# John Cater’s Keynote notes

## HE Sector Overview

## **Challenges**

### Confusing landscape and half-baked ideas politically

### 5 years ago the Augar review was commissioned, still awaiting response - no government update as yet

### Student Loans not moving with inflation - not covering day to day in some instances for some students

### Repayments of Student Loans Company - students paying back more - length of loan changing - away from state onto the students. New £25,000 payment threshold over a 40 year period.

### HE Funding for universities squeezed - 2012 raised maximum fees to £6000-£9000 - no increase apart from £250. Freeze over next few years - Brighton announced 100 redundancies, with some at Wolverhampton and Northampton too

### Lifelong loan entitlement -18-60 - face to face teaching, more of a dramatic effect if done virtually? Google, apple, Amazon etc could come into the market going forward - demand for it initially is low but possible changes to come

### Office for Students (OfS) now regulator of performance and quality - B3 metric judged on retention and progression - 3% students don’t complete their degree at Edge Hill

### Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), Research Excellence Framework (REF) and knowledge exchange being assessed on

### Freedom of speech - legal and Legitimate speakers - create debates and discussions

### Power of Department of Education - lacks power in Westminster, HE and schools/colleges are treasury and no.10 led. Obsession with degree apprenticeships – reality for the moment is numbers very low in terms of take up.

### **What’s the future and what does it look like?**

### Good news for HE - lots of people having children, birth rate increased around 2005. Economic performance poor, people have less children - 12.5% increase in live births - what happens when it dives - by 17% - over the coming years.

### Burgeoning costs - government nervous about student loans book. Third or quarter of people pay back total debt. Women pay back less due to possible career status/hiatus.

### HE Participation - 2021 - 18\19 year olds - 40%. Last year first time we saw a drop - UK home students (38.8% to 37%) – reasons why include; job opportunities, cost of HE is high, comprehensive campaign to look at HE alternatives

### Politics - very difficult. Debate around perception of apprenticeships vs HE. Poor view of apprenticeships back in 70s/80s still having an influence - some are very limited and don’t give depth for long term

### Government are trying not to deny aspiration in people - no politician wants this. Redefine HE, not reduce the number of people attending. Trying to re-shape traditional university, 3-year residential degree, into more lifelong learning.

### Industrial action not helping HE & FE - debates around pensions, surge of international student applications (mainly Africa and India) - possible number caps?

### Minimum entry requirements - do you have to have English and maths at GCSE?

### Possible student number caps for HE - linked to B3 indicators - perhaps humanities and arts

### Tuition Fees frozen till 2026.

### Are unis in the public sector or not? National institute of teaching plans for going forward for ITT courses

### T levels - lots of input needed and contribution of employers - not as quick as the Government would have liked along with their continued reduction of BTEC qualifications. Demise in wrong areas H&Sc and engineering for example.

### **The market vs the state**

### Apprenticeships on UCAS from 2024 entry

### 60,000 fewer applications in UCAS for this cycle. Fewer people taking up offers. Applying later. “I’ll do it but as a safety net”. Increase of decline by default numbers too.

### **How to resolve?**

### Recruit, retain, have the correct culture and ethos

### National student survey losing importance – not being in bottom quartile to gain OfS gaze

### **Trification – HE in 2030?**

### 1). University as we know it

### 3 year, residential living - Russell group, Lancaster etc.

### more privileged backgrounds

### Were Edge Hill needs to be - the road ahead needs to improve continually

### 2). Re-emergence of polytechnics

### Linking with employers, students from more Widening Participation based backgrounds.

### 3). Global powers

### 24/7 learning and study - virtually or digitally

### Lifelong loan entitlement

### Tailored provision by corporate names, the big players of the world – Google, Apple, Amazon

### **What’s Edge Hill doing?**

### We need to be known, be good, and be known to be good

### Drive on bringing excellent graduates through a substantial framework

### Continue to receive a range of awards and accolades

### **Questions**

### **Being asked about medical apprenticeships frequently by students, is there a future in this?**

### Can you deliver in 4 years instead of 5 or 6, can we train medics in hospitals? Very best practitioners get knowledge and skills together. Resistance from hospitals - very busy, can’t train doctors fully and properly on the wards, too many other aspects/issues occuring

### **Do you think there will be major changes to HE policy if we have a change of government?**

### Flexible, lifelong learning, modular content. Labour very committed to work based learning and apprenticeships - not looking at causing rifts. Predicted that it will be better resourced and a more empathetic approach than current government.