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Abstract

There are three sets of 'primary stakeholders' in the university entrance process: academics, school teachers and applicant students. This process is currently subject to intense media interest, scrutiny by parliament and new Government policies calculated to influence the social composition of higher education. One instrument of potential student empowerment is currently missing from this process: Post Qualification Application (PQA). At present, 'conditional offers' of places are made by universities before examination results are known, with school teachers estimating grades in advance. Students have to make choices about the university to which they aspire before they know their grades. A different set of arrangements, under which applications would only be made after grades are known, might give students greater confidence to make appropriate choices. PQA has been supported by UCAS, the body which facilitates admissions, and by four enquiries over the past nine years, including a parliamentary select committee and a study of the organisation of the school year. If PQA became feasible, it could help alter the power exchange in the higher education "market" in favour of the student and complement current government higher

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education priorities for recruiting more students and removing historic distortions in the social composition of universities. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)