



From a rebel to consumer and now a digital user: The changing role of students in British university governance

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Dr Rille Raaper, Durham University
Dr Janja Komljenovic, Lancaster University

Overview

To trace and problematise the changing role of students in British higher education governance over the three societal periods:

- ❑ Period 1: The welfare state and 'students as partners'
- ❑ Period 2: The market society and 'students as consumers'
- ❑ Period 3: The digital economy and 'students as digital users' - governing with/of student data

The messy field of students in HE governance

- ❑ **A variety of mediums:** representation in governing bodies (Bloland 2005; Lizzio & Wilson 2009), course level representation (Carey 2013; Flint et al. 2017), students' unions (Brooks et al. 2015; Raaper 2020a, 2020b), student surveys, metrics/data, complaints procedures (Freeman 2016).
- ❑ **Competing purposes:** communitarian/democratic vs consumerist models (Luescher-Mamashela 2013; Naylor et al., 2020)



60-second summary

Undergraduate Students: Your Consumer Rights



Make sure you have the complete picture

Choosing the right course and university is an important decision: you're investing a lot of time and money and it can be difficult to change if you're dissatisfied.

Knowing your rights under consumer law will help you get the information you need when choosing a course and university, and help to protect you if things go wrong.

What should you check when choosing a university and course?

Universities must give you the information you need to make your decision. This includes:

- the course's content, structure and length, the location of study and the award given on successfully completing the course
- total cost of the course, including tuition fees and any necessary additional costs such as field trips, lab equipment or studio/bench fees
- the universities relationship with other institutions



The University Of Sheffield.

Before, or at changes to the information.

- course in university
- any right

What should you do?

- strike a fair deal
- not give up

What can you do?

- be fair, try to get the best deal
- set out the terms of the contract
- be clear about what you are buying

If you are not able to resolve a complaint, you can contact the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA).



Why is this important?

All institutions which provide undergraduate courses, including universities and FE colleges, must comply with consumer law. Consumer law may apply to other institutions.

Study >

Governance and Management

Governance Structure Council Senate Committees Governance Documents

Home > Governance and Management > GDPR and data protection > Privacy Notices > **Privacy notice: prospective, current and former student data**

Privacy notice: prospective, current and former student data

The University needs to hold and process personal data relating to its students in order to keep proper records, provide support and guidance to students and monitor academic progress.



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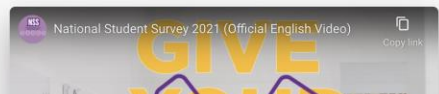
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The NSS gives you the opportunity to say what you think about your course at your university/college.



It allows you to say both what you like and what you think could be improved.

Your feedback will be used to help improve the education to make decisions about your course.

Your university/college will also use your feedback to make real changes to the student experience.

Responses will remain anonymous to your university/college.



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ACADEMIC REPS

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Periodisation: looking back and ahead

- **The construction of the student in HE governance:** a site of contestation where different societal forces struggle for hegemony at a particular time (Klemenčič 2011; Troschitz 2018)



Period 1: The welfare state and students as partners

Economic order:

- The post-war Keynesian welfare state
- Strong state and welfare pioneering (Castles 2010): e.g., Education Act 1944, Family Allowances Act 1945, National Insurance Act 1946, NHS 1948
- Bretton Woods Agreement (1944), IMF, World Bank
- Collective organising and trade unions (Noble 2008; Wrigley 2002)

Universities

- HE as 'a public and social good' (Doherty 2007)
- Expansion and widening participation discourse (Robbins Report 1963)
- Public funding and autonomy (Radice 2013; Scott 2015)

Period 1: The welfare state and students as partners

Students as partners in HE governance

- ❑ Non-existent structures for students in HE governance prior to 1960s
- ❑ Student movements in 1960s brought a change (Shattock 2006)
- ❑ Representative governance: student voice and partnership vs prevention of future activism (Bloland 2005; Luescher-Mamashela 2013)



Period 2: The market society and students as consumers

Economic order

- Economic and social crisis (e.g., the oil crisis of 1973/74; 2008 financial crash)
- Neoliberalism, changes in the welfare provision and public attitudes (Macleavy 2013), reduced trade union membership (Wrigley 2002)
- Financial liberalisation

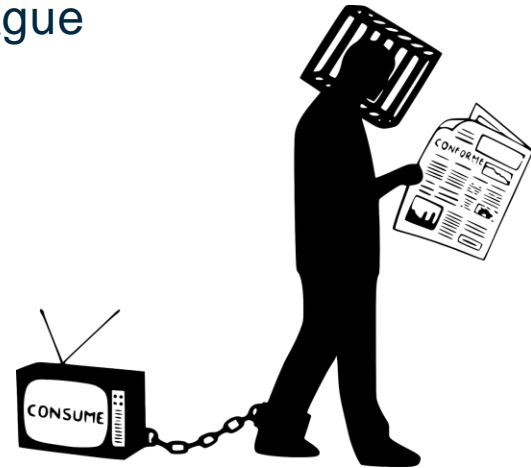
Universities

- HE: human capital development (Naidoo & Williams 2015) and a global industry (Musselin 2018)
- Shift from public funding to tuition fees
- HE governance: public vs private, efficiency and accountability, regulation of diversity, competition, consumption and risk management (McCaig 2018).

Period 2: The market society and students as consumers

Students as consumers in HE governance

- ❑ Legal consumerist positioning: Consumer Rights Act 2015, CMA, OIA
- ❑ Consumer power, representation and quality assurance (Carey 2013; Raaper 2020a, 2020b)
- ❑ Market tools and student voice: satisfaction surveys, league tables, apps (Bols 2020)
- ❑ Visibility of student power (Bols 2020) vs tokenism and transaction (Klemenčič 2011)



Period 3: The digital economy and students as digital users - governing with/of student data

Economic order

- ❑ Changes in the global economy; financialisation and rentiership (Christophers, 2020; Sadowski, 2020; UNCTAD 2019)
- ❑ Digital platforms and assetisation (Birch & Muniesa, 2020; Bukht & Heeks 2017)
- ❑ Digital data and data value – aggregation and intelligence (Pistor, 2020; Savona 2019; Viljoen, 2020; Wiebe 2017)
- ❑ Digital work, digital education, digital consumption,...; IoT
- ❑ Geopolitical dimension and unevenness

Period 3: The digital economy and students as digital users - governing with/of student data

Universities and HE

- ❑ Unbundling of education and new types of partnerships with private companies (Komljenovic, 2020; Morris et al. 2020; Perrotta 2018)
- ❑ Microcredentials, bootcamps, stackable degrees, peer to peer learning and alternative qualifications (Marshall 2020)
- ❑ Extending HE markets (students and markets incl LLL, provision, employability and skills matching)
- ❑ Universities collect an unprecedented amount of digital data (a new asset class ? - Zuboff, 2019)

Period 3: The digital economy and students as digital users - governing with/of student data

Governing with data

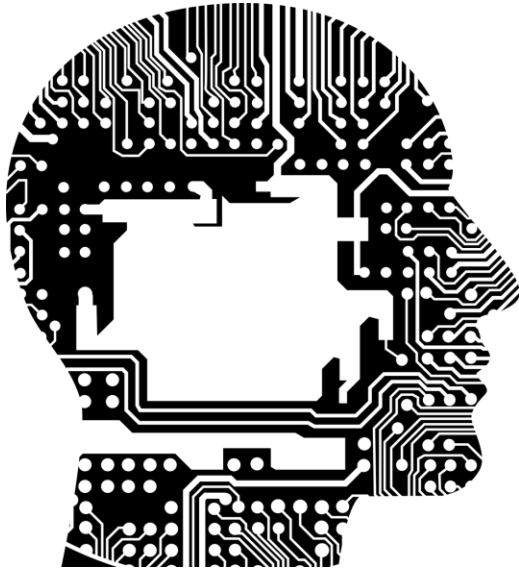
- ❑ Governing with numbers (Rose 1991)
- ❑ Investment in national data infrastructure (Data futures; Williamson 2018)
- ❑ Private actors, infrastructure and extrastatecraft (Easterling, 2014)
- ❑ Intelligence products, business and learning analytics (Buckingham et al. 2019, Williamson 2018)
- ❑ Student data in HE governance: quality assurance and institutional improvement, educational product development, information on value for money and employment/graduate outcomes (Holmwood & Marcuello Servós 2019; Williamson et al. 2020)

Period 3: The digital economy and students as digital users - governing with/of student data

Governing of data

- ❑ Nestedness of policies and contractual governance – universities, students and terms & conditions (Lemley 2006)
- ❑ Processing student data, GDPR and legal confusions/possibilities
- ❑ Inconsistency of practice, issues of transparency (Cohney et al. 2020)
- ❑ Relational data governance: vertical and horizontal data control and use (Viljoen, 2020); data monopolies; precision education; algorithms as HE governance stakeholders
- ❑ Student data in HE governance: students as digital users, passive 'data subjects'; inconsistent, (in)voluntary and unclear practices (Ramiel, 2020)
- ❑ Temporal, spatial and impact black-boxing; student agency?

Continuing thoughts...



- ❑ Students in HE governance: from partners to consumers, to digital users and data producers
- ❑ Tensions in governing with/of data (public/contractual law)
- ❑ Visibility of student voice and representation vs a hidden shift to student data processing, prediction building and influencing behaviour (precision HE)
- ❑ Students as being 'used' rather than engaged in HE governance?
- ❑ Techno-legal-financial tensions

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