

## TRIPLED TUITION FEE FIASCO FRIGHTENS STUDENTS

Tuition fees were first introduced throughout the entire UK in September 1998, with students being required to pay up to £1,000 a year for tuition. At first, this might have seemed like a logical idea to fund tuition to undergraduate and postgraduate certificate students. However, with tuition fees having risen to £9,250, people are wondering: are these high fees worth it or are they just ridiculously high?

A huge impact of tripling the tuition fees is that students are now being riddled with large amounts of debt after leaving university. Average student debt increased to more than £50,800 since the fees rose to £9,250. With student debt at eye-watering levels, it means that  $\frac{3}{4}$  of students will have not fully repaid their debt before the 30-year limit when the loans are written off. The institute for Fiscal Studies said that students in England leave university with higher debts than almost anywhere else in the developed world.

With tuition fees and student debts at shockingly high levels, it's not a surprise that university is not looking as appealing to young people anymore. The total number of English-resident students applying to UK universities fell after the introduction of higher tuition fees. Many people are being put off of university due to the large fees and the ludicrous amounts of debt they will be in afterwards. This particularly affects poorer students who are feeling deterred from university. Those from the poorest backgrounds will graduate with debts over £57,000. These students are much less likely to go to university than students who are better off. Is it fair that just because they cannot afford it they are deprived of higher education? Should we be trying to help the divide between the rich and the poor, or punishing the poor for something they can't help?

By having such high tuition fees, it also means that many young people are being limited in their choices of university in order to save money. England and its inflated tuition fees cause our country to be an outlier, especially within Europe. In fact, the majority of Europe has low fees or none at all. However, we're not just an outlier within Europe. We're an outcast even within the UK. Scotland has no tuition fees for Scottish students and fees in Wales and Northern Ireland are much lower than England. This again raises the question, are such high tuition fees necessary?



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Tuition fees and student debt doesn't just affect students. Tripling tuition fees has actually increased how much taxpayers have to pay because half of the loans will never be repaid.

So, with increased tuition fees causing students to be discouraged from university, limiting their choices, making taxpayers pay more and giving them debts they'll never be able to pay off, has the UK benefitted from raised tuition fees, or has our country just descended into financial chaos?