



7<sup>th</sup> – 9<sup>th</sup> June 2022

## Doing more with less. How mature access to English Universities through the provision of foundation years is being set up to fail

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In launching the UK Government's response to the findings of the independent 'Post-18 review of education and funding' in England on 24th February, Minister Michelle Donelan announced its intention to reduce the fee limit for foundation year provision, suggesting that "... it is unfair that some of those who take advantage of this transformational opportunity have to pay over the odds".

One week later, the Office for Students in England re-emphasised its belief that "... extending equality of opportunity for underrepresented groups (or other student groups) [should not] be achieved by reducing our minimum requirements for quality and standards for any student groups" and that "a provider that recruits students from such backgrounds is obliged to ensure that they have a high quality academic experience, including receiving sufficient resources and support."

This paper examines the implications of current Governmental and OfS proposals as these relate to the provision of integrated degrees with foundation years, designed to enable access to a wide range of undergraduate degrees for mature learners. It interrogates OfS's insistence that HE providers '*take all reasonable steps to ensure ... those students succeed in and beyond higher education*', and concludes that current dogmas - however reasonable they might appear on paper - are setting up a long and powerfully transformational tradition of mature access provision in English Universities to fail. And, saddest of all, universities' loss will be nobody else's gain.