

TUITION FEES

Britons Oppose Increase in Tuition Fees, Want MPs to Block Proposal

More than half of respondents believe the new rules will discourage poorer students from attending university.

[LONDON – 8 November 2010] – The British Government’s decision to allow Universities in England to charge students up to £9,000 per year to students who take their courses has been rejected by many people in Britain, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

In the online survey of a representative sample of 2,001 British adults, 70 per cent of respondents oppose the increase in the level of fees which Universities can charge students to take their courses. Only 23 per cent of Britons support the change.

Seven-in-ten respondents (71%) think the maximum cap of £9,000 per year is too high, and 57 per cent believe that the change in tuition fees will ultimately discourage students from economically poorer backgrounds from attending University.

Two-in-five respondents (44%) believe the repayment threshold that will be introduced as part of the proposed guidelines is correct.

Political Implications

In this year’s General Election campaign, the Liberal Democrats pledged to end tuition fees altogether and not to raise them. As part of the Coalition Government with the Conservative Party, Liberal Democrat

KEY FINDINGS

- **70% oppose the increase in the level of fees which Universities can charge students to take their courses**
- **57% believe that the change in tuition fees will discourage students from economically poorer backgrounds from attending University**
- **62% want their own MP to vote against the proposed changes**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From November 3 to November 4, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,001 randomly selected British adults who are Springboard UK panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Great Britain. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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ministers are supporting these new tuition fee increases, although there will be a free vote so that individual MPs can choose to abstain or vote against the changes.

More than half of Britons (56%) believe the support of Liberal Democrat ministers to the proposed tuition fee changes is unjustifiable, and three-in-five respondents (62%) want their own MP to vote against the proposed changes.

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Tuition Fees

The Government has confirmed that Universities in England will have the option to charge students up to £9,000 per year to students for taking their courses, from 2012. This is an increase from the current maximum of £3,290 per year. Do you support or oppose the increase in the level of fees which Universities can charge students to take their courses?

Support	23%
Oppose	70%
Not sure	7%

Tuition Fees

Do you think that the maximum cap of £9,000 per year, is...

Too high	71%
About right	19%
Too low	3%
Not sure	7%

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Tuition Fees

The universities which opt to charge the highest fees will be required to demonstrate that they are widening access to students from economically poorer backgrounds by other means such as outreach programmes, summer schools and targeted scholarships. In your view, will the change in tuition fees combined with this requirement...

Encourage more students from economically poorer backgrounds to attend University	10%
Make no difference	24%
Discourage more students from economically poorer backgrounds from attending University	57%
Not sure	9%

Tuition Fees

Students will be able to apply for a loan to cover the cost of the fees, which they will start to re-pay when their income after graduating reaches £21,000 per year, paying 9% of their income towards re-paying the loan. Do you think that the re-payment threshold of an income of £21,000 per year is...

Too high – they should pay back their loan on lower income levels	18%
About right	44%
Too low – they should not pay back their loan until they reach a higher income levels	29%
Not sure	10%

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Tuition Fees

The Liberal Democrats campaigned for the General Election earlier this year on a platform which included the pledge to end tuition fees altogether and not to raise them. As part of the coalition, Liberal Democrat Government ministers are supporting these new tuition fee increases, although there will be a free vote so that Lib Dem MPs can choose to abstain or vote against the changes. Do you feel that the Liberal Democrat Ministers' support of the Tuition fee increases is...?

Unjustifiable	56%
Justifiable	22%
Not sure	22%

Tuition Fees

The proposal to raise tuition fees must be approved by Parliament. Would you like your own MP to vote in favour of the proposed change or against the proposed change?

In favour of the proposed change	20%
Against the proposed change	62%
Not sure	18%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specialising in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record in Canada and the United States can be found at:

<http://www.angus-reid.com/services/record-of-accuracy/>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.angus-reid.com/about/>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.angus-reid.com>**

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