How has Brexit impacted students?

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Students have faced a number of issues in the last year or so. COVID caused universities to close, causing many students to be paying their tuition fee for online university and Brexit has made many university students rethink placement years and working abroad, as well as causing a drop in the number of international students.

According to Forbes, policy changes that were a result of Brexit will cause an estimated drop of 35,000 fewer EU students completing their degree in a UK university. This drop is likely a result of travel restrictions and border closures, as well as the loss of the right to work in the UK post graduation, and the right to bring dependents into the UK. The EU is responsible for 1 in 3 international students within UK universities, which will result in less diversity around universities, as well as making it harder for UK universities to build their reputation around the world.

Universities themselves will also be facing hardships from Brexit, including a big financial impact. UK universities have been estimated to lose £62.5 million as a result of less international students paying them tuition fees, which after already losing a lot of money through the COVID-19 pandemic, can be a cause for concern to some universities.

The impact of this will hit different universities differently, and not all universities will feel such a severe impact of a financial hit. Oxford and Cambridge university are actually estimated to see an overall increase of £3.5 million, whereas other educational institutions are estimated to lose an average of £0.6 million a year. Over a 3 years degree, this works out to be an estimated £8.37 million increase in income for Oxford and Cambridge, but a loss of £1.60 million for other, potentially newer, universities.

Erasmus

The Erasmus scheme was a European Union student exchange programme first introduced in 1987, allowing university students to study abroad for a year, sandwiched between the second and third year of the student's degree.

However, due to Brexit, students will no longer have access to the Erasmus scheme, as the UK turned down the offer to continue participating after Brexit. Although, this is not the end of international study for university students; a new scheme has been introduced, named after computer scientiest Alan Turing, the Turing scheme. Michelle Donelan, the UK universities minister, said that this scheme will allow over 35,000 students to travel abroad to study and work 'across the globe'. The Turing scheme will be available for universities to apply to, funding students to travel for work and study internationally, covering travel and living costs, as well as the administration costs of running the scheme.

The difference between the Turing scheme and Erasmus is that Erasmus only funded placement years in the EU and a limited amount of non-EU countries, however the Turing scheme will be offering placement all around the world. Both schemes are accessible to university students,

apprentices and vocational trainees, however, the Turing scheme will not offer placements for teaching and college staff and youth workers as Erasmus previously did.

The amount of money available on the scheme will depend on the location, as well as the amount of time spent there. This is to adapt to different living costs and situations. The Turing scheme will not pay for tuition fees of students travelling to the UK or for UK students going abroad, it will instead expect these fees to be waived by the universities taking part. This is because the universities will be 'swapping students' in effect. The scheme will offer support to disabled students, disadvantaged students and students will additional needs, such as providing disadvantaged students the money for passports and visas, or covering preparatory visits and risk assessments for disabled students before travel for example.

Although the government feel as though the Turing scheme is more beneficial than Erasmus, the new scheme has not been welcomed by the National Union of Students, who have said that they think the new scheme will damage the potential for many students to travel and study abroad.