. Applicants and enrolments are very different for the reasons above, yet the terms can often be confused.

Despite the overall application figures show some expected levels of growth and shrinkage, they fail to encapsulate the competition and discrepancies within the applications to each university. The level of anxiety was seen in the Universities and Colleges Application System not publishing institutional application data in January 2013 with in concerns that would be students could retract applications to universities receiving low amounts of applications (Fazackerley, 2013a).

The 2015/16 cycle Universities and Colleges Application System reported the January 15th deadline application data showing an increase in applications of 2% across the UK, 7% from the EU (not including the UK) and 3% overseas. This results in an overall 2% increase in applications from the same time the previous year at 592,290 applications the highest January 15th deadline recorded (UCAS 2015).

Although, these figures include all UK universities, including those in Scotland who under their own parliamentary law home nationality students will not pay higher fees and arguably skews the figures, the same can be said for Welsh students in Wales who pay lower fees that in England. The table below has been created by using Universities and Colleges Application System data to show full-time applications by domicile to English only Universities (end of cycle). Appendix 2.1 shows an expanded version of Figure 2.7 providing historical applicant data from 2007.

Figure 2.7: Applications to UCAS by domicile of applicant 2011 to 2016

Domicile of applicant	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
England	496,635	454,000	471,120	487,870	494,495	491,480
Northern Ireland	20,240	19,375	20,545	20,570	21,030	21,310
Scotland	46,015	45,115	45,720	44,785	51,295	52,315
Wales	24,975	24,845	24,595	25,065	25,200	25,400
UK	587,865	543,340	561,985	578,290	592,025	590,505
EU (excluding UK)	49,275	43,150	44,835	46,830	50,705	53,595
Not EU	63,020	67,150	70,555	74,560	75,750	74,300
All	700,160	653,635	677,375	699,685	718,480	718,400

(Figure 2.7 created using data from the following sources: UCAS 2014, UCAS 2016b, UCAS 2016c)

It can be seen that applications are rising to the highest levels seen at a global level, but not as high as previous years for English or UK students as a whole.

In response to fluctuations UCAS produced a report in 2012 which analysed changes in full-time undergraduate applications (UCAS 2012). Their analysis of the reduced application level suggests that this had little effect on the 18 year old sector; with reductions showing 15,000 less applicants from this group, equivalent to 1 in 20 did not apply in comparison to the year prior. They also found that older students were less likely to apply, down by 15-20 percent on the year prior. They also found that in comparison, during this period the proportion of advantage to disadvantage students applying continued to get smaller. Applications from the most advantaged dropped 2-3 percent, compared to a fall of 0.1-0.2 percent for the most disadvantaged (UCAS, 2012). However gaps between applications of those in areas most likely and least likely to apply to university (often seen as a measure for advantage and disadvantage) remained at 35 percent in 2012; which means that the small

changes in applications between the advantaged and disadvantaged had little impact on the overall gap.

Figure 2.7 shows full-time undergraduates application levels in line with those in the past five years for English. However, the data for part-time undergraduate students remains poor. The full time undergraduate recovery is recognised by HEFCE (2015, p.3) although it notes 'indications that the growth is slowing' however other parts of the sector have not recovered in the same vein. The increased participation does not look like slowing either. Therefore as the supply of graduates appears to be holding steady, recovering from fee increases, the demand for graduates is increasing.

In the past part-time fees were arguably subsidised by universities and government in initiatives to widen participation. The impacts have reportedly been hardest hit in the new university sector, where up to 40% drops in applications rates were seen in the January 2013 Universities and Colleges Application System application deadline in some universities (Fazackerley, 2013a). Higher tuition fees has resulted in the subsidisation being too great to carry across whole awards and therefore price hikes have been felt harder by these students. As a result a Howse (2014) quotes BIS (Department for Business, Innovation and Skills) reporting that in the first year of higher fees the part-time market saw a 19% reduction in new students. HEFCE data shows that between 2010/11 and 2013/14 part-time undergraduate students have fallen by almost 50%, from 259,000 to 139,000.

The dramatic fall in application numbers can clearly be attributed to increases in fees, although there are several nuances of how this has caused multiple barriers for part-time students who back in 2003/04 made up nearly half all undergraduate students (HEFCE 2014). It is reported that 95% of part-time students are employed and of which 45% of part-time students studies are linked to education or medicine – public sector areas which in the past would have seen more student funding that today, especially in times of austerity (HEFCE 2014). Overall employer funding for undergraduate awards fell by 35% (Callender, 2014). Change in employer behaviour towards further part-time study (which would normally see support from release of duties to attend class, assessment or study; to

subsidising tuition payment) imposes a further challenge for students who not only face the workload of higher education study alongside work but also the increase cost burden with decreasing employer support.

This challenge has also been compounded by slow reaction from by government to offer additional loans to part-time students. Furthermore in 2008/09 the ELQ (Equivalent or Lesser Qualification) policy resulted in part-time students not receiving funding for awards at the same or lesser academic level they'd previously undertaken resulting in a 57% drop in students taking an award which would be classed as ELQ between 2008 and 2013 (HEFCE 2014).

Reaction to the student facing tuition fee increase can also be seen in the change in participation rates for modes of study (a reduction in part-time undergraduate participation) and within subjects being chosen. Callendar (2014) explained, the part-time market is not as predictable as the full time market – it is more volatile, difficult to predict and actual running costs are higher (in order to support, retain and maintain achievement) than full time awards. In contrast to many full time undergraduates, part time undergraduates will study close to their home or place of work. The distances travelled by part time students are likely to increase as the number of part-time awards decrease. As part-time enrolments are down, it follows that Universities have reduced their part-time award portfolios (Grove, 2013).

Sa's (2014) work provides insight into how students' rates of applications to degrees that tend to lead to lower paid jobs has been negatively affected by the introduction of higher fees, despite students not having to pay back income contingency loans till their earnings are over £21,000. Using information in his analysis from UCAS and the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey, it shows the potential that lower amounts of students will invest into degrees where salary premiums are not achievable post-graduation. That said, Walker and Zhu (2013) found that after forty-two months post-graduation that part-time study had a small positive effect on the likelihood of graduates having a high income. Should the decline in part-time students continue to become a long term trend,

industries which rely on lower paid graduates, e.g. those within the public or creative arts sectors could face future workforce shortages. Furthermore this would suggest that the process of, and ultimate aims of, studying for undergraduates is largely focused for future financial gain. Those choosing to study a subject that will most likely result in a lower paid return face a challenging decision on if continuing the pursuit of such a profession is worth the cost burden.

2.4.1 Student price sensitivity

Despite changes to tuition fees there has been little published research of student price sensitivity to tuition fees in relation to student application or student enrolment. Research often referred to tends to use data from the 1980s and 1990s and draw upon US data (Langelett et al, 2015). Heller (1997) refreshed the previous work of Leslie and Brinkman (1987) investigating Price Elasticity of Demand of American undergraduate students. Price Elasticity of Demand provides a measure of the relationship between price (of a product or service) and the quantity demanded.

Heller's work (1997) concluded that students understood the value of the degree within labour markets and therefore 'disposing them to have an inelastic demand for tuition price increases' (Langelett et al, 2015, p.113). This can be seen in Heller's (1997) results that showed for every \$100 increase in tuition fees, resulted in a drop of 0.5 to 1 percentage point at enrolment. Similar findings, between 0.25 and 1 percentage point drop at enrolment can be found in the more recent work of Hemelt and Marcotte (2008).

However, the headline data of students being inelastic to tuition prices does not apply equally to all groups of students. Heller (1997) found that despite university students' inelasticity, community college students, especially those with low social economic backgrounds were more responsive to tuition fees. More recently Denning (2017) also found that students attending US community college (where fees can be over three times as much) were more sensitive to fee increases than the four-year undergraduate degree model. However, Denning (2017) also notes that in his study there were few students that were induced from a US four-year degree to a community college course as a result of lower fees.

2.5 The ongoing challenge to widen participation and the role of Further Education Colleges in the Stratification of Higher Education

This section provides further discussion on the challenge of widening participation in English Higher Education, explaining how the industry has a history of serving students from middle and upper class backgrounds. This final part of the chapter concludes with discussion on the stratification of the Higher Education sector, in particular Higher Education in Future Education Colleges.

2.5.1 The ongoing challenge to widen participation

Participation within the English Higher Education system has predominantly been monopolised by students from wealthy backgrounds. Participation from lower socially economic families in up until the 1960s was very low, a potential outcome of the tripartite schooling system. Altbach (2016), from a United States perspective, suggests that massification led to a struggle of meeting demand, following imperfect growth in all areas of student background, and that the industry ‘wrestles’ with the stratified provision and identification of which students are still under represented in Higher Education. Addressing and correcting this failing has coined the term widening participation; that is the term covers a range of factors which identify groups within society as under-represented within higher education; including students from ethnic minorities and social class.

Post 1992 universities, in recent years have seen the largest increase in students from widening participation backgrounds. The rise in this group of students attending post 1992 universities can be attributed to many factors, for example those entering with non-traditional post Level 3 qualification³. Centralised funding streams have also incentivised this trend for post-1992 institutions; which have gone as far as ‘tailoring their product by

³ Using the HEQF a Level 3 award is similar in level to A Level pass grades. Level 3 is often used as a generic term for these qualifications, often more vocational compared to A Levels, such as; BTEC National Diplomas, GNVQ.

designing programmes that are attractive to a wider cohort of potential students ' (McCaig 2011, p. 124). Reay (2011) offers harsh criticism of these trends suggesting that the development of the different types of universities has resulted in the class-based school system being replicated; privately educated students attending the Russell Group, whereas state educated students attending new universities. As the stratification of Higher Education is emerging this could be amplifying the inequalities of society and participation within Higher Education (McGettigan, 2015). Considering this sizable change, Heagney (2008, p17) identified that the population of gender and race have also changed over time with 'massification of higher education has been the demise of homogenous student populations'. Although Read et al (2010, p261) argued that despite the growth and diversification the culture for students to adopt was often that of what was going before being, 'white, middle-class and male'. Mangan et al (2010) suggested that should this disproportion exist then the opportunities and benefits from attending university may also be unfairly disproportioned.

Purcell et al (2007) showed that the increase in mature students (those over 21) increased at a faster rate than those leaving school between the early 1990's and mid 2000's. Despite the numbers of partition rising, Purcell et al (2007) data showed that mature learners being over the age of 30 at the time of graduation found greater difficulty in gaining graduate level employment.

Robinson (2012) offered a critical view of the neo-liberal policy stance first introduced by New Labour in the 1990's which has since continued. His critique was that educational policies based on widening of choice are not promoting the widening of participation of underrepresented groups in Higher Education. Such strategies may open more opportunities for a competitive market but it reduces the 'role of government' and anticipates that individuals will accept greater responsibility for their personal and family welfare and economic well-being' (Robinson, 2012, p.456). As a focus was placed on why individuals did not take up this responsibility the wider debate of social and structural inequality was seen as less important. More simply; policy which has been based on the assumption that individuals will identify and seek the opportunity to invest in themselves; fail to provide alternatives for those who cannot see the opportunity; don not have self-belief

to act upon the opportunities; or do not think that it is their place to take up the opportunity of Higher Education. For those who believe that it is not rightfully their place to take up the opportunity of higher education, Stoten (2016) referred to the Bourdieu view that the lower classes were socially conditioned to believe that their place in society was not that of a graduate.

Policy intent aside the challenges remains, especially in a market of higher fees. Adnett and Tulpova (2008) presented their 'trilema' theory which outlined the three part relationship of the government's desire to increase widening participation and fair access; increase participation; both in a landscape where the government aims to reduce its contribution to the costs. Adnett and Tulpova (2008) acknowledged that there must be an 'economic rationale for widening participation dependent upon there being net social welfare gains'; whilst in the same paper conclude that: 'the immediate cause of unequal access to higher education is a lack of prerequisites reflecting inequalities at a much earlier stage of the educational life cycle', (p.252) which suggested that although increases in fees may have some reduction in widening participation overall the impact is minimal. Similar work from McInnis and James (1995) is noted by Lawrence (2002), who frame the 1990's change in Australian Higher Education as a paradigm shifts in 'elite-mass' and 'investment-costs'. Lawrence explains that as participation was increased and widened the costs were also shifted from public to individual. It follows that with government reducing their costs on Higher Education, they can reinvest in public schooling to improve the level of attainment, especially in areas which produce low levels of higher education participation, in order to improve entry standards and therefore a better redistribution of income potential.

Davies et al (2014) showed strong links of young applicants from low participation areas in England was associated with school exam results. Furthermore they found links between parents' education levels, their cultural capital and intention to go to university. In other words, children from non-graduate families with low cultural capital had less intention to go into higher education study. Therefore measuring magnitude of growth in student numbers does not give a true reflection on the success of the widening participation agenda. Using the measurement of Free School Meals (FSM), the Department for Business and Skills (BIS

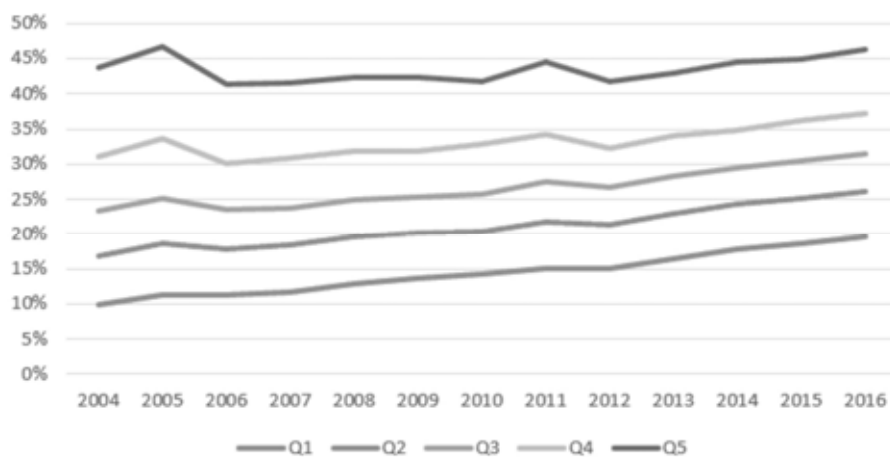
2011) which administers higher education shows that only 23% of students eligible for FSM entered full-time higher education at or below the age of 19, compared to 40% of non-FSM students for the 2012/13 year of entry. This data showed a 17 percentage point difference within the FSM and non-FSM student groups in 2012/13, a 2% lesser gap of 17% see in 2005/6 entry.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) funds research into the geographical based Participation of Local Areas (POLAR) classification. The data separates regions into five quintiles. The fourth iteration of the project, POLAR 4 (HEFCE 2017a) shows that applications from the most likely regions to apply are three times more likely to apply to higher education than those from the least likely geographical regions. Whilst the POLAR 4 data is not a direct report of socio-economic status of the regions there are clear correlations. This shows that whilst the proportions of participation of disadvantaged students has risen over the past decade (UCAS 2012) there is still a large gap between the advantaged and disadvantaged.

Figure 2.8 below shows an extract of the POLAR 4 map produced by HEFCE (2017b). This extract shows a section of the West Midlands, which include the cities of Stoke-on-Trent to the west, and Derby to the east. Both cities suffer from low education attainment in their schools, and thus they are categorised as Category 6 authorities (the lowest attaining) and have both recently been designated as government Opportunity Areas to promote social mobility (Department for Education, 2017). These have been highlighted as Figure 2.8 below shows how both of these cities contain quintile 1 districts, yet are surrounded by higher ranking quintiles. In the case of Stoke on Trent, which is neighboured by East Cheshire, the difference in participation is stark with areas of Stoke on Trent (area 017) measuring 10.8% and East Cheshire (area 041) measuring 67.8%.

period from when fees were at £1,000 to £9,000 (see section 2.4). For the most advantaged group (Q5) there has been little change in acceptances.

Figure 2.9: 18-year-olds in England entering HE by quintiles of advantage



Such figures have seen a governmental resurgence of the widening participation agenda in 2015 with the Minister for State Universities and Sciences setting a doubling of participation target of underrepresented groups. The concept of diversifying the Higher Education market includes strategies such as two-year degrees and the expansion of Higher Degree Apprentices (Bathmaker, 2016). Although such diversification could arguably be strengthening the inequality and between the students attending Higher Education, with a replication of the schooling that the entering students attended and compounding social class divides. For example, it is arguable that student populations of institutions such as Oxford and Cambridge, in terms of class and race have seen lesser change over the years compared to the sector (Reay 2011).

Bachan (2014) used the graduate debt surveys to explain that between 1994 and 2004 debt for new graduates had risen from £2,047 to £9,653, noting that this is at a time where tuition fees were none or minimal compared with the newer fee rates set in 2012. Furthermore, denoting studies in the USA and UK, Buchan (2013) provides evidence that in the wake of

higher fees the widening participation agenda will face increased difficulty. Harrison et al (2013) refer to a number of works which indicate that potential students from lower socio-economic groups are deterred from studying in higher education in fear of indebtedness. The National Union of Students' (2008) commissioned study of over 3000 students found that from lowest socio-economic groups were over twice as likely to choose a university close to home than students from the highest socio-economic group. In addition to the fear of financial burden working under-represented groups such as working class, disabled and mature; can be put off by a student experience which is 'unfamiliar and alien' (Locker, 2011). Remaining today, the higher education journey is based around upon an upper class private school including boarding facilities and rituals such as gowned graduation ceremonies.

2.5.2 The emergence of private providers in the stratification of Higher Education

In recent years England has seen a rise in the private providers offering Higher Education. Given the challenge of increased widening participation, rather than increase participation, the future for higher education may be seen in greater diversification of institutions. Recently private universities, such as BPP, are setting up with different business models and not following the traditional university norms of research, advanced scholarly activity and community engagement. Furthermore they are considering portfolios from afresh and not overstretching financially; for example in expensive Schools of Medicine or Engineering (Collini, 2012). Compared with existing universities, these new providers could be said to be post-modern in their structure; being lean and more reactive to the market. Slick websites and more flexible learning approaches (such as blended learning) are seen as positives by applicants. It could be said that these new institutions bring levels of fear and distaste to the industry; taking the spoils of student numbers without adding to the richness of being a university could leave the nation of a hollowed out sector. However a counter argument could be that 'plate glass' institutions such as Keele and Sussex in the 1950's and 60's were also different to those before them, as was the end of the binary system in the 1990's ending the era of polytechnics. Whilst private providers are not new within the education system, there on growing concerns of their quality, grow and regulation from both established universities and the sector (Lock, 2017).

The growth of the private sector justifies the concerns from the established providers. Quoting from the National Audit Office's (2014, p.8) investigation into financial support for students at alternative (private) HEIs, they found that 'Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 the number of students claiming student support for courses at alternative providers rose from 7,000 to 53,000 '. Fielden and Middlehurst (2017) refer to the increase in monies paid to students at the providers (in loans and grants) rising from £50 million to an approximate £675 million. That said the overall market size for individual alternative providers is small in comparison to existing universities. Out of approximately 700 private providers half have less than 100 students registered (BIS, 2016) and figures from 2014 show that only nine private providers had over 5,000 students registered (BIS, 2016, Fielden and Middlehurst, 2017).

Quality and regulation concerns are also raised in the National Audit Office's (2014) investigation. This showed higher dropout rates of students participating within private providers compared to established providers. Furthermore, there were concerns raised on the registry of students and if students were indeed registered with an institution and therefore eligible to be awarded their degree. Finally, concerns are noted on the acceptance of ineligible students onto courses; for example international students without correct visas.

Despite concerns, private providers continue to operate and develop. Current policy reflects the Conservative party's desire to increase competition within the university sector in order to drive up standards and lower costs. Fielden and Middlehurst (2017) quote the 2016 higher education white paper 'Success as a knowledge economy ' (BIS, 2016, p.8) which states 'At the heart of this lies insufficient competition and a lack of informed choice '. Discussed in Chapter 3, sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3 the government's approach to increase informed choice is via the introduction of the Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF). This new, and arguably consumer friendly, three tier rating system is designed to provide a simple quality rating to perspective students. Although initial results which show traditional Russell Group universities awarded the lowest ranking, are arguable producing challenging results for the sector and government (Weale, 2017). Results which rank such universities in the bottom tier challenge the assumption from the BIS (2016) statement; which is the belief that competition

between all providers will drive up standards. Discussed further in Chapter 3, section 3.2.3, early findings on the impact of TEF relating to student interest (including webpage traffic) shows mixed results for universities (Kernohan, 2017), similar to the findings of Gibbons et al (2015, p149) who found NSS data had a ‘the additional information it provides has only a small impact on the choices of students. ‘.

2.5.3 The role of Further Education Colleges in the stratification of Higher Education

In addition to private provider of higher education, another example of stratification of higher education in the UK is the growth of Further Education (FE) colleges offering degrees and other such awards commonly associated or validated by universities. Reports suggest that the FE sector contains 8-10% of all Higher Education within England (Stoten, 2016) making this is significant part of the sector. Those studying Higher Education within Further Education colleges, referred to as HE in FE, have seen increases within both full time and part time numbers. These increases can be linked to the increases in more vocationally orientated awards, such as Foundation Degrees being introduced in 2001 which have also supported the widening of participation by providing ‘pathways to improved social mobility for students of lower socio-economic groups’ p. 454 (Robinson, 2012).

Price differentials between HE in FE and universities present one reason for the rise in HE student numbers in FE. Garner (2015) in the Independent reports that whilst most universities now charge £9,000 per year tuition fees, FE colleges charge between £4,000 and £6,000. In fact one student could study a business management degree at a university with £9,000 per year fees, whilst another studies for the same award at one of the university’s franchised partner colleges for considerably less. Both students graduate with the same award from the same validating university. Given this situation; college and university in competition for the local student market, but also in partnership for franchised awards and widening participation; it can be seen why the relationship between Universities and their franchised partners (especially in the UK) can be described as an ‘awkward position’ (Wheelan 2016, p37). This can explain the behaviour of colleges when starting to partner with universities further away from their local area (Dhillon and Bentley, 2016).

Policy initiatives, based upon price, have supported the rise of HE in FE students. In 2012 when the number higher education student places were capped, institutions charging lower than £7,500 per year tuition fees could bid for additional allocations (Paton, 2012).

Further Education College location, in relation to competitor universities, is also a factor of participation. Colleges located in areas where there are few universities for students have stepped into the role of providing local Higher Education. Garner (2015) lists colleges in Truro, Skipton, Blackpool and Grimsby as examples of being popular and successful HE providers due to their location and lack of local university competition.

Despite the increase in popularity of studying HE in FE, HEFCE data show that graduates from HE in FE are not as successful in gaining professional jobs as those graduating from universities. Avis and Orr (2016) refer to the HEFCE findings that in 2010-11 23% of university graduates gain professional full-time employment compared to only 8% of those graduating from HE in FE. The difference between these rates is no doubt linked to numerous factors. As discussed in Section 2.1.2 Adnett and Davies (2000) suggest that social background has a large influence on the future trajectory of young adults; whereas Stoten (2016) referred to the Bourdieu stance on individuals expecting to take up their place in society at a level suitable for them. Wheelahan (2016) provides another view which is linked to the culture of FE colleges; in that FE colleges are linked to strong employability focus and that students will leave ready to take up employment. Graduates from university Higher Education may also be employable from their point of graduation, but often the type and level of employment may differ. As Wheelahan (2016) suggests, professional employers are seeking HE graduates that are autonomous and creative workers, rather than those ready to be directed. This type of difference may be seen in those graduating from HE in FE and those graduating from universities, and contribute to explaining the 15% difference in professional employment.

2.6 Conclusion and reflection

Developing a chapter based on the 'student as an investor' identity has enabled the discussion to explore and analyse the benefits and rates of return from higher education

study. The theoretical base adopted within the chapter is Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964) which core principles are the investment in one's own development to ensure a higher rate of productivity and wage return. Alternative rational thinking making theories to Human Capital theory are also presented, for example Signalling and Screening which suggest employers screen based on criteria rather than the individual's likely productivity.

Section 2.1.5 introduces non-rational thinking decision making theories, such as Prospect theory which explains how decisions are made on how potential loss/gain is framed.

A recent history of policy influencing participation and fees is detailed in section 2.5; this includes up to date sources of application data which has been created using multiple sources. This shows that whilst the impact of fees resulted in a dip in applications, the sector had all but recovered within a year. This may be attributed to students being inelastic to changes of tuition fees, as explained in section 2.4.1.

The final sections of this first literature review chapter explored the gaps in participation of different groups, in particularly students from lower social economic backgrounds. Alternative providers of higher education and how these offer degree awards has also been included. As fees increase within the mainstream university sector, price differentials in colleges and other providers rise at different rates. This final section has an important bearing on this body of work.

This chapter has discussed, at length, one perspective on student choice in higher education: 'the student as investor'. The next chapter switches the focus to the perspective of the 'student as consumer'. This perspective draws on different theoretical perspectives and has prompted empirical studies that have explored directions that were not attended to in the literature on human capital theory.

ⁱ Based on a comparison between the earnings of graduates and non-graduates with pre-university qualifications sufficient to gain a place at university.

Chapter 3 Literature Review

The student as a consumer

This chapter reviews the literature and research concerned with student as a consumer of Higher Education in the context of the rise of tuition fees in the academic year 2012/13. The Chapter then discusses factors that influence students in their decision making on entering Higher Education. This builds upon Chapter 2, which concentrated on the student role as an investor. It concludes with a discussion of how Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are changing in response to the perceived shifts in the student consumer identity. The Chapter reviews literature relevant to research questions 2 and 3: the student as a consumer and expectations of how institutions will use additional income from higher tuition fees to improve the student experience.

The Chapter explores the Higher Education industry and how developments have led to the creation of a competitive market place. The manifestation of this market place, combined with increases in student facing fees, it is argued, is leading to the shift in student identity from learner to consumer. This is broken down into the following sections:

3.1 The relationship change

3.1.1 The growing trend of consumerism and competition in education

3.1.2 Massification and the growth of competition in Higher Education

3.2 Quantification of student satisfaction and the student experience as competitive comparative measures within Higher Education

3.2.1 Factors that influence student recruitment

3.2.2 Capturing and application of student satisfaction within a competitive marketplace

3.2.3 Impact of quantified student satisfaction data on institutional recruitment

3.3 Student identity – the shift from student to consumer

Section 3.4 examines changes within the organisational culture in universities. Theories of Organisational Culture, such as Schein's (1985) model and Institutional Habitus (Bourdieu,

1993), provide a platform to enable analysis of change at an institutional level. Further analysis of evidence is drawn from wider influences on students choosing their university: student satisfaction, expectations and changing relations.

Reflection on the approach to the literature search

To address research question 2 (on student as consumer) I first focused on literature closely related to the policy change in 2012/13. Renfrew et al. (2010) was a key source, since this research was commissioned by HEFCE in anticipation of policy changes that followed the Browne Review (2010). Literature cited by Renfrew et al. (2010) provided a starting point for further literature search. But I was also aware of a broader literature which referred to treating young people as consumers of education. This literature was associated with discussion of 'massification' of higher education and a change in perspective on the nature and role of universities in society. My literature search in this field expanded from what I understood to be key contributions such as Ritzer (1996) and Marginson (2004, 2006)

The third research question (Section 1.2) probes expectations about institutional responses. To address this question I first examined literature on institutional behaviour, working from the perspective developed by Schein (1985). This perspective has long been one of my interests and I judged that it was a useful way to begin to look at what it might be reasonable for students and academics to expect. Through my reading of the literature on access to higher education I was also pointed towards the work of Bourdieu (1993), particularly in relation to the notion of institutional habitus. I used the work of these two theorists to guide a search for relevant literature that would provide a useful backdrop from which I might interpret the expectations expressed by students and academics. I did not previous empirical literature setting out expectations of institutional responses to tuition fee increases in HE.

Table 3.1 shows a summary of the literature searched in ordered of which this was undertaken, providing the method of literature search and the rationale.

Table 3.1 Summary of literature search on the student as a consumer of higher education

Sequence	Focus of search	Method	Rationale
1	Literature which referred to treating young people as consumers of education, often linked to the phenomena of massification of student growth	Initially based on the work of Renfew et al (2010), Google scholar searches were undertaken for similar works in student satisfaction. This enabled finding works such as Kandiko and Mawer (2013).	Understanding what information students base their decisions to attend university were key to consumerist behaviours and choice.
2	Reactions to the use of data to measure the effectiveness of universities	Sources such as Times Higher Education Supplement, Guardian Education and the BBC Education website proved to provide more up to date reaction and discussion than books and journals	At this time changes such as the Teaching Excellence Framework were being devised and implemented. Using these sources provided an up to date perspective
3	Institutional behaviour, working from the perspective developed by Schein (1985)	Searching for university organisational culture within Google searches and authors of those within this field. Use of tools such as ResearchGate were also used.	This work relates to the third research question. The author had experience of this body of work, and therefore was more confident in the field. As a result this became the last sections of literature to be searched.

Much of this chapter was developed during the same time as Chapter 2 – between 2011 and 2017. Within the early stages of writing, many of the themes which are split between the two chapters were merged. Only after the adoption of the ‘consumer’/‘investor’ split became apparent did the more formal separation of the two chapters take place, as discussed in section 1.4. Within this chapter searches for literature within student consumerism and student choice were very important. Using the works of Renfew et al (2010) were central to finding other work to support the literature review in this area. The latter discussions on

Schein (1985) and organisational culture had previously been researched by the author in previous studies. However (as explained in section 1.4) this theme took a lesser role in the project, and therefore this work was reviewed in 2011/2012 to support the development of the research tools, and then returned to later in the project in 2015 onwards.

3.1 The relationship change

This section begins by examining commercialisation as market forces play a more prominent role in the provision of education. The review investigates how in the times of the expansion of universities and growth in student numbers; increases in competition and market trends within Higher Education have taken place. Changes in the industry are analysed and evidence discussed, such as the growth of performance indicators and the use of league tables. The final section, which builds on the previous discussion, analyses the resulting shift of student identity from student to consumer.

Davies (2012) provides a detailed and accurate account of how universities have changed following the changes in Higher Education policy. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.2; policy within the sector has seen universities act as providers to the government and more recently, shift to providers for students. From a government stance, Davies (2012) explains this change in government/university relations from a changing of 'government as purchaser' to 'government as a informer'. The policy shifts of the past; which have balanced the need to increase participation and how it is paid for, can be seen in Davies's (2012) terminology. In times of free tuition the 'government as a purchaser' term refers to the role of universities enabling government to meet its goals and targets of increasing participation and the numbers of graduates. In light of top-up fees, and even more so in light of the 2012 higher tuition fees, universities are not only providers to government, but to each individual student. Davies (2012) and Renfrew et al (2010) (see section 3.1.1 and figure 3.1) explain this change puts pressure on government to ensure that students are informed in making rational choices of whether to participate in higher education; hence 'government as an informer'. These is later discussed in section 3.2.

3.1.1 The growing trend of consumerism and competition in education

Market forces have become more prominent in the allocation of resources throughout the public sector. Education is one context in which this trend can be observed. Strong competition between secondary schools in the recruitment of 11 year olds (Adnett and Davies, 2005); and the academisation of schools (Pells, 2016) are two examples of how the pre-university education sector has changed. School students, and their parents, are used to seeing head teachers and their school prospectuses 'selling' their school, in the context of regional and national league tables of performance. Market competition has reinforced local school hierarches (Adnett and Davies, 2002a) as a consequence of parental choice and 'cream skimming'. This has the potential to result in greater stratification and less diversity in compulsory aged schools.

In summary, market forces in schooling may be expected to influence the way in which students' expectations of higher education are formed. Choice and competition in education have become normalised well before students start considering higher education choices.

DeShields et al (2005) suggest the consumerisation of education has been around for some time, at least in the USA. For business schools in particular, they note the growth of: customer demand, increased widening participation student bodies, differing delivery methods and platforms, tough competition and the increased usage of technology to offer courses.

The Renfew et al (2010) study shows clear indication of that perspective students to higher education are seeking data to support their decision making. Figure 3.1 shows Renfew et al (2010) top sixteen highest ranked items of information which students ranked as most useful. Their study shows that alike customers responding on a product, over half of the 1,926 participants within their study had sought information on eleven out of the sixteen categories.

Table 3.1 shows a summary of the literature searched in ordered of which this was undertaken, providing the method of literature search and the rationale.

Figure 3.1 From Renfrew et al (2010) - Items of information about going to HE, ranked by the percentage of respondents indicating 'very useful'

'Very useful' rank	Information item	% indicating that this information would be 'very useful'
1	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with the standard of teaching	54.4%
2	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with their course	50.5%
3	Proportion of students in employment in the first year after completing this course	44.6%
4	Professional bodies which recognise this course	44.3%
5	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with the support and guidance they received	43.6%
6	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with their feedback on assessment	41.7%
7	Proportion of students employed in a full-time professional or managerial job one year after completing this course	40.5%
8	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with the library facilities	40.1%
9	Cost of halls of residence	37.7%
10	Weekly hours of teaching contact time	37.6%
11	Proportion of the assessment that is by coursework	35.2%
12	Average salary in the first year after completing this course	35.1%
13	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with the Student Union	34.7%
14	Maximum available bursary	34.5%
15	Proportions of students at the university satisfied or very satisfied with the IT facilities	33.6%
16	Maximum household income for eligibility for a bursary	33.3%

Of the sixteen categories listed above, most can be split into three areas, satisfaction within the course/institution; employment and costs (Renfrew et al, 2010). Whilst the results also found several groups not fully 'chasing' data they expected to be useful. The study

concluded that this may be attributed to students assuming that the information did not exist. Considering these categories, and the data showing the levels of students engaging with information prior to entry, it is clear from this substantial research that perspective students are conducting their search for higher education within a consumerist guise.

The recommendations the of Renfew et al (2010) study supported the introduction of greater reporting and publications of university results. Websites such as Unistats have grown more important in the eyes of government. In addition, the National Student Survey (NSS) is used as a government barometer between institutions as a measure of how satisfied students are. Further information for students can be seen in the new Teaching Excellent Framework (TEF); these are discussed further in section 3.2.2.

3.1.2 Massification and the growth of competition in Higher Education

This section argues that the growth in numbers of universities and students over the past 60 years has resulted in the creation of an increasingly competitive market place where students are a major source of income. This builds on from Chapter 2, section 2.2 which provided a detailed account of this growth, especially during the 1990s.

The massification of student numbers in the 1990s produced major industry change including: standardisations of accreditations (CAT points) and semesters and modules (Fisher 1998) in order to sustain these changes. Ritzer's (1996) McDonaldisation theory can be applied to the industry and Lilley (1998, p.174) warns of the dangers in that '...students and staff seem to have little alternative but to bend to the twin demands of increasing cost-consciousness and demonstrable quality that have already come to dominate many other spheres of consumption'. In other words, common pressures on HEIs have resulted in a mass market and standardised approach in Higher Education. Such standardised approaches can arguably restrict approaches to learning and teaching and also force methods of assessment to be applied into neat semester timetables. It can then be argued that in order to teach these standardised packages 'eccentricity and inspirational teaching' (Fisher 1998, p.154) has been reduced.

Alike other sectors, HEIs face tension in distinguishing themselves from their competitors to attract the volume and quality of students they aspire to; yet conforming enough to fit within the parameters of student expectations and the associated higher education quality assurance frameworks. Similarly to change in other commodities since the 1960s, Higher Education has clearly changed from a good for the few to a good for the masses. Massification, as McGee (2015) suggests, has transformed Higher Education from a luxury good to a good of necessity. Such change is a reflection of the labour markets requirements of high skilled graduate workers. This results in McGee's (2015, p.71) observations in the resulting change of value of the Higher Education experience as 'instrumental or transactional' rather than of personal development.

Given their importance on educating and developing the future higher skilled workforce, universities have long been of interest to governments. Brown and Carasso (2013, p.12) explain that due to universities' 'monopoly of the union of high-status knowledge and culture endows them with a third kind of socio-political power; the authority to promote particular sets of values'. As the population of undergraduates has rapidly expanded, the interest of government in universities has also expanded. Whilst the higher education industry has long seen quality assurance methods in place to control and monitor standards, recent policy has supported the increase of clearer reporting and publishing of results. Examples can be seen in the 2009 White Paper Higher Ambitions: The future of universities in a knowledge economy (BIS, 2009) which eventually saw the wider use of the National Student Survey, and the HEFCE 2010 and 2011 statements which saw the introduction of the Key Information Sets which were designed to provide public information that would be '...robust, easy to find and easy to compare between higher education institutions, wherever in the country they are.' HEFCE continue to explain that such data was now required due to students facing growing demand on university places and would have 'expectation that they will pay more for their education.' (HEFCE, 2011, p.7)

Analysis of student behaviour aside, the recent behaviours and approaches to recruitment from universities is different through the sector. Brown and Carasso (2013) draw on Marginson (2004) to explain the stratified polar ends of the selective versus recruiting

institution. Whilst the flaws in this thinking are explained later in the section, Marginson (2004) refers to universities now operating in a positional market, one which the universities at the higher end of the spectrum realise their goods or services based upon a hierarchical system where their goods or potential outcomes for students (both academically and socially) gives them the advantage. This is better explained in his own later works (Marginson, 2006), drawing on the work of James et al (1999), suggesting that students don't base their choices to study on future financial return or expected credentials (as explained by theories of Human Capital and Screening) but upon the reputation of the University, summarised by information such as university entrance tariffs, which in turn Marginson summarised as relative advantage; of which refers to Hirsch's (1977) work on positional competition.

Hirsch (1977) developed the concept of positional competition which refers to how individuals are compared to others within a positional hierarchy (Brown, 2000). Brown (2000) argues that when society follows market rules, a positive sum game cannot be achieved and society is left with a zero-sum game effect; which is to say that as one gains another makes an equal loss. Those believing that this may be true would then suggest that the social elite, playing on their cultural and material capital, can benefit in this zero-sum game system. For universities that could be considered to offer degree awards for the elite (rather than the mass), they would want to keep their products sought after and prestigious. In order to maintain their positional marketplace, they would not want to drastically increase their allocations of studentships in fear diluting the prestige of acceptance. In this sense, universities are in competition with each other for students, and students are in competition with each other for places. As high attaining students gain elite university places, lower attaining students (often from lower socio economic backgrounds or returners to education) find themselves restricted to lower ranking universities (Marginson, 2006) which in turn perpetuates the cycle of inequality and that positional competition allows the 'favoured middle class in the reproduction of existing class, gender and ethnic relations' (Brown, 2000, p.635). The concept of class reproduction, in with respect to Bourdieu's (1993) work is revisited in section 3.3.

Yet, Marginson's (2004) argument of education as a positional good is flawed. Firstly, Hirsh (1977) saw education as only partly a positional good as its value depends on absolute (measured qualities added to the student) and relative dimensions (those that are differentiated from others – e.g. exclusivity) (Adnett and Davies, 2002b). It can also be said that the comparison of 'top' and 'bottom' aspects of the undergraduate market results from amalgamating several factors regarding universities and wrongly combining them in this particular point. In this case it would appear that conclusions have been made from the point of view that students applying to the 'top' end as considering their choice within a positional market perspective, and that the 'bottom' end for recruiting (rather than selecting) universities seeing undergraduate teaching as an economic market and significant income stream. Thus the comparison between 'top' and 'bottom' here is not comparing the same entity. Altbach (2016) provides a clear counter argument to the education zero-sum game theory and suggests that whilst university league rankings assume a nonexistence zero-sum game in the current climate this is not the case. Altbach (2016) explains that as new universities from developing regions (e.g. Asia) improve, this does not diminish the good work of the traditional US and UK universities, but rather adds to the development of the industry overall.

At face value all universities are offering degree courses. Considering Marginson's (2004) discussion it follows that those universities that provide advantage, measured via their alumni success, historical prestige and scholarly outputs; are arguable offering a different product to institutions which can't be seen (or measured) to offering the same advantages during their time attending the university or as an alumnus or alumna. Maringe (2011) accounts proportional blame of inequality within the sector to the growing commodification of university awards, with modules and credits of learning rather than unrestrained learning opportunities. He goes on to explain that the elite universities protect themselves by imposing high entry tariffs which on the whole are only achievable by the rich who can afford to support teenagers in achieving these levels, and hence giving a 'false relationship between performance and social background' (p.144). Although it is recognised that undergraduate student choice in recruitment resulting in market demands for particular

universities, or awards by subject, can certainly be credited to those universities focusing on being 'less stodgy and elitist' (Bok, 2003, p.16).

In an expanded market (the growth of universities and HE providers) and growth in consumption (number of students) the need for such advice and information as Reay (1998) describes, has also grown. Simoes and Soares (2010) suggest that alike any consumer of services, the greater the perceived risk the greater the consumer will search for information to base their decisions on. Factors such as quality, price, likely return (e.g. employability) are areas which one would expect applicants to search. Briggs' (2007) study of important factors on student choice, in Scottish Universities, showed that information from universities to applicants was inadequate and that the institutions did not understand the complex process of student decision making. This is explained in her findings of students holding universities' location as highly influential, and universities over estimation of costs and amenities as student influencers.

Whether to understand how investment is being spent, or to create a sense of quasi positional market competition, the interest of governments on the student experience is clear. Whilst Chapter 2, section 2.1.5 explores how these factors can be used in framing the decision-making process for students, the following sections of this chapter discuss the utilisation of comparable data to measure success and quality of HEIs.

3.2 Quantification of student satisfaction and the student experience as competitive comparative measures within Higher Education

The concept of more coherent Performance Indicators (PI) within education and teaching is not novel. As a public function, which requires large amounts of taxpayer funding increased PIs result in greater accountability mechanisms to government and the public. The rise in the use of greater evaluations which can be reproduced in a numerical and comparable manner has been growing since the 1990s (Ramsden 1991). It is apparent that at a time of massive student growth in the early 1990s that such PIs were being developed. Firstly, to show that funding was producing high level graduates, and secondly to increase the

marketisation of the student experience of individual institutions. To explore this phenomena, this section is split into three parts; 3.2.1 provides a summary of the factors which influence student retention. This is followed by 3.2.2 which discusses the growth in capturing and applying student satisfaction data as a means of quality differentiation. Section 3.2.3 brings the earlier sections together to discuss the resulting impact of data on institutional recruitment.

3.2.1 Factors that influence student recruitment

Students have long balanced their needs and preferences of university life to their own personal constraints (e.g. costs, ability, courses offered). Finding an institution which best meets their needs has been via systems such as Key Information Sets (KIS) found on the Unistats website, and advice and guidance outlets (e.g. teachers and advisors). Whilst Chapter 2, section 2.1.5 discusses the framing of HE decision making, alongside loss aversion and Prospect Theory, this section addresses what specific factors influence students' decisions. The phenomena of published performance indicators is covered in greater detail in section 3.2.2, whereas this section concentrates on identifying university attributes which influence student decision making.

An example is provided in section 3.1.1, which introduced the work of Renfrew et al (2010), throughout the literature there are common themes which applicants to Higher Education are influenced by. These range from inherent possessive benefits of a university, for example: its geographical location, socio-economic area, prestige, course offered, resources; to those which the university 'earns' e.g. National Student Survey (NSS) scores, league ranking tables, and produced research. It can be argued that a combination of the two of these is also present in the university's mission group as discussed in Chapter 2 – e.g. Russell Group, Million+ etc. Whilst the literature has long called for more transparency and clearer information for applicants (Davies, 2012; Slack et al, 2014) which can be seen in the development of NSS, KIS and the most recent Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), the wider scope of the student experience and influence factors for applicants go beyond those currently published.

Drawing upon multiple sources Dunnett et al (2012) provide a range of attributes that most influence students' university preference. These are shown in an adapted table below:

Figure 3.2 Factors which influence students' university choice, adapted from Dunnett et al (2012)

Education quality	University reputation/image
	Course reputation
	Teaching/faculty quality
	Research quality
Institutional attributes	Location/proximity
	Fees/costs
	Facilities
Suitability	Course suitability/range
	Career/prospects
	Entry grades

Education quality factors, as listed above in Table 1, although not an exhaustive list, appears as the most influential in many studies (Catley, 2004; Dunnett et al, 2012; and Bharwa 2017). As explained in section 3.2.2 these education quality factors are quantified by the NSS which measures satisfaction of students in these areas.

Dunnett et al (2012) discuss their attributes in terms of which groups of students find them most influential. For example, they found that females were more influenced towards high quality teaching and local universities. Similarly they found that students from lower-socio economic groups were less influenced by the university's reputation and showed more preference to local providers of higher education.

Catley (2004) found that reputation of the course, the university and quality of teaching were ranked most important by students, which is in line with what is published KIS data. In later works, when questioning over 1,000 Year 12 students, Wilkins et al (2013) found that whilst 'quality' issues were still important to students entering university, 'financial' issues

had emerged as the most important consideration for students. This same study, pre-fee rises, found 'a quarter of respondents considering postponing university studies and almost one-fifth considering cheaper higher education options' (p.136).

A recent UCAS report (2016d) which utilised over 16,000 survey responses from 18-19 year olds in 2015, reported that 64% of students believed that the right accommodation is as important as the right course. This belief was seen more in disadvantaged, which showed 70 of this group agreeing. Such data highlights two points. Firstly young students were very concerned about where and how they live (standards and quality); secondly despite the emphasis on studying to increase future potential (a Human Capital Theory approach) current students appeared swayed by their short term accommodation on making decisions where to study.

Mangan et al (2010) discuss how Higher Education Institute location has a large influence upon students' choice of university. Where living and tuition costs are rising, the reality of living at home and saving money on rent and living expenses is an increasingly attractive option. Although the link to fees and expenses can be easily be associated with working class students, Mangan et al (2010) also found price sensitivity to middle income families (over £35,000 household income) expressing that the worry of debt had an impact upon their decision making upon going to university. Callender and Jackson (2008) discuss the notion of students finding strategies to avoid and reduce costs such as short courses; living at home and finding a university within an area which can provide a supply of part-time work. These factors can also be seen outside of the UK as in Simões and Soares (2010) work which suggests that 'geographical proximity' is also the most important factor among their proportion of Portuguese students, arguably a reflection of expenses and costs. Holmwood (2011), referring to Mangan et al (2010), gives a further example of how costs can impact upon choice in suggesting that students seek local higher education providers to reduce overall costs, even if they sacrifice the opportunity to attend a higher ranked university. The concept of students having a greater consideration of value for money from their degrees, and therefore the increase of their consumer identity, is discussed in section 3.3.

3.2.2 Capturing and application of student satisfaction within a competitive marketplace

Increases in state-funded students, either in payment of fees or long-term repayment loans, have brought greater measures in attempts to implement transparent forms of reporting metrics. Metrics designed to aid increases in standards of learning, teaching and attainment within universities can also be used to perpetuate a capitalist consumer led choice by applicants. Examples of such measures would include metrics of student satisfaction scores such as the National Student Survey in the UK; attainment of good degrees (first class and higher second class passes in degrees); and employability data captured by the Destinations of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE).

The concept of student satisfaction has been of growing interest since the mid-1990s, Hill's (1995) and Havery's (1995) work identified a range of factors which were used to define student satisfaction, ranging from impacting upon teaching experiences to wider university service experiences; such as catering and housing. Whilst the interest was based in the practice of improving students' university experiences, growth in university administration and sophisticated methods of technology has made the process of collecting and analysing data much more efficient (Altbach, 2016). This has led to a convergence of two phenomena, firstly the ability and want to collect and analyse student data, coupled with the ability to compare inter and intra institutional student feedback data; which ultimately leads to a ranking process. This can be seen most predominantly in the National Student Survey (NSS). As discussed in section 3.1 Davies (2012) argues that the use of this data to inform future students of the quality of award and institution is fundamental to the role of government since the end of free tuition.

Considering education in the USA, DeShields et al (2005, p.129) go as far to suggest that given the increase in costs for education, expansion of higher education and the changing student, institutions are forced to 'think differently about the role of student satisfaction for their survival'.

Since the start of the NSS in 2007, Lenton's (2015, p.124) results for universities samples showed increases of graduate employability, the percentage of gaining a doo degree and better staff-student ratios impacted institutional NSS results. However they also found that 'expenditure per student, which varies greatly across universities, does not appear to increase student satisfaction'.

The Higher Education Funding Councils for England (HEFCE); its Welsh counterpart (HEFCW); the Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland (DELNI) and Health Education England all commission the independent Iposs MORI research group to conduct the online National Student Survey; with its purpose to '...gather feedback on the quality of students' courses in order to contribute to public accountability as well as help inform the choices of future applicants to HE' (Davies, 2012, P.265). The 2017 NSS (HEFCE, 2017c) is an online questionnaire survey with 27 scaled response questions and two qualitative response sections. Question 26 asks students satisfaction of their Students' Union. Appendix 3A shows a paper version of 2017 survey. It can be seen that the 27 questions are split into eight areas; of which can arguably be filtered into six: learning, teaching and assessment, support, leadership and management, resources, learning community and student voice, and finally overall satisfaction. The 2012 survey was completed by approximately 287,000 students, around 67 per cent of targeted final year students in 154 higher education institutes and 104 further education colleges (HEFCE 2012). The growing interest in student satisfaction, to near obsession by some universities, is embedded in the development and introduction of the NSS. The NSS, implemented in 2007, has become a key performance indicator for universities; used as a factor within league ranking tables and therefore in a time of growing market forces, of utmost importance for institutions.

Recent evidence shows the quantification of student satisfaction and institutional ratings to be growing. Following the publication of the Higher Education White Paper – Success as a Knowledge Economy (BIS, 2016c), the introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) in England, links a range of university performance indicators to graded quality

judgements and in return with award each organisation with an Olympic style bronze, silver, or gold award (Adams, 2016b). The TEF also marks the first instance where a centralised quality judgement will directly impact upon the fee charges that universities can apply to students. 2017/18 will see the introduction of raising the undergraduate fee to £9,250 per year for full-time undergraduate students for all universities included within the TEF, however future increases will be capped on 'institutions with poor teaching or satisfaction while allowing other to increase their fees' (Adams, 2016a). Criticisms of the TEF plans surround the problems associated with the metrics that TEF will use; e.g. the TEF uses NSS as a tool to measure teaching quality (Gunn, 2018). Whilst Tessema et al (2012) explain that greater NSS scores represent satisfied students, and that satisfied students tend to be less likely to withdraw from their course, it can be argued that the NSS is not an accurate measure of the quality of teaching (Bishop, 2016). Furthermore, the usage of NSS within the TEF gave the opportunity for students to show resistance to the TEF's linkage to fee setting. In the spring of 2017 25 institutions boycotted the NSS, with their National Student Unions (or equivalent) urging students not to complete the survey; and thus showing the ongoing tensions between students and higher tuition fees.

Outside of the NSS and TEF, defining student satisfaction, and how to measure this, remains a challenge for universities and academics. Gibson (2010) notes how 'academic experience' is referred to as an evaluation of students' experience across their university experiences; including perceived quality of teachers and administrators etc; however goes on to question if these expectations on academic experience is influenced by their perceptions on entering, for example expecting to be employable at the end of the award; acquisition of particular skills. Similar themes are discussed in Lobo and Gurney's (2013) work who point out that that in order to retain students, and compete within a global market, universities need to understand students' learning expectations; whilst acknowledging that these expectations differ between countries of origin. Although Mai (2005, p.859) provides a solid counter argument for differing student expectations which may provide some solace for higher education institutes, 'While the global market becomes more homogeneous, students' needs and expectations of their education should become increasingly similar'.

Whether, or not, student expectations can ever be realised or defined, the research community (as discussed above) at least acknowledges the concept of student expectation. Thus far in the chapter, the frame of reference is always to the student experience – a reflection of involvement, rather than an analysis of what perspective applicants to higher education are expecting from their time in higher education. Chong and Ahmed (2015) support this notion, suggesting that levels of student satisfaction and retention are formed prior to students starting their studies. These prior expectations are thus instrumental in the student forming their ‘service quality perception since quality is essentially a result of comparison between expectation and perceived service received’ (P.162). Byrne and Flood (2005), who discuss the concept of students being prepared and motivated for higher education, explain how the majority of higher education students who drop-out do so in the first year of their studies. A further factor which could explain non-completions is students’ misconceptions of the expectations of university life, in terms of expectations placed upon them and also the differing environment to previous educational settings they had have experience of Douglas et al (2015) provide an example of this when they found in their study of 350 students over two HEIs that communication was the area that caused the most dissatisfaction. Given Chong and Ahmed (2015) suggest that students base their expectations of education on their former experiences, one can foresee how students may perceive schools (much smaller organisations) as better communicators than universities (much larger and diverse organisations). Hartman and Schmidt (1995) also analyse the problematic issues of students expressing their satisfaction providing two explanations. Based on the work of Oliver’s (1980) dissatisfaction model consumers base their satisfaction on ‘pre-purchase’ and ‘post-purchase’ beliefs. In the case of higher education, students have little comparison of services to base their pre-purchase beliefs. Pre-higher education (schools and colleges) institutes in the UK provide students with very different experiences and thus fail to inform perceptions of the student journey within higher education. In the case of post-purchase beliefs, higher education causes problems as the service is over such a long-time period and is hard for students to summaries their overall satisfaction in one compartmented questionnaire, for example the NSS.

3.2.3 Impact of quantified student satisfaction data on institutional recruitment

In a higher fee paying culture, where the student is personally taking the burden of the shift in the cost of higher education; from state to student; the customer relationship alongside the need to understand their satisfaction levels can be argued for. Therefore the shift from earlier works in devising student satisfaction models to enhance the student experience and improve universities' understanding of their students' needs has become a tool for which government can use as a quasi-barometer of institutional quality. With the 'ranking wars' and league table envy taking stronger hold, universities are clearly having to 'pay greater attention to those factors that help them to more effectively attract students and create a supportive learning environment' (Letcher and Neves, 2010, p.2). Commissioned by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) the extensive Renfew et al (2010) report provided a basis for the Key Information Sets (KIS) data. This report found that prior to KIS availability students and advisors found only limited data useful. As a Renfew et al (2010) made recommendations which would enable Unistats (the website which KIS data can be accessed) to deliver comparable information regarding HEIs and their courses. Using such performance indicators within strategic marketing of undergraduate degree courses and the institutions has thus become an increasingly important recruitment activity for universities (Matthews, 2013). As a result, the role of corporate marketing in universities is prevalent.

The resulting competitive capitalist culture of student enrolment increases rivalry between universities within the Higher Education marketplace. With 91% of young applicants attending at least one University Open Day and 67% between two and five Open Days (UCAS, 2016d), universities have used the Open Day as sales pitches, to show off their estates and resources to entice students to apply. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.2 and 2.5.3, in recent years England has also seen the rise of alternative providers and Further Education Colleges offering degrees and private providers offering online courses. Altbach (2016) refers to such new providers of Higher Education as an alternative to offer courses according to the interests and abilities of students who may not be suitable for traditional universities, suggesting that these are 'open door' institutions (p.44). DeShields et al (2005)

argue that in the past traditional universities have underestimated their customer orientation compared to the private providers.

In an increasing global market universities are working harder to increase student enrolment. As such a growing interest in how students approach the decision making process of going to university, and which one, has arisen. Stratification in the Higher Education industry, whilst adding choice of provider, may also result in greater uncertainty of market share for existing and 'traditional' providers (McGee 2015). Indicators of quality which can differentiate traditional universities from competitors and new providers will be sought after. Furthermore, any indicators, even those challengeable, of showing value for money in terms of consumption of experience or post graduate return on investment will be hard to evidence. In turn the drive to improve and market differentiations between universities fuels a growing competitive culture within the sector. This increases student and applicant expectations in their experience, which further drives up the need for 'competitive advantage, in a sector which McGee (2015, p.95) notes as sometimes described as having 'narcissistic impulses'. The triangulation of narcissism, growing expectations of consumers and demonstrating competitive edge results in a sector where key performance indicators are being applied to differentiate provider quality.

Whilst institutions look set to remain competitive in achievement in NSS and TEF Gibbons et al (2015) found that both rankings and student satisfaction had differing effects on differing bodies of students. In the main these had relatively small impact on applications to universities. As noted by Gibbons et al (2015, p.162):

'Second, student satisfaction, or for that matter league tables, do not have a major impact on demand in the short-term. University or departmental managers expecting a large surge in demand from students in response to improved student satisfaction ratings or league table positions will be disappointed with our findings.'

Soo's (2013) work found that league table, in his research the Sunday Times University Guide, have an effect on the perceptions of Head Teachers and academics, but no statistical significant impact on applications made to institutions from a student perspective. A

potential explanation of this behaviour can be seen in the work of Slack et al (2014). This work highlights the difference between 'hot' and 'cold' information in student decision making processes. The 'hot' information, seen as more reliable to by applicants, was from '...the grapevine', a manifestation of social networks, and relates to first hand or second-hand recommendations or warnings about specific institutions...' (p.208). However, 'cold' information were the sources from more official outlets such as prospectuses. Slack et al (2014) note that they do not suggest student think that NSS results are unimportant, but that students appear to hold other information on 'student satisfaction' as important too.

In terms of the upcoming TEF, a simplistic three level grading system could result in greater impact on applications. Reactions from applicants towards lower ranking – or in this instance bronze institutions – is unknown. Yet basing predictions on the work of Slack et al (2014), the impact of the ratings may have limited impact upon application and recruitment trends.

Measures and tools like the NSS and TEF continue to be questioned by academics as to the validity of the tool and sample (Davies, 2012). Douglas et al (2015) explains how the NSS is based upon a customer satisfaction type model, therefore the 'student' becoming a 'customer', although they argue that the student relationship is more comparable to satisfaction of a long-term service rather than product purchasing. With higher fees being imposed it is be argued by many that those studying at a university are customers rather than consumers (Barnett, 2011), rather than students. It is the essence of this shift in moving from a pedagogical relationship to that of a market driven commodity transfer relationship which faces such opposition from academics. This is explored further in section 3.1.4.

3.3 Student identity – the shift from student to consumer

Thus far, sections 3.1 and 3.2 have articulated the growing competitive behaviours of universities to attract students. It is therefore clear how student applicants can perceive their role in Higher Education as one of a customer, choosing their product, rather than a future learner. This section explores this changing identify further. Given that Higher Education

can be interpreted as a service (Chong and Ahmed, 2015) this section adopts the term student consumer, rather than student customer.

Williams (2012) explains that the notion of the student taking on a consumer persona (referring to attitude rather than any physical transaction or exchange of money) was first expressed in the USA in the 1960s and more recently in UK newspapers in the 1990s. Capturing the transition from student to customer, Williams (2012) highlights concerns that as a result of higher fees, new students being under the impression that they are in a transactional relationship of 'buying' their degree. In a higher fee paying culture, where the consumer (or customer) rather than student relationship is taking hold, arguably more so at application level, student expectations on their university experiences are rising. Kandiko and Mawer (2013) capture this consumerist transformation around a higher consciousness of 'value for money' in students.

Changes in students' identity isn't necessarily a new concept. Williams (2012) reflects back to the 1960's student body which began to move beyond their own internal learning and became more active in society; seeing their role in commenting and influencing political and environmental policy. Student activism and protest were first seen in the 1960s. Fast forward from the 1960's to present day and the rise in financial burden faced by modern students cannot be ignored. Tuition fees have shifted, and so have costs of living away from home, coupled with the expectations of young people today and their needs of modern day goods, satellite television, mobile phones, computing equipment and personal transport. The combinations of these arguably aids the shifting of student concentration from learning and interaction with wider society, to a more concentrated consideration of their own student experience and (as detailed in Chapter 2) ability to graduate and be attractive in the job market place.

There is much rhetoric which suggests that students are now more focused on their role as a consumer of HE, concerned about the quality of service they get from academics and administrators (Williams, 2012). The 2013 QAA commissioned report by Kandiko and Mawer (2013) into student expectations and perceptions showed a range of student

expectations, including increased quality of learning environments. In addition findings showed students expected academics (those teaching them) to be engaging and enthusiastic, and receiving greater levels of personalisation from their courses, e.g. small teaching groups.

Despite the simplistic purpose of a university to students – a place where one can study to gain a degree; the influences of consumerism, coupled with increasing economic burdens and fees produce a turbulent higher education environment. Universities as suppliers have rights to choose their consumers (or customers) and put barriers (admission criteria) to those who they refuse. Consumers pay a significant fee not to ‘buy their degree’ but only to have the opportunity to achieve (Chong and Ahmed, 2015). Recognising these tensions shows the complexities of this marketplace which Chong and Ahmed (2015, p.160) explain as demonstrating ‘specific service quality challenges in the higher education sector which are scarcely discussed in the retail service literature’. In this context they refer to the quasi student customer relationship and the difficulties in Higher Education (unlike the retail sector) to identify customers. Whilst the discussion does highlight the challenge within the sector, Chong and Ahmed (2015) seem to concentrate more on the transactional relationship between customer (purchaser) and student, rather than consumer. For example banks will have ongoing criteria for who they will lend money, and some clubs will have restrictive membership codes.

Zepke et al (2014) provide some insights into this area of work when comparing the expectations of students to staff on differing importance for students and priorities for teachers in areas of learning and teaching (such as ‘teachers providing feedback to improve student learning’). The work showed evidence that in some areas students had higher expectations than academics, and vice-versa. Whilst tuition fees were not part of the Zepke et al (2014) study, they do note how in a time of increasing fees the student expectations are likely to increase.

Since the increase in tuition fees a growing concepts that has gained traction in the higher education student satisfaction vocabulary is ‘value for money’. Measuring the concept is not straight forwards. Examples can be seen in the joint HEA/HEPI (Neves and Hillman 2016)

Student Academic Experience Survey which uses a range of questions to explore the concepts. However given the fee increase, reports on Value for Money have made headline news, e.g. BBC news Coughton 2007. Neves and Hillman (2016) show a consistent fall in student's perceptions of value of money from their degree – and example being that in 2012 (prior to fees) satisfaction was at 53%, whereas it lowered to 37% satisfied in 2016. These finding reports on the survey are clearly researching customer satisfaction in questions of hours in class, and tuition/student/staff time – as opposed to a HCT application; which would be based upon changing views on their engagement and production of output.

Student expectations of university life now spans across multiple areas of the Higher Education experience. In his predictions of growing student expectations McGee (2015) illustrates the significance of the increasing demands on universities and providers of Higher Education by suggesting 'few institutions will be able to indefinitely sustain the costs of infinitely rising expectations of the collegiate experience.' (P.95). This highlights the pressures to meet student demands seen in HEIs. In a stratified market place, the current competitive climate, provides opportunities for private and alternative providers who can balance student experience and costs to meet differing student expectations, without the burden of research portfolios or community regeneration. Overall the growth of both student consumerism and growing expectations (from applicant and state) have direct relations to student recruitment and resulting provider income. That said, university prestige and status are critically important. Marginson (2008) describes a classic of example of the American college Princeton having its law school ranked in the top 10 in a student survey, Princeton not having a law school highlights the influence of a university's prestige.

Whilst growth in competition between universities can lead to increases in quality standards, the plethora of reported performance indicators used in this competitive market can add to the established confusions for students choosing to enter Higher Education. Although using only a small sample of case studies, Reay (1998) explored the changing demographics of student seen in the massification in the late 1990s and analysed how they made choices of where to study. Using Bourdieu's (1993) work on habitus and cultural capital as a theoretical framework. Reay's (1998, p.528) findings highlighted the 'messy

reality that constitutes Higher Education choice for many applicants' which did not hide the 'equally real issue of social injustice which permeate the process and remain entrenched in the system' (p.528). Reay (1998) also outlines that influences on applicants include cultural capital, family and institutional influence and advice. This work also raises the 'complexity of class' giving examples of students who have come from high socio-economic backgrounds, but in families with a legacy of being working class with no university experiences. Alike the work of Slack et al (2014) which stressed the importance of 'hot' information from first or second hand experiences of attending Higher Education, Reay (1998) points out the importance of advice and guidance to these students.

Section 3.1 has articulated the growing trends and behaviours of marketisation and competition within HEIs. This began with an acknowledgement of the growing influence of market forces in the public sector in general (state schools) and progresses to articulating the current phenomena in Higher Education. In summary, this landscape, alongside the introduction of higher tuition fees has provided the fertile environment to incubate the identity of the student consumer.

3.4 Organisational culture and HEI barriers to change in the student experience

Much of this discussion in Section 3.1, was from the individualised viewpoint of the student, this section widens this scope to potential changes within universities following fee increases. Section 3.3 develops the wider work of Bourdieu (1993), explaining the term 'institutional habitus'. This explanation of institutional habitus is further built upon to discuss the concept of organisational culture and its impact on students, staff and the organisation. The discussion moves on to analyse a range of applications of organisational culture models and tools and finally to a discussion on how recent changes (such as higher student fees) results in university organisational cultures and barriers to improving student experience.

Organisational culture aims to identify embedded differences within organisational practices. These differences define the organisational approach to meeting its set goals and successes. The often used definition of culture 'the way we do it here' , a useful explanation

in its simplest form, falls short to convey the true importance of organisational culture and why it matters so much to organisational success. This final section of the Literature Review provides a theoretical underpinning of by explaining Schein's (1985) model of Organisational Culture.

3.4.1 Institutional Habitus and Organisational Culture

Section 3.3 concluded with the introduction of Bourdieu's (1993) work on student habitus – the impact of social reproduction on students. Unlike Chapter 2 which draws upon rational decision making, in particular the framework of Human Capital Theory. Bourdieu's work has been linked to non-rational decision making as a result of the influences of social class.

The extension of Bourdieu's (1993) work has been taken further and applied to education institutions and their associated class based bias – known as 'institutional habitus' (Reay et al, 2010). This can be further seen in the work of Smyth and Banks (2012) who apply the theory of institutional habitus of two differing secondary schools (in terms of socio-economic catchments) and their resulting institutional influence on student choice and decision making on going to university. Similar results can be seen in Reay's (1998) work which compared state schools, private schools and Further Education colleges' influences on students entering Higher Education. Both studies found difference in the institutional habitus of advice and guidance towards students. Private schools were found to provide very strong influences for students to apply to high ranking universities, whereas other schools and colleges would tend to provide their advice on geographical location and student financial considerations (Reay, 1998, 2006).

In later work Reay et al (2010) the effect of institutional habitus within English universities comparing these with the student experience of working class students attending these institutions. Findings show that each of the universities studied had differing institutional habitus which '...exerts a powerful influence on how they see themselves and are seen by others in terms of both their learning and class identities.' (Reay et al, 2010, P.111). This then

leads to connections between the influence of institutional habitus on the student identity. Highlighting difference in institutional customs and expectations, such as students living on campus or at the family home, or teaching contact hours, show the impact of the institution's cultural norms on the student identity.

The formation of the institutional habitus is also strongly linked to the organisational culture of the university (Reay et al, 2010). Whilst academics and leaders have long debated the definitive definitions organisational culture; how to measure resulting increases in productivity or effectiveness; or how to replicate effective cultures, there has been a large consensus that effective organisational cultures are positive phenomena. Schein (1985) suggests that as an almost invisible force, organisational culture refers to the 'values and beliefs that provide norms of expected behaviours that employees might follow' (Hogan and Coote, 2013, p. 1609). Whilst there are numerous definitions (or even soundbites) to explain organisation culture, Huczynski and Buchanan (2001, p.624) provide a simplistic and clear explanation of this area of study:

'Organizational culture is the collection of relatively uniform and enduring values, beliefs, customs, traditions and practices that are shared by an organisation's member, learned by new recruits, and transmitted from one generation of employees to the next.'

Parker et al (2003, p.76) explain that in order for people to 'live in a world with some degree of continuity always have some way to begin dealing with whatever they find themselves having to do'. They also explain that it is the culture of the organisation which allows the lessons of the past to be passed down and 'transmitted' to new forms of practice. Such definitions explain how vital organisational culture is to both the organisation as a set of process, but also those working within the organisation. Tromenaars' (1993, p.21) simple explanation follows 'A fish can only discover its need for water when it is no longer in it. Our own culture is like water to a fish. It sustains us.'

Recognising organisational culture as framework to understanding what is currently taking place within an organisation and how current practices and beliefs are passed to new employees means that companies will want to continually seek to create the right

organisational culture. Since the 1980's this has meant that the study of organisational culture, as a branch of organisational research, has become popular, partly due to publications and books being of interest to both academics and non-academics (Ouchi and Wilkins, 1988). This increase in awareness and knowledge in the subject could be reflected in the research coming about from Japanese organisations, where operating characteristics were seen to be superior to western companies. Ouchi and Wilkins (1988) explain the researcher in search of organisational culture is not only concerned with 'the capacity of organisations to create order and rationality' (p.224) or '...chaotic and nonrational features of organisation life' (p.224) but rather the tensions between two, hence the relationship between the implicit and explicit nature of organisations. Cameron and Quinn (2011) base their work particularly on the tensions within the cultures of organisations. They acknowledge the struggles between focuses on 'internal and external' and 'stability and flexibility'. They refer to this tension as 'the competing values framework' which is discussed further in section 3.4.2.

Schein's (1985) model of culture provides a fundamental view that culture is a sharing of meanings and 'basic' assumptions (Huczynski and Buchanan, 2001). A cyclical relationship between his names levels: 'Surface Manifestations' (artefacts, ceremonials); 'Values'; and 'Basic Assumptions' (Relation to environment, human activity and relationships) is presented. Schein's model suggests that the resulting observed culture – the surface manifestations, is a result of an organisation's (and those collectively within) basic assumptions which shape the value system within it (Schein 2004).

Applying Schein's (1985) model to the higher education industry, a university's values could be reflected in its organisational strategy document and shared mission and vision goals. Examples could be: setting out its plans for growth in a particular group of students (postgraduate rather than undergraduate); or growth in overseas partnerships. Each example give an indication of the espoused values which the organisation holds. Integral to these values would be the assumptions held by employees within the organisation. Such assumptions could be gained from the espoused values which the organisation holds or from practices undertaken; for example a university may have a strict policy on all

academics being entered for the Research Excellence Framework exercise; or all academics to have high teaching loads. Such internal policies shape the employees' assumptions of what the overall university values. Lastly, but not least, a university's surface manifestations would can be seen in activities such as the way graduations or staff achievements are celebrated.

Schein's (1985) model, unlike others, recognises the importance of each level as an individual competent of an organisation's culture. Furthermore the interaction and relations between each of the levels is held with great important which provides an understanding of the resulting culture. Schein (2010) warns against making quick assumptions of an organisation's culture from only surface observations without understanding the deeper relations within the levels. He provides examples where some organisations from an observational viewpoint could be seen as very informal, and therefore wrongly assumed that the organisation is inefficient. Alternatively an organisation which espoused values could be seen as different to the assumptions made and seen by the employees, for example 'If the beliefs and values that provide meaning and comfort to the group are not congruent with the beliefs and values that correlate with effective performance, we will observe in many organizations espoused values that reflect the desired behaviour but are not reflected in observed behaviour' (Schein, 2010, p.27). To give an operational illustration, despite any top-down policy 'If the norm is for everyone to arrive ten minutes late in the morning, a newly appointed manager will find that a difficult habit to change. Equally, if everyone is in the habit of arriving punctually, then a new recruit who often arrives late will come under strong social pressure to conform' (Torrington and Weightman, 1994, p.144).

Whilst simplistic this example of shows how ultimately organisational culture is a manifestation of social interactions. These interactions then play a significance in the behaviours and attitudes of employees, including motivation. Whilst personal intrinsic motivation is key; effective organisational culture which includes 'affiliation (explained by the fact that members receive affection from colleagues), psychosocial comfort, social recognition, achievement.' (Cucu-Ciuhan and Guita-Alexandru, 2014, p.449) can lead to an increase in staff motivation and greater efficiency.

3.4.2 Applications of organisational culture models

This section provides examples of the application of two frameworks. Firstly the use of Schein's framework and secondly the application of Cameron and Quinn's (2006) Organisational Cultural Assessment Instrument.

Schein's three layered framework of understanding organisational culture has been used and applied to many organisations. In his own research (Schein, 2010), Schein depicts differing organisational cultures in a variety of companies in differing industries. This provides examples of how his analysis of organisational culture can lead organisations to change and improve. This work has been used and built upon since the original framework was created.

In analysis of Schein's 1985 model to analyse an innovative organisation, Hogan and Coote (2013) produce the following diagram (Figure 3.3) to illustrate Schein's model and the visibility of each of the layers.

Figure 3.3 An adaptation of Schein’s (1985) model of Organisational Culture (from Hogan and Coote 2013, p.1610)

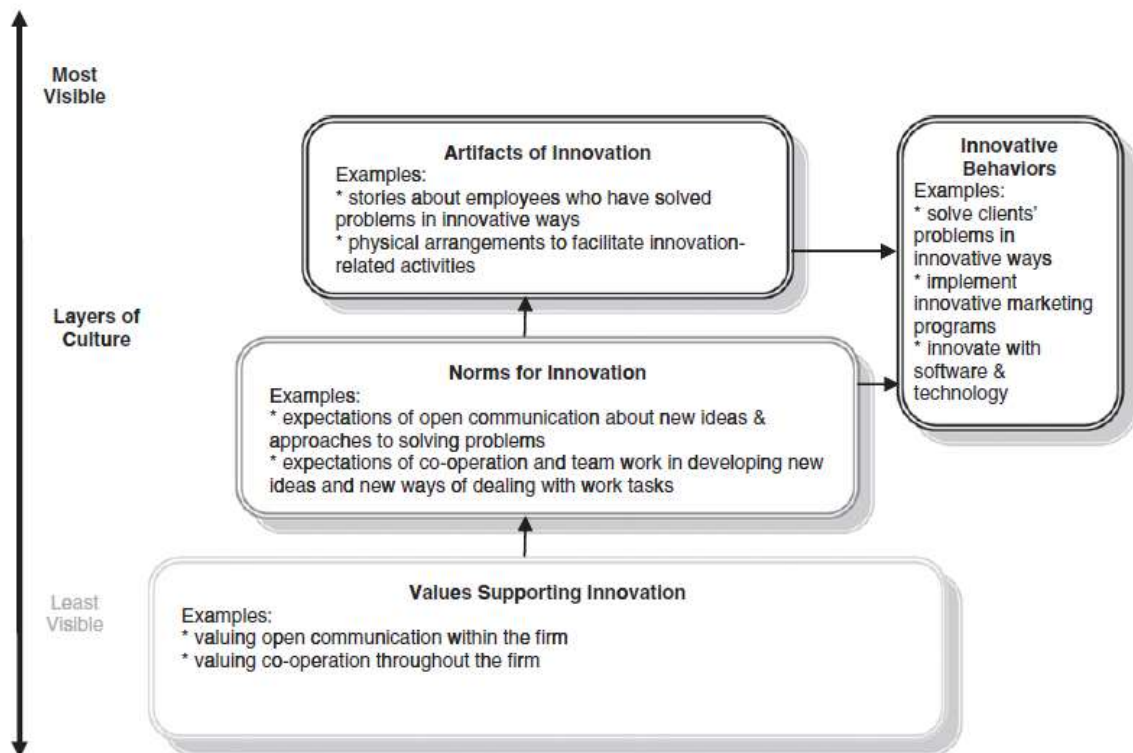


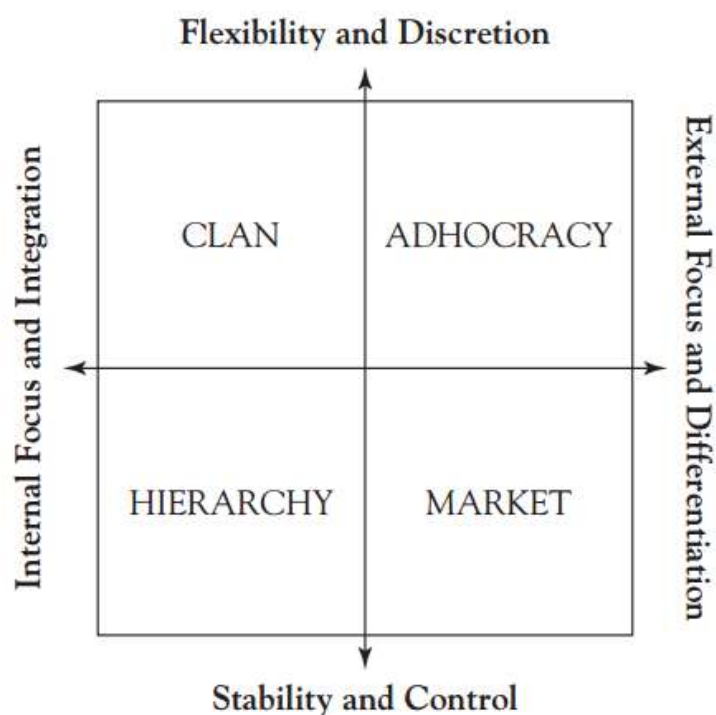
Fig. 1. Layers of an organizational culture that supports innovation.

Cucu-Ciuhan and Guita-Alexandru (2014) provide an example of work where Schein’s work has been applied to analyse a university. In their study of a Romanian state university they compare the effect of organisational culture to the work motivation of academics. By using a survey based tool, they found statistically significant association between ‘desired organisational culture and motivation for work’ (P.452). This showed that those within the university that showed higher economic motivators were in favour of a greater ‘power-based’ culture, whereas those motivated more by social aspects of their work (team work, informal leadership) were in favour of a ‘support type’ culture. Whilst this study only 100 academics from one university, the results from academics do show evidence of the environmental tensions seen impacting upon the organisation’s (university’s) culture.

To analyse organisational culture Cameron and Quinn’s (2006) created the Competing Values Framework which illustrated the inter-relationship between the following areas and

how emphasis may be changing due to higher fees: 'Flexibility and Discretion' as opposed to 'Stability and Control' and 'External Focus and Differentiation' as opposed to 'Internal Focus and Integration' (p.35). This model, Competing Values Framework, proposes that each of the opposing elements of an organisation's culture are in tension with each other. Placed opposing on a cross axis, producing four differing quadrants, the Framework can be seen below in Figure 3.4, from Cameron and Quinn (2011, p.39).

Figure 3.4 Cameron and Quinn's (2011) Competing Values Framework



This Framework produces four values which the authors suggest can be prevalent in any organisation. To explain, for an organisation to in part inhabit the lower right-hand quadrant, an organisation would place emphasis on stability and controlling policies yet would be focused upon external forces and how to differentiate; resulting in possessing elements of strong competitive or 'market' culture.

Application of this Framework is seen in Cameron and Quinn's Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI). This tool is presented to the research subject (in this case an employee of the organisation) in the form of six sets of statements regarding the

organisation. The sets are based around: dominant characteristics, organisational leadership, management of employees, organisational glue, strategic emphases, and criteria of success. Each set gives the research subject four opposing statements which could describe their organisation, but which they must rank, but dividing and allocation of 100 marks to each of the statements. The truer the statement is the more marks that the employee gives that statement. As shown in Figure 3.5, marks are given for the organisation is, and how the employee would prefer it to be, again referring to Cameron and Quinn (2011, p.30):

Figure 3.5 Example of Cameron and Quinn’s (2011) OCAI questions

<i>1. Dominant Characteristics</i>	<i>Now</i>	<i>Preferred</i>
A The organization is a very personal place. It is like an extended family. People seem to share a lot of themselves.		
B The organization is a very dynamic and entrepreneurial place. People are willing to stick their necks out and take risks.		
C The organization is very results-oriented. A major concern is with getting the job done. People are very competitive and achievement-oriented.		
D The organization is a very controlled and structured place. Formal procedures generally govern what people do.		
Total	100	100

Once completed the scores in each bank of questions are collated. Scores for all A, B, C and D questions are summed and averaged. These scores are then plotted to produce a graphical representation which overlays the cross-axis diagram show in Figure 3.3. Therefore, the higher the scores for each letter the higher the correlating culture type (clan, adhocracy, hierarchy, market) is. Figure 3.6 shows an example from Berrio (2003) of how this is plotted:

Figure 3.6 An example of Cameron and Quinn’s (2011) OCAI on Competing Values Framework

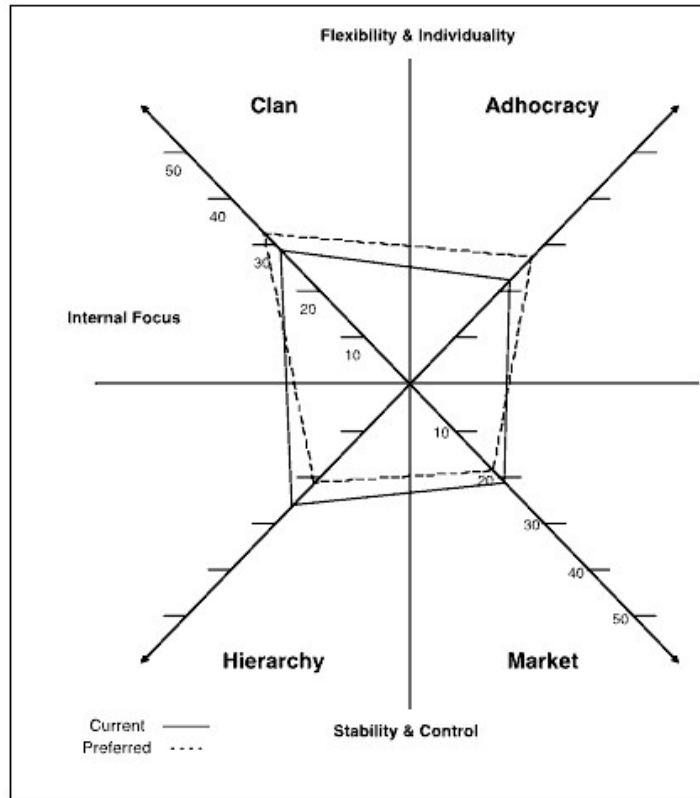


Figure 3.6 shows Berrio’s (2003) work which plots the results of the OCAI onto the competing values framework axis. This higher education example is of Ohio State University Extension (a unit of the University which supports widening participation, learning and research within the community). The differences between the current and preferred line can explain employees (as individuals or collated as a group/department/workforce) perceptions of the organisational culture. The plotted results give insights into the phenomena of organisational culture, which as discussed earlier, is in nature hard to measure and define. Whilst Camron and Quinn’s (2006) model can be challenged as to providing a too simplistic account of the complex internal forces that organisational culture can pose, it does allow leaders and managers to understand the perceptions of their workforce and hence give a useful grounding when planning change and development.

In the example in Figure 3.6, the preferred increase in Clan culture could suggest that the employees would want to see more team work and higher levels of trust. The increase in Adhocracy could be interpreted that employees want to see the organisation be more creative and bolder in innovation. The decrease in Hierarchy would suggest a reduction in micromanagement and bureaucracy. Finally, a preferred decrease in market culture could suggest that the company needs to refocus aims from income/external targets to increase those internal human motivational goals (Camroon and Quinn, 2011). Compared to other examples, comparing the 'now' and 'preferred' in Figure 3.6 shows that the employee base is not expecting major change in any of the four cultures. However, that is not to say that all employees are motivated and happy in their work or with the organisation. Also, leaders of the organisation may have expected different results. These comparisons lead to an informed starting point for implementing change within an organisation. Berrio's (2003) findings agreed with similar US studies of the time that suggest the majority of higher education institutes had a strong Clan culture type.

3.5 Conclusions and reflection

Changing Cultures? Influences of increased fees, competition and accountability

This final section reviews the arguments that are imposing new performance indicators, such as increasing NSS scores, on an existing University Organisational Culture may result in unwanted tensions between academics and leaders.

In the main, following the end of the polytechnic binary split in the early 1990s, the higher education industry has seen emerging identities formed, such as 'research intensive' and 'teaching institution'. As a result, the differing universities have differing proportions of income streams – e.g. research grants or private consultation contracts. For some universities their bulk of income will be reliance on student fees; this sees institutions forced to take a corporate competitive approach to areas such as advertising, public engagement and

corporate social responsibility. As industry change has taken place, so has the shift in university organisational culture, where effective management is associated with an established corporate culture (Jamanbalayeva et al, 2013).

Growth in student numbers has caused 'tension between the priorities of higher education' (Altbach, 2016, p.288). This tension can be seen in the demand for academics to teach growing numbers of students, yet in the main, recognition, promotion and increased salaries are normally associated with academic's research productivity, rather than their teaching productivity. To summarise, the traditions of universities being producers of knowledge, can be seen as a barrier to increased and sustained improvement of the student experience. Even today it is fair to claim that the dominant value of Higher Education is in research and publication rather than in management (or teaching) excellence. Evidence of this can be seen in the suggestion that introduction of the new Teaching Excellence Framework, including potential increase in fees from successful TEF results, is unlikely to 'erode the dominate position or research' in leading universities (Havergal, 2016)

Reaction from universities has seen roles change too. The managerialism of executives, the increased importance of business managers and the arguably lowered voice from the professoriate on the direction of their institutions. This perpetuates the tension between university management and university academics who both believe in their own importance in improving student experience. Altbach (2016) explains that massification caused universities to grow and restructure administratively and bureaucratically, fuelled by technology, internal quality departments and managers have grown accordingly. The 'decline in professorial power' and rise in the 'career track professional' administrative management in modern universities is an example of this change in culture (Altbach, 2016, p.39). Reaction has also seen a shift in academic roles too. Teaching only contracts can be seen at various institutions (Fazackerley 2013b) and, in part due to some strategic game play of improving Research Excellence Framework (REF) results in 2014, the number of academics on teaching only contracts is increasing (Grove, 2014). These changes show the changing face of academics in light of universities adapting to increased demand of improved quality in large student population.

3.6 Reflections on Chapter 2 and Chapter 3

This section reflects upon the literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 3, providing a holistic commentary of the breath of the discussion. Chapters 2 and 3 review two perspectives – students as investors in Higher Education, and students as consumers of Higher Education. Later chapters analyse the key findings of the research within these perspectives. For example, the Human Capital perspective is examined in Chapter 5 through an analysis of price sensitivity which is discussed in relation to the literature in Chapter 7, section 7.1.2. Human Capital Theory, linked to students choosing to engage in Higher Education to improve their earning potential, using the works of Becker 1964, and links to Renfew et al (2010) as evidence on the influences of degree choice, is drawn on in Chapter 7, section 7.1.1.

The perspective of ‘student as a consumer’ is examined in Chapter 6 which analyses survey and interview results on expectations of the student experience and the difference that students believe higher fees would make to this experience. Chapter 7 provides a critical review of this evidence in the light of to the literature in Chapter 3. Dunett et al (2012) and Renfew et al (2012) are examples in section 7.2.1 which analyses the applicants’ use of published performance data to make decisions on whether to study. This makes reference to key performance indicator data (such as KIS) and also wider factors of accommodation and local nightlife. How differing university life factors influence decisions can be seen in the works of Renfew et al (2010). More recent works of Kandio and Mawer (2013) and Neves and Hilman (2016) acknowledge the growing issue of students’ recognition of increased fees within the concept of ‘value for money’. Whilst these later works make connections between price and value, they do not provide any empirical research which link the beliefs and views of students on differing price fees during the time of change and price implementation, leaving an omission within the field. This study addresses that omission, and as set out in Chapter 4, 7 and 8 shows how the opportunity of a natural experiment of changing fees results in the project creates new knowledge within the field.

Chapter 4 Methodology

The opening sections of this chapter provide a detailed explanation of how the research was approached. This is followed by a review and justification of how the research was carried out and how the data were analysed.

In order to provide clear signposting for the reader, the chapter is organised under the following subheadings:

4.1 Research focus and questions

4.2 Research Design

4.2.1 The occurrence of a natural experiment

4.2.2 Case study approach

4.2.3 The choice of organisations

4.2.4 Justification of choice of methods

4.3 Student and staff samples

4.3.1 Survey samples

4.3.2 Selection of staff interviewees

4.4 Design and administration of data collection with students and staff

4.4.1 Student survey

4.4.2 HE staff survey

4.4.3 Interviews with senior staff

4.5 Ethics

4.6 Data analysis

4.6.1 Data cleansing and missing student survey data

4.6.2 Bivariate analysis in SPSS

4.6.3 Calculating Price Elasticity of Demand from student survey data

4.6.4 Analysing student influences on choosing which institution to study from the student survey data

4.6.5 Analysis of academic survey data

4.6.6 Analysis and coding of interview data

4.6.7 Analysing relationships between the different data sources

4.7 Conclusion and reflection

4.1 The research focus and questions

The focus of the research undertaken was the effect of the 2012 tuition fee increases within England. In order to investigate this, the following research questions were developed:

1. How does the level of tuition fees affect the decision to participate in higher education?
2. How does the level of tuition fees affect students' expectations of their experience in higher education?
3. What effect did higher education leaders believe the rise in tuition fees in England in 2012 would have on students' expectations?

These questions were refined and constructed over a period of time leading up to the research. As explained in Chapter 1, section 1.4, the original plans for the study were to have great focus on the internal organisational cultural changes within the institution. However as the formation and design of the project grew, the main objectives were to focus upon the effect of fees and resulting student and staff expectations. Research question 1 was framed to address the implications of the tuition fee rise from the perspective of human capital theory. The research background to this question was outlined in Chapter 2. Research question 2 was framed to address the implications of the perspective of 'the student as consumer' and the background to this question was reviewed in Chapter 3. Chapter 3 also reviewed research on the question of institutional responses to the tuition fee increases and this provided the background to research question 3.

Chapter 8 returns to these questions. It provides a detailed discussion of the findings and analysis. Section 8.2 also reflects on the limitation of research question 2.

4.2 Research Design

In 2012 tuition fees were increased significantly (approx. £3,000 per year to £9,000 per year) due to the removal of government funding and introduction of larger student loans (Harrison et al, 2013).

The research undertaken was able to utilise this change in order to investigate the decisions made to participate in higher education and the expectations students had. This created a natural experiment (see section 4.2.1) allowing a comparison of the students who began their studies in the academic year starting 2012, and the students who had started their studies in the previous year and who continued to pay the lower rate of fees.

The research is a single case study. As explained in section 4.2.3 this focuses on one HEI, with supplementary data drawn from one of the HEI's associated FE colleges. This methodological approach encourages the adoption of mixed methods (Modell, 2009). This study relies on gathering data on the voices of participants (how they interpret their world) whilst relating these to decisions they have made (study at a particular university or further education college in partnership with that university).

A student survey was used to collect data in response to research questions 1 and 2, whilst a staff survey and follow up interviews were used to answer research question 3. The decision to use student surveys is outlined in Table 4.1 and explained in section 4.2.4, but essentially gathering a larger proportion of student data via surveys appeared the most reliable and valid approach. Similarly, surveys to academic staff was considered to be the most appropriate way to gather data from busy professionals. Following the collection of survey data, a small number of senior staff were identified to provide explanation and justification of potential changes in expectations of the institution. These were conducted using semi structured interviews. Table 4.1 highlights the overarching themes of the research, and how these were addressed through the use of mixed data collection methods with different participant groups.

Table 4.1: The mixed methods approach utilised to collect data

	<u>Student Surveys</u> – HEI and HE in FE students (cohorts beginning study in 2011 and 2012)	<u>HEI Academic Staff Survey</u>	<u>Senior Academic Staff Interviews</u> (HEI and HE in FE)
Student participation in HE <i>(Research questions 1 and 2)</i>	Experience: a) reasons to study and invest within education b) likelihood of attendance and price sensitivity c) influences on where to study		
Students' expectations of their experience in higher education <i>(Research question 2)</i>	Experience: a) student facing services b) organisational improvements c) organisational cultural	Experience: a) academic staff perceived student expectations b) organisational practice c) organisational cultural	Experience: a) organisational perceived student expectations and attitudes b) organisational practice change c) expected change to academic role d) expected organisational cultural change
Academic beliefs of student expectations <i>(Research question 3)</i>	Experience: a) perceived student expectations b) student participation c) sector culture	Experience: a) perceived student participation b) sector practice c) sector culture	Experience: a) sector responses b) sector practices c) sector culture

The following sections review the research design and how this was conducted. Section 4.2.1 outlines the organisations in which the research was based; and 4.2.2 provides data regarding the participants involved in the research and how they were selected. In addition, tables 4.1 and 4.2 (in section 4.2.5) provide an overview of the research population.

Appendix 4H contains a data collection log and timeframe of when the research was carried out.

4.2.1 The opportunity to use a 'natural experiment'

In response to the Browne (2010) report, there was a substantial increase in student tuition fees for new students going into higher education in England. New full-time undergraduate students in 2012 were subject to tuition fees of up to £9,000 per academic year; whilst existing students' fees would remain circa £3,000 per year. Such a momentous development provided a naturally occurring opportunity to investigate the expectations and views of students paying variable amounts in tuition fees.

During the focus year for data collection, the academic year 2012/13, undergraduate students starting higher education course would be first cohort required to pay increased tuition fees. Thus, a culture of higher fee paying amongst students and academics had yet to develop. The increase was known for over a year before implementation, resulting in record applications to higher education during 2011/12. Whilst the academic community were concerned over the national student riots and demonstrations (Lewis et al, 2010), the extent of impact following higher fees on individuals, and their perceptions and expectations, were unknown. Concurrently, how higher education establishments would address and meet the perceived changes in student expectation would provide a pertinent focus for research.

Whilst the impact of increased fees to full-time universities was the subject of media and public concern (Lewis et al, 2010), fees charged for students studying higher education courses in Further Education colleges (HE in FE) were infrequently reported. The system of FE institutions franchising degrees from Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and then charging less for the same final degree qualification appeared to be marginalised in the debates and coverage. This provided the opportunity to investigate students' expectations on choosing to study HE in FE compared to those within a university.

The data collection period 2012/13 allowed for research to be conducted which could address a range of current and emerging issues. These included considerations of whether

there were differences in students' expectations between those paying higher and lower fees; whether students perceived higher education as a means to invest in their future; whether there were significant factors involved in the decision-making processes of students with regard to course and higher or further education selection. It is possible that students surveyed during the second year might have expressed different views if they had been surveyed in their first year. However, it is not obvious that this would be the case given that the policy change had been signalled well in advance. The investigation timeframe enabled exploration of how higher education establishments prepared for perceived changes in student expectations; how students expected higher education to change following the higher fees; and whether there were differences in these factors when comparing university and HE in FE students.

4.2.2 Case study approach

This research project has taken a case study approach. Explaining what a case study approach is can be difficult as in each research project the case will differ. As such, the nature of a case study using a potential range of research methods means that defining the term as a research method can be ambiguous (Easton, 2010a).

The most common use of the term can be seen referring to a particular location, organisation, or group (Bryman, 2012). Grix (2004, p.162) gives a definition of case-study research:

'A case-study is a restriction or narrowing of focus to one or more towns, individuals, organisations, etc., which are studied in great detail...They represent particular strategies for research, involving empirical investigation of particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, and employing multiple sources of evidence'.

The quote above is very similar to Robson's work in the 1990s in which Robson explains how the term 'contemporary phenomenon' is used in order for the 'case' to be virtually anything (Robson, 1995).

Research in case-study format falls into both quantitative and qualitative paradigm in terms of data gathering (Grix, 2004). Bell (1999) referred to the use of the term 'umbrella' by Adelman et al (1977) acknowledging that case-study researchers may utilise several data gathering methods focusing on inquiry on the chosen 'case' (Adelman et al, 1977). However, case-study research tends to be seen as a qualitative paradigm in its interpretive approach to the data it collects (Clough and Nutbrown, 2002). Northey et al (2002, p.79) gave further explanation to this paradigm when writing:

'They [qualitative researchers] are more concerned with how an entire pattern of thinking and acting fits together, with the uniqueness and changeability of the situation they are studying, and with the strange interplay between their own consciousness as observers and the consciousness of the people they are studying'

The ability to apply quantitative and qualitative research methods within the case study methodology is noted by Bryman (2012) who explained further the differences of the resulting research. Bryman (2012) claimed that case studies that rely on qualitative approaches tended to be inductive, whereas when a quantitative approach was taken the case study tends to be deductive.

Northey et al (2002) discussed 'the uniqueness and changeability of the situation' as a motivation for using a case study approach. This case study examines the implementation of a particular policy in a particular place. The rationale for the emphasis upon context is that a 'specific case ... (helps the researcher) to identify, uncover and unpick specific contextual factors in which the event, ... you are analysing is embedded' (Grix, 2004, p.51). Bell (1999) simplified this area of 'context' by noting how case-study researchers could attempt to identify the interactive processes at work that affect the case itself. These interactions were so embedded in the context of the case, they would either be missed or hidden in larger scale

research methods (Bell 1999). Within this study the interactions would be those between participants; academic staff and students.

Whilst case study research provides the methodical approach required for this project, criticisms of the method are acknowledged. In this instance the validity of a single case – one university – cannot be treated as representative of the wider population – in this example all student of higher education (Bryman, 2012). If the sample does not represent a wider population then we must be cautious about inferences about the causal process that have been active elsewhere in the higher education sector (Denscome, 1998).

4.2.3 The choice of organisations

The research was undertaken across two English institutions: one 'post 1992' university, and one Further Education (FE) college which offered degree awards. The selection of an FE college, which franchised its degree courses from the same university, enabled a comparison between the views of students choosing to study Higher Education in a Further Education college (HE in FE).

These intuitions were chosen because of several reasons. The initial decision-making process centred upon the university. Explained in section 4.3.1, as a small to medium sized university, the student population from the study would be a sizable percentage of the university's total full-time undergraduate student body. Secondly, the university and college are based within the West Midlands region. This means that geographically there was little difference in terms of urbanisation between the two institutes. Within the staff and student surveys, this geographical region would factor out issues of moving to study within the capital city type decisions. Thirdly, the institution had many franchised partnerships which allowed access to the HE in FE setting. The college (HE in FE) was chosen as it was the university's largest full-time under graduate courses franchised partner. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The university used in this study received is a former polytechnic and received its awarding powers in 1992. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The institution was ranked within the lower quartile in the Guardian league rankings (www.theguardian.com/education/table/2011/may/17/university-league-table-2012). The university's portfolio was consistent with other post 1992 institutions. For example, it did not have a medical school, but offered a range of medical focussed courses such as nursing. Other professionally linked courses were offered by the university, including initial teacher training. The university had a Law School, and students from the School were included in the research. Table 4.2 provides a detailed breakdown of the subject areas involved, in summary these were: law, English, computing and business.

Several members of the university's executive team were new to the organisation (within 18 months) and during the period of data collection, a small-scale staffing restructure was undertaken. The university had organisational change in the run up and during the research, yet this was arguably happening elsewhere in the sector at the time. This change had an impact upon the research findings and approach, however there is some reference to internal change within the interviews with the senior staff.

The FE college included in the research is based within the same county as the university. The college offers a range of pre-HE courses, both vocational and academic, such as A-Levels. Utilising data captured in the college OFSTED (2012) report, the college had just over 3000 full-time and 2000 part-time Level 3 and below learners. There were 71 full-time and 287 part-time HE in FE students registered during the 2012/13 academic year. The college was a franchised partner of the university discussed above. The franchise relationship meant that the university was a preferred, but not sole, provider of validated courses which could be taught by college staff at the college. Of all the university's partners, this college had the largest full-time franchised undergraduate population; this was the key factor for choosing

the college within this study. In addition, the college was a key provider for progressing Level 3 (A Level, BTEC) students to the university in starting undergraduate degrees.

Collecting data from linked Further Education colleges proved challenging. A second college also agreed to participate and the Higher Education manager was interviewed. This college was identified as it had a large full-time undergraduate cohort, although these were not franchised from the university. Unlike the first college, this provider requested that student questionnaires were sent electronically. However, the college secured no student questionnaire returns. As the number of student survey responses was reaching 700, it was decided that this second college would not be included within the project sample. Given the number of responses secured, the omission of the second college did not require a change to the research design.

4.2.4 Justification of choice of methods

The research used quantitative and qualitative methods. The use of mixed methods can provide greater validity through triangulation of the differing sources (Bryman 2012). This study used a mix of surveys and interviews. Surveys were used to gather data from students and academic staff. Interviews were used to gather data from senior managers to understand the rationale for the institutional responses to the opportunity to raise fees.

Surveys are a popular method of data gathering (Sapsford 2007; Bell 1999). This popularity is for several reasons. Firstly, questionnaires provide a relatively inexpensive method of gathering large samples (Sapsford, 2007; Frankel and Wallen, 1993). There are different methods in which questionnaires can be circulated. In the research all surveys were completed in hard copy. As discussed in section 4.3.1 the majority of questionnaires, which were responses by students based in a university, were handed out by the researcher prior to lectures. In the FE college the HE manager administered the questionnaires.

A questionnaire can be used to gather multiple types of data, often numerical, which makes comparisons and the consequential analysis relatively straightforward (Cohen et al, 2000).

Design, appropriateness and deployment of questionnaires is not to be taken without deep thought and reflection upon its aims and its target audience (Sapsford, 2007; Wisker, 2001).

In relation to this particular research, survey research would be useful in terms of gathering numerical data about students and staff. These data would ascertain information such as age, sex, nationality, education etc. This information was useful in relation to the motivational aspect of the research, where these factors impact upon outcome. However, the required time to complete the questionnaire was given great consideration. Whilst quality and breadth of data are required from the research tool, if the questionnaire takes too long to complete then it jeopardises completion rates. A common fault of the questionnaire is poor return of data, in either non-returned or poorly completed questionnaires. Gall et al (1996) pointed out that this can be the fault of the researcher, by not giving sufficient time and analysis over the creation of the questionnaire itself. Trial samples can avoid large-scale disappointment; as explained in section 4.4.1 student questionnaires were trialled by a group of business students.

Whilst the survey approach can provide data from a large population in a short time, the approach was not to be the only form of research within the project. The aims and objectives of the research were to find common trends in both practice and in viewpoints. Using only a survey would not achieve this. There are questions which are important in this study which questionnaires will not explore. To find such data, would require more than empirical data analysis (Gall et al, 1996).

Unlike survey research, interviews provide richer qualitative findings. As acknowledged by Miller and Glassner (2016) interviews cannot be assumed to provide a 'mirror reflection of the social world' (p.53) but they do allow the researcher to access the subjects' understanding and perceptions of their experiences and social constructions.

It was decided that interviews would be face to face, rather than at a distance via telephone or video call. When conducting face to face interviews there is a personal interaction, which the interviewer needs to be aware of (Walliman, 2001). This needs to be considered in the

design of the questions and the structure of the interview. As explained in section 4.2.4 these interviews were semi-structured, designed to set a professional, but relaxed, tone in which the interviewee felt comfortable to speak. Deliberate use of open questions to encourage discussion and explanation can be seen in Appendix 4D through 4G (Flick, 2014). Furthermore, as each of the interviewees were experienced professionals they were confident at expressing themselves in this field.

There are three main structures of interviews: structured, where the interview is tightly controlled by the interviewer; semi-structured, where the interviewer has clear lists and notes of what topics to cover but takes a more flexible approach; and unstructured interviews, where the emphasis is more unobtrusive and thoughts and themes are pursued (Punch, 2014; Denscombe, 2003). Patton (2002) describes semi-structured interviews that can allow the interviewee to elaborate and expand on certain areas which were more applicable in their organisational structure or strategy. Whilst not used in this project examples of interactional interviews, as described by Holstein and Gubrium (2016) were considered. These more interactive and fluid approaches were not followed as it was deemed that given the nature of the participants (academics with at least post-graduate levels of research background) they would prefer a one-to-one and more orthodox interview.

Denscombe (2003) noted the potential impact on the interview of the interviewer's 'personal identity'. This takes into account the effect of factors such as the interviewer's age and gender. In this study the researcher, compared to those interviewed was a junior academic. During the interviews, in some cases, the researcher had the impression that the interviewee was 'teaching' the interviewee about the subject matter – possibly due to the organisation hieratical relations. In this instance this was seen as an advantage and that the interviewee spoke freely and at length. By approaching interviewees prior to the interview in a professional but relaxed manner and continuing this throughout the interview will aid the data-gathering task. Miller and Glassner (2016) explained that initial approaches, interviewee and interviewer relations and finally the interviewer's knowledge of the subject matter are all important in the ability to conduct effective interviews. Successful

interviewers provide a climate where they can respond, ask follow-up questions and challenge the interviewee's perceptions allowing further data to be gathered.

4.3 Student and staff samples

This section provides an overview and justification of the sampling for the students and academic staff selected for the differing parts of the study.

4.3.1 Survey samples

A purposive sampling strategy was used (Silverman, 2010). Survey data were collected from students and staff in three of the university's four faculties. The faculty omitted was the Faculty of Health Sciences. This was omitted as students were mainly based in practice and proved hard to reach in terms of availability for research in large groups. Within these faculties the data collection focused on the following subjects: English, Business, Law, and Computer Science. These subjects were chosen to provide a range of subjects reflecting the emphasis of the university on applied subjects. These subjects were also chosen as students attended large core lectures which facilitated the implementation of the survey.

632 questionnaires were collected and processed, approximately 6.5% of the overall full-time on-campus undergraduate population (approx. 6.5% of 2011 and 2012 entry cohorts). Five respondents did not indicate that they were over 18, a requirement of the research selection criteria, so the sample was reduced to 627. The sample enables a comparison between Year 1 students on the new fee regime and students attending Year 2 classes who were on the previous fee regime. 302 students were in Year 1, 306 in Year 2 and 19 in Year 3 or higher year groups. This anomaly of third years is accounted for students re-taking their second year and also those progressing from Foundation degree awards. Year 2 and Year 3 respondent data was grouped together for analysis as the research focussed on the factors impacting on HE studies for students entering the University during the September 2012 cycle and those prior.

The FE college sample comprised responses from 67 students studying full time Higher Education Awards at the college, 44 in Year 1 and 23 in Year 2 or above. Only 71 full-time ('HE in FE') students were registered with the college during this time period, therefore this represented a very significant proportion of those able to respond, 94%.

All data from first year undergraduate students were collected between September and October 2012, designed to capture the initial and uninfluenced views and expectations from the 2012 new starters. The majority of the data collection from second year students was collected during the same time frame, with the exception of English which took place in February 2013 due to timetabling issues. The time delay for this sample was not seen as a factor which would alter their responses, whereas if they were first years it could be argued that they might have formed different opinions in the four months at university. The FE student data was collected in September 2012. Details of data collection can be seen in Appendix 4H.

As the students surveyed were from three (out of four) faculties within the university, only staff within these faculties were invited to participate in the staff survey. HE in FE staff were not surveyed due to the small population of teachers who would have contact with these students.

Tables 4.2 and 4.3 provide summaries of the data gathered within the project. More information on the samples can be found in sections 5.1 and 6.1 within the results chapters.

Table 4.2 Descriptive summary of all students surveyed

Subject	Total (%)
Number of students	694 (100)
Studying at university	627 (90)
Is first year student	346 (49.9)
White	502 (72.3)
Non-white	188 (27.1)
Male	381 (54.9)
Female	305 (43.9)
Age 18-21	557 (80.3)
Mother been to University	149 (21.5)
Father been to University	157 (22.6)
Mother professional or managerial	193 (27.8)
Father professional or managerial	305 (43.9)
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	446 (71.1)
Studying business	138 (19.9)
Studying law	216 (31.1)
Studying English	51 (7.3)
Studying computing	222 (32)
Studying subject unknown	67 (9.7)

Table 4.3 - Descriptive summary of university staff surveyed

Descriptor	Total (%)
All staff	97 (100)
Male	52 (53.6)
Female	45 (46.4)
Age 18-50	52 (53.6)
Age 51-60	30 (30.9)
Age 61+	15 (15.5)
Worked in this institution for over 3 years	74 (76.3)
Over 5 years HE service	77 (79.4)
Worked in more than one institution	43 (44.3)
Work full time	81 (83.5)
Student facing academics	71 (73.2)
Non-student facing academics (Management or research academics)	24 (24.7)
Management	16 (16.5)
Arts and Creative Technology Faculty	24 (24.7)
Business Education and Law Faculty	48 (49.5)
Computing, Engineering and Sciences Faculty	24 (24.7)
Cross University role	1 (1)

4.3.2 Selection of senior staff interviewees

Five senior academics were interviewed to provide further detail and explanation of staff responses. Each interviewee had been employed by either the university or the FE college for over four years, and in most cases significantly longer. Each of the senior staff was a member of their respective faculty/department senior management teams and reported into senior staff committees regarding university/college policy on student experience and the institutional fee setting proposals.

These interviews were designed so that senior academics could respond to the headline results of the student survey data. These academics were chosen as they balanced two key

elements in their role – ensuring quality standards across their faculty (e.g. NSS) and recruitment targets. Given their expertise in these areas four staff were from the university, three of which were Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching (ADLT) from the three Faculty's in which students in the student population belong to: Arts and Creative Technology Faculty (ACT); Business Education and Law Faculty (BEL); Computing, Engineering and Sciences Faculty (CES). This information should be provided earlier in the student data collection section. The fourth university academic was a director of the university's Academic Development Unit and was included in the sample to be interviewed in order to provide an institutional perspective. The final interview was undertaken with the Higher Education manager from the FE college.

4.4 Design and administration of data collection with students and staff

A data collection log can be seen in Appendix 4H. This shows dates, number of collected and processed surveys. It also includes the time taken for each interview. This form was used ongoing throughout the data collection time period as an ongoing record. The version in Appendix 4H has had names deleted due to ethical considerations. The working log included contact names for those interviewed and also for academic points of contact for each of the subject areas.

4.4.1 Student surveys

As explained below a student survey was designed, tested and distributed to students, in both the HEI and the FE college. To be sensitive to students coming from each institution, two slightly differing versions of the questionnaire were produced, as seen in Appendix A and Appendix B respectively.

An initial pilot student questionnaire was trialled with a small group of undergraduate business students attending the university. These students were chosen because their field of study was market research so they were expected to be well equipped to critically review the clarity of the survey. Amendments were made to the survey from the feedback received

through this pilot, although these were mostly minor amendments to assist the reader in comprehension. The pilot also provided feedback on how long it took to complete the questionnaire. Information about the expected time for completion was added to the instruction section at the front of each questionnaire.

HEI student survey

A copy of the HEI questionnaire is provided in Appendix 4A. Questions were split into three main themes. The first theme was student characteristics in terms of age, gender and social background (seen in questions 1 to 11). The second theme was student responsiveness to change in tuition fees (questions 12, 15 and 16). These second theme questions directly related to Research Question 1 which sets out to understand how the level of tuition fee effects the decisions to participate in higher education. The third theme was university characteristics influencing choice of course linked to reasons for studying (questions 13 and 14). Finally, a series of questions focused on each student's predictions of changes to the learning environment after the fee change. These later questions relate to Research Question 2 which asks how the level of tuition fees effect students' expectations of their experience in higher education.

As discussed further in section 4.5, the surveys were originally created using the online survey tool Qualtrics. However, rather than administer the surveys online, in order to maximise student participation hard copies of the questionnaires were handed out in lectures and were completed in lecture halls with the assistance of module tutors. Given that surveys would be handed out, the Qualtrics designed survey had to be exported into Word. This resulted in some redesigning of the questions due to the formatting. Core module lectures were targeted to maximise student numbers and participation rates; and to ensure that all students were studying the subject discipline as the major part of their awards. The process took approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete. Some students attending the lectures in law were on foundation year studies paying fees. These students are identified in the analysis through the fee rate they disclosed. Similarly, in business and law there were a

few students studying two year fast track awards and paid £9,000 per year, again these were identified by the fee rates they disclosed.

HE in FE student survey

FE college student responses were collected in a similar manner. An HE in FE version of the survey was produced (see Appendix 4B) using Qualtrics. This questionnaire used most of the questions in the university student survey, as explained in 4.4.1. There were two differences between the two student surveys. Firstly, all questions based around university factors were omitted or changed to fit with experience of students at the FE college (questions 16-27). This includes questions which acknowledge the potential of progressing students (from pre-undergraduate, e.g. A-Level, to undergraduate) within the college. Secondly, students attending the FE college were asked about price sensitivity to fees at the university as well as price sensitivity to fees at the college (question 20).

In the same way the data was collected from the university sample, the questionnaire survey was exported into a Word document and printed as hard copies. These copies were distributed by the HE manager within the college, to the appropriate students.

Core module lectures were targeted and the students completed the surveys during class time. These were returned via the post to the researcher. This approach was taken opposed to sending surveys online via an electronic application, to enable maximum participation from students. Using this approach, the researcher avoided a low return. Low returns and poor data, could have reflected a poorly constructed questionnaire, but also jeopardise the validity of the results, due to the assumption that the small sample received represented the sample as a whole (Birely and Moreland, 1998; Denscombe, 2003).

4.4.2 HEI staff survey

A third survey was created using Qualtrics for university academic staff (see Appendix 4C). This survey collected background data from staff which included their gender, age and

service within Higher Education. In the first group of questions focused on student expectations of being in higher education and predicted changes to higher education following the introduction of higher fees. The later section of the survey included an 'Organisational Culture Assessment Instrument' (OCAI) based upon Cameron and Quinn's (2006) work. Despite significant time being dedicated to the development of this tool, the results from this were deemed to be superfluous to this project and therefore would be written up outside of this dissertation. This decision was made as whilst the OCAI tool would allow the plotting of results on the Competing Values Framework (Cameron and Quinn, 2006), as discussed in Chapter three, section 3.4.2, it would not be possible to apply or interpret any results clearly to any changes resulting in student fee rises.

Academic staff surveys were distributed electronically. An email with an embedded link to the online Qualtrics questionnaire was sent to all potential participants. Within Qualtrics, this method of distribution allows the prevention of repeat completions and 'ballot stuffing'.

4.4.3 Interviews with senior staff

Interviews were mostly arranged via emails and phone calls. All interviewees completed ethical approval contracts and were made aware of the objectives and intentions of the study. Interviews were recorded using a dictaphone application based on a tablet computer. This application allowed the local saving of the recording and secure saving to a cloud based storage as immediate backup. The interviews, of approximately forty minutes were later transcribed (by a third party).

Details of the differing types of interviews can be seen in the following appendices:

Appendix 4D – Interview questions for HE in FE manager – with commentary

Appendix 4E – Interview questions for university faculty Associate Deans

Appendix 4F – Interview questions for university director of Academic Development Unit

Appendix 4G – Example transcript – faculty Associate Dean

The transcripts in Appendix 4D-4F show the semi-structured nature of the interviews. The open-ended style of these questions allowed participants to elaborate and share their

perceptions of organisational direction and behaviour during the tuition fee transition period (Flick, 2014). Appendix 4D also provides a commentary which shows how the questions were devised; linking both the occurrence of a natural experiment in the form of tuition fee changes, and literature linked to organisational culture change. Each of these interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner. As explained by Punch (2014) the more unstructured the greater the levels of questioning and listening skills are required. To support the interviewees, bespoke rooms were booked to ensure that participants were not disturbed and both researcher and subject could concentrate and speak confidentially.

4.5 Ethics

The nature of this study posed no complex ethical decisions or situations, yet for the safety of all involved, ethical issues were given great consideration during this study. The research was devised so there was no need for identification of participants, protecting those participating. Anonymity and confidentiality were vital considerations which the researcher ensured throughout.

Ethical approval was first granted by the University of Birmingham. This approval was initially postponed until the security of the Qualtrics survey programme was validated. Despite Qualtrics being affiliated to a range of Ivy League American universities for research, the researcher had to gain evidence that Qualtrics's servers were secure. This was the first ethical approval application to the University of Birmingham which included the use of Qualtrics. Approval was achieved by confirming that Qualtrics used secure servers to hold all the online responses. Evidence was gathered from Qualtrics, which was passed on to the University of Birmingham, which eventually granted ethical permission (see Appendix 4I) (N.B. The letter contains the original proposed thesis title rather than the final title). The approval of the use of Qualtrics resulted in the University of Birmingham adding the software to the accepted usage registry.

Given that no individual student could be identified from completing the survey, their identity remained confidential. At the start of each survey, students had to indicate that they had read the opening statement. This statement explains the confidentiality of the statement.

If this statement is not ticked to indicate the students were aware, then the survey would have been void and not entered into the analysis. A sealable folder was provided to the FE College’s HE manager, as a place for completed questionnaires. These were kept in a secure and locked office. Silverman (2010) provides a list of prominent principles for ethical research, seen in Table 4.3. Using information explained above, this outlines how this study adheres to these principles.

Table 4.3 – How the project adheres to Silverman’s (2010) principles of ethics

Silverman’s principles	Achieved in student survey	Achieved in academic’s survey	Achieved in academic’s interview
Voluntary participation and the right to withdraw	Students made aware during the collection period that they did not have to complete the survey.	Academic survey was distributed via email. Choosing to complete was a voluntary choice.	Academics had a choice to agree to be interviewed. Consent forms were signed, and all participants agreed to the terms.
Protection of research participants	Completed surveys were anonymous. Uploaded onto secured Qualtrics.	Completed surveys were anonymous. Direct upload onto secured Qualtrics.	All interviews were recorded and then transcribed. All data were kept secured.
Assessment of potential benefits and risks to participants	Low risks of survey completion. Consideration of potentially aggravating students when questioning on tuition costs, but this was deemed as a low risk.	Low risks of survey completion. Consideration of any staff data being sensitive to their employment. Deemed low as staff could not be identified within the project.	Low risks of interview due to the senior members of staff responding to questions regarding their employer. Low risk as sensitive/endangering comments could be omitted by the researcher.
Obtaining informed consent	All questionnaires began with the initial questions of consent. If not completed, the survey was not included within the project.	All questionnaires began with the initial questions of consent. If not completed, the survey was not included within the project.	All surveys began with the initial questions of consent.
Not doing harm	Low/zero harm for students completing the survey.	Low/zero harm for academics completing the survey.	Low/zero harm for academics completing the interview.

Following the analysis, hard copies of completed student surveys are now kept in a secure and locked filing cabinet within a locked office which is only accessible by the author. All softcopy materials were stored on secure drives which were password protected. The data held on the Qualtrics website is secured by passwords.

Table 4.3, column two, row four, notes the assessment of risk to students when the surveys were given out. This particular risk acknowledges the sensitivity and potential tension within the 2012/13 entry cohort of knowing that they were subject to near triple tuition fees compared to the rest of the university student population, as discussed in Section 2.3 in Chapter 2.

Acknowledging potential tensions amongst student groups was actioned by ensuring that lower and higher fee-paying students were targeted in separate groups. This was achieved by distributing surveys in year group-based lectures as explained in section 4.4.1.

Interviews were conducted in an environment which best suits both researcher and interviewee, which all took place in the university or college. This environment put the interviewee at ease was quiet enough for the digital recording device to pick up both voices. All locations of interviews were in situated where were private and the interviewee could speak without fear of being overheard or interrupted. Interviewees signed a disclaimer, explaining how all interviews were confidential. An example can be found in Appendix 4J. In addition, organisational permission for research within the University was gained from the Academic Registrar which was accompanied by an explanation of the study. This can be seen in Appendix 4K. As discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.4 it was deemed that the researcher's role within higher education did not overtly effect the interviewees of influence their responses.

4.6 Data analysis

The survey software Qualtrics was used to design the questionnaires and for manual data entry. The data sets were then imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 for review and analysis.

Qualtrics was chosen due to its application in setting up cross tabular questions and its ability to produce outputs of recorded data to Excel and SPSS via .csv file formats. SPSS was chosen due to its ability to analyse and manipulate data in the tests described later in this section. Furthermore, both Qualtrics and SPSS were available to the research without charge; therefore, a level of convenience in using these packages is acknowledged.

4.6.1 Data cleansing and missing student survey data

During the first phase of running binary logistical regressions it became apparent, due to unexpected results that the data set held errors. After interrogation it was ascertained that the problems were due to missing data. This had not initially been identified at the data entry stage, partly as the data were imported via the Qualtrics online survey tool rather than manually importing the data into SPSS. Furthermore, it was diagnosed that the dummy variables which had originally been created turn all remaining variables into 0, therefore missing data was not being identified. To overcome the problem all dummy variables were recoded to ensure that missing data was recoded into being missing. A set of variables which recoded if original data was present were written. These variables were used in combination together within a function that enabled selection of only completed cases. Once these changes had been made the binary logistical regressions were executed, this time showing no anomalies.

4.6.2 Bivariate analysis in SPSS

Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 provide a range of qualitative results which have been analysed using SPSS. This section identifies some of the commonly used statistical tools and tests used in this analysis, explaining their purpose and usage.

Many of the tests use the data in dichotomous variables; when there are only two variable outcomes, for example male and female. Where other variables have been collected, dummy variables were created. For examples where participants recorded their age using interval variables on a six-point scale, these were recoded to provide a new set of variables which identified if participants were over or under the age of twenty one.

Bivariate analysis could then take place, often in production of contingency tables which allow the comparison and analysis of the pairs of variables. Table 5.11 in Chapter 5 shows an example of a contingency table. The table shows Pearson chi-square test results. In simplistic terms SPSS calculates the chi-square result by 'calculating the differences between the actual and expected values for each cell in the table and then summarising those differences' (Bryman, 2012, p. 349). Alongside this calculation SPSS produced associated level of statistical significance (P). P levels below 0.05 show as statistical significance between the pairs of variables for example a $P < 0.05$ means there is only a 5 in 1000 chance that there is no relationship between the two variables.

4.6.3 Calculating Price Elasticity of Demand from student survey data

Chapter 5, section 5.2 provides data on student price sensitivity to increases in tuition fees. This section explains how the data was analysed.

Price Elasticity of Demand provides a measure of the relationship between price (of a product or service) and the quantity demanded. In this instance a series of graphs below show Price Elasticity of Demand (PED) between the price points below £7000 and those between £7000 and £9000. Using the Arc method to calculate PED, which allows a price range rather than price points to be considered, it is defined as: $PED = (\% \text{ change in Quantity}) / (\% \text{ change in Price})$. Which has been calculated as:

$$Ed = \left[\frac{\text{midpoint } P}{\text{midpoint } Qd} \right] \times \left(\frac{\Delta Qd}{\Delta P} \right)$$

Although PED is often used in examples which have clearer rates of quantity change, e.g. number of burgers sold per hour, PED has been applied to provide magnitudes of elasticity between different price points and between the different groups and clusters of students discussed in this paper. As PED requires specific prices to be compared, rather than price ranges, where students have indicated that they'd be likely to attend university at a given range the lower fee has been used as the point price (therefore assuming that students would pay the minimum amount in the fee range).

4.6.4 Analysing student influences on choosing which institution to study from the student survey data

Chapter 5, section 5.4 analyses student survey data related to influences on student's decision making. This section explain how external and personal comparison factors were derived.

Externally comparable factors are those relating to areas which are relatively easy to compare between different universities; such as using Key Information Sets on the UniStats website (www.unistats.direct.gov.uk accessed June 2012). These factors include league table rankings and perceived reputation. Applications selecting university could make a long list of HEIs using this data with the use of the internet and prospectuses. Each of these factors can be relatively compared, or ranked, to other institutions.

Personal comparable is made up of influencing factors which will have an impact on the applicant's decision-making process however are not as easily comparable between universities and furthermore will be interpreted differently by individual students; for example the influence of 'nightlife' will have a different level of importance for differing applicants.

The final grouping was those influencers which resulted in some level of interaction between the applicant (or in this case current student who was once the applicant) and the

university. This included aspects of Open Day experience, the university's website and the atmosphere on campus seen in pre-student visits. Alike the personal comparable grouping these are again harder to quantify and compare to other institutions by a ranking system but have a high level of personal interpretation.

Grouping these in such a way allows the author and reader to interpret the results in a framed and logical manner. It is acknowledged that not all applicants will take this type of decision making process, but the conceivably applicant's decision making could firstly start at high externally comparable factors and finally working towards university bespoke services. Some may select location, price or employer links as their first and only criteria. Furthermore the 22 influencers are not an exhaustive list. It is recognised that in the early stages of devising the survey questions relating to the 'universities portfolio' were missed. The university does not have world ranking resources or significant geographical locations which would significantly impact upon portfolio being a factor – e.g. this is not a coastal university with a marine biology degree. However, questions regarding portfolio choice would have strengthened the survey's findings.

4.6.5 Analysis of academic survey data

Alike the student data, staff data were extracted from the survey capture tool Qualtrics and uploaded to SPSS for further manipulation. As explained in section 4.2.3 only the first sections of the staff survey would be used in this study, which related to expectations of students following fee increases. This meant that in comparison to the student surveys, these had less data to import to SPSS. Furthermore, there were no errors within the data and no missing data.

The data presented in Chapter 6 shows comparisons between academic and student responses. To provide this a separate SPSS workbook was created. This was a copy of the student workbook, containing all student data. This copied workbook was then manipulated to delete unwanted columns (those that didn't appear on the academic survey). Academic

responses were then manually imported. This was achieved by ensuring that in each case the columns were matched perfectly. Once this had been completed a series of checks were carried out; for example, descriptive statistical analyses. These results could then be compared with previous results from the independent student and staff surveys – e.g. number of responders; male and female responses etc. Once the author was content that the worksheet was in working order, dummy variables could be created to allow binary logistical regressions to be executed. In several instances, filters were created in order to run comparative analyses on differing groups within the data. Examples of this can be seen in Chapter 6 section 6.5.

4.6.6 Analysis and coding of interview data

Senior academic staff interviews were recorded on a mobile tablet device, using a dictaphone application. This application was enabled to upload the recording to a secure cloud-based drive. These recordings were then transcribed by an experienced commercial transcriber into Word. An example can be found in Appendix 4G.

Analysis of these transcripts and recordings took place using the computer-assisted data analysis software (CAQDAS) NVivo, version 9. This software allows the linking of sound recordings, documents and additional electronic materials (e.g. permission letters).

Using the themes covered in the literature review, a coding template was designed. A screen shot of this can be seen below in Figure 4.1. These were applied to the interview transcripts in uploaded and analysed in NVivo. Once applied, NVivo allows retrieval of the codes across all interviews, which enables improved comparison and analysis. The use of the Nvivo as a CAQDAS allows such examination to occur much quicker and also improves the rigour of searching through and analysing the qualitative data gathered (Silverman, 2010).

Figure 4.1 Screen shot from Nvivo showing coded nodes to analyse interview transcripts

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On
Basic Assumption		5	9 23/08/2015 11:24	JPH	27/08/2015 20:15
Changing Expectations		6	20 22/08/2015 12:38	JPH	27/08/2015 20:18
External Focus and Differentiation		6	34 22/08/2015 12:34	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Fee Setting		6	16 22/08/2015 12:35	JPH	27/08/2015 20:19
Fees Impacting Upon Campus Standards		3	5 23/08/2015 11:36	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Fees Impacting upon Teaching Environment Stan		1	4 23/08/2015 11:12	JPH	23/08/2015 11:23
Fees Impacting Upon Teaching Standards		6	25 22/08/2015 12:36	JPH	27/08/2015 20:16
Flexibility and Deserition		5	6 23/08/2015 11:21	JPH	27/08/2015 20:19
HE in FE		6	16 22/08/2015 12:36	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Internal Focus and Intergration		5	18 23/08/2015 11:15	JPH	27/08/2015 20:16
Stability and Control		6	16 23/08/2015 10:55	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Student Body		5	14 22/08/2015 12:31	JPH	27/08/2015 20:21
Surface Manifestations		6	26 22/08/2015 12:42	JPH	27/08/2015 20:15
University Change		4	11 22/08/2015 12:43	JPH	27/08/2015 20:21
Values		2	4 23/08/2015 11:11	JPH	23/08/2015 12:11

4.6.7 Analysing relationships between the different data sources

Recognising and analysing relationships between the different data sources occurred as the researcher focused upon the research questions as detailed in section 4.2 and outlined in Table 4.1. Namely the research themes were: students as investors and consumers – primarily Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964; Blaug, 1976; Johnes, 1993); Schein’s (1985) cultural model; Cameron and Quinn’s (2006) Competing Values Framework. Evidence to provide examples of the application of this approach can be seen in Section 4.2, Table 4.1 (outline of mixed methods); Appendix 4D (senior staff interviews with commentary); and Section 4.5.6, Table 4.2 (coding themes from interviews).

4.7 Conclusion and reflection

This Chapter has outlined the research questions, epistemological stance and the approaches undertaken to gather data. A large student survey sample coupled with both academic survey and interview data produced a rich data set for analysis.

Whilst the researcher had undertaken interviewing and small-scale surveys in previous research projects; this is the largest research project undertaken by the individual. The researcher's first degree included mathematics and therefore was competent with mathematical skills to complete the project. Qualtrics and NVivo had been used previously before, however this was the first time they had used SPSS and encountered economic concepts such as PED.

Using SPSS was a huge piece of learning undertaken by the researcher, both in terms of using the software and approaching the mathematical testing outlined in section 4.5. Section 4.5.1 explains, within 159 words, how missing data required recoding of data during the data analysis. However, this short section fails to fully capture the hours of investigation, often weeks apart for the part-time PhD student until this problem could be identified and fixed. Setting back the research a number of months. Whilst large amounts of time went into this, the researcher acknowledges the learning that has taken place and feels that skills learnt during this part of the process have been invaluable for their future research career.

In hindsight the researcher would have changed several aspects of the study. Firstly, greater investigation into fees higher than the £9,000 per year would have been an advantage given where fees are in 2017. In addition, the concept of repayment methods and interest rates would have been questioned within focus groups of students.

From academic staff, more explicit investigation of the spending and investment which was taking place at the time to improve the student experience would have been useful – although at times when the interviewees were questioned, they didn't seem to identify with concepts of targeted spending and investment. Finally, the expansion of the study, in terms of an additional FE college would have allowed a greater dimension of triangulation for the FE data. This would have enabled the researcher to be in a better position to publish findings following the completion of the PhD thesis.

As discussed above in section 4.5.7, the differing data sources have been analysed to provide two results chapters which are theme based:

Chapter 5 centres upon students having an identity as investors. This mainly draws upon two sources of data – surveys from HEI and surveys from HE in FE.

Chapter 6 takes a differing focus, which focuses upon the students as consumers. This Chapter brings together all data sources, comparing staff and student surveys and also triangulating with findings from the senior staff interviews.

Chapter 5 Results

Factors influencing students' decision to choose their higher education institution, including price sensitivity, following the introduction of higher tuition fees

This Chapter presents results on the influences upon student choice when entering higher education, including sensitivity to changes in the new fee regime introduced for students starting their awards in September 2012. The Chapter begins (Section 5.1) with a brief recap of the sample of students being discussed and a summary of the methods applied. This section outlines the descriptive data on the students surveyed within the two organisations. Survey responses are presented by the two institutions, although where appropriate these results are compared to provide an overview of how studying higher education outside of a university acts as a variable within the results.

Section 5.2 analyses students' reasons for participating in HE. The major focus of this section is on students' self-reported emphasis on the benefits of HE for future salary. This sheds some light on the emphasis placed on human capital in the reforms which led to the fee rise. Section 5.3 focuses on students' choice of institution. Regression models are used in these sections to examine the strength of association between individual characteristics and preferences and HE choice.

Section 5.4 discusses fees, contribution and price sensitivity on entering higher education at any university. This section analyses the data showing fees charged to the students and how these fees were paid for. Price sensitivity, in terms of elasticity of demand has been calculated for intervals across the fee range and within differing clusters. Section 5.5 presents evidence of students' expectations about how institutions will use the additional revenue received through higher tuition fees. The chapter concludes (Section 5.6) with a summary of the results.

5.1 Descriptive findings and methods

Results in this chapter have been collected from student surveys, as discussed in Chapter 4, (see appendix 4A and 4B) which gathered background information including ethnicity, social class; and information about how students paid their fees.

The bulk of the sample was from one English new university. 632 questionnaires were collected and processed, making this approximately 6.5% of the overall full-time on-campus undergraduate population at this university. The following subjects were selected: English, Business, Law, and Computer Science. The sample enables a comparison between Year 1 students on the new fee regime and students attending Year 2 classes who were on the previous fee regime. In addition, responses were collected from 67 students studying full time Higher Education Awards at a Further Education College. These are franchised awards from the university and therefore the students are registered to both the Further Education College and the University. Within the chapter, as in the sector, these are referred to Higher Education learners in Further Education students (HE in FE).

Table 5.1 provides a summary of the descriptive data for the university sample. Within the sample of 627 (632 collected but five removed for either being under 18 or not indicating age), 302 are Year 1, 306 in Year 2 and 19 within third or higher year groups. This anomaly of third years is accounted for students re-taking their second year and also those progressing from Foundation Year awards. The grouping of Year 2+ is appropriate as it is comparing the factors impacting upon HE study for students entering the University during the September 2012 cycle and those prior.

Table 5.1 - Summary of descriptive student characteristics studying in the university

Subject	Total (%)	2012/13 Entry Year 1 (% of year group)	2011/12 Entry Year 2+ (% of year group)	Fisher's Exact Test
Year of Study	627 (100)	302 (100)	325 (100)	
White	441 (70.3)	216 (71.8)	225 (69.7)	.598
Non-white	183 (29.4)	85 (28.2)	98 (30.3)	.598
Male	365 (58.2)	179 (59.9)	186 (57.9)	.683
Female	255 (42)	120 (40.1)	135 (42.1)	.683
Age 18-21	510 (81.3)	246 (81.5)	264 (81.2)	1
Mother been to University	133 (21.2)	62 (20.9)	71 (21.8)	.845
Father been to University	145 (23.1)	62 (21.2)	83 (25.9)	.184
Mother professional or managerial	178 (28.4)	73 (24.4)	105 (32.7)	.026
Father professional or managerial	275 (43.8)	117 (39)	158 (49.2)	.012
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	446 (71.1)	199 (63.3)	247 (77.2)	.003
Studying business	138 (22)	44 (31.9)	94 (68.1)	.000
Studying law	216 (34.4)	99 (45.8)	117 (54.2)	.402
Studying English	51 (8.1)	27 (52.9)	24 (47.1)	.559
Studying computing	222 (35.4)	132 (59.5)	90 (40.5)	.000

Table 5.1 shows that the sample was balanced between the cohorts in terms of gender, race and first-generation students. The proportion of students with parents in professional or managerial occupations was higher in the Year 2+ cohort which had experienced the lower fee regime. It can also be seen that the proportion of students from Business was higher in the Year 2+ cohort and the proportion of students from Computing was higher in the Year 1 cohort.

Table 5.2 shows a breakdown of the HE in FE students. This slightly weighted split of 66% 2012/13 entry students compared to 34% of those registered in 2011 or before. This split is not representative of the national participation rates for HE in FE students; HESA reported a 4.3% reduction in full-time first degree (and sandwich) students studying in FE between 2011/12 and 2012/13 (HESA, 2013). Furthermore, the sample is made up of 75% female (which is seen in both cohorts) and the majority of students were aged 18-21. Most students

in both year groups are white. Although the sample is considerably smaller the HE in FE sample is more homogenous.

Table 5.2 - Summary of descriptive HE in FE student characteristics

Subject	Total (%)	2012/13 Entry Year 1 (% of year group)	2011/12 Entry Year 2+ (% of year group)	Fisher's Exact Test
Year of Study	67 (100)	44 (66)	23 (34)	
White	61 (91)	39 (91)	22 (96)	.651
Non-white	5 (7)	4 (9)	1 (4)	.651
Male	16 (24)	11 (25)	5 (23)	1.000
Female	50 (75)	33 (75)	17 (77)	1.000
18-21	47 (70)	28 (64)	19 (83)	.160
Mother been to University	16 (24)	9 (21)	7 (30)	.381
Father been to University	12 (18)	9 (21)	3 (13)	.523
Mother professional or managerial	15 (22)	9 (21)	6 (26)	.759
Father professional or managerial	30 (45)	23 (52)	7 (30)	.073
Aiming to be Professional or managerial	31 (46)	21 (49)	10 (48)	1.000
I live at home with parents	40 (60.6)	22 (50)	18 (81.8)	.016
I live with other students	4 (6.1)	3 (6.8)	1 (4.5)	1.000
I live in my own home	22 (33.3)	19 (43.2)	3 (13.6)	.025

Unlike the university data, Table 5.2 (rows 13-15) shows that residential data were collected from these students showing that the majority of students are living with parents (60.6%). The college does not own halls of residence therefore only three categories were given to students to choose from. The remaining students either live in their own home (33.3%) or with other students (6.1%).

5.2 Reasons for participating in HE

Students attending the university and the FE college were asked to complete a Likert scale question indicating levels of agreement to statements offering reasons for participating in HE. Table 5.3 combines responses from HE in FE and university students. The table shows that a large majority in both year groups claimed that they were studying to increase their earning potential. Students starting HE in the year before the fee increase were much more likely to assert that they were studying now to avoid the higher fees.

Table 5.3 Reasons to Study -cohort comparison

	All students	2011/12 Entry	2012/13 Entry	Fisher's Exact Test
I'm studying to increase my earning potential	644† (93.3)	328 (94.5)	316 (92.1)	.225
Without my degree I can't get my dream job	467 (68.1)	235 (68.5)	232 (67.6)	.870
I'm studying now because I don't want a job just yet	117 (17.1)	61 17.7)	56 (16.4)	.685
I'm studying because all my friends went to university	46 (6.7)	29 (8.4)	17 (5)	.093
I'm studying now because I think university costs are going to increase	258 (37.6)	175 (50.5)	83 (24.3)	.000

† the top figure in each cell is the n and the figure in parentheses is the percentage of that cohort reporting that they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

Table 5.4 presents results from logistic regressions (complete case analysis) investigating the likelihood that students agreed with each of the statements in Table 5.3. To do so, the Likert scaled responses were conflated to create binary dependent variables within SPSS. A complete case analysis approach was taken. As a result the total population size n=694 was reduced to n=645. The table reports Exp(B) and probability for each dependent variable. The Exp(B) is a measure of the odds ratio (the strength of the association between the explanatory and dependent variables). This estimate ignores the extent to which the odds ratio is affected when other variables take different values. The table also reports the probability (p) that the result is a random fluctuation. The analysis concentrates on those associations where the test suggests there is less than a 5% chance of the result being due to random fluctuation. As the data set is moderate in size there is a relatively low risk that the

statistical analysis will report statistical significance which is largely a function of the large sample size.

White students, younger students and students aspiring to a professional or managerial occupation were more likely to declare that they were studying to increase their earning potential. But younger students also declared that they were studying because they did not want to enter the job market yet. Students' responses to the first two statements ('studying to increase earning potential' and studying 'to get dream job') were highly correlated (Spearman Rank correlation, $R_s = .25$, $p < .001$, $n = 684$). This correlation suggests that students were responding to the statements in a consistent way.

Table 5.4 A summary of complete case binary logistic regression showing significance values of categories listed in Table 5.3 by student characteristic dummy variables

	Increase Earning potential	Dream Job	Don't want a job yet	Friends went to University	Future to University Cost Rise
	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.
Student in Year 1	.468 (.083)	.911 (.725)	1.484 (.282)	.582 (.321)	.474 (.004)
Aged 18 to 21	2.107 (.053)	.857 (.499)	2.906 (.005)	1.924 (.178)	.845 (.453)
Male	2.557 (.012)	.811 (.254)	1.263 (.315)	5.255 (.000)	.975 (.890)
White	2.489 (.017)	.953 (.814)	1.061 (.816)	.565 (.108)	1.044 (.833)
Mother professional or managerial	.933 (.863)	.767 (.199)	1.705 (.034)	.553 (.156)	1.378 (.125)
Father professional or managerial	.714 (.350)	1.322 (.137)	.981 (.935)	2.002 (.063)	.863 (.439)
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	2.111 (.048)	1.439 (.058)	1.204 (.467)	.952 (.888)	.859 (.445)
Mother been to University	.442 (.042)	.970 (.893)	.569 (.064)	.993 (.987)	1.021 (.927)
Father been to University	1.176 (.716)	1.178 (.483)	1.065 (.827)	1.419 (.379)	.702 (.134)
Student is a UK resident	1.641 (.433)	1.040 (.928)	1.282 (.702)	.570 (.463)	1.294 (.563)
Student contributing to fee	.833 (.615)	1.029 (.873)	1.469 (.099)	1.172 (.655)	1.342 (.108)
Tuition fee is above £6,000	1.882 (.172)	1.150 (.613)	.618 (.206)	.978 (.968)	.482 (.009)
Attending HE in FE	.658 (.428)	.737 (.354)	.380 (.074)	2.423 (.178)	.637 (.185)
Constant	2.344 (.319)	1.942 (.208)	.037 (.000)	.027 (.000)	.979 (.968)
N	642	640	639	637	639
-2 Log Likelihood	270.3	791.1	550.9	280.349	775.4

Males were much more likely to state that they were influenced by friendship groups in their decision to participate in HE. Students with professional or managerial fathers were slightly more likely to make this assertion, perhaps suggesting motivation in line with status attainment theory: keeping up with peers was relatively more important to these students.

Finally, first year students ($p=.004$) *and* those with a degree price above £6,000 ($p=.009$) were significantly more likely to suggest that they were studying now as they believed the price would increase. This would be in line with the sector assumption that the majority of students eligible to start university prior to the higher fees did so – rather than take gap years for example, which explains the rise in applications during 2011/12. These data suggest that those who would be contributing their own fees were more sensitive to this and therefore studied prior to the price rise.

5.3 Influences on choice of institution

This section reports students' rating of the importance of 22 possible influences on students their choice of university using a five scale Likert scale. Responses were conflated into dummy variables where the rankings 'somewhat important, important and very important were set equal to 1 (see Table 5.5).

Of the categories in Table 5.5, only five were classed as important by 80% or more of the responders. The strongest factors indicated were the university's reputation and its reputation for good teaching. The university's links to employers was seen as important to over 80% of the responders. The final two categories related to the campus.

Out of the twenty-two factors only four (Employer links, Look of the campus, Course League Table and Open Day experience) show statistical difference ($p\leq.05$) between the two cohorts. Out of these four factors, three show the 2012/13 cohort having a greater number of responders thinking the factors were important. The Year 2+ cohort were more likely to rate the ranking of the course in league tables' as important in their choice.

Table 5.5 Number of university students who responded that the factors listed were somewhat important, important or very important in their decision on choosing their university

Choice Factor Important	All students	2011/12 Entry	2012/13 Entry	Fisher's Test	Exact
University Reputation	543† (86.6)	275 (84.9)	268 (88.7)	.159	
Employer Links	529 (84.4)	262 (81.1)	267 (89)	.007	
Teaching Reputation	528 (84.2)	269 (83.3)	259 (85.8)	.439	
Feels like a University	521 (83.1)	263 (81.9)	258 (86)	.190	
Look of Campus	509 (81.2)	253 (78.6)	256 (85.3)	.029	
Campus Atmosphere	500 (79.7)	250 (77.4)	250 (82.8)	.109	
Course League Table	494 (78.8)	267 (82.9)	227 (76.4)	.046	
University League Table	475 (75.8)	249 (77.8)	226 (75.3)	.507	
Transport Links	460 (73.4)	230 (71.2)	230 (76.2)	.174	
Student Recommendation	444 (70.8)	230 (71.2)	214 (70.9)	.930	
Application Treated	442 (70.5)	230 (71.4)	212 (70.4)	.792	
Open Day Experience	432 (68.9)	207 (64.7)	225 (74.8)	.007	
University Website	428 (68.3)	214 (66.5)	214 (71.1)	.227	
Geographic Location	422 (67.3)	226 (70)	196 (65.1)	.200	
Student Website Reviews	381 (60.8)	199 (61.4)	182 (60.3)	.806	
Price of award	377 (60.1)	196 (60.5)	181 (60.1)	.935	
Accommodation Quality	352 (56.1)	178 (55.1)	174 (57.8)	.519	
Night Life	337 (53.7)	172 (53.1)	165 (55.6)	.573	
Accommodation Price	322 (51.4)	172 (53.4)	150 (53.4)	.378	
Can live at home	307 (49)	161 (50.6)	146 (47.6)	.809	
Have to live away	283 (45.1)	147 (46.1)	136 (45.5)	.936	
Parents Liked University	274 (43.7)	136 (42.1)	138 (46.2)	.332	

† in each cell the first figure is n, and the figure in parentheses is the percentage of all students declaring this factor was somewhat important, important or very important in their choice of university.

For the externally comparable influencing categories logistical binary regression showed that white students aged 18-21 were statistically more likely to find the University league ranking an important factor when choosing where to study. Whilst the data is not recorded within a separate table it showed that university ranking and course ranking demonstrated some statistical significance for those students studying computing ($p=0.012$ University, $p=0.085$ Award) and English ($p=0.067$ University, $p=0.014$ Award) students. Computing ($p=0.065$) and English ($p=0.049$) students were more likely to report that the teaching reputation of the University impacted upon their choice.

Logistic binary regression showed that 18-21 year old students found all three of the institutional interaction influencing categories important, furthermore Law (0.034) and Computing (0.041) were significant in that organisation 'feels like a university'. Despite fees being significantly higher for the students in year 1 in 2012, there was no meaningful difference between Year 1 and Year 2 in the importance attached to course fee in choosing the university.

To examine relationships between choice factors a factor analysis was conducted. The data suggested that two factor solution should be used. Table 5.6 incorporates the 22 factors into items of the influence on decision making, making them subject to dimension reduction. Before carrying out the dimension reduction, suitability of the data for factor analysis was reviewed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .873 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant, thus showing that the data were statistically suitable for factor analysis.

Maximum Likelihood analysis showed that three components had eigenvalues exceeding 1, which overall explained for 39.528% of the variance. The Scree Plot shows a strong change in gradient after the second component, therefore, with a total variance of 34.672%. To support the interpretation of the two components, Oblimin rotation was performed as the correlation between the two components (in the correlation matrix output) was $r=.344$. The factor analysis distinguished between two factors: choice lodging ('Accom': 18% of variance) and choice university quality ('Uni qual': 17% of variance).

Table 5.6 Pattern and Structure for Maximum Likelihood with Oblimin Rotation of Two Factor Solution for factors influencing choice of university

	Pattern Coefficients		Structure Coefficients	
	Accom	Uni Qual	Accom	Uni Qual
Factor reliability (Cronbach alpha)	0.90	0.87		
University League Table	-.037	.572	.160	.559
Award League Table	-.055	.605	.154	.587
Can Live at home	-.585	.184	-.522	-.018
Live Away	.345	.109	.383	.228
Campus Atmosphere	.093	.587	.295	.619
Choice Look of Campus	.047	.588	.249	.604
Feels Like a University	-.007	.633	.211	.631
Open Day Experience	.108	.446	.261	.483
Price of Tuition	-.052	.413	.090	.395
University Reputation	.004	.590	.207	.591
Past Student Recommend	-.032	.526	.149	.515
Website Reviews	.043	.542	.230	.557
Nightlife	.317	.312	.424	.421
Accommodation	.948	.076	.974	.402
Accommodation Cost	.787	.102	.822	.373
University Location	.208	.281	.305	.353
Parents Liked	.163	.323	.274	.380
Application Treated	-.024	.593	.180	.584
University Website	-.017	.594	.187	.588
High Teaching Standards	-.116	.731	.135	.691
University Links to Employers	-.050	.633	.168	.616
Good Transport Links	.040	.464	.199	.478

The reliability of each factor was very good. Within the accommodation factor, characteristics of the university accommodation took a positive value whilst the opportunity to live at home took a negative value.

Using these two new variables as dependent variables, ordinary least square (OLS) regression was conducted on the range of descriptive variables, seen below in Table 5.7.

Table 5.7 Table showing significance within OLS Regression where the dependant values are components from dimension reduction against a range student descriptors

Dummy Variable	Choice Lodging		Choice Quality		University	
	Exp(B)	p	Exp(B)	p	Exp(B)	p
Constant		.054				.001
Student in Year 1	.048	.482	-.053			.437
Aged18 to 21	.200	.000	.070			.098
Male	.054	.271	.013			.801
White	-.034	.421	-.172			.000
Mother professional or managerial	.009	.837	.001			.986
Father professional or managerial	-.009	.834	.044			.330
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	.044	.348	.028			.553
Mother been to University	.023	.608	-.049			.284
Father been to University	-.001	.980	.015			.755
Student is a UK resident	-.076	.085	-.084			.058
Student contributing to fee	-.037	.380	.025			.552
Tuition fee is above £6,000	-.084	.220	.010			.885
Studying Computing	.144	.019	.019			.756
Studying Law	-.022	.699	-.060			.292
Studying English	.141	.004	.061			.215
N	580		578			
R ²	.075		0.58			

Younger students (aged 18-21) and students studying Computing or English were more likely to rate the university accommodation as a factor in choosing the university. White students were less likely than other students to be concerned about the indicators of university quality in their university choice.

Finally, the survey administered to HE in FE students included several questions which were not included in the survey administered to university students (Table 5.8). Just over half of the HE in FE students had applied to a university, but less than a third of these reported that they had been rejected from a university.

Table 5.8 HE in FE student applications to university

Application process	All students	2011/12 Entry	2012/13 Entry	Fisher's Exact Test
I never applied to study at university	29 (47.5) †	9 (40.9)	20 (51.3)	.594
I applied, got accepted and declined a place at university	23 (37.7)	6 (27.3)	17 (43.6)	.275
I applied to university but got rejected	9 (14.8)	7 (31.8)	2 (5.1)	.008

† in each cell the first figure is n, and the figure in parentheses is the percentage of all students declaring this factor was somewhat important, important or very important in their choice of university.

In the year when tuition fees had been raised, a smaller proportion of HE in FE students had applied to university, but the sample size is very small so it is difficult to read much into this difference. Table 5.9 provides result from a Likert Scale where the students agreed that the following factors were either Important or Very Important, similar to the data in the table for University students.

Table 5.9 Number of FE Students who responded that the factors listed were somewhat important, important or very important in their decision on choosing their college

Choice Factor important or very important	All students (%)	2012/13 Entry Year 1 N (%) of cohort)	2011/12 Entry Year 2 or above N (%) of cohort)	Fisher's Exact Test
Teaching Reputation	43 (66.2)	33 (76.7)	10 (45.5)	.025
Student Website Reviews	26 (38.8)	19 (43.2)	7 (30.4)	.429
Employer Links	39 (59.1)	28 (65.1)	11 (47.8)	.198
Application Treated	38 (58.5)	27 (64.3)	11 (47.8)	.293
Transport Links	37 (57.8)	24 (58.5)	13 (56.5)	1.00
Geographic Location	43 (65.2)	28 (65.1)	15 (65.2)	1.00
College Website	30 (46.2)	22 (51.2)	8 (36.4)	.301
Parents Liked the college	20 (30.3)	15 (34.9)	5 (21.7)	.400
The local nightlife	16 (24.6)	8 (19)	8 (34.8)	.229

Overall only the teaching reputation of the college and the college's geographical location were factors in which over 60% of the sample agreed were important in deciding their college. In the year when tuition fees had risen the students were more likely than the previous cohort to rate the institution's reputation for teaching as important in their choice. ($p = 0.025$). Furthermore, when comparing these results to those in Table 5.6, the college students appeared to be less influenced by each of the factors. The first 5 items in Table 5.9 were analysed further using logistic regressions (Table 5.10).

Table 5.10 A summary of complete case binary logistical regression showing significance values of influencing factors against student descriptors

	Teaching Reputation	Student Website Reviews	Employer Links	Application Treated	Transport Links
Dummy Variable	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.
Student in Year 1	29.687 (.005)	3.798 (.089)	6.444 (.016)	16.894 (.004)	2.290 (.257)
Aged18 to 21	25.474 (.013)	1.739 (.508)	6.029 (.039)	9.994 (.023)	1.928 (.430)
Male	1.294 (.837)	6.725 (.053)	.575 (.520)	2.769 (.302)	3.444 (.192)
Mother professional managerial	or.058 (.040)	.312 (.241)	1.240 (.807)	.608 (.602)	.423 (.313)
Father professional managerial	or.370 (.301)	1.752 (.445)	.951 (.946)	.382 (.241)	1.560 (.540)
Student aiming to Professional/Managerial	be.037 (.006)	.127 (.011)	.302 (.088)	.297 (.118)	.796 (.733)
Mother been to University	17.475 (.082)	2.181 (.420)	3.230 (.257)	13.555 (.036)	.259 (.150)
Father been to University	5.715 (.279)	1.363 (.783)	.916 (.934)	.355 (.357)	.545 (.562)
Student is a UK resident	.016 (.398)	.054 (.114)	.351 (.509)	.018 (.045)	.564 (.680)
Student contributing to fee	.417 (.395)	.465 (.308)	.671 (.592)	.215 (.101)	.259 (.083)
Tuition fee is above £6,000	13.076 (.126)	.570 (.598)	.222 (.152)	.229 (.208)	.326 (.083)
Constant	14.881 (.588)	6.090 (.349)	2.584 (.690)	17.458 (.132)	3.011 (.471)
N	58	60	59	58	57
-2 Log Likelihood	39.796	62.308	64.285	57.606	68.401

Younger students, and those in the cohort affected by higher fees (Year 1) attached more importance than the previous cohort to three variables: the institution's teaching reputation, its employability links and how their application was treated. Table 5.10 shows in each of these findings the standardised coefficient (B) is high, implying that universities showing strengthens in these areas would improve influencing these particular students. Knowing that Year 1 shows significance in these responses may suggest that in Year 1 students (who are subject to higher fees) were more influenced by a greater range of factors. However, it is

noted that responses from those paying over £6,000 showed no statistical significance on being influenced on the price of the award.

Table 5.11 examines relationships between student characteristics and a further set of items which students were asked to rate as important or not in their choice to study at the college. Roughly one third of the HE in FE college sample had completed their level 3 qualification at the same college. This was more likely to apply to younger students. Younger students and those in Year 1 were more likely to refer to the importance of saving money by living home as a reason to study at their local college. Male students appear to have been more influenced by their previous college experience and by a desire to reduce costs by living at home.

Table 5.11 FE in HE students who Agreed or Strongly Agreed to the following factors influencing why they chose to study at their college

Dummy Variable	Completed Level at College	Based upon previous experiences at this College	I didn't feel ready to leave home the	I don't think I'd fit in university	Living expenses are cheaper than living away
	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.	Exp(B) Sig.
Student in Year 1	1.317 (.715)	4.873 (.058)	.993 (.993)	1.789 (.674)	9.605 (.016)
Aged 18 to 21	13.529 (.027)	2.575 (.279)	4.303 (.128)	1.619 (.708)	13.201 (.011)
Male	4.032 (.107)	8.714 (.019)	.766 (.764)	5.653 (.281)	8.220 (.029)
Mother professional or managerial	.860 (.845)	1.635 (.525)	.345 (.236)	.418 (.512)	1.280 (.751)
Father professional or managerial	.941 (.935)	3.107 (.141)	.956 (.951)	33.049 (.025)	6.146 (.029)
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	.163 (.029)	.255 (.085)	.349 (.150)	.415 (.447)	.197 (.070)
Mother been to University	.503 (.498)	.207 (.157)	1.514 (.695)	18.093 (.050)	.590 (.592)
Father been to University	1.850 (.588)	.567 (.639)	.571 (.656)	.014 (.105)	.130 (.085)
Student contributing to fee	3.032 (.155)	1.233 (.777)	.817 (.786)	.366 (.440)	3.074 (.16)
Tuition fee is above £6,000	4.148 (.182)	.424 (.410)	.655 (.739)	.289 (.440)	.288 (.242)
Constant	.038 (.026)	.057 (.024)	.346 (.393)	.013 (.045)	.014 (.004)
N	59	59	57	59	59
-2 Log Likelihood	61.535	62.086	59.800	28.526	60.299

The final set of survey question covered in this chapter asked HE in FE students whether the identity of the college's partner awarding university influenced their choice on choosing the college. Responses from students showed that only 25% of students chose their college award because of the university it belonged to; with the largest group of students (38.8%) agreeing that they 'don't really care' which university validates their award. This would suggest that students' decision making on choosing their college relate to the college and are not dependent upon the awarding university or only being restricted to study HE in FE.

Binary logistical regression was also performed on these questions against student descriptors which showed only one statistically significant response, which was male students were particularly not caring of the identity of the awarding university.

5.4 Fees, contribution and price sensitivity

The following subsections in explain and analyse the fee contributions which students believed that they are making, and how likely they would be to attend university or college within differing fee bands. The data are used to create price sensitivity models, where students are analysed by different groupings.

5.4.1 Fee contribution

The university sticker price for second year undergraduates (2011/12 entry) was £3,000 per year. The standard fee for first year undergraduates (2012/13 entry) attending the university was £7,499, which rose to £8,300 for resource intensive awards and £9,000 for 2 year Fast Track degrees. Some students attending the lectures in Law were enrolled on foundation year studies on which the course fees were £5,000 per year for new students. The majority of university students in the post fee rise cohort will have been subject to the standard university fee of £7, 499. The sticker price for students attending HE in FE for Year 2+ students (2011/12 entry) was also £3,000, however the cost for 2012/13 entry students was £5,500 for all students. So HE in FE students in the 2012/13 cohort were charged £2,000 less than students enrolled at the university.

Table 5.12 shows that whilst the majority of students in each cohort were aware of the extent of the change in the sticker price tuition fee, a minority in both cohorts either held mistaken beliefs or were unsure; for example, 8.7% of the Year 1 HE in FE students believed that they were paying over £6,000 per year; when the maximum fee was £5,500 per year.

Table 5.12 University students' beliefs about the full fee (sticker price) of the award on which they were enrolled

	Year 1		Year 2 +	
	University	HE in FE	University	HE in FE
Below £2,000	0.0%	0%	0.9%	0%
Between £2,000 and £3,999	6.6%	4.7%	88.0%	91.3%
Between £4,000 and £5,999	2.3%	74.4%	2.2	0%
Above £6000	84.4%	8.7%	6.8%	0%
Don't know fee	6.3%	0%	2.2%	8.7%
n	301	43	325	23

Table 5.13 shows that the proportion of university students bearing the full burden of tuition fees rose from 46.8% before the fee rise to 58.8% after the fee rise. There was an almost 50% increase in the percentage of HE in FE students reporting that they had taken out loans. The proportion of HE in FE students reporting that they were paying fees from their savings or their income fell. The increase was statistically significant (Fisher's Exact Test, $p=0.003$) for university students, but not for HE in FE students. After the fee rise the proportion of students reporting that their fees were paid by parents dramatically fell.

Table 5.13 Comparison of how tuition fees were paid before and after the fee increase

	Year 1		Year 2+	
	University	HE in FE	University	HE in FE
I'm paying my own fees from savings or personal income	5.3%	2.4%	4.6%	13.0%
I have taken loans to pay my fees	53.3%	61.9%	42.2%	43.5%
Sponsor is paying my fees	0.3%	0%	0.6%	8.7%
Employer is paying my fees	0.3%	0%	0%	0%
My parents/family are paying my fees	2.3%	2.4%	10.8%	8.7%
State funding is paying my fees	37.0%	31.0%	40.3%	26.1%
The State is paying part of my fees, and I pay part	1.3%	2.4%	1.5%	0%
n	300	42	325	23

Table 5.14 presents results from a logistic regression (complete case analysis) on a dummy variable where 'parents paid for fees' take the value 1 and all other options in table 5.4 take the value 0. Predictably, indicators of father's socioeconomic status are strongly associated with the likelihood that parents pay fees. But parents of students from non-white ethnic backgrounds were also more likely to pay their children's fees. Table 5.13 indicates that these relationships weakened considerably after the fee rise. Parents of students enrolled in the year after the fee rise were much less likely to be paying fees. There was no observable difference between university students and HE in FE students.

Table 5.14 Factors associated with the likelihood of reporting that parents were paying fees

	Exp(β)	p
Male	.64	.20
White ethnicity	.30	.001
Father in professional or managerial job	3.66	.002
Father has degree	2.69	.008
Mother in professional or managerial job	.82	.61
Mother has degree	1.21	.64
1 st year student (cohort paying higher fees)	.23	<.001
Attended University not FE)	1.40	.62
Constant	.096	.000
Loglikelihood		257.0
n		657

5.4.2 Price sensitivity

Students were asked to declare how likely (4-part Likert scale, very unlikely, unlikely, likely, very likely) they would have gone to university if the tuition fee had been within each of 8 fee bands (below £3,000, £3,000-£3,999, £4,000-£4,999, £5,000-£5,999, £6,000-£6,999, £7,000-£7,999, £8,000-£8,999, above £9,000). A maximum fee that they would have been prepared to pay was inferred from their responses to these items. This was based on the highest fee at which they declared they would have been likely to go to university. This 'maximum fee' was then used as the dependent variable in a linear regression to examine associations with students' background characteristics, year of enrolment and whether they attended the university or the FE college. An alternative specification including the subject studied found that there was no significant association between subject studied and the maximum fee a student was prepared to pay. Therefore, these variables were omitted from the model. The results are presented in Table 5.15.

Table 5.15 Factors associated with the maximum fee at which students declared they would have been prepared to go to university (OLS)

	β	p
Male	-292	.089
White ethnicity	271	.165
Mother in professional or managerial job	227	.256
Father in professional or managerial job	47	.796
Graduate mother	114	.603
Graduate father	335	.132
HE in FE student	-1189	<.001
In Year 2+ cohort	-1670	<.001
(Constant)	9531	<.001
R^2		.19
n		624

On average, HE in FE students declared that they would only have been prepared to pay just over £1,000 less than students attending the university. Students in the 'pre-tuition fee rise' cohort declared, on average, that they would have been prepared to pay just over £1,500 less than students in the post-fee increase cohort.

Tables 5.16 and 5.17, and Figures 5.1 to 5.3 present more detailed information on the differences between the pre-fee rise and post fee rise cohorts. Table 5.16 shows the percentages of university students agreeing that it would have been likely that they would have attended any university at suggested fee levels. Year 1 students (the 2012/2013 entry) expressed a much greater willingness to attend university at higher fee levels. Table 5.17 shows a similar difference in willingness to pay higher university fees amongst the pre- and post- fee rise cohorts of the FE in HE students. However, this pattern is not replicated in the HE in FE students' readiness to study at college. These figures are presented graphically in Figure 5.1. The figure suggests a 'kinked' demand curve for post-fee rise students with the kink at the sticker price level set by the university.

Table 5.16 University students' expressed willingness to attend any university at different fee levels

Students likely to attend university at the given fee rates below	Total (% of whole sample)	2011/12 Entry Year 2 or above N (% of cohort)	2012/13 Entry Year 1 N (% of cohort)
3K-£3999	534 (85.2)	229 (94.6)	235 (81.6)
4K-£4999	482 (76.9)	247 (78.2)	235 (81.3)
5K-£5999	403 (64.3)	176 (56.8)	227 (78.5)
6k- £6999	350 (55.8)	123 (39.2)	227 (78.5)
7K - £7999	322 (51.4)	95 (30.2)	227 (78.5)
8K - £8999	252 (40.2)	77 (24.2)	175 (61.2)
£9000 and above	176 (28.1)	62 (19.6)	114 (39.7)

Table 5.17 FE in HE Students' expressed willingness to attend any university or college at different fee levels compared†

<i>Students likely to pay</i>	(% of cohort who completed item)			
	To attend university		To attend FE college	
	2011/12 Entry	2012/13 Entry	2011/12 Entry	2012/13 Entry
Under £3000	28%	66%	95%	90%
£3-3999	39%	48%	95%	70%
£4-4999	17%	47%	95%	93%
£5-5999	22%	41%	95%	68%
£6-6999	6%	30%	63%	83%
£7-7999	6%	24%	79%	61%
£8-8999	6%	30%	43%	80%
£9000+	6%	28%	58%	59%

† there was a high level of missing data for HE in FE students on these items (just under 30%)

Figure 5.1 A chart to show how likely university students would be to attend university at these fee levels

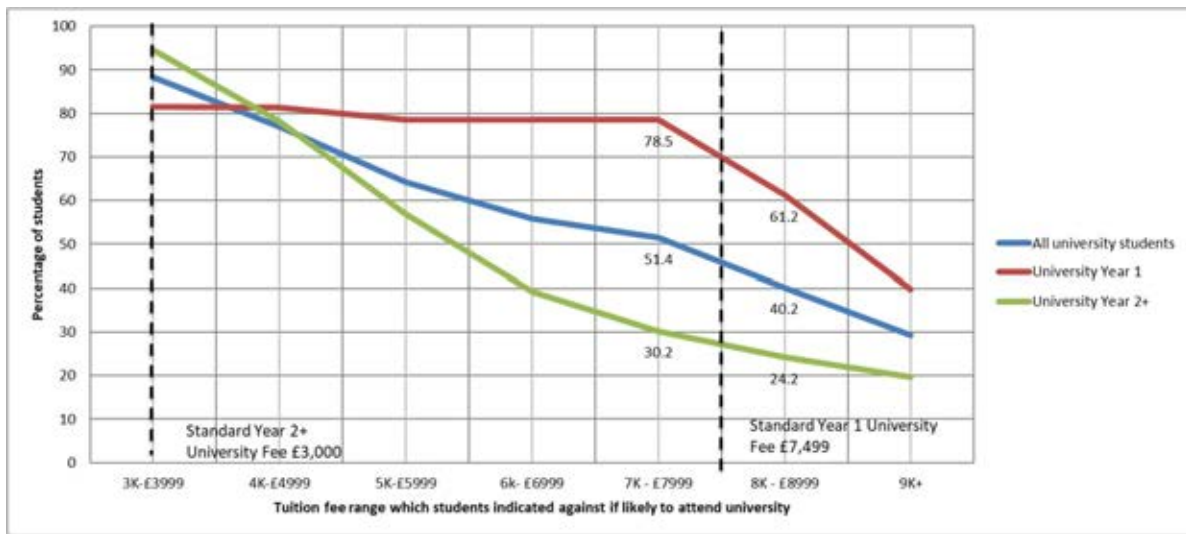


Figure 5.2 Chart to show how likely HE in FE students would be to attend any university at different fee levels

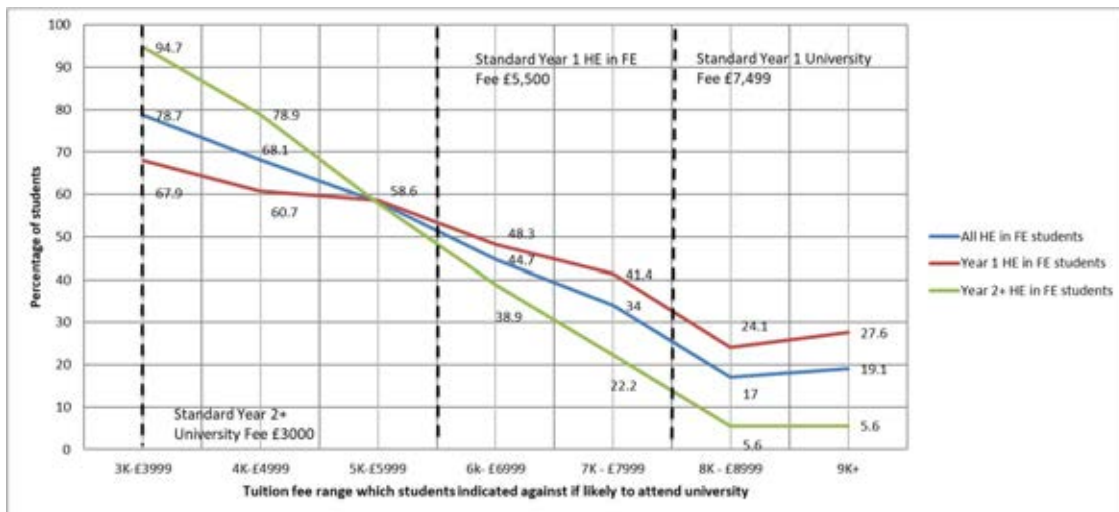


Figure 5.3 Chart to show how likely HE in FE students would be to attend study HE at any college at different fee levels

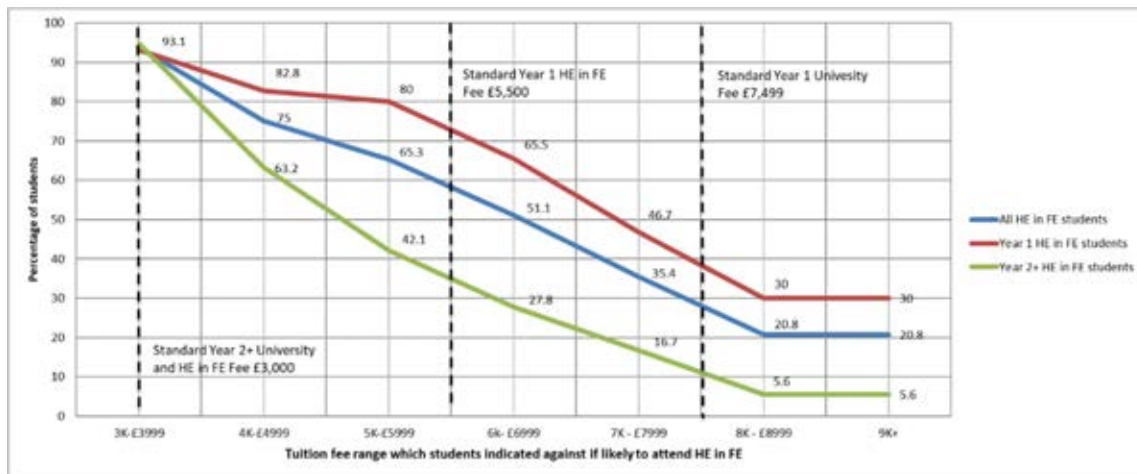


Figure 5.2 shows at fees below £5,000-£5999 bracket Year 2+ students attending HE in FE were more likely to attend university than Year 1 students attending HE in FE. Whereas in Figure 5.1, which represents all sampled university students, the crossover of Year 1 to Year 2+ percentages of students suggesting they would have attended university is at the £4,000-£4,999 fee bracket. This may indicate that Year 2+ HE in FE students placed a higher value on university education, compared to the Year 2+ actually studying in university.

Comparing Figure 5.2 and Figure 5.3 shows that Year 2+ students declared that they are more likely to attend university compared to HE in FE at all fee levels (although at £9,000+ both Figures show 5.6%). This may indicate that the FE in HE Year 2+ sample place more value on attending a university than at these lower fees. Figure 5.3 also shows that once above £5,000 the percentage of Year 2+ students willing to attend falls significantly, whereas the Year 1 students only dip to 24% participation at higher fees.

The blue line in Figure 5.3 shows on average (when compared to the Figure 5.2) students are more likely to study HE in FE compared to when asked if they study at a university at all fees. The Year 2+ data shows a lower percentage of students willing to study at the different fee levels when compared to if they would have studied at a university, whereas Year 1 indicate that they would be more likely to pay higher fees when studying at an FE college.

The task of establishing the maximum fee that students declared they were willing to pay (as required for the regression in Table 5.15) suggested that students varied in their responsiveness to higher fees. To examine these price sensitivities a K-Means three-part cluster analysis was used to examine *university* student price sensitivity as shown in Table 5.18. Table 5.19 provides a descriptive breakdown of the students within each cluster which was produced by creating a series of cross tabulations after applying a data filter in SPSS to isolate each cluster. Due to missing data only 590 cases (out of 627) are included in the cluster analysis. Due to the small size of the sample K-Means three-part cluster analysis has not been reported here for HE in FE students.

Table 5.18 Results from a K-Means Cluster analysis on price sensitivity of university students

	Cluster		
	1	2	3
Price Sensitive Likely 3k – 3999	.98	.00	1.00
Price Sensitive Likely 4k – 4999	1.00	.00	.77
Price Sensitive Likely 5k – 5999	1.00	.13	.43
Price Sensitive Likely 6k – 6999	1.00	.39	.16
Price Sensitive Likely 7k – 7999	1.00	.56	.00
Price Sensitive Likely 8k – 8999	.75	.60	.00
Price Sensitive Likely 9k+	.52	.45	.00

Students in Cluster 1 declared almost complete price insensitivity up to the sticker price after the fee rise. Once fees rose above this level, students expressed decreasing willingness to attend university. Nonetheless three-quarters of these students indicated that they would have been willing to pay up to the maximum fee (£9,000) that universities were allowed to charge Year 1 students under the new fee regime. Students in Cluster 2 indicated that they were more likely to attend university if the tuition fee was higher (up to the maximum permitted fee after the fee rise). It is possible that these students interpreted the question as asking them to indicate the likelihood that they would attend *this* university. The students in Cluster 3 reported that the likelihood of them attending university would drop rapidly as fees rose above the sticker price in the year before the fee rise.

Table 5.19 Characteristics of students allocated to each cluster

Sample descriptions	Cluster			P ¹
	1	2	3	
Students (% of total)	279 (47.3)	62 (10.5)	249 (42.2)	
Yr. 1 (% within cluster) (% of Year 1)	192 (68.8) (68.1)	48 (77.4) (17)	42 (16.9) (14.9)	<0.001
Yr. 2+ (% within cluster) (% of Year 2)	87 (31.2) (28.2)	14 (22.6) (4.5)	207 (83.1) (67.2)	<0.001
Contributing to fee (% within cluster) (% of contributing to fee)	168 (60.6) (46.8)	42 (67.7) (11.7)	149 (59.8) (41.5)	0.51
Not contributing to fee (% within cluster) (% of total)	109 (39.4) (47.6)	20 (32.3) (8.7)	100 (40.2) (43.7)	0.51
Paying above £6000 (% within cluster) (% of total)	184 (65.9) (71.9)	49 (79) (19.1)	23 (9.2) (9)	0.000
Is 18-21 (% within cluster) (% of total)	238 (85.3) (49.6)	48 (77.4) (10.0)	194 (77.9) (40.4)	0.07
Mother is a Professional (% within cluster) (% of total)	88 (31.8) (52.7)	10 (16.4) (6.0)	69 (28.0) (41.3)	0.05
UK Resident (% within cluster) (% of total)	267 (96.4) (47.5)	55 (88.7) (9.8)	240 (96.4) (42.7)	0.02

¹ The probability that there is no significant difference between the proportions of students with this characteristic across the three clusters, calculated through a Pearson Chi-square test.

Table 5.19 shows that, as expected, Cluster 1 is largely populated by Year 1 students and Cluster 3 is largely populated by Year 2+ students. However, a minority of students from each year turn up in the other Cluster. Nearly a third of the Year 2+ cohort were in Cluster 3 indicating they would have been willing to pay the sticker price charged to Year 1 students. Roughly one in seven of Year 1 students were allocated to Cluster 3, declaring that they would not have attended university if they were charged the sticker price for that year.

Cluster 2 accounted for just 10% (n=62) of the total sample. Most of these students (79%) have fees above £6,000 and they have declared they were unlikely to attend at lower tuition fee rates, and more likely to attend at prices bands of £7,000-£7,999 and £8,000-£8,999. This looks like 'conspicuous consumption'. These students appear to have been using price as an indicator of the quality of education they would receive. However, since the sample is small for this group it is prudent to be cautious about this. The likelihood that a student was contributing to their own fees (68%) was higher in Cluster 2 than in other clusters. So, there is some indication that this tendency towards conspicuous consumption was higher amongst students from higher income backgrounds. This lends plausibility to the interpretation.

Cluster 3 accounted for 42.2% of students who declared they would only be likely to attend at lower fee. Unsurprisingly these are mostly Year 2+ students (83.1%), and only 9.2% of these students pay over £6,000. 59.8% of these students contributed to fees.

The final column in Table 5.19 presents Pearson Chi Square tests comparing the distributions between clusters of all the students with the distribution between the clusters of the sub-sample of students indicated in each row. All students' characteristics were reviewed and only those included within Table 5.19 showed significance approaching the $P \leq 0.05$ level. The table shows that the student's year group and their fee the most significant scores within the table, which would be expected. Whilst not included above, the data showed there is little to no statistical significance within the clusters of subject being studied, if contributing or any other of the characteristics recorded.

The consistency of students' statements was examined through their answers to another question providing a robustness check. Students were asked to indicate the importance of tuition fee level in their choice to study at this university. Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale. Students' answers to this question were used as a reliability check on their declared price sensitivity as reported in Figure 5.1. Table 5.20 compares the Likert scale responses on this additional question with the allocation of students to Clusters 1-3 in Table 5.17.

Table 5.20 Student responses to a question on the importance of tuition fees in choosing this university compared with Cluster membership in Table 5.9

	Didn't consider	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Chi-square
	n (% of cluster)					(p)
Cluster 1 (n=279)	48 (17.3)	86 (30.9)	49 (17.6)	48 (17.3)	47 (16.9)	0.228
Cluster 2 (n=62)	9 (14.5)	19 (30.6)	12 (19.4)	17 (27.4)	5 (8.1)	
Cluster 1 (n=279)	48 (17.3)	86 (30.9)	49 (17.6)	48 (17.3)	47 (16.9)	0.000
Cluster 3 (n=249)	36 (14.5)	41 (16.5)	45 (18.1)	61 (24.5)	66 (26.5)	

The answers of students in Cluster 1 and 2 were fairly evenly spread across the Likert scale of answers about the importance of fee level in their choice of this university. There was no significant difference between the responses of students in these two clusters. Although Cluster 1 students indicated that they were price sensitive up to the maximum fee charged by this university to Year 1 students, over a third reported that tuition fee level was important in their choice of this university.

Table 5.20 shows that those in Cluster 3, the group likely to only pay lower fees, placed a higher importance on fees when choosing their university in comparison to Cluster 1. Table 5.20 also shows that 51.8% of Cluster 1 students indicated that the fees of the university were important compared to 69.1% of Cluster 2 students. This relationship is statistically significant with $p=0.000$ and Crammer's V of $\varphi=0.000$. This therefore suggests that students likely to attend university only at lower fees consider tuition fee price to be an important factor when choosing their university. This consistency check encourages confidence in the reliability of students' survey responses.

Table 5.21 examines the willingness of university students attending the university to pay more than they believed their current sticker price to be. Students' beliefs about the sticker price were presented in Table 5.12 and university students' declarations of the likelihood that they would go to university given different fee levels were presented in Table 5.16. Table 5.21 combines the data from these two sources. The rows in the first column indicate the sticker price that students believed their cohort was subject to (from Table 5.12). The remainder of the columns distinguish by cluster between students who would have been likely or unlikely to go to university if the fee had been higher than the sticker price.

The table suggests that the majority of students, in each cluster, would have been ready to pay more for their course. It also shows, as seen in Figure 5.1, students currently paying lower fees (under £6,000) are more likely to indicate that they would pay more for their tuition, whereas students currently facing higher fees are much less likely to want to pay more than their current 'sticker price'. This can be calculated, as 302 out of 313 students subject to less than £6,000 fees indicated that they would pay more (96.5%), however only 139 out of 256 students who currently pay £6,000 or over indicated that they would pay more (54.3%).

Table 5.21 The willingness of students within each cluster to pay more than the sticker price they believed their cohort was subject to (n, %)

Student current fee	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		All Students	
	<i>Pay more</i>	<i>Not pay more</i>	<i>Pay more</i>	<i>Not pay more</i>	<i>Pay more</i>	<i>Not pay more</i>	<i>Pay more</i>	<i>Not pay more</i>
Below £2K	1 (100)	0	1 (100)	0	1 (100)	0	3 (100)	0
£3K-£3999	79 (100)	0	6 (100)	0	211 (100)	0	296 (100)	0
£4K-£5999	1 (100)	0	0	2 (100)	2 (18.2)	9 (81.8)	3 (27)	11 (63)
£6k- £7999	76 (62.8)	45 (37.2)	18 (64.3)	10 (35.7)	0	16 (100)	94 (57)	71 (43)
£8K - £8999	25 (49)	26 (37.2)	10 (62.5)	6 (35.7)	0	6 (100)	35 (48)	38 (52)
Above £9k	8 (66.7)	4 (33.3 %)	2 (40)	3 (60)	0	1 (100)	10 (55.6)	8 (44.4)
Total	190 (71.7)	75 (28.5)	37 (63)	21 (37)	214 (87)	32 (13)	441 (71)	128 (29)
Unknown (Omitted from Total calculation)	14		4		3		21	

5.4.3 Price Elasticity of Demand

This section completes the analysis of students' price sensitivity through demand curves which plot the number of university students who declared they would be likely to attend university at different fee levels. Price sensitivity was measured through calculations of Price Elasticity of Demand (PED) (as discussed within the methodology chapter). Figure 5.4 presents 4 demand curves, one for all students and then one each for the three clusters. The differing gradients of each cluster show a kink approaching the £7000 level, suggesting that this fee is seen as a tilting point. The shape of Cluster 1 and All Students line are very similar, which can be explained as the Cluster 1 makes up the majority of students. Below the £7,000 fee Figure 5.5 shows the influence of Cluster 2 students who would only pay lower fees. This shows a clear graphical representation in the difference between Cluster 1 and 2 and their decision making on fees between these different fee levels. Data represented in Figure 5.4 are associated with Table 5.15 and the discussion in section 5.4.2 which highlighted the circa 40% differences between students willingness to pay more by students either subject to £6,000 per year or above (54.3%), and those subject to less than £6,000 per year (96.5%).

Price elasticity of demand (PED) may be calculated at particular points on each demand curve. In this case, the value of PED changes as we move up or down each demand curve. Where the demand curve approaches horizontal axis the PED is more inelastic (values greater than -1), whereas when approaching vertical axis the PED is more elastic (values less than -1).

PED may also be calculated using 'arc elasticity': comparing the relationship between change in price and change in quantity over a given range. This is the method used in the calculations in Figure 5.4. Each demand curve has two PED calculations, one calculated between the lowest fee and £7000 and the second calculating the PED between £7000 and £9000.

Figure 5.4. A chart to show PED award fee against numbers of student likely to attend any university

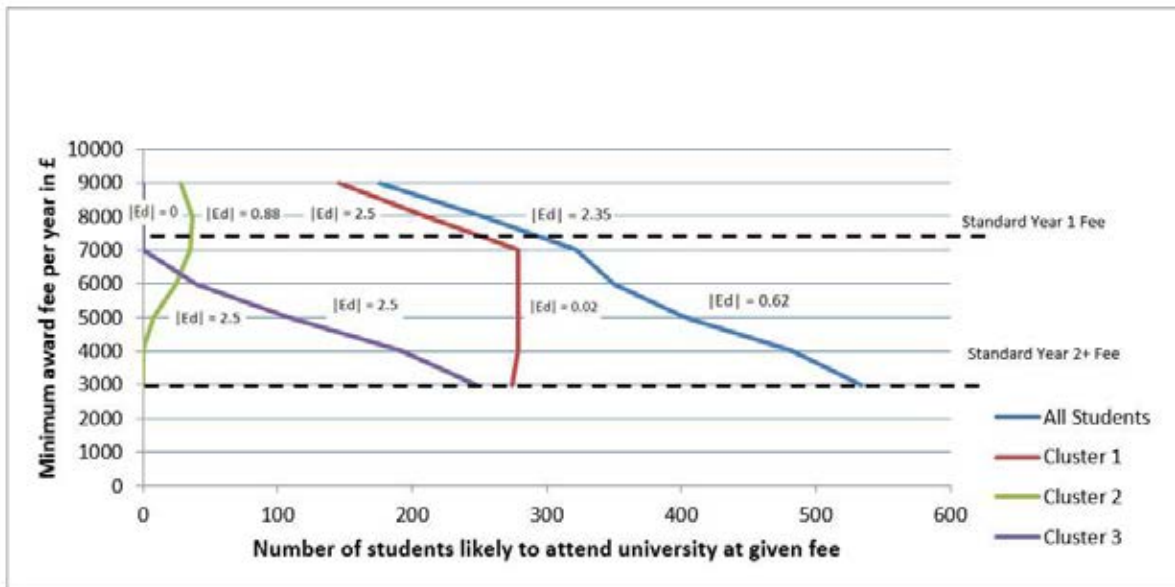


Figure 5.5 presents comparisons of the price sensitivity of all Year 1 students, this draws upon the data presented in Table 5.16 and Table 5.18.

Figure 5.5 A chart showing price sensitivity for Year 1 students

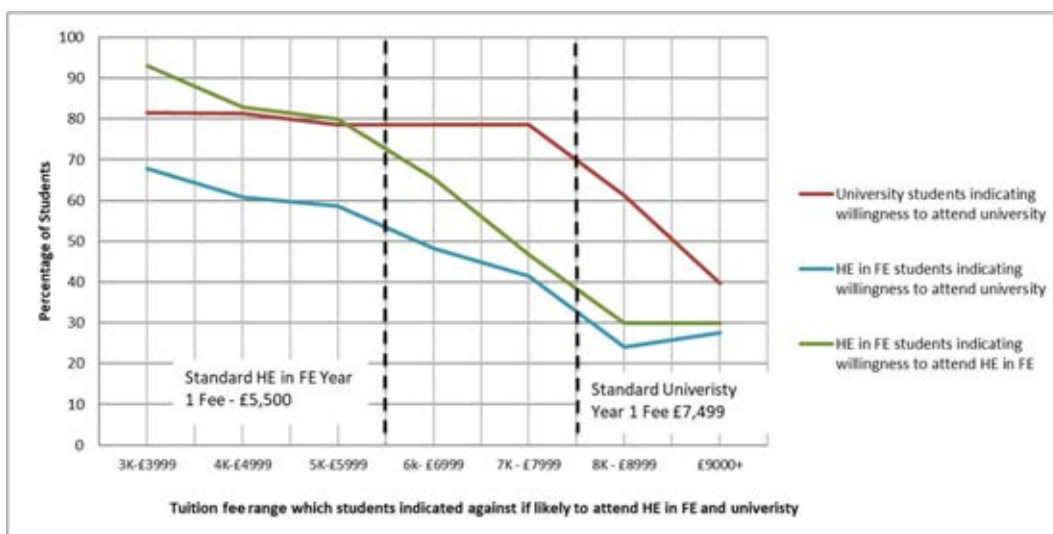


Figure 5.5 shows that the kink leading to a sharp decrease in likelihood to attend is seen around the £5000 fee rate for HE in FE students, whether considering attending a college or university; whereas university year 1 students show price responsiveness when fees rise above £7,000.

5.5 Students' predictions of change in the student body

In addition to asking students the prices that they would be prepared to pay to study the survey also asked students to predict how fees would result in changes to the student body. Table 5.22 presents results from binary logistical regressions examining relationships between four expectations about the student body and student characteristics.

The four expectations were:

- (1) New students will tend to have higher student debts than existing students;
- (2) Students like me won't be able to study for degrees in the future because of fees;
- (3) University students will tend to come from richer family backgrounds; and
- (4) The number of university students will increase.

Dummy variables were created for students' responses to each of these statements, in which 'agree' and 'strongly agree' were coded as 1 and 'strongly disagree', 'disagree' and 'unsure' were coded as 0.

Table 5.22 shows that student characteristics were associated with an expectation that students would incur higher debts after the increase in tuition fees. Year 1 and white students show significant responses in predicting that students paying higher fees will have greater debts, with both white and young descriptors showing high values of standardised coefficients too. Similar findings can be seen in the responses from younger students showing significance in thinking that new students will come from richer backgrounds.

Young, male students studying computing were more likely to think that students like them would not be able to study in the future due to the increased fee.

Table 5.22 A summary of complete binary logistical regression showing significance values of categories listed by student predictions on how the student body will change as a result of fee increases

	Statement			
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)	Exp(B)
	Sig.	Sig.	Sig.)	Sig.
Student in Year 1	2.48 (.017)	.71 (.20)	.87(.62)	1.09 (.87)
Aged18 to 21	.740 (.37)	.498 (.002)	.462 (.001)	1.70 (.28)
Male	1.04 (.89)	.54 (.003)	.68 (.06)	.99 (.99)
White	4.32 (<.001)	.82 (.31)	1.13 (.55)	.37 (.007)
Mother professional or managerial	1.08 (.79)	1.23 (.31)	1.19 (.41)	1.09 (.82)
Father professional or managerial	.99 (.96)	.66 (.02)	.98 (.89)	.83 (.62)
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	1.65 (.08)	.91 (.66)	1.96 (.001)	.47 (.048)
Mother been to University	1.436 (.28)	.85 (.48)	1.12.62)	1.35 (.47)
Father been to University	.84 (.58)	.73 (.16)	.85 (.47)	.84 (.69)
Student is a UK resident	1.25 (.69)	2.16 (.10)	.77 (.57)	.27 (.03)
Student contributing to fee	.92 (.73)	.86 (.40)	1.03 (.85)	.61 (.15)
Tuition fee is above £6,000	.28 (.001)	.73 (.25)	.49 (.011)	1.81 (.25)
Is studying HE in FE	.25 (.004)	1.21 (.61)	1.44 (.36)	.70 (.62)
Studying Computing	1.35 (.42)	2.09 (.008)	1.64 (.08)	.47 (.11)
Studying Law.	1.23 (.56)	1.22 (.43)	.98 (.95)	.31 (.02)
Studying English	1.37 (.62)	1.82 (.13)	.99 (.97)	.000 (.99)
Constant	1.76 (.41)	1.94 (.23)	2.92 (.05)	1.02 (.99)
n	622	624	629	617
Log Likelihood	468.2	814.0	796.3	279.1

5.6 Summary

This Chapter compares undergraduates enrolling in one university in the years before and after a substantial increase in 'sticker price' tuition fees suggests a radical difference between the sensitivity to fee levels expressed by students and the sensitivity to fee levels suggested by levels of enrolment. Overall students were moderately price sensitive, however according to their survey responses students are highly sensitive to fee increases above the level the current fee level. For example, just over half of the Year 2+ students who were paying fees governed by a fee cap of just over £3,000 asserted that they would not have gone to

university if they had been required to pay tuition fees above £6,000 a year. However, Year 1 students asserted that they would only become price sensitive if tuition fees rose above the level of 'sticker price' after the fee regime change for the university they were attending (£7,500).

Results show no difference between cohorts by gender, ethnicity or 'first-generation university' status. However, a lower proportion of students in Year 1 reported that parents were not in professional or managerial jobs. Results also suggested a strong disjunction between students' self-reports on price sensitivity and the evidence from student enrolment. Although Year 2 + students claim they would have been sensitive to fee increases above the level they were paying, there are no reasons to believe that the cohort of students who actually enrolled in Year 1 had different characteristics from the previous years (at least in ways which might plausibly be considered associated with responsiveness to tuition fee changes).

Whilst Year 1 students showed greater likelihood in paying higher fees, they were more likely to believe that new students will tend to have higher student debts, which even in the initial year of higher fees, could indicate an acceptance of higher fees, higher costs and student debt. Results suggest a strong disjunction between students' self-reports on price sensitivity and the evidence from student enrolment. Although Year 2+ students claim they would have been sensitive to fee increases above the level they were paying, there is no reason to believe that the cohort of students who actually enrolled in Year 1 had different characteristics from the previous years (at least in ways which might plausibly be considered associated with responsiveness to tuition fee changes). Interpretation of the observable price insensitivity of undergraduate enrolments at this university is consistent with the predictions of Human Capital Theory and, in particular, with the evidence that the NPV for undergraduates looks rather like NPV4 in Chapter 2, section 2.1.6, Figure 2.4 (at least after taking account of fee remissions for disadvantaged students and the impact of income contingent loans on expectations of the graduate premium).

Nonetheless, the Cluster Analysis (Table 5.6) suggests a more fine-grained story to set against this overall picture. Students with professional or managerial fathers were more likely to be in the 'conspicuous consumption' cluster and, if paying fees of more than £6,000 were more likely to display lower price sensitivity.

Results suggested that students are motivated to study to increase their future potential, and as discussed in Chapter 7, following the Human Capital trend of investing in their earning potential. Furthermore, students indicated that the reasons for choosing their university were links to employers and the success of the course in league tables – two categories which enable the course to improve graduate earnings.

Further analysis, using an OLS regression (Table 5.16), shows two clear groups of students emerging. Firstly, a group that chose their university mainly based upon the quality factors and performance indicators of the university, and a second group who based their choice of university based upon the quality of the lodgings available.

Comparing HE in FE students' responses to students studying within the university, there are some notable differences. Likelihood to pay higher fees is much lower, which may explain that 85.2% chose to study in the college with either not having applied to university or declining an acceptance to study at university. An example of this is that 40.2% of all university students would pay a £9,000 fee rate compared to only 17% of the HE in FE student body. Similarly, to university students, HE in FE students also indicated that institutional quality performance indicators influenced their decision to choose their university. However, students were not concerned on the quality of the validating franchise university's quality.

Chapter 6 builds upon these findings and further explores the data to provide an analysis of students' and academics' expectations of institutional change following increased fees.

Chapter 6 Results

Students' and academics' expectations in changes to Higher Education Institutions and the student body following the introduction of higher tuition fees

This Chapter presents results from student and staff surveys regarding expectations of change following the introduction of higher tuition fees. Results from students attending the university and the FE college are presented alongside each other. In addition, survey and interview responses from academic staff working at the same new university are presented to offer comparisons of staff expectations.

6.1 Sample characteristics

This section presents descriptive data for the three sets of results presented in this chapter: interviews with senior academic staff, staff survey, and student survey. The interviews with senior academic staff aimed to reveal institutional strategies towards resource use in the light of the tuition fee change. The staff survey aimed to capture the extent to which teaching staff shared the expectations and priorities expressed by their senior management. The student survey was designed to find out whether the expectations of new first year students were different from the expectations of students in years two and three who were experiencing the 'old' fee regime. It also enables a comparison between student and staff expectations.

6.1.1 Interviews with academic staff

As explained in Section 4.6.5, interviews with senior academics were conducted to explore institutional intentions and expectations regarding the tuition fee increase. The interviews were designed to probe four categories identified in the literature review (in particular Section 3.4.2). These categories were: 'external focus', 'surface manifestations' and 'fees impacting on teaching standards and expectations'. Five senior academics were interviewed to provide further detail and to inform interpretation of the survey results. Four staff were from the university: the Associate Deans of Learning and Teaching (ADLT), from the three

Faculties which took part in the student survey; and the Director of the university's Academic Development Unit. The final interviewee was the Higher Education manager at the Further Education College which provided the student survey responses. Each interviewee held a senior academic position within their institution and was able to offer institutional views of the anticipated consequences of the rise in tuition fees. With the exception of the university's Director of the Academic Development Unit (D ADU), the individuals interviewed had responsibility for handling appeals, complaints and recruitment issues within their faculty/college. The D ADU has a remit which includes helping the organisation to understand and interpret league tables and student survey feedback.

6.1.2 Survey samples

The characteristics of the students who were surveyed are presented in tables 5.1 and 5.2 in the previous chapter. The survey also included questions about students' beliefs about how the tuition fee might change the way in which the institution would operate and the effects that this would have on students' experience and outcomes.

The same questions were also asked in a survey sent to university staff. The survey was sent to all academic staff in each of the faculties in which the surveyed students were based. Out of a potential 474 returns, 97 completed responses were received, just over 20% of academics sampled. A summary of the 97 university staff who responded via an online survey can be seen in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1 Summary of descriptive staff characteristics

Descriptor	Total (%)
Male	52 (53.6)
Female	45 (46.4)
Age 18-50	52 (53.6)
Age 51-60	30 (30.9)
Age 61+	15 (15.5)
Worked in this institution for over 3 years	74 (76.3)
Over 5 years HE service	77 (79.4)
Worked in more than one institution	43 (44.3)
Work full time	81 (83.5)
Student facing academics	71 (74.7)
Non-student facing academics (Management or research academics) (of which) Management	24 (25.3) 16 (16.8)
Arts and Creative Technology Faculty	24 (24.7)
Business Education and Law Faculty	48 (49.5)
Computing, Engineering and Sciences Faculty	24 (24.7)
Cross University role	1 (1)
Total staff survey responses (n)	97 (100)

The distribution of respondents between student facing academics, non-student facing academics and management was similar to the whole university. Roughly two-thirds of the academics were employed as lecturers or senior lecturers. The remainder of the sample were readers, professors and/or management. Although staff in the latter category may still be teaching, their roles are no longer predominantly student facing.

HE in FE staff were not surveyed due to the small population of teachers who would have contact with these students, as explained in Chapter 4.

6.2 Evidence from interviews with senior academics to obtain a sense of what changes were planned and why

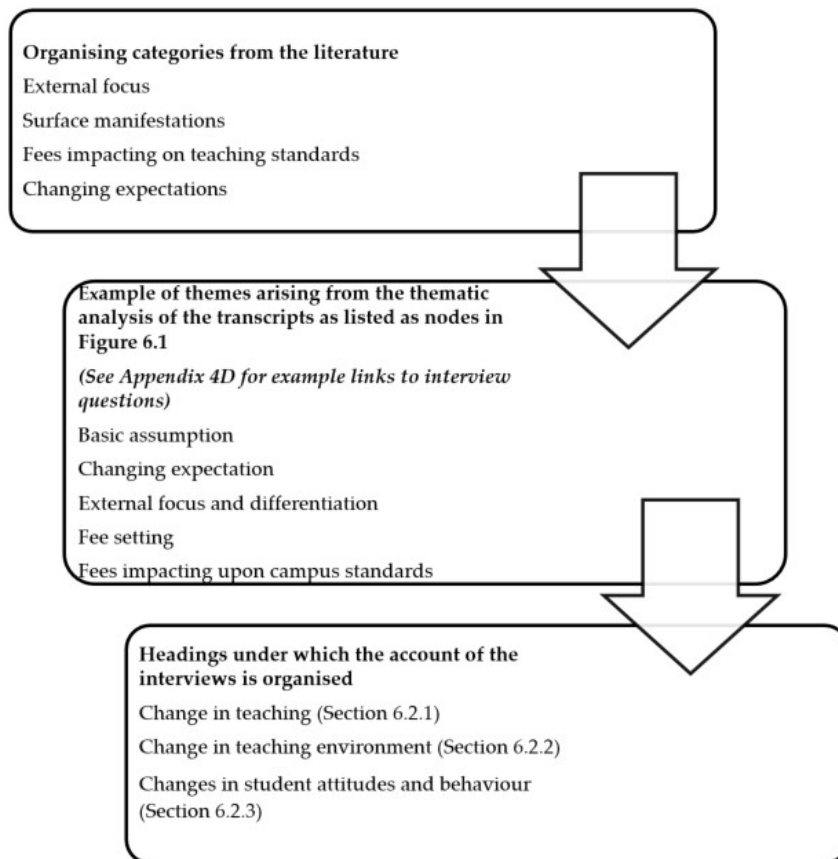
Figure 6.1 Screen shot from Nvivo showing coded nodes to analyse interview transcripts

Name	Sources	References	Created On	Created By	Modified On
Basic Assumption		5	9 23/08/2015 11:04	JPH	27/08/2015 20:15
Changing Expectations		6	20 22/08/2015 12:38	JPH	27/08/2015 20:18
External Focus and Differentiation		6	34 22/08/2015 12:34	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Fee Setting		6	16 22/08/2015 12:35	JPH	27/08/2015 20:19
Fees Impacting Upon Campus Standards		3	5 23/08/2015 11:36	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Fees Impacting upon Teaching Environment Stan		1	4 23/08/2015 11:12	JPH	23/08/2015 11:23
Fees Impacting Upon Teaching Standards		6	25 22/08/2015 12:36	JPH	27/08/2015 20:16
Flexibility and Descretion		5	6 23/08/2015 11:21	JPH	27/08/2015 20:19
HE in FE		6	16 22/08/2015 12:36	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Internal Focus and Integration		5	18 23/08/2015 11:15	JPH	27/08/2015 20:16
Stability and Control		6	16 23/08/2015 10:55	JPH	27/08/2015 20:20
Student Body		5	14 22/08/2015 12:31	JPH	27/08/2015 20:21
Surface Manifestations		6	26 22/08/2015 12:42	JPH	27/08/2015 20:15
University Change		4	11 22/08/2015 12:43	JPH	27/08/2015 20:21
Values		2	4 23/08/2015 11:11	JPH	23/08/2015 12:11

Figure 6.1 shows that high frequencies of coding took place in the areas of External Focus; Surface Manifestations; Fees Impacting upon Teaching Standards and Changing Expectations.

Figure 6.2 shows the relationship between categories identified in the literature have informed the interview coding, which in turn influenced the design of the subsections used to structure this section of the chapter.

Figure 6.2 diagram to show the relationship between categories identified in the literature have shaped the interview coding and structure of presentation



6.2.1 Changes in teaching

None of the interviewees discussed active and prolonged changes to teaching approaches or portfolios. For example, there was no mention of hiring more teaching academics or reducing class-sizes. The Director of the Academic Development Unit hoped that there would changes in the quality of teaching from his intention to strengthen the culture of comparison across the university. He believed that lecturers' performance would be improved by publication of comparative statistics (in the manner that has become standard practice between institutions in higher and secondary education in England). There is an implication here that the increased tuition fees would require the institution to act to improve the quality of teaching without any indication that any of the additional fee income would be used to enable this.

“At the moment an award leader knows how their award has performed but they have no idea how anybody else’s has. You need to have that comparison to see. So there will be a culture change in terms of making information available but the other big cultural change that I am hoping is going to start coming about is about improving attainment and success for individual students but recognising that in doing that, because that is all around learning and teaching strategies, personal tutoring, mentoring etc, we are doing it because we recognise that there is a social justice reason for doing it. Ultimately there are very sound business reasons for doing it because that improves institutional performance.” (D ADU)

The DADU’s reference to academics judging the performance of their award acknowledges the use of NSS and KIS data as discussed in the Literature Review Chapter 3, section 3.1.3.

The major concern expressed by the senior academics was that greater efforts would be needed to convince students that the quantity and quality of teaching they were receiving was good value. But they were also concerned to try to make sure that staff made themselves available for student queries. The burden of improvements to the teaching experience would fall on staff without any additional expenditure. The extract below shows the Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching from the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies (ADLT ACT) explaining the change in approach to contact hours:

“I think one of the other aspects is the monitoring of the contact hours and getting them (students) to understand the difference between school, college and university, expectations about independent learning but at the same time ensuring that they have that access to colleagues so that for a course that does appear to have only eight hours contact, well what else does that mean? ... I think what colleagues are very aware of in trying to point out to the student body what’s happened with regards to that.” (ADLT ACT)

Within this extract the ADLT suggests that students perceive contact time as a form of receiving value for money. In this instance the faculty did not question the resulting benefit to the student experience in contact time.

The ADLT CES believed that students' expectations were formed through their previous experiences in other institutions such as schools and colleges.

“I think one area that they can refer to is what they have had in school. So typically, within schools they get very immediate feedback, a greater percentage of their learning time is within classes, they interact with themselves and teachers and smaller groups as well which gives much more immediate feedback. In terms of materials that are being presented within schools you look at classrooms and I am sure you know the standard of materials presented and the way they are presented using tablets and things like that and the whole pedagogic approach to learning is probably something that we really need to review. Universities clearly say it is not just about teaching but it is about the student learning and being critical, autonomous learners and also staff are involved in a range of other things as well. I think it is those comparisons and again the number of times you hear from student ‘well I could have given it to my teacher and they could have turned it around in a week and provided comments and a personalised form of comment’ that will be on a 1:1 basis and replicating that or matching that expectation is extremely challenging.”
(ADLT CES)

In the quotation this ADLT suggests that traditional reliance on students' autonomous learning is now being viewed as a lower service level. This senior manager was anxious that former expectations of student autonomy would prompt student dissatisfaction with university teaching.

The Head of Higher Education at the FE College spoke of the dangers of the rise in fees, as he believed that many students lacked understanding of the changes and the repayment

system. He felt that much of his role, during this transition period was spent in advising and supporting students:

“The changes of the fees directly for the students is something that we have struggled with initially because a lot of our level 3 learners are progressing to our FE Awards and choosing not to sometimes because they don’t understand the fees. They don’t understand how it has changed, they don’t understand the repayment, they don’t understand that they don’t have the money upfront and getting that information out to students and to course tutors and course leaders has become a bigger part of the job.” (FE Head of HE)

6.2.2 Change in the teaching environment

One of the Associate Deans believed that teaching environments would have to improve as a result of changes within Higher Education:

“The teaching classroom is no longer in the university, obviously there will be some classrooms here but we go out and do things with business, with industry etc. That has a major effect on culture because the culture of an organisation is essentially made of its people and the resources and spaces that it holds” (ADLT BEL).

Similarly, the ADLT CES discussed how universities were competing through their use of technology as a result of student expectations. He believed that the use of technology supported learning would need to be improved to match the offer of national and international competitors. This shows some recognition that investment in technological resources should be increased following the increase in student tuition fees and in light of perceived student expectation.

The Head of Higher Education at the FE College indicated that the investment by his college in a Higher Education centre was as a direct link to the increase in fees:

“There are some things that we have done for example, establishing the HE Study Centre that we have done that partly with the fee increase in mind and if anything,

that has allowed me a little bit of strength to my argument for certain changes. I think had we not increased the fees I would have had more of a battle on my hands to get a space allocated for HE students” (FE Head of HE).

This provides a similar story to the messages from the university that money is being spent on facilities, rather than staff. The ‘battle on my hands’ is a reference to his lobbying senior college management for increases within budgets to this area for new build and refurbishment. He indicates that without managers assuming students expect higher standards the change would not have happened. This assumption about student expectations will later be tested in this chapter.

6.2.3 Changes in student attitudes and behaviour

Growing trends of consumer behaviour was noted amongst those interviewed. This is shown below in evidence of student’s approaches to finding their courses and also in their behaviours whilst on the course; in particularly complaints.

In conversation, the Head of Higher Education at the FE College felt that students found little use in use of Key Information Sets (KIS) (including National Student Survey data) in choosing their courses; although he did suggest that parents and advisors found KIS data helpful. He believed that students were already considering price as a category to base their choices of where to study and that the KIS data should more clearly represent the fees that students would pay.

“If you have got an 17/18 year old who is looking to do their UCAS application and is looking at what effectively is a price comparison site and then they chose an institution on that information, if then they arrive at that institution and they find it does not align with their expectations they will feel that they have a right to come and say something about it” (FE Head of HE).

Within the interviews each of the Associate Deans mentioned the rising rates of complaints and appeals and linked them to rising fees.

“I would say is to put the emphasis on the complaints and appeals, that is a rising trend that I have noticed and I think I shall continue to see that. People will say ‘I am paying for this so therefore dar, dar, dar’” (ADLT BEL).

Another Associate Dean explained how higher fees are making students act more like consumers:

“If the students are paying more then, however much we don’t like it, we view them more and more as consumers, or they view themselves as consumers and therefore what you are having to do is... You are more acutely looking at value for money ensuring that student experience is what it should be etc.

...Previously that awareness of a complaints culture and awareness of being able to have a come-back on the University wasn’t there; it has increased in the student body now. Hence for colleagues there is much more of a sense of accountability” (ADLT ACT).

The same Associate Dean discussed how student expectations are growing as a result of higher fees and that this is reflected in the number and nature off complaints and appeals:

“...students are saying ‘well hang on, I pay for this so....’. You also, in a certain sense... I have spoken to some level 4 students in terms of complaints and that is one of the key things that you see coming through, ‘I have paid for this’ as the opening comment and ‘I am not receiving what I think I should be’” (ADLT ACT).

She continued to explain how this type of student approach and behaviour is being compounded by the expectations of parents.

“A student complaint goes in but with a ‘my family has asked me’; ‘my Dad is also dissatisfied with this and this because I am paying’. I think you have got that aspect to it as well” (ADLT ACT).

The senior managers claim that students are using fees as a basis for complaint justification. As a senior manager whose role includes dealing with complaints on behalf of their faculty,

all ADLT's interviewed would be attempting to minimise complaints. If fees become a catalyst for complaints, these managers have a reason to regard the fee regime as making their job more burdensome.

The Associate Dean with Business Education and Law observed that despite the increase in fees, that applicants were not asking about fees and services or eligibility for paying less than the sticker price.

“The other thing I think, which I found quite interesting, was that during the course of clearing when I would have expected there to be quite a lot of competition between universities in terms of the fees I never had one single question about fees other than fees on campus like living accommodation. Not one single student said ‘is this going to cost me more or less’ or ‘will you reduce the fees if I do X, Y or Z’, or anything like that; not a single question” (ADLT BEL).

The FE Head of HE also commented that applicants were not enquiring about possibilities for paying reduced fees, however also believed that the HE in FE market was still a place for students that were not “typical A level 17 year old student” and that the services they offered to support higher education in the college was different than the experience provided at university and that this was what attracted students to HE in FE.

The sample of academics interviewed believed that the student body would change as a result of higher fees. The Director of the Academic Development Unit commented:

“Those were the more innovative ones [awards] and again are more likely to recruit from those students with lower social capital who don't necessarily have families who understand that you are better off doing physics than computer games design. You might be interested in computer games design and you might get a better degree but you really need to do physics because that is the subject which is more important” (D ADU).

As discussed further in Chapter 7, this quote shows the complexity and misconceptions that academics can also have in the field of estimating future income based on degree subjects.

Whilst there was some acknowledgement that the student body may change over time there was also evidence to suggest that institutions will also have to adapt. As noted by the ADLT BEL that increased fees may lead to students having a “greater awareness of experience, perceptions of usefulness...”. They believed that this may force universities and traditional providers into considering how they adapt student experiences:

“The advent of the increase in private colleges will have a major impact on the state sector because private colleges are able to undercut most universities by a significant amount, they are increasing their reputation all the time and people will ask the question ‘why am I bothering to go to this traditional university and paying an extra £2,000 a year when I could send my son or daughter to private college and get the same equivalent degree which will be perfectly accepted in the professions without any problems’” (ADLT BEL).

6.3 Survey evidence of academics’ perceptions of expectations of standards and change at their university as a result of fee increases

Sections 6.3.1 to 6.3.3 present survey responses from academics when asked to predict changes to standards of practice in the following areas; teaching, teaching environments and campus facilities. Quantitative responses are provided, which have been analysed using binary logistical regression. Staff were asked to predict changes in practice and resulting standards as a result of increased fees within the survey. This was based on three survey questions bases around standards of teaching and resources. The survey asked staff to indicate whether they believed that, as a consequence of the tuition fee increase: students would get better results; students would be treated differently; or the student body would change.

6.3.1 Teaching standards – academics’ expectations of potential change to teaching standards following fee increases

Table 6.2 shows academic responses to the three survey questions which probe academics regarding their expectations on standards across. Table 6.3 shows a marginal majority believe that teaching environments will improve, whereas a large majority indicated campus facilities will improve.

Table 6.2 Academic expectations of change following increased fees [n(%)]

	Decline in standards	Standards stay the same	A small improvement in standards	Significant improvement in standards	Standards decline or remain same	Standards Improve
Standards of teaching improve	13 (13.4)	47 (48.5)	33 (34)	4 (4.1)	60 (63.8)	37 (36.2)
Standards of teaching environments and resources improve	15 (15.5)	32 (33)	42 (43.3)	8 (8.2)	47 (48.6)	50 (51.4)
Standards of campus facilities improve	7 (7.2)	27 (27.8)	44 (45.4)	19 (19.6)	34 (35.1)	63 (64.9)

Table 6.2 shows a small majority believed that teaching environments would improve, whereas a large majority believed that campus facilities would improve.

Binary logistic regressions were conducted using the final 2 columns of each row in Table 6.2 as the dependent variable (Standards improve =1). Staff characteristics were used as the explanatory variables (Aged over 50, Male, worked in institution for over 3 years, Over 5 years HE service, Worked in more than one institution, Work full time, Faculty of Business, Education and Law, Computing, Engineering and Sciences Faculty, Lecturer Scale, Middle Management and Senior Researchers). Only one of the explanatory variables was significantly associated with a dependent variable: staff over 50 were more likely to expect an increase in teaching standards. There was no detectable difference between the

expectations of student facing and non-student facing academics or between the expectations of academics in different faculties. By the nature of their subjects academics in Computing, Engineering and Sciences would use more equipment and resources that those in Business, Education and Law.

6.3.2 Student experience: academics' expectations of potential change to the wider experiences and the industry following fee increases

Tables 6.3, 6.4 and 6.5 provide a summary of academics' responses to questions asking for predictions on changes to the student 'consumer journey' and how higher fees could change the ways students are treated.

Table 6.3 Staff expectations in change of higher fee-paying student achievement

	No – student achieve lower grades	No – they will achieve not affected	Yes – student achievement will improve
Will students paying higher fees achieve higher grades compared to those paying less?	6 (6.2)	75 (77.3)	16 (16.5)

Table 6.4 Staff expectations in change of higher fee paying and change to the student body over time [n (%)]

	less favourably	the same	More favourably
Will students paying higher fees be treated differently by the university as opposed to those paying less?	1 (1)	66 (68)	30 (30.9)

Table 6.5 Staff expectations of change to the student body over time [n (%)]

	Change?				
	No	Very unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely
Consider the students at your university which make up the student body. How likely will the higher fees change this student body over time?	1 (1)	4 (4.1)	9 (9.3)	59 (60.8)	24 (24.7)

Table 6.3 and Table 6.4 show that the majority of academics believe that standards for students' grades and how they will be treated by their institutions will remain the same following higher tuition fees. However, the majority of respondents (85.5%) believed that the student body will change. This suggests that academics think that whilst the external change of higher fees will be dramatic enough to change the make-up of the student body attending higher education, they do not believe that the change will impact upon the internal processes of how students are treated or that student achievement will increase. These responses are collated and analysed further in Table 6.6 which presents results from a logistic regression which examined whether there were any differences among staff in terms of expectations regarding students.

Table 6.6 Summary of complete case binary logistical regression showing significance vales of categories listed in Table 6.3 through 6.5 against staff characteristic dummy variables

	Students paying higher fees Exp(B) (p)				
	achieve grades	higher	will be treated DIFFERENTLY by the institution	will be treated FAVOURABLY by the institution	will change the student body over time.
Aged over 50	.675 (.529)		3.023 (.047)	2.742 (.070)	2.602 (.178)
Male	1.127 (.847)		6.287 (.002)	5.588 (.004)	.903 (.873)
Worked in institution for over 3 years	.489 (.369)		.687 (.603)	.668 (.574)	.267 (.165)
Over 5 years HE service	.955 (.956)		3.138 (.161)	2.773 (.209)	1.389 (.741)
Worked in more than one institution	.695 (.570)		.602 (.357)	.672 (.474)	.230 (.038)
Work full time	.747 (.696)		2.394 (.256)	4.040 (.106)	.358 (.357)
Faculty of Business, Education and Law	1.326 (.712)		.395 (.150)	.367 (.123)	.571 (.495)
Computing, Engineering and Sciences Faculty	2.088 (.382)		.926 (.915)	.935 (.927)	.527 (.475)
Lecturer Scale	.613 (.542)		2.118 (.320)	1.680 (.491)	1.312 (.778)
Middle Management and Senior Researchers	.921 (.927)		2.755 (.232)	2.554 (.271)	.429 (.406)
Constant	.565 (.677)		.023 (.008)	.020 (.008)	84.078 (.023)
n	95		95	95	95
Log Likelihood	82.941		98.210	96.916	69.886
Nagelkerke's R ²	.056		.286	.285	.169

Table 6.6 shows that the analysis found no evidence of an association between most staff characteristics and expectations. However, male academics were much more likely than female staff to suggest that students paying higher fees will be treated more favourably. The two academic faculties included in the analysis, which by the nature of their subjects treat students differently, show no sign of their responses being statistically significant.

6.4 Student perceptions of expectations of standards and change at their university as a result of fee increases

Section 6.4 presents responses from students when asked to predict changes caused by the tuition fee increase that would affect their experience as students. The section begins with students' responses to a question asking if they expected that students paying higher fees would get better grades. Since the students in this sample asserted that improving labour market prospects was their major motivation for going to university, it is pertinent to ask whether they expected that students paying more would get any additional benefit in terms of those outcomes. This, after all, is part of the rationale for governments wanting to increase competition between HEIs. These results are followed by evidence from students' expectations about changes in the use of resources which might affect their experience. The survey questions explored the aspects of the student experience set out in Table 6.7.

Table 6.7 Aspects of the student experience explored by the survey questions

<i>Main category</i>	<i>Sub-category</i>
Teaching standards	Number of staff employed Responsiveness to students
Teaching environment	Provision of ICT
Campus facilities	

The section concludes by examining students' expectations about the consequences of the increase in tuition fees on the nature of the student body.

6.4.1 Did these students believe that students paying higher fees would get better grades?

Table 6.8 Students' expectations about the relationship between paying higher fees and achieving higher grades

	Students agreeing (%)	2012/13 Entry	2011/12 Entry	Fisher's Exact Test	n
	N (% of responses)				
Students paying higher fees achieve higher grades.	91 (13.4)	41 (12.1)	50 (14.7)	.368	677

Table 6.8 shows that only one in seven of the students answering this question believed that there would be a positive relationship between paying higher fees and achieving higher grades. This result may have arisen because respondents were thinking purely in terms of students attending their own institution whilst paying different levels of fees.

6.4.2 Overview of students' expectations of change in teaching standards, teaching environments and campus facilities

Table 6.9 shows the student expectations of change in standards of teaching, the teaching environment and campus facilities. The survey provided students with examples to clarify what was meant by each term. 'Campus facilities were exemplified by 'e.g. more coffee shops, sports fields, accommodation etc'. The table distinguishes between students paying over £6,000 and those below, following on from Table 6.8.

Whilst not shown in a separate table, analysis of the data showed that students who expected teaching to improve were about three times more likely to suggest that grades would also improve, which was seen at 29% versus 9%. Pearson Chi-Squared test showed this result to be statistically with $p < .001$ and Value $X(1) = 21.786$.

Table 6.9 Students responses to changes in teaching standards as a result of higher fees at their university by cohort and fee band

Standards of	Change in Standards					Chi-Square (p) ²	Standards		
	Small	Significant	Total	Decline/same	Improve				
	Stay								
	Decline	same	Improvement						
	N (% within fee band) (%of students responding) ¹								
teaching	Fees								
	< £6,000	27 (6.6) (73)	253 (62.2) (61.7)	90 (22.1) (57.7)	37 (9.1) (46.3)	407 (100) (59.6)	.022	280	127
	£6,000 +	10 (3.6) (27)	157 (56.9) (38.3)	66 (23.9) (42.3)	43 (15.6) (53.8)	276 (100) (40.4)		167	107
	Total	37 (5.4) (100)	410 (60) (100)	156 (22.8) (100)	80 (11.7) (100)	683		447	236 (34.5)
teaching environment	< £6,000	23 (5.7) (71.9)	178 (44) (60.8)	143 (35.3) (59.3)	61 (15.1) (53.5)	405 (100) (59.6)	.270	201	204
	£6,000 +	9 (3.3) (28.1)	115 (41.8) (39.2)	98 (35.6) (40.7)	53 (19.3) (46.5)	275 (100) (40.4)		124	151
	Total	32 (4.7) (100)	293 (43.1) (100)	241 (35.4) (100)	114 (16.8) (100)	680		325	355 (52.2)
	campus facilities	< £6,000	29 (7.2) (74.4)	167 (41.4) (57.4)	155 (38.5) (61.8)	62 (12.9) (54.2)	403 (100) (59.5)	.123	196
£6,000 +		10 (3.6) (25.6)	124 (45.3) (42.6)	96 (35) (38.2)	44 (16.1) (45.8)	274 (100) (40.5)	134		140
Total		39 (5.8) (100)	291 (43) (100)	251 (37.1) (100)	96 (14.2) (100)	677		330	347 (51.3)

¹ The first percentage showing the % within fee band sums horizontally. The second percentage showing the % of students responding with that judgement sums vertically.

² Comparisons of students paying fees more than £6,000 and students paying less than £6,000.

Table 6.9 shows that more students (one third) believed that teaching standards would improve than believed that students' grades would be higher for students who paid £6,000 or more. Nonetheless, a somewhat higher proportion of students paying £6,000 or above

than students paying below £6,000 believed that teaching standards would improve. Two further tests were carried out to check the possibility of optimism bias (believing that if you paid more, though others did not, teaching standards would improve). A Chi-square test comparing the distribution of students contributing to their own fees and students not contributing to their own fees found no significant difference. Moreover, a comparison of students contributing to their own fees and those who were not found that the difference in expectations (between those paying more than £6,000 and those paying less) was concentrated in those students not contributing to their own fees.

Roughly one fifth of students expected that better teachers would be employed, whilst nearly a third believed that universities would be more responsive to students. Given that one third of students expected a rise in standards of teaching (Table 6.9) it appears they were more likely to expect this to come from access to academics than from the quality of teaching in lectures and seminars.

Students were a little more optimistic about improvements in teaching environments and campus facilities. Roughly half of this group of students believed they would see improvements in both of these areas. The difference between the distribution of responses on teaching standards and the distribution of responses on the teaching environment was significant at the $p < .01$ level. So was the difference between the distribution of responses on teaching standards and the distribution of responses on campus facilities. There was no indication of different expectations of students paying more or less than £6,000 with respect to the teaching environment or campus facilities. Nearly 45% of students believed that the tuition fee rise would lead to an improvement in ICT facilities on campus. This proportion is fairly similar to the percentage of students expecting an improvement in campus facilities (Table 6.9).

Table 6.9 found some difference in expectations between students paying different levels of fees. Differences between students were explored more thoroughly through logistic regressions which examined associations between student characteristics and each of the expectations. Expectations about each possible change (e.g. increases in teaching standards)

were truncated into dummy variables shown in Table 6.9. The definition of the student characteristics was explained in Chapter 5.1. The results of these logistic regressions are presented in Table 6.10.

These results show that the positive association between paying higher fees and expecting teaching standards to rise persisted when other student characteristics (including whether a student was in Year 1) were taken into account. There was also a positive association between expecting teaching standards to rise and having a mother in a managerial or professional occupation. Students with managerial or professional mothers (only at 10% significance) and white students were also more likely than other students to believe that HEIs would employ better teachers. University students studying Law or Computing (compared to the base category of studying Business) and students studying HE in FE (compared to university students) were more likely to believe that there would be an improvement in campus facilities and increasing use of technology following the fee rise.

Table 6.10 A summary of complete case binary logistical regression showing significance values of categories listed in Table 9 by student characteristic dummy variables

	Increase standards of teaching	Universities/Colleges will employ better teachers	Increase standards of teaching environments and resources	University/Colleges will increase their use of technology	Increase standards of campus facilities
	Exp(B) (p)				
Student in Year 1	.583 (.055)	.963 (.908)	.797 (.370)	1.250 (.387)	.796 (.371)
Aged 18 to 21	.836 (.426)	1.557 (.134)	1.338 (.175)	1.492 (.069)	1.436 (.096)
Male	.961 (.849)	1.239 (.390)	.838 (.374)	1.181 (.409)	.863 (.463)
White	.755 (.167)	.560 (.014)	.858 (.437)	1.161 (.454)	1.068 (.742)
Mother professional or managerial	1.731 (.007)	1.558 (.062)	1.084 (.681)	.997 (.989)	1.096 (.645)
Father professional or managerial	1.163 (.417)	1.122 (.606)	1.080 (.664)	.924 (.662)	.921 (.647)
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	.721 (.731)	1.235 (.934)	.676 (.094)	1.291 (.440)	.919 (.576)
Mother been to University	.980 (.154)	.860 (.413)	.867 (.069)	1.125 (.240)	1.071 (.698)
Father been to University	.929 (.929)	.578 (.578)	.515 (.515)	.596 (.596)	.754 (.754)
Student is a UK resident	1.220 (.658)	.496 (.138)	.757 (.520)	.758 (.524)	1.200 (.671)
Student contributing to fee	.911 (.605)	.969 (.883)	.949 (.761)	.838 (.310)	.783 (.157)
Tuition fee is above £6,000	2.365 (.003)	1.050 (.884)	1.455 (.158)	.850 (.547)	1.167 (.564)
Is studying HE in FE	.726 (.422)	.641 (.351)	.605 (.176)	.431 (.027)	.373 (.009)
Studying Computing	.643 (.104)	.712 (.284)	.738 (.252)	.525 (.017)	.478 (.007)
Studying Law.	.580 (.034)	.653 (.159)	.805 (.385)	.543 (.017)	.383 (.000)
Studying English	.530 (.110)	.767 (.578)	.876 (.727)	.693 (.327)	1.090 (.832)
Constant	.735 (.569)	.526 (.282)	1.482 (.452)	.998 (.997)	1.523 (.419)
n	637	616	634	617	631
Log Likelihood	794.0	602.3	854.3	832.4	839.2
Nagelkerke's R ²	.063	.061	.047	.041	.071

6.4.3 Students' expectations of change in how students are treated and the composition of the student body

Whilst Section 6.4.1 concentrated on students' survey responses relating to the quality of teaching and facilities, this section focuses on expectations about how students would be treated by their institutions and the composition of the student body (Table 6.11).

Table 6.11 A summary of student responses on changes as a result of higher fees

	All students agreeing with statement (%)	2012/13 Entry Year 1 N (%) of cohort)	2011/12 Entry Year 2 or above N (%) of cohort)	Fisher's Exact Test (2 sided)	n
Students paying higher fees will be treated differently by the institution.	95 (14.1)	38 (11.2)	57 (17)	.057	674
Students paying higher fees will be treated favourably by the institution.	69 (10.2)	27 (39.1)	42 (60.9)	.036	674
Higher fees will change the student body over time.	304 (45)	142 (42.1)	162 (47.9)	.142	675

Logistic regressions using dummy variables (where any agreement with the statements in Table 6.11 was coded 1) found few associations with student characteristics. Students who were males, white and had graduate parents were more likely to believe that the rise in tuition fees would affect the composition of the student body. Non-UK residents were, perhaps unsurprisingly, less likely to believe that higher fees would change the student body. Students studying law were more likely to believe institutions will be more responsive to student needs.

Table 6.12 Logistic regressions showing associations between expectations and student characteristics

	Students paying higher fees				Higher fees will change student body	HEIs will be more responsive to student needs
	achieve higher grades	will be treated differently by institution	will be treated favourably by institution	will be treated favourably by institution		
	Exp(B) (p)					
Student in Year 1	.537 (.121)	.933 (.844)	.782 (.553)	.797 (.388)	1.587 (.094)	
Aged 18 to 21	1.057 (.864)	1.324 (.390)	1.189 (.634)	.721 (.135)	1.112 (.652)	
Male	1.253 (.439)	1.575 (.119)	1.099 (.778)	.594 (.011)	1.357 (.156)	
White	.737 (.266)	.649 (.111)	.947 (.869)	1.545 (.032)	1.238 (.325)	
Mother professional or managerial	.853 (.582)	1.209 (.494)	1.371 (.315)	1.187 (.391)	.863 (.496)	
Father professional or managerial	.933 (.792)	1.112 (.681)	1.352 (.299)	1.297 (.146)	1.054 (.786)	
Student aiming to Professional/Managerial	1.129 (.678)	.842 (.546)	1.248 (.510)	1.158 (.472)	1.357 (.165)	
Mother been to University	1.979 (.019)	1.059 (.850)	.638 (.236)	.933 (.754)	1.319 (.227)	
Father been to University	1.124 (.701)	.869 (.653)	.814 (.570)	.785 (.277)	1.270 (.306)	
Student is a UK resident	1.005 (.993)	.300 (.015)	.709 (.615)	3.667 (.011)	.530 (.147)	
Student contributing to fee	.953 (.846)	1.118 (.658)	1.234 (.465)	.899 (.539)	.888 (.525)	
Tuition fee is above £6,000	1.930 (.113)	.515 (.081)	.656 (.341)	1.015 (.956)	.986 (.962)	
Is studying HE in FE	.814 (.710)	.982 (.973)	1.324 (.665)	.755 (.457)	.654 (.281)	
Studying Computing	.499 (.604)	1.427 (.340)	2.203 (.082)	1.066 (.812)	.547 (.032)	
Studying Law	.833 (.052)	1.186 (.640)	1.712 (.217)	.775 (.316)	.528 (.017)	
Studying English	.396 (.169)	.735 (.654)	.947 (.941)	1.148 (.718)	.554 (.153)	
Constant	.191 (.019)	.444 (.218)	.073 (.003)	.308 (.045)	.564 (.290)	
n	629	628	628	616	617	
Log Likelihood	479.2	483.4	397.4	831.1	749.6	
Nagelkerke's R ²	.065	.062	.039	.072	.052	

Beliefs about the student body were pursued in more detail by three questions included in Table 6.13. The table also reports students' beliefs about whether courses will tend to be traditional after the fee rise. Descriptive data on responses to these statements found that most students thought that that universities (73.2%) and university courses (68.6%) will not become any more traditional. About three-quarters of the students did *not* agree that the student body would become more diverse. The results in Table 6.13 are from logistic regressions where any form of agreement with the statement was coded 1.

Year 1 students and students aiming for professional or managerial jobs were more likely to believe that the student body would become more diverse and students paying more than £6,000 were more likely to expect an increase in mature and part-time students. It is not easy to understand the first of these expectations but it seems reasonable that students paying higher fees might be more likely to expect students to look for ways of participating in HE that they might consider less financially demanding.

Table 6.13 Logistic regressions showing associations between expectations of change in student body and student characteristics

	University courses will tend to be traditional	Future students will tend to study later in life	Future students will tend to study part time	Student bodies will become more diverse
	Exp(B) (p)			
Student in Year 1	1.129 (.653)	1.365 (.224)	1.263 (.363)	1.760 (.045)
Aged 18 to 21	.743 (.193)	.723 (.133)	.728 (.142)	.902 (.675)
Male	.869 (.513)	.739 (.130)	.782 (.220)	1.154 (.536)
White	.833 (.395)	.966 (.859)	.777 (.204)	.715 (.138)
Mother professional or managerial	1.053 (.811)	1.061 (.767)	1.050 (.806)	1.277 (.287)
Father professional or managerial	1.211 (.326)	.869 (.429)	1.158 (.412)	.961 (.851)
Student aiming to be Professional/Managerial	1.660 (.029)	1.302 (.188)	1.070 (.736)	1.413 (.154)
Mother been to University	1.382 (.161)	1.474 (.076)	.906 (.647)	.826 (.457)
Father been to University	.971 (.901)	.832 (.402)	.835 (.414)	.805 (.415)
Student is a UK resident	1.077 (.874)	.839 (.686)	.937 (.880)	.459 (.083)
Student contributing to fee	.960 (.828)	.837 (.300)	.863 (.395)	.913 (.651)
Tuition fee is above £6,000	.638 (.114)	.622 (.076)	.579 (.042)	.963 (.899)
Is studying HE in FE	.937 (.874)	.780 (.501)	.752 (.448)	1.544 (.281)
Studying Computing	1.016 (.958)	1.530 (.112)	1.562 (.097)	.575 (.079)
Studying Law.	1.547 (.107)	1.104 (.691)	1.417 (.167)	.769 (.358)
Studying English	1.619 (.221)	1.377 (.394)	1.379 (.394)	.932 (.869)
Constant	.369 (.082)	1.617 (.358)	1.526 (.421)	.714 (.552)
n	621	624	621	616
Log Likelihood	704.3	845.7	841.4	664.6
Nagelkerke's R ²	.025	.040	.038	.066

6.4.4 Comparisons between students studying at university and students studying HE in FE of change at their university as a result of fee increases

This section presents further analyses of the data analysed in Table 6.9 and 6.10. Table 6.14 shows summaries of students' expectations of changing standards following increases in tuition fees. It can be seen that there are no significant differences between the expectations of both sets of students; although on comparison 12% of university students expect improvements in the standards of teaching and learning environments, which is highlighted in the .072 Fisher Exact Test

Table 6.14 Student responses who indicated that a small or significant improvement in standards within the following areas of their university as a result of higher fees

		Expected Improvement n (%)	Fisher's Exact Test p value (2-sided)
Standards of teaching	University students n=618	220 (35.6)	.117
	HE in FE students n=67	18 (26.9)	
Standards of teaching environments and resources	University students n=615	329 (53.5)	.072
	HE in FE students n=67	28 (41.8)	
Standards of campus facilities	University students n=612	348 (51.3)	.122
	HE in FE students (%) n=67	28 (41.8)	

Students in both institutions show similar expectations in terms of future student changes. Each category listed in Table 6.15 shows only minor percentage differences between the two groups.

Table 6.15 Student responses on changes as a result of higher fees

		Students agreeing with statement n(%)	Fisher's Exact Test p value (2-sided)
Students paying higher fees achieve higher grades	University students n=610	84 (13.8)	.572
	HE in FE students n=67	7 (10.4)	
Students paying higher fees will be treated differently by the institution	University students n=615	87 (14.3)	.851
	HE in FE students n=64	8 (12.5)	
Students paying higher fees will be treated favourably by the institution	University students n=612	63 (10.3)	1.000
	HE in FE students n=64	6 (9.4)	
Higher fees will change the student body over time	University students n=618	275 (44.9)	.895
	HE in FE students n=67	29 (46.0)	

Tables 6.14 and 6.15 show that in these samples there was no evidence of difference in expectations about the future student body or the ways in which institutions would treat students.

6.5 Comparisons between students and staff of expectations of change at their university as a result of fee increases

This section compares the survey responses from staff and students to analyse differences and similarities between their expectations of change within their organisations because of rising fees. Firstly, the comparisons on expectations of institutional standards will be reviewed, followed by expectations of differing aspects of the student experience.

Table 6.16 shows staff responses to the same questions as covered in Table 6.5 to Table 6.8. Student responses are also incorporated into this table so a comparison can be made. As

academic responses only come from University academic staff, the student data in Table 6.16 through to 6.19 is only drawn from the HEI sample (n=627).

Table 6.16 A summary of staff and university student responses to questions regarding academic standards

Standards		Decline in standards	Standards stay the same	A small improvement in standards	Significant improvement in standards	Pearson Chi-Square Probability (<i>p</i>)
of teaching	Staff n=97	13 (13.4)	47 (48.5)	33 (34)	4 (4.1)	.000
	Students n=618	29 (4.7)	369 (59.7)	143 (23.1)	77 (12.5)	
of teaching environments	Staff n=97	15 (15.5)	32 (33)	42 (43.3)	8 (8.2)	.000
	Students n=615	24 (3.9)	262 (42.6)	221 (35.9)	108 (17.6)	
of campus facilities	Staff n=97	7 (7.2)	27 (27.8)	44 (45.4)	19 (19.6)	.049
	Students n=612	31 (5.7)	261 (42.6)	230 (37.6)	90 (14.7)	

The Chi-Square tests in Table 6.16 show that the differences between the staff and student responses are statistically significant. Differences in responses can be seen when comparing counts for decline in standards, where the percentage of staff agreeing with this is over twice that of the students in the areas of standards of teaching and teaching environments. This suggests that staff are more pessimistic than students regarding the impact of the increased fees. This is also indicated in these two categories with fewer staff expecting significant improvements. This can be related back to the interview responses which suggested that none of the senior university academics believed that increased income from fees (if there were any) would have a positive impact upon learning and teaching standards.

Table 6.17 compares the responses (shown in Table 6.16) of academic staff categorised as 'non-teaching facing' (senior managers and researchers) and students. University staff in non-student facing roles comprised 25.3% of the staff survey sample (Table 6.1).

Table 6.17 A summary student responses to questions regarding academic standards compared to non-teaching and management staff

		Change in standards				Pearson Chi- Square (p)
		Decline	Stay the same	Small improv- ement	Signific- ant improv- ement	
Standards of teaching	Non-teaching facing staff ¹	3 (12.5)	12 (50)	7 (29.2)	2 (8.3)	.276
	Students ¹	29 (4.7)	369 (59.7)	143 (23.1)	77 (12.5)	
Standards of teaching environments and resources	Non-teaching facing staff	2 (8.3)	10 (37.5)	9 (33.3)	5 (20.8)	.696
	Students	24 (3.9)	262 (42.6)	221 (35.9)	108 (17.6)	
Standards of campus facilities	Non-teaching facing staff	1 (4.2)	8 (33.3)	7 (29.2)	8 (33.3)	.105
	Students	31 (5.7)	261 (42.6)	230 (37.6)	90 (14.7)	

¹ In each row the sample size was 24 for non-teaching staff and 615 for students.

Table 6.17 shows that the expectations of non-student facing academics were not significantly different from those of students. Non-teaching staff were more optimistic than frontline teaching staff about improvements.

Table 6.18 compares staff and student expectations regarding other possible changes (student responses on these are summarised in Tables 6.3 to 6.5). In each case it focuses on the proportion of respondents who declared that they expected some kind of improvement. The first row compares expectations about the relationship between paying higher fees and achieving higher grades. Expectations of a positive relationship were similarly low in both groups. However, staff were more optimistic than students about the prospects of students paying higher fees being treated differently. Staff were also much more likely to expect a change in the composition of the student body.

Table 6.18 Staff and student responses on changes as a result of higher fees

		Respondents expecting improvement, n(%)	Fisher's Exact Test Exact (2-sided)(p)
Students paying higher fees achieve higher grades	Students ¹	84 (13.8)	.530
	All staff ¹	16 (16.5)	
Students paying higher fees will be treated <i>differently</i> by the institution	Students	87 (14.3)	.000
	All staff	31 (32)	
Students paying higher fees will be treated <i>favourably</i> by the institution	Students	63 (10.3)	.000
	All staff	30 (30.9)	
Higher fees will change the student body over time	Students	275 (44.9)	.000
	All staff	83 (85.6)	

¹The sample size for students was 610 for the first three rows and 612 for the final row. The sample size for staff was 97 (no missing data) in each row.

Table 6.19 restricts the comparison to non-teaching staff/ students. provides a breakdown of differing staff compared to students; showing that non-teaching and management staff are in line with the responses shown from all staff, with the exception of the second row. 37.5% of non-teaching staff compared to 32% of all staff believe students will be treated differently, with one of the manager believing that students will be treated less favourably.

Table 6.19 Student responses on changes as a result of higher fees compared to non-teaching and management staff

		Respondents expecting improvement, n(%)	Fisher's Exact Test Exact (2-sided) (p)
Students paying higher fees achieve higher grades	Students ¹	84 (13.8)	.761
	Non-teaching staff and management ¹	4 (16.7)	
Students paying higher fees will be treated differently by the institution	Students	87 (14.3)	.005
	Non-teaching staff and management	9 (37.5)	
Students paying higher fees will be treated favourably by the institution	Students	63 (10.3)	.003
	Non-teaching staff and management	8 (33.3)	
Higher fees will change the student body over time	Students	275 (44.9)	.000
	Non-teaching staff and management	20 (83.3)	

¹ The sample size for students was 610 in each row. The sample size for non-teaching staff and management was 24 (no missing data) in each row.

A comparison of Tables 6.18 and 6.19 shows that management and non-teaching staff had fairly similar expectations to other staff.

6.6 Summary

This Chapter has analysed qualitative and quantitative data from students and academics working in one university and one further education college in the year before and the year after a substantial increase in 'sticker price' tuition fee.

The results show that students have some expectations that universities will change as a result of increased fees, however these expectations are not for universal improvements. Only a third of students believed that teaching would improve, although a slight majority of students (53.5% and 51.3%) believed that resources and campus facilities would be improved. Table 6.15 shows that these expectations are broadly similar when comparing

students study at the university to those studying at HE at the FE college. Table 6.10 shows that student characteristics were related to their expectations, for example students studying Law and Computing (compared to the base category of studying Business) and students studying HE in FE (compared to university students) were more likely to believe that there would be an increase in campus facilities and increasing use of technology following the fee rise. Students paying higher tuition fees were more likely than other students to believe that standards of teaching would improve.

Expectations of teaching environments, teaching resources, employment of better teachers and increases in use of technology were broadly in line from students paying over and under £6,000 per year tuition fees. Similarly, there was no significant difference in expectations when comparing these responses to those who do and do not contribute to their tuition fee payment. That said, students paying higher fees were marginally more likely to expect teaching standards to rise – although expectations of all other factors were no different from other students. However, there was no evidence of difference in beliefs between Year 1 or Year 2 after taking account of fees paid.

Students and staff had similar expectations in many respects. However, ‘student-facing staff’ were significantly more pessimistic than students about improvement in teaching standards and the teaching environment. In contrast, non-teaching staff and management were more optimistic than students about the likelihood that students paying higher fees being treated more favourably.

Interview data indicated that senior managers believed that fees were changing student behaviours and expectations. They referred to students expressing customer dissatisfaction. This may imply that senior managers believed that students were adopting more of a consumer identity. No academic referred to any instances of students seeking to bargain over the level of fees they would pay.

Whilst students did have higher expectations than staff, the expectations from a student perspective could be considered to be low to moderate given the significant increase in fees.

An example would be less than 40% of university students expected increases in teaching standards. HE in FE students gave similar responses. Year 2+ students had higher expectations of change following the increase in fees compare to Year 1 students. The new cohort of students was relatively pessimistic.

Chapter 7 Discussion

This Chapter reviews the results in light of previous research. It, therefore, follows the structure used in the literature review chapters:

Section 7.1 – Students as investors

Section 7.2 – Students as consumers

Section 7.3 – Anticipated sector changes and effects of increased tuition fees on participation

Section 7.4 – The stratification of Higher Education, via HE in FE opportunities

7.1 Students as investors

The first section of this Chapter discusses the results from the perspective of ‘the student as an investor’. This builds on Chapter 2 which explained the role of Human Capital Theory in this study.

7.1.1 Students are studying to improve their future earning potential

The relevance of Human Capital Theory (Becker, 1964; Blaug, 1976; Johnes, 1993) is indicated by students’ declarations about their motivation. An overwhelming (93.3%) proportion of students reported that they were studying to increase their earning potential following graduation. Moreover, 84.4% of survey respondents agreed that the university’s links to employers was a factor in their choice of university. These findings are in line with studies such as Renfew et al (2010) and Kaniko and Mawer (2013) which found that employment-based information was important for university applicants. In this study, ‘links to employers’ were ranked 2nd out of 22 choice factors by university students and were ranked 3rd out of 9 choice factors by HE in FE students.

These findings contrast with the evidence of motivation regarding their choice of subject provided by Davies et al (2013). In their study they found little evidence at subject level, that students were basing their motivations to attend higher education based on Human Capital

principles. Although results in this study were from findings recorded a later year than Davies et al (2013) and they also acknowledge that at the 'going to university' decision making level students may be basing their reasoning on Human Capital principles but due to a lack of information (e.g. wage premia) they cannot apply this to the subject level. Furthermore, the difference in results between the studies could indicate a change in the relative importance of future salary for the cohorts before and after the fee increase. It is also noted that this sample from one new university and responses from students attending other types of university might have been different.

On reflection it is a regret that no explicit questions were asked of staff concerning what student motives to study were. However, it is surprising that academics did not include this topic in the responses to other questions, given the emphasis on universities supporting student employability.

7.1.2 Students showed moderate price sensitivity

In the year when the maximum undergraduate tuition fee rose from £3,250 to £9,000, 60% of university students that completed the survey claimed that price was a factor in choosing their university. The level of tuition fee actually paid by students made little difference to their declared price sensitivity. This appears to be a reasonable confirmation of the expectations of the Browne Report (2010) and government responsible for the policy change. The policy had been expected to introduce a new era of strong 'value for money' between universities. It is difficult to use the survey data to judge the effect of the tuition fee rise on the likelihood of applications to any university, since the sample only includes students who did apply. However, students in this study who enrolled after the tuition fee rise expressed a greater willingness to pay higher fees than students who enrolled before the tuition fee rise. Whilst all those surveyed were studying, and therefore compliant in their choice to pay differing amounts, the results from the study are in line with the trend in application levels of the total HE applications before and after the tuition fee increase (UCAS 2012) (see also Chapter 2, section 2.4, table 2.7).

The lack of price sensitivity of new students and acceptance of the fees, compared to existing students is consistent with the results found within the academic interviews where one senior manager pointed out: '... I never had one single question about fees other than fees on campus like living accommodation. Not one single student said 'is this going to cost me more or less' or 'will you reduce the fees if I do X, Y or Z', or anything like that; not a single question.'

This remark suggests that applicants were not concerned about the costs they would initially incur but were primarily focused on whether to live at home or live on campus. This is in line with the qualitative data which showed students only had moderate price sensitivity to fees. Given the large proportion of students from lower SES backgrounds at this university, this inference is consistent with the results reported by Mangan et al (2010).

Survey results showed that student price sensitivity had a tipping point at the £7,000 per year tuition fee price, where the PED rapidly increases. This level of sensitivity is similar to the Langelett et al (2015) study which reported very low price sensitivity amongst US students until fees reached \$9,000 per year (see Chapter 5, section 5.4.2, tables 5.16 and 5.17). They reported that community college students, especially those with low social economic backgrounds, were more sensitive to tuition fee increases. Whilst HE in FE are not community colleges, similar parallels could be linked to HE in FE students in this study and the findings from Langelett et al (2015).

Table 5.21 in Chapter 5, section 5.4.2 shows that 29% of all university students indicated that they were not willing to pay more than their current tuition fee. Furthermore, Table 5.5 and Table 5.21 show that students subject to lower fees were more likely indicate that they would only pay lower fees. This would suggest that whilst students are confident in their decision to invest in their education at the 'sticker price' they thought they are paying, they are not confident in the investment at the prices significantly above the rate that they are currently subject to; especially at fees over £7,000 per year, which is just under the university's standard 'sticker price' of £7,500 per year. Table 5.21, in Chapter 5, shows that

students would pay moderate increases in fees, compared to the fee they indicated they were currently paying.

Whilst the data shows evidence that students are making decisions based upon a Human Capital approach there is no difference in Price Elasticity of Demand (PED) between subject disciplines. Given the findings of Britton et al (2016a) which showed a differential level of pay for graduates entering differing industries – e.g. medical graduate earning £21,000 per year premium over graduates from subjects linked to lower learning industries; such as the arts (Britton et al, 2016a) it could be expected that students how would have an increased likelihood of earning more post-graduation would have been less sensitive to price. The responses from students in this study which were linked to questions surrounding price sensitivity showed no significance between different subject disciplines they were studying. Given that this study includes students from a cross section of subjects: English, law, business and computing the expected returns on investments are likely to differ. This study shows no sign of this type of assumption; either from student responses or from senior academics when interviewed.

Despite fees being significantly higher for the students in Year 1 in 2012, Table 5.5 shows a small difference (0.4%) between Year 1 and Year 2 indicating that price was a factor in their decision making. This could be explained due to applicants knowing the price of award on application, which in the English system could be up to 10 months prior to enrolling on the award. This could have indicated that the 2012/13 cohort had accepted that tuition fees would be higher than the year before and therefore as the price may have been seen a 'universal' across the sector, the tuition fee has low impact on their decision making. This could show support for the works of Davies et al (2013) and Mangan et al (2010) that suggest course fee was only considered late in the decision-making process or that there was little difference between the course fees at different universities.

7.2 Students as consumers

Whilst the opening sections of this Chapter discussed evidence of students participating in higher education as a means to invest in their own future, section 7.1.2 discusses how students also showed evidence of behaviours which can be identified as consumerist.

Academics suggested that they believed there was a shift in the student attitude and that this was beginning to show how this change is problematic with two senior academics noting that students base their higher education student experience satisfaction expectations on previous experiences in schooling or college enrolment. This links to the discussion in Chapter 3, section 3.2.2 which covered the work of Hartman and Schmidt (1995), indicating that 'pre-purchase' satisfaction expectations are developed in schools and college, as these are the fundamental educational experiences which these learners enter higher education with.

7.2.1 Things that are important to students in the decision-making process

As discussed in the Chapter 3, section 3.2, recent government policy have been implemented to inform students of university quality measures, such as publishing National Student Survey satisfaction scores and graduate employability in Key Information datasets (KIS).

The results from this study shed light on the ways which information available to students informs their choices. Supporting the work of Dunnett et al (2012) and Renfrew et al (2010), who highlight the breadth of information which has been considered useful for anyone applying to higher education. Findings from this project also suggested that whilst current information presented to students (e.g NSS and KIS data) contributes to the decision-making process, applicants also consider a range of other factors.

This study adds to the existing literature, by applying a maximum likelihood factor analysis of 22 factors affecting students' choice of university. The first of these factors was based around lodging and accounted for 17.9% of the variance – e.g. those that were living away from home, including the cost and quality of accommodation. The second concerned university quality and accounted for 16.7% of the variance – e.g. reputation, open day

experience, employer links. Comparing the two categories shows the extent to which lodgings (including costs) and university quality are important to prospective students. Renfrew et al (2010) also found that applicants were influenced by similar factors, but their study did not use the maximum likelihood factor analysis to drill down to two overarching factors.

Chapter 5, section 5.3, Table 5.6 and 5.7 show categories which influence student choice of their university; which were reduced into two components: Choice Lodging and Choice University Quality. Wilkins et al (2013) used similar groupings in their research on potential student 'behavioural dynamics' in the raising of tuition fees. It is also worth noting, as seen in Chapter 5, section 5.3, Table 5.7 that students who intended to live at home showed a different pattern of sensitivities which is followed up later in this thesis for further analysis. Rather than only depend upon this two-part model, Table 5.6 incorporates the 22 factors into items of the influence on decision making, making them subject to dimension reduction. Before carrying out the dimension reduction, suitability of the data for factor analysis was reviewed. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value was .873 and the Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was statistically significant, thus showing that the data were statistically suitable for factor analysis.

As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2 this throws published data (such as KIS) into question on its usefulness for students. Whilst Renfrew et al (2010) questioned prospective students, this study asked current undergraduates similar questions on the usefulness of student website reviews. Chapter 5, section 5.4 shows similar results to Renfrew et al (2010) who found that web sites were a relatively less important source of information for students. In this study 60.8% of university students and 38.8% of HE in FE students found this important, (ranked 15th out of 22 factors). Both this study and Renfrew et al (2010) saw 'student recommendation' having a greater importance (70% of university students), which also links with Slack et al (2014) findings on student to student recommendations having greater influence. Given how the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) (discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.2) and league tables are measured, these findings show some evidence of mismatched priorities between government and student.

7.2.2 Evidence of price being used as a quasi-measure for quality of the course; and students' conspicuous consumption

An example of price being used as a quasi-measure as a quality indicator can be seen in Chapter 5 (Table 5.21), which show a small group of students' (10% of university students) responses that suggests 'conspicuous consumption' (Leibenstein, 1950) is taking place. In this instance, a small number of students indicated that they would only attend Higher Education at higher rates of tuition fees. This could be attributed to these students assuming that the cost of the award is linked to the quality of student experience (as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2) (Kandiko and Mawer 2013). The price differential could also be attributed to the student decision making under the theory of signalling (see Chapter 2, section 2.1.4) where the students try to use the price of tuition to signal their relative desirability to possible employers (Spence, 1973; Altonji, 1995). Students adopting a signalling approach to participation in HE would assume that courses with low tuition fees yield lower financial returns.

The HE in FE students were asked about the fees they would be prepared to pay to attend their FE college and the fees they would have been prepared to pay to attend a university (see Chapter 5, section 5.5.2, Table 5.17). These data are somewhat difficult to interpret and this may simply reflect the small sample size. The data show that Year 1 students were willing to pay higher to attend HE in FE than the fees they were prepared to pay to attend the university. This may reflect the financial advantage to them of staying local to their institution rather than moving to live near the university or paying higher transport costs. However, the Year 2+ were marginally more likely to be willing to pay higher fees to attend university compared to HE in FE. It is possible that the substantial rise in tuition fees made these students more cautious about where they attended and they were looking to reduce their overall financial outlay through decisions about where to study. This interpretation is consistent with the evidence from the university students about the role of location in the decision about where to study.

7.2.3 More students expect improvements in real estate than in teaching

The findings in Chapter 6 (Table 6.9) provide new evidence of students' expectations relating to infrastructure and buildings, following fee increases. Results show that 52.2% of university students expected improvements to teaching environments, and 51.3% expect improvements to campus environments. However, only 34.5% of students who expect teaching standards to increase. Similar response rates can be seen from both HE in FE students and those studying at the university, as seen in Chapter 6, section 6.4.4, Tables 6.15 and 6.16. Whilst this could be explained by students assuming teaching standards to be high, and therefore improvements are not required, the perception of over half of the students is that real-estate is where universities will invest. Interestingly, the responses to these expectation related questions were very similar for academic staff surveyed. However, within the interviews with senior academic staff, it was surprising that there was no reference to future financial investment to infrastructure as a result of increased fees. Previous studies have not provided evidence about students' expectations regarding how institutions would use the additional funding they gained from higher fees. The data suggest that students were fairly pessimistic about the effect of higher fees on the quality of the student experience. They largely presumed that they would simply get a worse deal than the students that had gone before. Results also showed that students' expectations of change following increases in fees were similar regardless of the level of fees they were paying.

7.3 Anticipated sector changes and effects of increased tuition fees on participation

This section discusses the expectations held by staff and students regarding the consequences of the rise in tuition fees for the nature of the student body and the relationship between staff and students.

7.3.1 Expectations of how tuition fee rises will change the makeup of student body

More than one third of students (24.3% 2012/13 entry, 50.5% 2011/12 entry, see Chapter 5) indicated that they were studying now as they thought the price of Higher Education was going to rise further. Even in the year immediately after the big rise in tuition fees, nearly a quarter of students not only expected fees to rise again but claimed that they were trying to avoid future fee increases by studying now.

This pattern of behaviour is consistent with available national application data (Chapter 2, section 2.4, figure 2.7). Applications peaked during 2011/12, although the UCAS (2012) report plays this application increase down, higher proportion of students studying at lower fee rates responded that they were studying in the 2011/12 entry as they knew fees would increase.

Students predictions are also similar to the beliefs of academics where 85.6% are expecting fees to change the make-up of the current student body. The university in this study has a high number of students from widening participation areas. The same statement was agreed by 45% of students; 47.9% (2011/12) as opposed to 42.1% of (2012/13), expecting that the student body would change as a result of higher fees. This is arguably further supported by only 25.2% of students expecting student diversity to increase. A response which is more likely to be seen from younger students.

The project provides evidence that students expect future cohorts to be made up of students from 'richer backgrounds'. This may be because students anticipate that increases in fees will deter students from lower backgrounds. Therefore, these students are expecting the widening participation gap to increase as a result of higher fees. Evidence within this project can be seen in Chapter 5, section 5.5, table 5.22 which shows that young (18-21) students and those subject to fees over £6,000 per year were statistically significant in believing that future cohorts if students would come from a 'richer background'. Students whose parents were professional was not a statistically significant factor for this question. This would be in line with findings from Langelett et al (2015), which suggest that widening participation students have a lower threshold of price elasticity.

7.3.2 Academics are sensitive to increased accountability and the importance of student satisfaction, more so than students

This study further contributes to the body of work (e.g. Kandio and Mawer 2013) suggesting that academics believe that evaluation of university quality through student satisfaction surveys has become increasingly influential in university life.

Unlike other studies (e.g. Kandio and Mawer 2013), this research questioned academics and students (both university and HE in FE students) regarding anticipated change. These findings showed that academics expected students to be treated more favourably because of higher fees. Chapter 6, section 6.3.2, table 6.4 shows 30% of academics expected better treatment for higher paying students. Only 15% of students expected this. In addition, Table 6.19 shows that 85.6% of academics compared to 44.9% of students believed that higher fees would change the student body over time.

Investigating survey responses from manager and non-teaching staff, these responses are in line with the wider staff, although in some areas managers seem to have higher expectations than other staff and students. For example, Chapter 6, section 6.5, Table 6.19 shows that 37.5% of non-teaching staff think that students subject to higher fees will be treated more favourably, compared to 32% of all staff and only 14.3% of all students.

Further supporting evidence of staff having expectations of change in the way students would be treated can be seen within the interviews with senior staff (Associate Dean level), even at the time of the research academics were seeing signs of students referring to fees when filing complaints. It could be that at the time academics assumed this worrying trend would continue and strengthen as higher student fees became the norm. As one Associate Dean of Learning and Teaching in the Faculty of Arts and Creative Technologies explained:

“...Previously that awareness of a complaints culture and awareness of being able to have a come-back on the University wasn't there; it has increased in the student body

now. Hence for colleagues there is much more of a sense of accountability" (ADLT ACT).

This provides evidence, even in 2012 shortly after the implementation of higher fees, that academics were seeing changes in student behaviours; and that academics were perceiving increased accountability in relation to ensuring high quality student satisfaction.

Whilst students in this study showed no significant appetite to use website to support their decisions of where to study (similar to Renfew et al 2010), this study shows that academic staff believed differently. When interviewed the Director of the university's Academic Development Unit explained that this ability to compare would be a 'big culture change'. As a result, he indicated that this would continue to lead to greater competitive behaviours of universities in attracting students, which is similar to the predictions of Williams (2012) and discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.2.

7.3.3 Changing cultures in Higher Education

This section considers the results in the light of Schein's (1985) model of Organisational Culture. The question is addressed is whether the substantial rise in tuition fees prompted (or encouraged a pre-existing) shift in the culture of the institutions in this study. Schein's model distinguishes between

1. surface manifestations (artefacts, ceremonials),
2. values (espoused values shared within the organisation) and
3. basic underlying assumptions (relation to environment, human activity and relationships),

The idea is that the most fundamental level underpinning organisational culture lies in basic assumptions about the environment in which the institution is operating and the human relationships supposed by this environment. This basic level informs the values that are espoused in the organisation and these values are observed in surface manifestations: the

activities and procedures of everyday life in the organisation. In relation to HE relationships between staff and students might be formed in terms of 'mentor/novice' or 'provider/customer' whilst relationships between staff might be formed in terms of 'collaboration between scholars' or 'hierarchical control of staff by managers'. These stylised alternatives generate different conceptions of 'good practice' which would be observed in different 'surface manifestations'.

This study provides some indicators of a changing culture within Higher Education during the 2012/13 academic year following the rise in tuition fees. Surface manifestations demonstrating the importance of student satisfaction were evident in the study. An example was given within the Further Education interview citing the creation of bespoke HE in FE buildings and study spaces, which the college believes are a way which the prominence of HE in FE study was being demonstrated. However, interviews with university senior managers revealed only a few surface manifestations of institutional response to higher fees; a greater emphasis on learning and teaching and student attainment. The lack of surface manifestations could be argued that at the time of the research higher fees were new. The physical manifestations of new spending were yet to be seen.

In the years after the introduction of fees, universities were still grappling with the concept of value for money for the student consumer. In the interviews with senior managers they explained that they had not experienced students or applicants questioning or trying to barter over fees. It is also supported in historical experience of institutions setting lower fees not seeing benefit from increased applications, and therefore reduced their income (see Chapter 2, section 2.2.4). Thus, the Higher Education sector in England, unlike other industries, appears to be restrained to a fixed price model across institutions and courses for undergraduate tuition. As such, the absence of any advertising price discounts provides for home undergraduate students, produces surface manifestations which are markedly reserved in the industry's acknowledgement of fees.

Students and academics (in the survey and interviews) believed that institutions would continue to improve and expand their real estate was clear. In terms of Schein's (1985)

model, they believed that the institutions would place a high value on providing better real estate. This prompts a question about what basic assumptions about the environment for HE and relationships within HE would encourage this emphasis? One reading is that HEIs would perceive their environment as increasingly competitive and that they would need to provide tangible manifestations of quality in terms of new buildings on their campus. This suggests a basic assumption that the primary relationship lay between the 'university' and students rather than between staff and students. That is, the key transaction lay in the provision of a student experience by the central university. Transactions between staff and students (through teaching and learning reflected in the quality of teaching and class size) were not unimportant but they were secondary to this leading basic assumption.

From this perspective, a basic assumption of manager/staff relationships (rather than collaboration with colleagues) meant that managers needed to make sure that staff provided students with more of *their* time in terms of out of class tutorial support which would in turn encourage student satisfaction.

Whilst there was some surface manifestation (visible evidence) to support these underlying assumptions, no academic discussed university strategic policy that linked real estate with increased student satisfaction, with some exception from the HE in FE manager discussing their new dedicated HE learning space. In summary, the study found that the organisation was becoming more sensitive to student's wishes and thus more customer orientated. This form of approach could arguably be coined as a value of the university. Whilst educational institutions will have the student journey and well-being at the heart of their values, the concept of the student's consumer journey may be an increasing phenomenon.

A further example of an underlying belief and value was increasing accountability of academics. Of the senior academics interviewed most gave examples of how change was taking place that led to academics perceiving a requirement to improve their service to students as a result of increased tuition fees – despite this not being apparent within the student survey results. Yet this perceived rise in accountability from academics could be a result of a need to demonstrate value for money to students, similar to findings of Kandiko and Mawer (2013). Interviewees repeatedly discussed issues of 'contact hours' and 'student

experience' and 'consumerism'. There was also a lot of discussion based around growing numbers of complaints which included reference to the fee students were paying linked to lack of support or assessment feedback from academics. Furthermore, academics discussed the concept of parental pressure on students to ensure that they received contact hours and support; which given more supporting evidence that the concept of value for money is growing within the industry. Should tuition fees rise further, then evidence of value for money from universities and HEIs is likely to grow. The underlying assumptions of academics sensing growth in their accountability to students and their institutions is only likely to grow in such a climate.

7.4 The stratification of Higher Education, via HE in FE opportunities

Whilst efforts to widen participation in English Universities show mixed results, this study shows that those attending HE in FE would have been unlikely to attend university in the current fee structure. This would suggest that the policy to support HE in FE, as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5.2, is proving to attract students into HE that would not have attended a university setting. Whilst this study only represents a small sample group, Stoten (2016) (using HEFCE 2009 data) estimated that students studying HE in FE account for 8 to 10% of the HE student population. In contrast, this is a small proportion, compared to the USA where (using 2014 data) 42% of all undergraduate students, and 25% of all full-time students were enrolled at community colleges (Ma and Baum 2016). Project results showed that 85.2% of students in this survey were set on attending a FE college at the point of application; rather than failing to secure a place at university.

The FE in HE students in this study indicated that they would not pay significantly more to attend a university. In fact, Chapter 5, section 5.4.2, table 5.17 shows that Year 1 students are marginally more willing to pay higher tuition fees to study within HE in FE compared to a university; whereas Year 2+ are the opposite of this. This would suggest that FE in HE students do not think that the concept of attending a University will either provide them a better student experience or yield a higher return on their investment.

This is also supported in the data from HE in FE students indicating that, compared to students applying to universities, they placed different values on factors relevant to the choice of where to study for a degree. The most important two factors (more than 60% agreement) for FE students were 'teaching reputation' and 'geographical location'. This is in contrast to the university applicant data which five categories ([see Chapter 5, section 5.3] University reputation, Employer links, teaching reputation, feels like a university, and Look of campus) that were important to over 80% of the student body. The data also show that HE in FE students have little differences (not statistically significant), of institutional expectation, which can be seen in Chapter 6, section 6.4.4, Table 6.15. Furthermore Table 6.16 shows that HE in FE and university students have similar expectations of how they will be treated as a student following the increased tuition fee.

This small sample of HE in FE students was used primarily as a means to enable a comparison of views from a range of students on fees and expectations of institutions following fees. These lower fee-paying students were set on attending HE in FE, to which they indicated the decision was influenced by location and reputation, yet were significantly more price sensitive to higher fees. This discussion shows the need for further research in this area. This study has not compared the views of HE in FE students to understand their perceptions of difference between a university and Further Education College. Whilst the survey and interview questions were limited in this area, there was no indication that students were overtly conscious of differences in research, scholarship and societal positional differences. If students are not aware of these differences then it could be that their decisions of investment in future study are not being based from a fully informed position.

Chapter 8 Conclusions

This final chapter provides final conclusions of this PhD research project. This draws aspects of discussion from the literature review and concluding summaries of the findings and discussion chapters.

The chapter is set in the following sections:

8.1 Responses to the research questions

8.2 Limitations of the study

8.3 Implications of the study

8.4 Implications for policy

8.5 Implications for future research

8.1 Responses to the research questions

This project answers the following research questions:

1. How does the level of tuition fees affect the decision to participate in higher education?
2. How does the level of tuition fees affect students' expectations of their experience in higher education?
3. What effect did higher education leaders believe the rise in tuition fees in England in 2012 would have on students' expectations?

Sections 8.1.1 to 8.1.3 summarise the answers provided by this research to these questions.

8.1.1 How does the level of tuition fees affect the decision to participate in higher education?

This thesis has focused on the sharp increase in tuition fees in HEIs in England that were implemented from the academic year 2012/13. This increase was based on the analysis and recommendations of a report (Browne, 2010) that emphasised human capital as a rationale

for participating in higher education (Becker, 1965; Davies et al, 2014). This perspective emphasised the private benefits of participating in higher education that would accrue through higher lifetime salaries for graduates compared to non-graduates. Therefore, this section begins by setting the results of this research in the context of national data reviewed in Chapter 2. This is followed by a review of the declared motivation of students in this study. How important was labour market motivation? The section goes on to consider students' price sensitivity when facing the question of whether to participate in higher education and then considers price sensitivity in relation to choice of institution.

National data (see Section 2.2.4, Figure 2.5 and Appendix 2A) show that after an initial dip in applications in the first year of the higher fee regime, applications returned to their previous level with a rising trend. This occurred despite evidence from a report commissioned by the Quality Assurance Agency (Kandiko and Mawer, 2013) suggesting that 'value for money' was very important to students. The data from this study shed some light on this puzzle, with the study finding that many second and third year students who faced a 'sticker price' fee of £3,000 claimed that they would not have enrolled if they had been required to pay fees substantially higher than the level they were paying. Yet more than doubling the 'sticker price' of tuition fees at this university to £7,499 had not led to any reduction in recruitment (despite the national trend which saw recruitment fall by 9% overall between these two years) and there was only a slight change in the socio-economic background of the students (UCAS 2012). The reference point of previous fees appeared to feature more strongly in the minds of those (second and third year students) who had personal experience of paying the lower level of tuition fees. Using previous, lower, fees as a reference point is more likely to encourage a view that a university degree is no longer 'value for money'. However, the national evidence and the evidence from this project indicate that this is not lowering participation rates (UCAS 2012).

Students in this study were overwhelmingly motivated to study by increasing their future earning potential. Table 5.12 which shows that 93.3% of all students indicated that they were studying to increase their earning potential. Moreover, this level of agreement was evenly split between the 2011/12 and 2012/13 year of entry students. There was no indication that

students enrolled at these institutions had become more focused on labour market motivation after the large rise in fees. Given that the 2011/12 cohort reported that they were strongly motivated to participate in HE to increase salary there was little room for any difference between the cohorts to be observable. The overall drive of students studying to increase earning potential appears to provide further supporting evidence of the motivation assumed by Human Capital Theory.

However, if students are very concerned about future earnings we might expect them to make careful calculations about how much it is worth paying to participate in higher education. Evidence from studies of the graduate premium (reviewed in Chapter 2) show that graduate salaries are most related to degree subject and then to classification of degree. We might have expected, therefore, that the students in this research who were studying English would be willing to pay lower fees than students studying computer science, with students following courses in the School of Business somewhere in between. The survey results reported in Chapter 5 (see section 2.4.2) found no evidence that the maximum fee that students were willing to pay was related to the subject of their degree. In fact, within each cohort, student price sensitivity appears to be low. Moreover, Table 5.9 in Chapter 5, section 5.2.2, shows that on the whole students would be willing to pay slightly higher fees than those they think they are currently paying.

The survey also provides some evidence of students' sensitivity to price in their choice of institution. This evidence comes in several forms: students' response to a question asking them to indicate the importance of each of 22 possible factors in their choice of institution; HE in FE students response to a question asking them about the price they would have been prepared to pay to study at a university; and evidence from university students indicating that a minority (roughly 10%) showed some signs of 'conspicuous consumption'.

When students were asked to indicate the importance of 22 possible factors in their choice of university, tuition fees were ranked 16th and this ranking was not affected by whether a student was in the 2011/12 cohort or the 2012/13 cohort. The two factors most frequently rated as important or very important were the 'university reputation' and 'university links

to employers' (see Chapter 5, section 5.3, Table 5.5). There was also some evidence that employability became a more important choice factor after the fee rise, this was evident in 'university links to employers' being the highest ranked factor after the fee rise by students starting in 2012/13 cohort. The strong emphasis on earnings and employability in this sample bear comparison with results from two surveys that were conducted with school students in Year 12 (their last but one year before university).

A survey conducted by Renfrew et al (2010) found that students were most interested in undergraduates' satisfaction with their courses in general and with their satisfaction with teaching in particular. However, in a ranking of 51 items by the proportion of students reporting that this information would be very useful, 'proportion of students in employment in the first year after completing the course' was 3rd, 'professional bodies that recognise this course' was 4th and 'average salary in the first year after completing this course' was 12th. So labour market indicators were prominent in students' interests. Moreover, this relatively high priority was fairly consistent across students with different backgrounds. However, tuition fees were not included in their list of items.

Wilkins et al (2015) reported that costs were the most important to the sixth form (school) students in their sample. However, their analysis conflated tuition fees with several other factors such as cost of university accommodation and cost of travel from university to home. The factor analysis of factors affected choice of institution conducted in this study (see Table 5.6) was only able to distinguish between two factors, rather than the six factors in (Wilkins et al, 2015). In this study, tuition fees loaded on to a factor of 'university quality' whilst cost of accommodation and travel loaded on to the other 'accommodation' factor. The differences between the results from this study and those in Wilkins et al (2015) may reflect the wording of the items and the form of analysis. Wilkins et al. used varimax rotation which does not take account of non-linearities which are recognised in the Oblimin rotation used in this study. Differences may also reflect the sampling. Wilkins et al (2015) surveyed Year 12 students who were studying A-levels. The sample in this study will have included a higher than the national average of 'non-A-level' students (excluded from the Wilkins et al (2015) survey), given the intakes of the two institutions.

Although this study only has a small sample of HE in FE students, these data are interesting because of the paucity of evidence of the decision-making of this category of students and because the FE college was a partner of the university which provided the main sample. Following the increase in tuition fees HE in FE students were more likely to report that they had never applied to university or that they had been offered a place at university that they did not accept (Table 5.8). It is difficult to ascertain from these data whether this change was due to the tuition fee change, but the difference between university and FE tuition fees had become greater. Moreover, HE in FE students in the post fee rise cohort were more likely than the students in the year before to report that their choice of where to study had been influenced by living costs (Table 5.11).

HE in FE students reported that the maximum fee they would have been willing to pay was £1200 less than equivalent university students (Table 5.17). Thus, the tuition fee differential between the university and the FE college was important for these students and appeared to become more important after the general rise in tuition fees. This is confirmed in Table 5.17 which shows that after the fee rise the proportion of HE in FE students who would have been willing to attend university was much lower at every fee level for the cohort after the fee rise (although special caution is needed with these data giving the level of missing data on this item).

This study adds to knowledge by identifying a minority of students (10% in this sample) who asserted that higher fees made a university more attractive to them. This suggests a belief that price is a good indicator of quality. This phenomenon could be labelled 'conspicuous consumption' (Leibenstein, 1950). Moreover, this conception of price has been widely reported as an 'everyday' conception used (inter alia by undergraduate students) to make sense of prices in a wide range of contexts (Dahlgren & Marton, 1978; Shanahan & Meyer, 2003). Individuals who employ this conception are implicitly regarding price and value as synonymous. In this case, a rise in tuition fees is interpreted as indicating a rise in quality with no change in value for money. Whilst referring to fees at the lower end of the spectrum, in interview (see Chapter 6, section 6.2) the HE manager in the FE college

suggested that students desired a more simplistic course comparison tools for perspective students which made course price comparisons easier for applicants. Given this study suggests that some students may be selecting their course on the basis of higher prices, such a comparison tool would enable them to filter out lower price courses and institutions.

8.1.2 How does the level of tuition fees affect students' expectations of their experience in higher education?

As far as the author is aware, no previous study has reported survey data on the relationship between tuition fees and students' expectations of the quality of undergraduate education. This study took advantage of a tripling of the maximum tuition fee in England to examine this relationship.

The project provides new evidence that students believed universities and colleges will invest in infrastructure on campuses rather than improvements to teaching. Just over half of the students in the survey expected the rise in fees to lead to improvement in the teaching environment and campus facilities, but only a third expected improvement in the quality of teaching (See Chapter 6, section 6.4.1, Table 6.9). In comparison to changes to the HEI, students gave lower percentages of agreement on their predictions of how students would be treated following fees. Table 6.12 (Chapter 6, section 6.4.3) shows only 14.1% of students paying higher fees will receive higher grades, and only 10% think that these higher fee-paying students will be treated more favourably by their institution.

Breaking down student expectations into different groups, there appears little difference in expectations. This can be seen in Chapter 6, section 6.4.4. Table 6.14 and Table 6.15 which show how similar responses between responses from HE in FE and university are, despite them studying in very different organisations. Another example is that students subject to differing fees (e.g. Year 1 compared with Year 2+) within the university showing little difference in expectations.

Unlike other studies, to the author's knowledge, the study provides new evidence which compares academic staff and student expectations, during the fee transition period. The project shows that when comparing student responses to staff responses, parallels between the student and staff results can be seen. Survey responses to the same questions from academics and students showed that staff and students have broadly similar expectations of future standards in the areas of teaching, teaching environments and campus facilities. The largest difference is seen in the expectations campus facilities where only 51.3% of all students expect improvements, compared to 65% of staff expected expecting improvements. Furthermore, there are larger differences in responses between staff and students in their expectations of how students will be treated; with staff providing responses that indicate they are up to times more likely to believe that students will be treated more favourably by the institution following tuition fee increases.

Despite survey data showing that academics believed change would be seen in universities and that student expectations would rise (which supports the student survey data) no examples of increased expenditure from the university was given in the interviews. There was reference to increases in student behaviour as customers, e.g. via complaints linked to fees, but no reports of applicants or perspective students acting explicitly in the customer persona since the increase in fees.

However, comparison of evidence from the two cohorts of students (Table 6.10) found little evidence of any difference in expectations between the student cohorts before and after the tuition fee rise. It is therefore, difficult to infer anything from these student data about a shift in student identity towards consumerism as expected by Kandiko and Mawer (2013). A judgement of this kind would benefit from evidence from students about their role in the education process: did the fee rise lead to a reduction in students' expectations in how hard they would work and the dependency of their achievement on their own efforts? Unfortunately, the opportunity to gather information of this kind at the point of change has passed, although future studies might aim to replicate studies of students' working habits and orientation towards learning that were carried out before the fee rise (e.g. Davies et al., 2012).

8.1.3 What effect did higher education leaders believe the rise in tuition fees in England in 2012 would have on students' expectations?

Leaders interviewed in this study expected a different student body to emerge following fee increases. They seemed somewhat surprised by the lack of consumerist behaviours at the point of application, (for example trying to negotiate the tuition fee). Yet they believed that consumerist behaviours were increasing. For example, they reported examples of how students referred to fees in complaints about the education they were receiving.

Leaders believed that students as consumers, were starting to compare their university experience with previous experiences at school or college. Hartman and Schmidt (1995) referred to the framing effect of prior experience as 'pre-purchase' beliefs. In the case of choice of university this might be thought to affect students' expectations regarding the extent of direct contact with, and support from, academic staff. This belief may be related to Renfrew et al evidence about the information which Year 12 students thought would be useful for choice of university. In this survey, 'weekly hours of contact time' was the tenth ranked piece of information by frequency with which students regarded the information as 'very useful'.

However, the Renfrew et al (2010) and the Wilkins et al (2015) surveys were both cross-sectional and this makes it difficult to infer much about change in students' consumer orientation. It is also important to remember that there was a substantial difference before the tuition fee rise in terms of students' contact with school staff and contact with university staff. The rationale for predicting that higher tuition fees would make students more 'consumerist' is based on the expectation that bearing more of the financial burden of higher education would make them more conscious of the difference in attention from school and university staff. Since, by and large, universities did not choose to spend much of their additional income on additional teaching staff (and that neither students nor staff expected

them to do so) looks like a calculated gamble that additional staff would have been insufficient to materially affect contact time or student satisfaction.

The interviews with senior managers suggested that they expected two other kinds of change that would affect the student experience: firstly, how teaching will take place and secondly the information which applicants should have access to prior to entry. Managers expected teaching changes which were linked to increasing use of technology and developing stronger links with business and industry. There were concerns that if this did not happen then more students could be lost to private and alternative providers which could offer greater levels of bespoke learning and teaching approaches at cheaper fees. Nonetheless, these managers did not provide specific examples of how the university had invested in new technology. Nor was there reference to extra support for teaching staff to meet these changing expectations.

Senior managers especially the Head of HE in the FE college, were also concerned about the competitiveness of their institution in terms of fees and repayments.

8.2 Limitations of the study

The main limitations of this study are related to the sampling and data collection. The survey was administered to undergraduates and does not provide any information about school students who chose not to proceed to HE. The survey was also only administered in one (teaching intensive) university and a partner college. Students attending another type of university may have had different preferences and expectations. In addition, with a larger data set it would have been possible to distinguish between sub-groups in the sample (e.g. 'males from black ethnic background). The sample also includes students from only four subjects and it is possible that students enrolled in other subject areas may have expressed different views.

The limitations in this sample reflect the urgency required in order to gather data at a unique point in time. Efforts were made to gather data from other partner FE colleges and from an unrelated research-intensive university, but permission was either refused or not

granted in time. By collecting data from students from two cohorts, one just after and one just before the tuition fee rise, the study took advantage of a natural experiment. The comparison between cohorts at a single institution has the merit of controlling for institutional type, thereby focusing on relationships between the tuition fee rise and students' expectations.

Whilst the timing of the study provides a unique insight into staff and student beliefs at the time of change; the author is aware that these insights are the views of 2012/13 cohort shortly after joining their courses. Arguably, this may have caught the students within the 'honeymoon' period of starting their courses and, therefore, their expectations of services and willingness to pay may be optimistic at this point in time.

A further limitation of the study was the ambiguity of Research Question 2. In the formation stage this remained to solely focus on students. On reflection this was an oversight within the formation of the questions. The research into expectations of change within higher education from the affect of fees has clearly covered both staff and students.

8.3 Implications of the study

This final section provides summarises of implications of the results of this study. Implications are discussed at the institutional level (section 8.3 and 8.4); at the policy level (section 8.5) and finally implications for future research (section 8.6).

8.3.1 Implications for the HEI and HE in FE college within this study

In the current funding environment in England, HEIs and FE colleges offering HE programmes have several issues to contend with: what tuition fee should they charge? How can they attract students? How should they use the income they receive from tuition fees? These questions are, of course, related and the answers to these questions from this study apply specifically to the HEI and the college in the study and possibly to other institutions

operating in the same sector of the HE market. The institutions in this study, particularly, the HEI are what have been dubbed 'recruiting' (as opposed to 'selecting') institutions (McCaig & Adnett, 2009). This categorisation assumes that institutions of this type will face similar constraints on their strategies.

The university in this study set its tuition fee at £1,500 below the tuition fee cap. When the earlier £3,000 tuition fee cap was introduced a number of 'recruiting universities set their sticker price below the maximum but then came to the conclusion that they were simply missing out on extra income because their recruitment did not seem to be advantaged. When the tuition fee cap was raised to £9,000, Ministers hoped that an era of greater price competition would be introduced. The behaviour of the university in this study appears encouraging from that perspective. However, by 2018 this university had raised its undergraduate tuition fee to the maximum. It had concluded that, as with the institutions that had set their fees below £3,000 in response to the earlier tuition fee cap, it was simply losing revenue by offering a lower tuition fee.

The results in this study provide some support for this shift. Most students enrolled at the university indicated that they would have been prepared to pay more. Students who had chosen the FE college would not have been persuaded to attend the university by lower university fees. The comparison of attitudes to fee levels among the two cohorts of students suggested that they became normalised at the 'going rate' (consistent with Prospect Theory). By setting their fee £1,500 below the maximum the university had to recruit 20% more students than they would have done with fees at £9,000. The evidence from this study suggests that within cohort price elasticity is much less than would be required to achieve this effect. The implication for the university was that it should have learned from the experience of those institutions that gambled on lower than the maximum fee when this was set at £3,000. By 2018, the FE college had also substantially raised its tuition fees for HE programmes. These ranged from £5,000 to £9,000, considerably higher than in the first year of the £9,000 fee cap. The level of tuition fees set in 2012/13 by these two institutions misjudged what the market would bear. But institutions exposed to market pressures do learn what to do in their own best interest.

If setting tuition fees below the fee cap did not attract students, what does? Table 5.5 identified 8 factors that were important to the choice of institution by 75% or more of the students attending the university. Half of these were related to the reputation of the university and three of the remaining four were concerned with the 'feel' of the institution, largely inferred from impressions of the campus. The emphasis on university reputation is difficult to interpret, given that in the year of data collection, the university was rated in the bottom quintile of universities by the 'Good University Guide'. If students could report that they were highly motivated to choose this institution on the basis of its reputation, why should it need to do more than tell students that it was good?

The results of this study do, therefore, carry some implications for the university's image management (which in 2012/13 looked as if it had been pretty successful). In this regard, the items ranked 10-13 in Chapter 5, Table 5.5 look like they may be important since these were ranked as important by roughly 70% of the students. These four factors were: student recommendations, treatment of applications, the open day experience, and the university website. Aside from image management, the results of the study suggest that the appearance of the campus mattered to these students. This stands in contrast to the results found in Renfrew et al (2010). Perhaps the big increase in tuition fees made students focus on the visible indicators of what the university had to offer. Universities' spending on campus improvements (The Guardian, 2016) in the wake of the rise in tuition fees looks perfect sense from this perspective. The institutions in this study acted in the same way as other institutions. They concentrated on spending their increased income from tuition fees on real estate.

The key attraction that the FE college held for students was its accessibility. This reduced costs for students who could live at home and have low transport costs. In this sense, the key issue of 'going local' which is particularly important for students sometimes labelled as 'disadvantaged' or 'widening participation' students (Mangan et al, 2010) is that going local in an age of high tuition fees helps to keep debt down. This story is consistent with the Wilkins et al (2015) report suggesting that finance was a major issue in choice of institution.

Going local is not only a matter of preserving local social networks. To some extent this gives the FE college a 'captive market' which could partly explain the rationality behind the big increase in fees at the FE college (2012-2018).

8.3.2 Implications for others HEIs and HE in FE colleges that are not part of this study

This project provides evidence that universities and providers of higher education continually need to understand student expectation and clearly articulate their offer, in terms of the academic and wider student journeys. This study shows at least two differing groups of students; firstly those that appear to accept paying higher tuition fees, secondly students whose responses showed that they would prefer to study outside higher education outside of a university.

Section 8.1.1 refers to a small group of students showing some signs of conspicuous consumption and willingness to pay higher fees, which suggests that they link price with the quality of their award. Furthermore, during interviews academics explained how consumer behaviours were evidence in behaviours of complains, of which often were distilled down to students not receiving the service levels which they expected. As noted by an interview academic in Chapter 6, section 6.2 (ADTL BEL) there are beliefs that students will start to look outside of the traditional university marketplace to take up study. The stratification of institutions offering cheaper alternatives of higher education must make existing providers more competitive and clear on their market offer. This is even more critical when beliefs espoused from the Head of HE within the FE college implied (Chapter 6, section 6.2) that the online Key Information Set data should include some form of easy to use price comparison.

Universities also need to be aware of the potential dangers of student consumerist behaviours, as described in section 8.1.1. Whilst students were influenced by university quality, there was no major trends of influenced by research or scholarship. Whilst more research (as noted in section 8.2) is required in this field, the lack of influence of the importance of research within a university allows alternative provision to market more

effectively to perspective students. FE colleges, online schools and private providers of higher education, that face lower running costs in terms of limited research, will arguably be in a better and more response position to respond to student expectations. Universities must find ways of utilising their research and research active staff better to attract students.

8.4 Implications for policy

8.4.1 The cap on tuition fees: a ceiling or a floor?

The tuition fee increase in 2012/13 followed the raising of the fee cap of £9,000. But ministerial hopes of greater price competition between institutions gradually faded after a promising start. In 2018, the fee cap looks more like a floor than a ceiling. This looks like a clear policy failure. Rather than compete through price or compete through the number and quality of teaching staff, institutions like the ones in this study have chosen to compete through buildings. Even the senior managers who were interviewed for this study (barring perhaps the senior manager in the FE college) struggled to offer a coherent rationale for how this was going to improve the student experience. However, given what students said about their decision-making it appears to have been sensible move by institutions. It looks less sensible from a policy perspective. If there is no clear evidence that the student experience – especially in relation to learning – has been improved, then this looks like wasteful competition. Efficiency has fallen if more money is spent on providing the same quality of experience.

The message from this study, as from the study by Renfrew et al (2010) and the analysis offered by Davies (2012) suggests that the prospects of increasing university through informing student choice are remarkably slim. Students are not in a position to critically appraise what they see and even if they could, the available information is insufficient to provide a basis for efficient decision-making. As pointed out in a recent HEPI/HEA report (Neves and Hillman 2016), students have three main reference points in relation to tuition fees: previous fees, graduate earnings and the quality of the student experience. Each of

these may become apparent in a student's thinking and behaviour without necessarily resolving into a coherent position.

In February 2018 the UK government announced a major review of HE policy with a particular focus on tuition fees (DfE, 2018). The Browne Review (2010) approached the problem of tuition fees from the perspective of what will students be prepared to pay? On this basis it is hard to judge them wrong. However, a more appropriate way to approach the review would be to ask 'what would be a socially efficient improvement?' It looks like UK universities have used their additional income in ways that are socially inefficient, and expectations about the rigour of market forces in higher education have been sadly misplaced. Universities have not been constrained to use their additional income in ways that clearly benefit students and they have not shown any 'public service motivation' which might have constrained their self-interest. Until adequate solutions to these problems can be found it makes more sense to reduce the fee cap, reduce student debt and reduce the future burden to the public purse underwriting that debt. This is less a question of inequality between social classes: adjustments to the repayment regime have created a system of income contingent loans that does a reasonable job. The big problem is inter-generational inequality.

8.4.2 Are the performance indicators fit for purpose?

The 2017 introduction of the Teaching Excellence Framework provides a key example where student satisfaction makes up a significant proportion of an institution's grade or rank. As such, NSS metrics appear to be hardwired into the culture and routine of modern day Higher Education. Validity and suitability of the NSS can be questioned as this study showed that students engaged very little with quality metrics such as NSS. Also, students were influenced by other institutional and course characteristics – for example lodgings and accommodation, which are not included within metrics like the NSS. Furthermore, NSS does not measure or report students' views on all aspects of their student journey, nor does it report on what students themselves think is important, e.g. investment in learning and campus buildings and resources. This triangulates with Kandiko and Mawer's (2013)

findings that students found such institutional investments as a means of justifying a value for money experience.

Findings from this study show that students and staff expect universities to spend more on infrastructure, such as buildings and teaching environments. There is also strong evidence to support students rating information on university accommodation and lodging as very important in the decision-making process.

Finally, there is a problem with the relationship between performance indicators and HEIs' decision-making. The Guardian University Guide has a weighting of 10% on expenditure per student, compared to 25% on NSS feedback scores (Hiely-Rayner, 2016). In some ways this looks like a decent guide to value for money. But tuition fee income only forms a part of university income. Some universities have substantial income from endowments. Some universities have a much higher proportion of students paying the sticker price. Do either of these characteristics make those universities necessarily better than the others? Performance indicators may have been promoted as a step towards 'better-informed' student decision-making, but the problems with the performance indicators we have mean that they look more like a way of misinforming students.

8.5 Implications for future research

This final section builds upon section 8.2 which discussed several limitations of this study and gave some indication of future research. Future research could examine whether there is any substantial change in students' expectations during the course of their university experience.

This study links fees to the students' rationale for choice of university and expectations of the student experience. Future research could examine relationships between fees paid, student expectations and retention.

Expanding the scope

Expanding the scope of similar follow-up research projects would test for student responses from differing types of HEI. For example, this could include different types of universities (e.g. Russell Group), face-to-face private providers, and providers which mainly offer virtual courses. This would show motivators on choosing their place of study against those listed in Chapter 5, section 5.3 and include links to the costs of their courses.

Gaining new perspectives now that the £9,000 per year fee is embedded

This study was conducted at a time of transition and change. It could even be argued that students, and parents, had not fully understood the magnitude of fees, interest rates and debt that students would incur. Now six years later and several cohorts having graduated with such debts, it would be sensible to investigate new cohorts with the same study. Alongside this, recent graduates could be sampled to see if they still showed the retrospective willingness to pay fees and if they believed they were motivated to study for the 'right' reasons.

Are approaches to informing applicants about university performance effective?

This study showed that students made their decisions on where to study based on a range of factors. The weighting of these was not representative of published metrics from league tables and NSS results. This questions the validity of the recent TEF ranking as a base for students to use as a guide in informing their application decisions. Future research could investigate this in terms of students at various application and participation stages, and those who have recently graduated.

8.6 Concluding remarks and reflections

Since the beginning of this research project change has been seen in policy, fee rises, and arguably university culture.

Within the first year of higher fees, the initial backlash and protest subsided. Through the stages of field research for this project, the researcher perceived that higher education was almost surprised by the degree to which students, staff and parents accepted the changes. Given student applications and populations did not drastically reduce in the years following the fee rises there was a sense that many of the concerns prior to the fee rise implementation were over estimated.

This research offers some explanations for this acceptance. Students' expectations of tuition fees seemed to quickly adjust. Expectations were normalised to immediate experience. From the perspective of the traditional analysis of the demand for higher education this suggests the previous tuition fee cap had been set well below the equilibrium. The substantial rise in tuition fees resulted in a transfer from students and their families to taxpayers and institutions of higher education. From a traditional market perspective this looks like an increase in efficiency. But this is only the case if students are making rational, well-informed, choices. The evidence from this study suggests that they are making choices about higher education on the basis of norms rather than calculations.

In more recent times, during the later writing up stages, there has been a growth in backlash to student fees. This has been seen across the press and reporting. Examples can be seen in scandals of high wages paid to Vice Chancellors, a growing surge to differentiate the mode and price of degrees, and post-graduation realisation of the significant personal debt graduates are bearing. This backlash has focused on the consequences of the tuition fee rise for the distribution of income, not least between generations. These consequences, which are hugely important for society, lie beyond the scope of this study.

Moreover, during the research, new key performance indicators and recording tools have been used to measure university performance (e.g. TEF). There is an awaited HE bill, and major speeches from the Minister for Students reflect the notion of value for money. This

latter shows the expectation, at least from government, that the market will react positively to lower fees. However, given this study's findings (which showed that student's expectations of their student experience remained stable against fees), it might be expected that if student fees go down on certain courses then student expectation will again remain stable, thus causing further stain on universities.

Professional reflection on the research journey for the author centres around being part of the discourse and of late the decision-making processes within his own institution. Executive leads within his current university openly discuss policy and many of the themes covered within this project. This study, as a scholar and researcher, has provided the author with the understanding of the subject matter and confidence to fully engage with these discussions, and even enhance the understanding of fellow academics in this area.

The development of skills to analyse quantitative data in this research project provided a key advance in my research skills. Whilst the research has a background of attainment to undergraduate mathematics standard, the use of statistical packages and tools in these areas were totally new. Learning to manipulate the data was a massive journey, which has yielded new confidence to engage and interpret the work of others. These skills have already been applied to other professional research projects.

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Appendix 2A Applications to UCAS by domicile of applicant 2007 to 2016

Domicile of applicant	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
England	378,675	423,205	460,050	494,365	496,635	454,000	471,120	487,870	494,495	491,480
Northern Ireland	17,150	17,115	17,865	19,680	20,240	19,375	20,545	20,570	21,030	21,310
Scotland	35,495	38,035	40,055	46,345	46,015	45,115	45,720	44,785	51,295	52,315
Wales	21,425	22,715	24,945	24,910	24,975	24,845	24,595	25,065	25,200	25,400
UK	452,745	501,070	542,915	585,300	587,865	543,340	561,985	578,290	592,025	590,505
EU (excluding UK)	33,620	34,530	39,505	47,320	49,275	43,150	44,835	46,830	50,705	53,595
Not EU	48,130	53,090	57,445	64,730	63,020	67,150	70,555	74,560	75,750	74,300
All	534,495	588,690	639,860	697,350	700,160	653,635	677,375	699,685	718,480	718,400

(Created using data from the following sources: UCAS 2014, UCAS 2016b, UCAS 2016c)

Appendix 3A NSS 2017 Core Questionnaire



National Student Survey 2017 - Core Questionnaire

Scale:

- Definitely agree
- Mostly agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Mostly disagree
- Definitely disagree
- Not applicable

Questions:

The teaching on my course

1. Staff are good at explaining things.
2. Staff have made the subject interesting.
3. The course is intellectually stimulating.
4. My course has challenged me to achieve my best work.

Learning opportunities

5. My course has provided me with opportunities to explore ideas or concepts in depth.
6. My course has provided me with opportunities to bring information and ideas together from different topics.
7. My course has provided me with opportunities to apply what I have learnt.

Assessment and feedback

8. The criteria used in marking have been clear in advance.
9. Marking and assessment has been fair.
10. Feedback on my work has been timely.
11. I have received helpful comments on my work.

Academic support

12. I have been able to contact staff when I needed to.
13. I have received sufficient advice and guidance in relation to my course.
14. Good advice was available when I needed to make study choices on my course.

Organisation and management

15. The course is well organised and running smoothly.
16. The timetable works efficiently for me.
17. Any changes in the course or teaching have been communicated effectively.

Learning resources

18. The IT resources and facilities provided have supported my learning well.
19. The library resources (e.g. books, online services and learning spaces) have supported my learning well.
20. I have been able to access course-specific resources (e.g. equipment, facilities, software, collections) when I needed to.



Learning community

- 21. I feel part of a community of staff and students.
- 22. I have had the right opportunities to work with other students as part of my course.

Student voice

- 23. I have had the right opportunities to provide feedback on my course.
- 24. Staff value students' views and opinions about the course.
- 25. It is clear how students' feedback on the course has been acted on.
- 26. The students' union (association or guild) effectively represents students' academic interests.

Overall satisfaction

- 27. Overall, I am satisfied with the quality of the course.



Appendix 4A University student survey

UNIVERSITY FEES AND CHANGES TO HIGHER EDUCATION

This questionnaire is part of a research project which aims to understand how university culture may change as a result of new higher tuition fees. By filling in this short questionnaire you'll be part of a UK wide study which will provide detailed analysis of student and academic perceptions of changes to higher education. This will cover questions regarding how your studies are paid for; what influenced your choice of university and how you expect your university culture to change as a result of higher fees from 2012. All responses will be treated as confidential and findings will be presented in a manner where no individual can be identified.

The first sets of questions help describe you. The final sets of questions help describe how you perceive universities. There are 23 questions in total which should take around 10 minutes to complete.

Please tick each of the YES circles to following questions to confirm your participation in the study.

	Yes
I give permission for my answers to be used in the research project.	<input type="radio"/>
I understand that my answers will be held confidentially and that I will not be identified in any reports by the research team.	<input type="radio"/>

1. What is the title of the degree you are currently studying for?

Please tick the circles to indicate your response to the following questions.

2. What year of study are you in?

- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3

3. When did you start studying for this award?

- September 2012
- September 2011
- September 2010
- September 2009
- Other _____

4. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-31
- 32-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Over 61

5. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

6. How would you describe your ethnic background?

- Black-Caribbean
- Black African
- Black-Other
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- White
- Chinese
- Other Ethnic Group

Use the following table to help you answer Question 7 and Question 8 and Question 9.

D	Kitchen Worker, Labourer, Office Cleaner, Window Cleaner	B	Architect, Accountant, Director, Doctor, Lawyer, Vet	E	Computer Operator, Nurse, Secretary, Sales Rep, Shop Assistant
A	Bus Driver, Bricklayer, Carpenter, Cook, Plumber, Electrician, Car Mechanic, Hairdresser	F	Aircraft Pilot, Engineer, Manager, Police Officer, Teacher	C	Bus Conductor, Care Assistant, Farm Worker, Postal Delivery Worker, Telephone Operator

7. Which group contains jobs that are most similar to the one your mother does (did)?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- Never worked or Not Applicable

8. Which group contains jobs that are most similar to the one your father does (did)?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- Never worked or Not Applicable

9. Which group contains jobs that are most similar to the one(s) you are (or were) aiming at by the time you are 30?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- Never worked or Not Applicable

10. Please tick Yes, No or Don't Know.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Has your mother ever been to university?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has your father ever been to university?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How would you describe your residential status?

- Home student (UK resident)
- EU student
- International student

12. Which statement best describes how your studies are being paid for?

- I'm paying my own fees from savings or personal income
- The State funding is paying my fees
- Sponsor is paying my fees
- Employer is paying my fees
- My parents/family are paying my fees
- I have taken loans to pay my fees
- Sponsor is paying part of my fees, and I pay part
- Employer is paying part of my fees, and I pay part
- The State is paying part of my fees, and I pay part

13. How important were the following factors in making your decision upon choosing this university?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Didn't consider
Its ranking in league tables	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The ranking of the course league tables	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I can live at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I have to live away from home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The general atmosphere around campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like the look of the campus	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It feels like a University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The experience I had at an open day	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The price of the course (Tuition Fees)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University's reputation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Past students' recommendations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
From the reviews on student based websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The nightlife	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The accommodation and living facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The cost of accommodation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Where the University is placed geographically (e.g. urban, rural)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My parents liked the University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way my application was treated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University's reputation of high teaching standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University's links to industry and employers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University has good transport links close by	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

14. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on why you are studying for your degree?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I'm studying to increase my earning potential	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My family forced me to study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm studying because all my friends went to University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Without my degree I can't get my dream job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm studying now because I think university costs are going to increase further	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm studying now because I don't want a job just yet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

15. What is the price of your award per year?

- Under £2000
- £2000 - £3999
- £4000 - £5999
- £6000 - £7999
- £8000 - £8999
- £9000 or above
- I don't know

16. Considering that the average fee level for 2012/13 students is above £8000 across English universities, how likely would it have been for you to attend university at the price levels below?

	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely
£2999-£3000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£3000-£3999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£4000-£4999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£5000-£5999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£6000-£6999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£7000-£7999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£8000-£8999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£9000 and above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of teaching at your university?

- Decline in teaching standards
- Teaching standards stay the same
- A small improvement in teaching standards
- Significant improvement in teaching standards

18. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of teaching environments and resources at your university?

- Decline in standards
- Standards stay the same
- A small improvement in standards
- Significant improvement in standards

19. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of campus facilities at your university? (e.g. more coffee shops, sports fields, accommodation, teaching buildings)

- Decline in standards
- Standards stay the same
- A small improvement in standards
- Significant improvement in standards

20. Will students paying higher fees achieve higher grades compared to those paying less?

- No – they will achieve lower grades
- No – student achievement will not be affected
- Yes – student achievement will improve

21. Will students paying higher fees be treated differently by the university as opposed to those paying less?

- No – students will be treated the same
- Yes – they will be treated less favourably
- Yes – they will be treated more favourably

22. Consider the students at your university which make up the student body. How likely will the higher fees change this student body over time?

- No change
- Very unlikely to change
- Unlikely to change
- Likely to change
- Very likely to change

PTO

23. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on how the student body will change as a result of the higher fees?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
New students will tend to come from richer family backgrounds than existing students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More new students will tend to be sponsored than existing students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New students will tend to have higher student debts than existing students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students like me won't be able to come to university in the future because of fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future students will tend to study later in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future students will tend to study part time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student bodies will become more diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will become more traditional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of university students will increase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Less females will study at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will be more responsive to students' needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will employ better teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will increase their use of technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University courses will tend to be traditional degrees, e.g. law, medicine, English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Competition between universities will increase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will become less formal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will reduce their number of students and concentrate on research	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have further contributions or any questions regarding this research then please email

Appendix 4B HE in FE student survey

UNIVERSITY FEES AND CHANGES TO HIGHER EDUCATION

This questionnaire is part of a research project which aims to understand how university culture may change as a result of new higher tuition fees. By filling in this short questionnaire you'll be part of a UK wide study which will provide detailed analysis of student and academic perceptions of changes to higher education. This will cover questions regarding how your studies are paid for and how you expect the culture of Higher Education to change as a result of raised fees from 2012. All responses will be treated as confidential and findings will be presented in a manner where no individual can be identified. The first sets of questions help describe you. The final sets of questions help describe how you perceive universities. There are 27 questions in total which should take around 10 minutes to complete.

Please tick each of the YES circle to following question to confirm your participation in the study.

	Yes
I give permission for my answers to be used in the research project and I understand that my answers will be held confidentially, also that I will not be identified in any reports by the research team.	<input type="radio"/>

1. What is the title of the award you are studying?

Please tick the circles to indicate your response to the following questions.

2. What year of study are you in?

- Year 1
- Year 2
- Year 3

3. When did you start studying for this award?

- September 2012
- September 2011
- September 2010
- September 2009
- Other _____

4. How old are you?

- Under 18
- 18-21
- 22-25
- 26-31
- 32-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- Over 61

5. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

6. How would you describe your ethnic background?

- Black-Caribbean
- Black African
- Black-Other
- Indian
- Pakistani
- Bangladeshi
- White
- Chinese
- Other Ethnic Group

Use the following table to help you answer Question 7 and Question 8 and Question 9.

D	Kitchen Worker, Labourer, Office Cleaner, Window Cleaner	B	Architect, Accountant, Director, Doctor, Lawyer, Vet	E	Computer Operator, Nurse, Secretary, Sales Rep, Shop Assistant
A	Bus Driver, Bricklayer, Carpenter, Cook, Plumber, Electrician, Car Mechanic, Hairdresser	F	Aircraft Pilot, Engineer, Manager, Police Officer, Teacher	C	Bus Conductor, Care Assistant, Farm Worker, Postal Delivery Worker, Telephone Operator

7. Which group contains jobs that are most similar to the one your mother does (did)?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- Never worked or Not Applicable

8. Which group contains jobs that are most similar to the one your father does (did)?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- Never worked or Not Applicable

9. Which group contains jobs that are most similar to the one(s) you are aiming at by the time you are 30?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E
- F
- Never worked or Not Applicable

10. Please tick Yes, No or Don't Know.

	Yes	No	Don't know
Has your mother ever been to university?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has your father ever been to university?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. How would you describe your residential status?

- Home student (UK resident)
- EU student
- International student

12. Which statement best describes how your studies are being paid for?

- I'm paying my own fees from savings or personal income
- State funding is paying my fees
- Sponsor is paying my fees
- Employer is paying my fees
- My parents/family are paying my fees
- I have taken loans to pay my fees
- Sponsor is paying part of my fees, and I pay part
- Employer is paying part of my fees, and I pay part
- The State is paying part of my fees, and I pay part

13. What is the price of your award per year?

- Under £2000
- £2000 - £3999
- £4000 - £5999
- £6000 - £7999
- £8000 - £8999
- £9000 or above
- I don't know

14. Tick the statement below which best describes where you live:

- I live at home with parents
- I live with other students
- I live in my own home

15. Consider the application process to Higher Education. Tick the statement below which best describes you:

- I never applied to study at a university
- I applied, got accepted and declined a place at university
- I applied to university but got rejected

16. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on why you chose to study Higher Education (HE) at your college?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I completed my Level 3 qualifications (A Levels, BTEC etc.) at this College?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College based upon previous experiences at the College	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose to study at the College because the course fees are cheaper than universities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College because I can live at home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College because living expenses are cheaper than living away	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College as I didn't feel ready to leave home	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College because it allows me balance work and studies better than University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College as completing my course is more important than living as a student	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College as my parents wouldn't pay for me to go to university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College because I don't think I'd fit in at university	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose the College because I have a strong local social life which I don't want to leave	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

17. Your Higher Education degree is awarded by University. To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I chose this award because of the University which it belongs to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I didn't really care which University the award belongs to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I chose this award because of the University's ranking in league tables	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I don't know which University my award belongs to	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

18. How important were the following factors in making your decision upon choosing this college?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Important	Very important	Didn't consider
From the reviews on student based websites	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The local nightlife	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Where the College is placed geographically (e.g. urban, rural)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My parents liked the College	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The way my application was treated	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The College's website	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The College's reputation of high teaching standards	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The College's links to industry and employers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The College has good transport links close by	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

19. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on why you are studying for your degree?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
I'm studying to increase my earning potential	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My family forced me to study	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm studying because all my friends went to University	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Without my degree I can't get my dream job	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm studying now because I think university costs are going to increase further	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'm studying now because I don't want a job just yet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

20. Average fee levels for 2012/13 students is above £8000 across English universities, how likely would it have been for you to study Higher Education at a college and university at the price levels below? (Two ticks per line)

	Very Unlikely		Unlikely		Likely		Very Likely	
	College	University	College	University	College	University	College	University
£2999-£3000	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£3000-£3999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£4000-£4999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£5000-£5999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£6000-£6999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£7000-£7999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£8000-£8999	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
£9000 and above	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

21. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of teaching at your college?

- Decline in teaching standards
- Teaching standards stay the same
- A small improvement in teaching standards
- Significant improvement in teaching standards

22. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of teaching environments and resources at your college?

- Decline in standards
- Standards stay the same
- A small improvement in standards
- Significant improvement in standards

23. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of campus facilities at your college? (e.g. more coffee shops, sports fields, accommodation, teaching buildings)

- Decline in standards
- Standards stay the same
- A small improvement in standards
- Significant improvement in standards

24. Will students paying higher fees achieve higher grades compared to those paying less?

- No – they will achieve lower grades
- No – student achievement will not be affected
- Yes – student achievement will improve

25. Will students paying higher fees be treated differently by the college as opposed to those paying less?

- No – students will be treated the same
- Yes – they will be treated less favourably

Yes – they will be treated more favourably

26. Consider the students at your college which make up the student body. How likely will the higher fees change this student body over time?

- No change
- Very unlikely to change
- Unlikely to change
- Likely to change
- Very likely to change

27. To what extent do you agree with the following statements on how the student body will change as a result of the higher fees?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
More students will study Higher Education in colleges in the future	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University students will tend to come from richer family backgrounds than existing students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future students who don't do well in Level 3 qualifications (A Levels, BTECs) will only study Higher Education in colleges.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
New students will tend to have higher student debts than existing students	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Students like me won't be able to study for degrees in the future because of fees	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future students will tend to study later in life	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Future students will tend to study part time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Student bodies will become more diverse	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Universities will become more traditional	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The number of university students will increase	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Colleges will employ better teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Colleges will increase their use of technology	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
University courses will tend to be traditional degrees, e.g. law, medicine, English	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Colleges will be more responsive to student needs'	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix 4C Academic survey

UNIVERSITY FEES AND CHANGES TO HIGHER EDUCATION

This questionnaire is part of a research project which aims to understand how university culture may change as a result of new higher tuition fees. By filling in this short questionnaire you'll be part of a UK wide study which will provide detailed analysis of student and academic perceptions of changes to higher education.

This questionnaire will ask you to gauge your university's characteristics across a spectrum of areas which will help provide an analysis of any culture changes taking places within universities.

All responses will be treated as confidential and findings will be presented in a manner where no individual can be identified.

The first sets of questions help describe you. The final sets of questions help describe how you perceive your university. There are 17 questions in total which should take 10 minutes to complete.

PLEASE TICK THE CIRCLES YES FOR EACH OF THESE QUESTIONS TO CONFIRM YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY.

	Yes
I am willing for my answers to be used in the research project	<input type="radio"/>
I understand that my answers will be held confidentially and that I will not be identified any reports by the research team.	<input type="radio"/>

1. What is your role title?

Please tick the circles to indicate your response to the following questions.

2. Which subject area are you mainly linked with? (Please tick one only)

- Business
- Computing
- English
- Law
- Other _____
- Not applicable

3. Do you work full or part time?

- Full time
- Part time

4. How many years have you been in your current role?

- Under 1 year 1-2 3-5 6-10
- 11-15 16-20 21-25 26+

5. What (if any) other roles have you had in this University?

6. Including this role, how long have you been working in Higher Education?

- Under 1 year 1-2 3-5 6-10
- 11-15 16-20 21-25 26+

7. How many Higher Education Institutes have you worked in?

- Just this one 2 3 4
- 5 6 6 or more

8. What (if any) other industries have you worked in?

9. How old are you?

- 18-21 22-25 26-31 32-40
- 41-50 51-60 61-65 66-70
- 70+

10. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

11a. Please consider the statements below and cross the response you most agree with?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The new fee levels will have little impact upon the majority of the University's student body.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University had free choice in setting 2012 Full Time Entrance tuition fees.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
External expectation pressured the University to set it fees where it did.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Response to the student market impacted upon the University to set it fees where it did.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The University set its fee as a result of internally generated calculations.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The fee has been set to provide increased stability and order in the University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The fee has been set to allow change within the University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will require the University to be more proactive in other externally facing work – e.g. partnerships, research.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The introduction of higher fees will provide the University with opportunities for internal discretion and flexibility.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11b. Please consider the statements below and cross the response you most agree with?

	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Somewhat Agree	Strongly Agree
The University's 2012 tuition fee price was to be expected.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new University fee level will have no impact upon the way the University conducts itself.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will force the University to change the way its employees work within the University.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will force the University to change the way it is seen by the general public.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will force the University to change the way it is perceived.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will make the University a less stable place to work.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will have little impact upon the most of the University's academic duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will have little impact upon the most of the University's administration staff duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The new fee level will have little impact upon the University's senior management duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of teaching at your university?

- Decline in teaching standards
- Teaching standards stay the same
- A small improvement in teaching standards
- Significant improvement in teaching standards

13. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of teaching environments and resources at your university?

- Decline in standards
- Standards stay the same
- A small improvement in standards
- Significant improvement in standards

14. What impact do you think the rise in tuition fee will have upon the standards of campus facilities at your university? (e.g. more coffee shops, sports fields, accommodation, teaching buildings)

- Decline in standards
- Standards stay the same
- A small improvement in standards
- Significant improvement in standards

15. Will students paying higher fees achieve higher grades compared to those paying less?

- No – they will achieve lower grades
- No – student achievement will not be affected
- Yes – student achievement will improve

16. Will students paying higher fees be treated differently by the University as opposed to those paying less?

- No – students will be treated the same
- Yes – they will be treated less favorably
- Yes – they will be treated more favorably

17. Consider the students at the University which make up the student body. How likely will the higher fees change this student body over time?

- No change
- Very unlikely to change
- Unlikely to change
- Likely to change
- Very likely to change

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. If you have further contributions or any questions regarding this research then please email

Appendix 4D Interview questions for HE in FE Manager – with commentary

Interview questions	Theory and policy links – fee increases	Theory and policy links – organisational culture
Your role		
How has your role changed over the past 18 months as a result of increased student fees	Organisational investment in staff. Expectations of change	
Considering: award, School, Faculty and University levels; what changes in the provision for students were you involved in introducing?	Potential investment in student experience resulting from fee increases. Change	Schein’s (1985) model of organisation culture: ‘Surface Manifestations’ ‘Values’;
Were any changes in student expectation anticipated? If so, what and who by?	Organisational change based upon assumptions, policy or student feedback?	Schein’s (1985) model of organisation culture: ‘Basic Assumptions’
Have you had to make an out of the ordinary effort to meet the expectations of new students?	Potential investment in student experience resulting from fee increases.	Schein’s (1985) model of organisation culture: ‘Surface Manifestations’ ‘Values’; Cameron and Quinn’s (2006) Competing Values Framework: “Flexibility and Discretion” as opposed to “Stability and Control”
To what extent will you have to change your future day-to-day work as a result of increased fees? If so what and when?	Organisational investment in staff. Expectations of change	Schein’s (1985) model of organisation culture: ‘Surface Manifestations’ ‘Values’; Cameron and Quinn’s (2006) Competing Values Framework: “Flexibility and Discretion” as opposed to “Stability and Control”
Do you have experience of seeing a change in student body changed as a result of		Schein’s (1985) model of organisation culture: ‘Surface Manifestations’

higher fees?		
The Organisation		
What, if anything, did you personally have to do to help the organisation to be ready for the change in fee regime?	Organisational investment in staff. Expectations of change	Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Values';
Has the executive and senior management taken stock of how things are actually working out? If so, what have you observed?	Organisational change based upon assumptions, policy or student feedback?	Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Values'; 'Basic Assumptions'
In your experience would you say the organisation is working hard to maintain stability in its day-to-day routine as a result of increased fee	Organisational change	Cameron and Quinn's (2006) Competing Values Framework: "Flexibility and Discretion" as opposed to "Stability and Control"
Has fees caused more pressure on the organisation to be more flexible in its routines and approaches? If so how? Has this impacted upon your role?	Organisational investment	Cameron and Quinn's (2006) Competing Values Framework: "Flexibility and Discretion" as opposed to "Stability and Control"
Has how the organisation would like to be seen from others changed as a result of fees? How so?		Cameron and Quinn's (2006) Competing Values Framework: "External Focus and Differentiation" as opposed to "Internal Focus and Integration"
Will the organisation's standard improve as a result of higher fees?	Organisational investment	Cameron and Quinn's (2006) Competing Values Framework: "External Focus and Differentiation" as opposed to "Internal Focus and Integration" Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Basic Assumptions'
Would it be true to say that the majority of staff across the college teaching HE have	Organisational investment (or lack of investment) in staff.	Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Values';

changed very little in their practices since the higher fees.		'Basic Assumptions'
The Future		
Is the sector expecting a growth in HE learners?		Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Basic Assumptions'
How will the sector adapt to cater for these learners?		Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Basic Assumptions'
How will these changes impact upon Universities?		Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Basic Assumptions'
Will the student body you are currently seeing change? Why?		Schein's (1985) model of organisation culture: 'Basic Assumptions'

Appendix 4F Interview questions for Director of university Academic Development Unit

Your role

- How has your role changed over the past 18 months as a result of increased student fees?
- Considering: award, School, Faculty and University levels; what changes in the provision for students were you involved in introducing?
- Were any changes in student expectation anticipated? If so, what and who by?
- Have you (or your staff) had to make an out of the ordinary effort to meet the expectations of new students?
- To what extent will you have to change your future day-to-day work as a result of increased fees? If so what and when?
- Do you have experience of seeing a change in student body changed as a result of higher fees?
- In your role within the ADU – has there been a need (pressure/request) to inform staff of changes, if so how have this been addressed?
- Do you think that academics require more knowledge of how the fees may change student expectation and how they could address this change?

The Organisation

- What, if anything, did you personally have to do to help the organisation to be ready for the change in fee regime?
- Has the Executive taken stock of how things are actually working out? If so, what have you observed?
- In your experience would you say the organisation is working hard to maintain stability in its day-to-day routine as a result of increased fee
- Has fees caused more pressure on the organisation to be more flexible in its routines and approaches? If so how?
- Has this impacted upon your role?
- Has “how the organisation would like to be seen by others” changed as a result of fees? How so?
- Will the organisation’s standard improve as a result of higher fees?
- Would it be true to say that the majority of teaching staff across the university have changed very little in their practices since the higher fees?

The Future

- Is the sector expecting a growth learners?
- Is HE in FE a major threat to University’s? What impact does the migration of HE learners into FE have on the culture of the University?
- With FE colleges charging less than University’s, do you think more students

- will attend College rather than University? How significant is the fee?
- Will the student body you are currently seeing change? And how will University's meet their expectations?

Appendix 4G Example transcript – faculty associate dean

Name of Interviewee: RC

Name of Interviewer: Jim Pugh

Date of Transcription: 4th February 2014

JP Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed RC.

RC That's okay.

JP How has your role changed over the past 18 months as a result of the fee increase or has it changed?

RC I don't think the role has changed but certainly the way that I relate to students has probably subtly changed and certainly some of the indicators that I am getting from students and from student groups would show me that there is a slight movement in the way that students perceive their relationship with the university.

JP Is that just the new students at level 4 or...?

RC Well actually no, I have seen it all the way through. It would be easy to say 'yes, the level 4 students are paying three times as much and therefore you notice it three times as much' but actually I don't. I have noticed it with everybody whether it is professional people who are paying their fees and probably always have done but maybe are now more aware of the amount of money that is going out from the household and the value that they should be getting from higher education particularly in a time of difficult employment they have got to balance, 'is this worthwhile?'. Their employer may be putting them under pressure to do more at work and not to do this programme or whatever. Similarly, even third year students who have virtually passed through the fees regime with a relatively low level of fees are still noting, well I can note, some linkages between payments and what they feel they should be getting.

JP Okay. Within your role and at the different levels in the university so for example an award level of school and faculty; what changes in the provision for students have you been involved in introducing?

RC Well my role is essentially split up into three areas, that is learning and teaching, quality of provision and it is the student learning experience overall. Certainly when we were looking at changing the business management programmes which were validated this time last year there was a major focus on not what we thought should go into the programme but what we thought the students would want to see and what they would want to get out of it and how attractive it would be to them, so balancing those two views together. There was a major shift in emphasis in programme design and also in the way that we thought things were going to be delivered now having seen a bit of level 4 being delivered this first year I am not actually sure, in confidence, that we have made the radical changes that we wanted to make entirely. I think we have in some areas but not necessarily in others. Certainly that was the talk of the town this time last year; how we are going to relate to students, how we are going to teach them and how are they going to learn, what are their perceptions going to be in the classroom, in the tutorial room, learning support etc, etc. So I think that has changed quite a bit.

- JP That moves on to my next question about anticipating change and anticipating what new student would want, you mentioned the revalidation of an award, do you think that the team did any explicit research in those anticipations?
- RC No I think there was... no certainly they didn't, I can tell you they didn't. There was a general awareness that student attitudes would be changing and in fact it was changing and one could point to a number of anecdotal incidences where students were beginning to link their experience to what they are paying and asking the question 'is this worthwhile?'. So, therefore, I think people were well aware of that and there is general talk within the higher education sector through government all the way to various institutions, people were aware of it all the time but they didn't carry out any specific research, no.
- JP You mentioned course design, was there anything else in terms of changes that may have taken place and you may have been involved with?
- RC The other part of my job is on quality and I deal with the areas like complaints. I tend to see that bad side of students some time. It is quite nice when I get to graduation when I think 'gosh this student body is not as bad as I thought it was', because I see the bad boys sometimes. A lot of the issues that I was dealing with were actually linking payment, 'why am I paying all this money' particularly some good students who were then involving their parents, you know 'why are we paying this money' when a lecture has been cancelled and not replaced or the quality of the feedback is not good enough or there is only 12 hours of lectures in the course of a week. Explaining all of those things to perspective students, their parents and to existing students is actually quite an important part of my job. So I think I have noticed that side of it as well. The other thing I think, which I found quite interesting, was that during the course of clearing when I would have expected there to be quite a lot of competition between universities in terms of the fees I never had one single question about fees other than fees on campus like living accommodation. Not one single student said 'is this going to cost me more or less' or 'will you reduce the fees if I do X, Y or Z', or anything like that; not a single question.
- JP Why do you think that might be?
- RC Well I think students have made their choice either they were going to university or they weren't and if they were there was a general expectation that they would have to take out the loans and that the differences between universities was insignificant, well the sort of universities that we are talking about basically. The difference between £7,500 and £7,700 is peanuts really. If you are paying £7,500 another £200 really does not make much difference so why even talk about it.
- JP And do you think that these trends are going to continue, are they going to get worse in terms of ... you were saying earlier that universities will have to show almost a value for money?
- RC I don't think it is going to get worse but I think there is going to be a greater awareness of value, of experience, perceptions of usefulness and I think there is going to be more emphasis placed on different types of programmes. I believe, but I haven't done any research into this that people will look more at fast-track programmes, they will look at accelerated Masters Programmes and will look at doing part-time programmes with employers so they don't have to pay for the whole thing. There will be a range of different moves that people will make. The advent of

the increase in private colleges will have a major impact on the state sector because private colleges are able to undercut most universities by a significant amount, they are increasing their reputation all the time and people will ask the question 'why am I bothering to go to this traditional university and paying an extra £2,000 a year when I could send my son or daughter to private college and get the same equivalent degree which will be perfectly accepted in the professions without any problems'.

JP And with those students migrating or possibly migrating to those other colleges what is the impact going to be for the university?

RC Well the university is going to have to try harder for the same market but they are also going to have to spread their wings into different areas. I have lived through higher education quite a bit and there was a general air of complacency probably between 1980s through 20 years or so, until the early 2000 when things started to get a bit tight financially. You can see this in a number of different areas with universities putting on different courses for relatively few students, not worrying about the market, not taking courses off their books in case somebody came along. You just couldn't do this in a product orientated marketplace and obviously universities have to go down that road now. I think universities are now out of that complacency without question and they are all looking to competitive advantage in their own areas and there is a certain pool of students, although that pool of students is probably getting smaller year by year, it may stabilise but it certainly will not increase dramatically, it won't increase at all I think and therefore we have got to look elsewhere. We have got to look at overseas students to professional programmes, to income generated from consultancy working with industry and going into different sectors basically.

JP In terms of the culture of an organisation, so part of that can be made up of the people within it and the student body, how do you think that is going to change? Are a certain group going to go to one place and we may take in a different type of student? Do you have any thoughts on how that might change?

RC Yes you are quite right; the culture is made up of all sorts of different elements. There is a lot of interesting facets to that question, if I could take just a couple. The culture of universities has sometimes been that they teach during the weekdays 9 am – 5 pm, now I know that that isn't absolutely true and if you put that to a university they will defend it strongly, 'oh, no, no we have got various courses, X, Y and Z', that go outside those bounds', but when you look at it and when you look at the room utilisation and staff utilisation actually what they are doing is picking a few little examples here and there. It is not a 24/7 operation, it is highly concentrated within the main semesters; it is highly concentrated within the general working week, 9 am – 5pm, Monday to Friday. Now I actually came from a institution that was not like that, we did genuinely work not teach, throughout the course of the year and weekend and evenings certainly 3 evenings (Monday, Tuesday and Thursday) when teaching was going up to 9pm. That was a natural part of the environment. It isn't the case here in Staffordshire and I think we have got to change quite dramatically. Certainly I used to run an MBA which was just taught entirely at weekends, the students didn't come in at all during the weekdays other than for a short intensive period in the summertime and they took holiday to do that. Now they were quite happy to come in at weekends, it was their time and they were

paying their money to get their course, but on the other hand we had to make our staff available, we had to make our resources available at times which were not traditionally open. I think you are going to see a greater trend in those sorts of directions because people will say 'actually the working week is my time and I want to study outside of that'.

In terms of student groups I think you are going to have some universities that concentrate on the full-time undergraduate and may post graduate market but others will be much more disparate going down to online learning, blended learning, work based learning, working with the university to basically go out like the old 'Higher Education Reach Out to the Community', it was business in the community. This is about the university going out to the community, going out to industry. The teaching classroom is no longer in the university, obviously there will be some classrooms here but we go out and do things with business, with industry etc. That has a major effect on culture because the culture of an organisation is essentially made of its people and the resources and spaces that it holds. It does not mean to say it is any worse it is just different.

JP Okay. If you think of the organisation because we have mentioned some already, do you do anything in your role which helps the organisation be ready for this fee regime and its change or any influence on the changes themselves?

RC Well when I was involved I was at Academic Board at the time so I was involved in the discussions, how much influence I had I don't know. I certainly was involved in the discussions about the fee setting. I was a member of our Senior Management Team what was then the Business School and we had a major input into those discussions in the university. I think to a large extent we were dealing within very narrow bounds, it was not as if we had a great deal of room for manoeuvre but we did put up some robust arguments for certain programmes to be moved from various bounds to other bounds because of the market attractiveness of those programmes. Essentially we were operating marginally but I had an influence.

JP In terms of you saying 'narrow bounds' were the fees that the university set expected at that level?

RC Yes and the university made a pretty firm statement that it was going to be below the average, it was going to be well below £9,000 and it was going to try and get down to £7,500 or as close as possible overall. It was not to be seen to be an expensive university and to be seen in line with its plan to be accessible. You can't be accessible if you are too expensive.

JP Okay. Do you think the Executive have taken stock of things, how they are actually working out?

RC Yes. We are obviously short of student numbers on the student number control side of things and I have heard intimations, slight nuances of discussion whereby people are now saying 'we could charge another £200 and afford to keep the same number of students, we don't have to go for more students, we could go for more money'. Looking earlier at the discussions that we had saying 'well actually if students are willing to pay £7,500 they will pay £7,700 why not bump it up by £200 and then we don't have to worry about getting extra students in'. I think the university Executive would put it somewhat differently, they would talk in terms of what the market can

stand and student expectations etc, etc, but basically that is it smaller number of products for a higher price.

JP Okay. I suppose somewhat following on from that, would you be saying then that the organisation is working hard to maintain a stability in its day to day routine?

RC In respect of what?

JP I think in respect of it being a university and what it has always been and the institution and how it has been in the past, is the university working to create some stability in not too much of a large change; it is more than a management role isn't it?

RC Yes and it is still in the same market. We can't really change much of the market that we are in whether we are talking about foundation degrees, work based learning, undergrad/postgrad, and essentially those movements can be made gradually over time. We have got to make sure our fee regime is fit for those particular markets otherwise we lose them. I think yes, maintenance and stability from that respect.

JP And do you feel that there are staff that work for you that are trying to hold on to stability, I suppose resisting change essentially?

RC Yes. I heard a clip on the radio which is a trailer for a programme which I love to listen to which was saying that people are naturally resistant to change and that they are resistant to change because they don't actually like change. I think I would accept that. I think most people don't like change. The thing is that most people have gone into a role at work or have a family life or a home or whatever; they have picked it because they are comfortable with it. If you then turn round and say 'you must change' of course it is going to take them out of their comfort zone and naturally there will be some kind of resistance. I would expect that. There is a difference between those people who are resistant to change because they are just so ingrained with everything that they are doing that they won't accept that the world has moved on and there are other people that say that change is the only thing that is stable. You have got to keep changing to move on. I would not accept either of those points of view, I would accept somewhere between the two. There are members of staff who are more towards one side and then members of staff who are more towards the other. I think there is a general acceptance within this faculty, within most elements of this faculty but not all that we have to be market orientated, that we have to maintain our student numbers that we have to be responsive to our students in a number of different ways.

JP Would that argue then the pressures of being flexible?

RC We have to be flexible, we have to be accommodating, we have to be understanding of our student environment and the student overall experience, yes absolutely. Again I have a job where I listen to complaints and problems and difficulties and very often students are saying things like 'well the member of staff didn't take into account my circumstances, I drive in from Manchester every day. How can I be expected to get here for 9 am every morning?' My answer generally is 'have you thought of moving', which is probably not the right sort of answer but we can't be accommodating to everybody, we can't say okay we will start at 10 am because people might be coming in from 60 miles away and finish at 4 pm so they can miss the rush hour. That just isn't on. On the other hand there are certain flexibilities that we can put in which accommodate different types of people and different types of

- learners. I think we are quite good at that. I think if people have got genuine problems and difficulties then we are accommodating.
- JP Is that something that you have always been good at or is this something we are getting better at because of the pressures?
- RC I think we are very good when it comes to specific categories of students, students with disabilities, students with learning difficulties, students with particular special needs. I think what we haven't done as an institution, as a faculty, is to look at the broader picture and say 'how can curriculum design and delivery be more flexible and adaptable for modern day needs?' Certain universities have gone down that road, not always successfully. For example, we could use different entry points, everybody is concentrated on September because that is when the A levels come out but that is not necessarily our only market. So you could have several delivery points. You could have things like Award Boards being arranged to fit student needs rather than fit academic needs which would mean us rethinking how we would do assessment, how we do feedback, how we do timing of all the work that we do in order to accommodate those students. We could look at more support off campus in other words more online work, more distance learning type work. We have this general expectation that students need to be here in order to learn and I would not accept that necessarily. Taking registers is a good thing but it is a bit of a stick and actually what you need is the carrot. You want to say to people 'I want you to learn but I am quite happy for you to learn within your own framework'; this is something which creates great nervousness amongst people like me who are managers because I want 100 students sitting in the class all the time. I don't want 30 of them sitting at home because I am thinking 'what are they actually doing'. At the end of the day they are perfectly capable of passing those assessments. They are working during the day but studying during the night. What is the problem with that?
- JP Okay. Has how the organisation would like to be seen by others changes as a result of the fees?
- RC I think we have probably gone down the road of looking a bit cheap and nasty. I think we probably gave a deliberate message that we were not going to be a high fee institution and in anything, whether it is undergraduate or postgraduate or doctorate level work, that we are at the cheap end if you like. I think there is a general perception that quality is linked to money basically.
- JP Do you think the university going so low, that cheap and nasty type of thing, is that an initial reaction; is the university trying to work against that?
- RC I think they have been thinking it in a number of respects and it is not just our on campus work that I am thinking about, I am talking about the fees that we charge our overseas partners for the work that we do for them. I think for some of them, well I know that for some of them there has been quite a surprise that they do not have to pay more money for things like validations and quality assurance and so forth. We kind of give them stuff relatively freely. We accept most of the costs and don't pass it on to them. I think 'why is that?', 'great they are going to take the advantage'. The perception of us is 'well are they really a solid, quality based institution?'. We could pump-up our fees considerably overseas without concern. I think those discussions are starting to go on in the university.

- JP I suppose it is therefore another dimension of the student fees in that where you set your fees it make you very identifiable or a clear identifiable place within the market, like a car for example?
- RC Yes absolutely. The problem is that you have to provide according to the price. If you are going to double or treble your price for let's say a professional programme then you have got to provide a professional quality of service. You have got to provide key note speakers who are nationally or preferably internationally recognised, you have got to provide the right facilities, comfortable rooms, the coffee breaks, the discussion forums, you have got to lead the students in the right sort of way, you have got to provide a really high quality experience. I don't think we are quite ready for that yet.
- JP Just picking up on that point if you think of undergraduates, do you think that undergraduates are that 'savvy' in terms of being ...?
- RC No I don't think undergraduates are. I don't think undergraduates really, from my discussions, are actually concerned about the fees at all because they aren't paying for it really. They are borrowing the money. That perception may change in the next 5-10 years or so when people start paying it back depending how the economy runs, what sort of jobs they get or whatever. At the moment I don't think they are concerned. Those people who are directly paying their fees I think there is a strong linkage there.
- JP Okay. Will the organisation standards improve as a result of the higher fees?
- RC Yes I think our overall professionalism, our relationship with our students, the quality of the experience that we give them and that is think not just teaching and learning experience but the quality of the information that we give them, the way that we treat them, that will improve yes. I think we will consider them much more as 'co-learners/co-producers', they are part of the organisation rather than simply students.
- JP In terms of that influencing more students to come to the university in terms of increasing your market and products, do you think there is an instantaneous change in that students will come to us or do you think there will be a time-lag, if so how long with the time-lag be?
- RC There will always be a time-lag because students, I think... you can categorise students in different ways, there will be students who will always come to us, your local students who would see this as their home university and they wouldn't think of anywhere else. If you are going to attract different markets then you have got to get that message out that we are worthy of coming to, making the journey out of another conurbation, coming to Stoke-on-Trent and therefore we have got to have something to say. We have got to have a unique selling point in a number of different areas whether it is the programme, whether it is the location, whether it is the teaching style, whether it is the quality of the experience that we give them, whatever. That does take time. At the moment we are on a downward trend rather than an upward trend. We came down in the league tables, our NCC scores are stable but not improving, if you drive around Stoke-on-Trent it look a complete mess at the moment and probably will do for a number of years. In the longer-term I do genuinely believe that there is a good place for this university in this area. I think we have got some attractive offerings.

- JP Okay. In terms of the teaching staff and what they do and their practices, would it be true to say that the majority of them have changed very little in their practices since the higher fees?
- RC Yes that is absolutely true. I will talk to you after this interview is over about specific examples but that is true. There has been a certain amount of lip-service paid but I think you are quite right there, they haven't changed at all.
- JP My final few questions are really about the future, you have covered some of these but is the sector expecting a growth of learners in the near to medium future?
- RC Yes but they won't be traditional undergraduate full time student they will be a gradual increase in the numbers of people who access higher education. The government is making some quite positive statements about this nowadays and I think they recognise that university sectors have gone through it a bit in the last couple of years partly because of the regime that they have put in place. They are talking about our universities being world ranking/world leading, that the emphasis is on science/technology, the emphasis on higher education/quality/profession of jobs, the fact that we can't compete at the lower end of the labour market, that we have got to have high qualified people and that we are a centre of the world, not just the centre of the U.K., yes some good positive stuff there. I expect an increase in numbers but it won't be British students necessarily.
- JP Is HE in FE a major threat to the university?
- RC It is a threat but it is not a major threat yet because I think there is a big distinction between HE in FE and HE in the university and I think most people recognise that. A lot of people actually want HE in FE which is fine but it is a different experience and I think if people want the university experience they will come to a university. I don't even think it is a growing threat at the moment. There is more threat from private universities than there is from HE and FE, I believe.
- JP Would you say it was the fees that are a major decision maker when a student goes to a local college, FE or private, or is it a mix of things?
- RC I think it is a mix of things. I think it is a mix of culture, environment and fees will play a part, transport, location, reputation, being with your mates and a whole series of things.
- JP I think we have mentioned already but just in case there is anything else you can think of; with those students not coming here... I suppose my question is do you think that the university now has a void of students that we used to have which are now potentially migrating to an FE college and if so what has that void created or is it creating any change here?
- RC I don't see that actually no. I think we have lost students to other universities but I don't think we have lost students to FE colleges.
- JP And in the near future, do you think that will be an issue?
- RC I don't see that changing either.
- JP Okay, my final question really is with regards to the student body that we currently have; will we see more change in them and how will the next 5 years of students change and how will the university meet these expectations?
- RC I think again there will be subtle changes but not major changes. I am quite interested in looking at some of these clips that you see on YouTube about the American universities. You probably have seen the one that Anne posted on there

the other day and there are a lot of other ones. It is quite an interesting interaction and the position between the student and the member of staff. It is usually the student complaining that they have not got a higher grade and the member of staff saying 'well you don't deserve it because I haven't see you' or whatever. Somewhere amongst that discussion the student says 'well I am paying for this' and the member of staff is quite comfortable and not 'anxt' about it and doesn't turn around and say 'oh yes you are', they simply say 'actually you are not, what you are paying for is the opportunity to come to university, you are not paying for the degree'. I think we have just got to establish that kind of rationale within our own mindset and with our relationship with our students. The biggest hurdle that I foresaw but I don't see that it actually took place now as that students will be saying 'I'm paying for my fees' when the fees first came in and 'now that I am paying you have to give me something', whereas before it was free. When the fees went up three times (by a factor of three), 'I am paying three times as much as I did before therefore you have got to give me three times more'. I have never heard that. I have had students stay 'I am paying' but not kind of linking it. I think there is a general understanding that actually... well I am not sure that there is a general understanding but I would argue that we don't receive any more money, in fact we receive less money from the student body so it is coming to us from a different source base. We aren't getting three times as much money. We are providing the same service for the same amount of money. It is just that the money is coming to us through a different route. I think there will be subtle changes but I think if we get much more towards the America attitude of a relaxation 'yes we know that you are paying but we also know what you are paying for, you should know what you are paying for, you aren't paying for your degree'.

JP Obviously I have given questionnaires to a lot of undergraduates and the trends I am seeing, and these are just emerging because i haven't looked through all of the data yet, but the trends that I am seeing is that the level 5 have a higher expectation of what level 4s will receive than what the level 4s think they will receive.

RC Personally I think that level 4s are receiving exactly the same as they received last year but in a different package. It is only a slightly different package. I was teaching yesterday and I was part of 30 credit module, a new module called Analysing Business and Environmental Information, which sounds great but it was nothing of the sort. All it is the students do Micro-Economics, 12 sessions and they do 12 sessions of Macro-Economics. Alongside the Micro-Economics you have got Mathematics. That is exactly the same as we taught them before under different names. That was a 15 credit module and that was a 15 credit module and it is exactly the same all the way through. Every single session is exactly the same as it was and it is just under a fancy name. I was pretty appalled actually. Worse still the students have got one hour, on their timetable and I know we don't control that, but they have got one hour of Micro-Economics from 1-2pm, they have one hour of Macro-Economics from 2-3pm, they have an hour's break and they have another hour of Macro-Economics from 4-5pm. The number of students that turn up for the 4pm lecture is absolutely minimal. I have probably got about 50 students there from 120. I can understand that. Why would the students bother basically? They have had enough by that time particularly if their tutorials are on Index Numbers and

- Statistical Functions, Correlation and Productions this sort of stuff, they are thinking 'is this a Business degree?'; 'analysing what, what am I analysing?'
- JP But that does show something that if attendance for example and the numbers are not coming in then the mindset of the new level 4s is arguably not so much different from the mindset of the level 5.
- RC No I don't think it is.
- JP Do you think other institutions are going to be similar?
- RC I don't know, I really don't know. I would not like to say. I don't think we have done a good enough job quite frankly in really revitalising what we do and how we do it. I use this example with quite a few people, I know it is old hat now and I have to have real evidence to support it but I can tell you that I used to teach a programme called International Trade and it was 3 hours, I desperately tried to get it not 3 hours but that was how the timetable was set. The first thing on a Monday morning in the summertime! So it started off in February then it went right through until June. Of course I lost 2 weeks because I had the 2 Monday Bank Holidays and Easter intervened. That was always a problem for everybody but I had 12-13 weeks out of 15 in those days. But first thing on a Monday morning is not very good for students particularly when we get into summertime, they have been away for the weekend and this, that and the other and they don't like to get there. I had in that programme something like 25 students for whom that was a core and every other student took it as an option and regularly I had classes of over 100. So I had 70+ students who had taken it as an option. Attendance was nearly 100%, why, because I pushed them really, really hard and I would be communicating with them all the time, particularly over the weekends. I would be posting things up for them, the exercise would be based on absolute real time information and I would go in there first thing and I would say 'okay, what is new, what has been happening since I saw you last'. I would walk around the classroom and I would talk to the student and I would say 'you haven't been doing your revision, you don't know what is going on in America and you haven't been listening'. 'Who is Hugo Chavez?' 'I don't know', 'well you should know because he has just died, why is that important to World Trade' and 'why is that important to the oil trade'. So they would really get down to it. I was pushing them hard but also I was making it very, very interesting. I would then split them up into groups and get them to do different things whatever, which is quite difficult with 100 students. You have got a three hour session and you have to organise that somehow. I would have a lecture and then breakout sessions and I would have sessions when they would be going round the university, or college as it was, drinking coffee but finding information and then they would come back again. They absolutely loved it. The pass rate was the highest of any level 6 module in the university. Of course, they would then tell their mates 'do this course with RC, it is hard work, it is Monday morning but you will love it'. That to me, and I know you are exactly the same mindset, that to me is the difference, the teacher puts absolutely everything into that course of study, give it his/her all and the students love it and the students get something out of it. As a result they will keep coming back.
- JP Great do you have any questions for me or anything else that you would like to add in terms of the study?

RC I just think the only thing I would say is to put the emphasis on the complaints and appeals, that is a rising trend that I have noticed and I think I shall continue to see that. People will say 'I am paying for this so therefore dar, dar, dar'.

JP Great, thank you.

Appendix 4H – Data collection log

University A

Data type	Area	Level	Date Gathered	Number processed	Number not processed
Student Questionnaire	Business	Level 4	17/09/2012	50	0
Student Questionnaire	Business	Level 5	01/10/2012	91	
Student Questionnaire	Law	Level 4	01/10/2012	99	1 Under 18
Student Questionnaire	Law	Level 5	26/09/2012	117	4
Student Questionnaire	English	Level 4	05/11/2012	27	
Student Questionnaire	English	Level 5	28/02/2013	25	0
Student Questionnaire	Computing	Level 4	15/10/2012	132	3
Student Questionnaire	Computing	Level 5	15/10/2012	91	5

Interviews – University A

Data type	Area	Contact	Date Gathered	Time
Interview	BEL - Business	xxx	12/03/2013	Length 40:01
Interview	FCES	xxx	22/05/2013	49:18
Interview	FACT	xxx	27/07/2013	38:26
Interview	ADU	xxx	05/07/2013	42:18

Staff Questionnaire

Data type	Area	Sent Date	Population Sent	Population Completed
Online Questionnaire	BEL - Business	20/06/2013	130	48 (37%)
Online Questionnaire	FCES	20/06/2013	134	24 (18%)
Online Questionnaire	FACT	27/06/2013	210	24 (11%)
			474	96 (20.25%)

College A

Data type	Area	Date Gathered	Number processed
Student Questionnaire	Paper	17/09/2012	67
Interview		03/12/2012	Length 52:44

College B – (not used in sample – see Chapter 4, section 4.2.5)

Data type	Area	Date Gathered	Number processed
Student Questionnaire	Did not complete	Live from 12/04/2013	5
Interview	xxx	03/12/2012	Length 49.33

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