



What does the Augar Review mean for me?

Information for students – July 2019

This information on the Augar Review has been prepared by the Council of Deans of Health for prospective healthcare students.

Your questions answered

What is the Augar Review?

The Augar Review is the name commonly given to the *Review of Post-18 Education and Funding* which was published at the end of May 2019. Theresa May commissioned this review from an independent panel.

The review proposes sweeping changes to further and higher education intended to rebalance the two sectors to address disparities in funding and to shift provision to courses better aligned to the country's needs.

I want to study healthcare (nursing, midwifery or allied health). How will the Augar Review affect me?

Despite its radical recommendations, the review may have little or no impact at all. **Implementation of the recommendations is far from certain** and will be affected by the wider political situation including this year's Spending Review, Government leadership or even Government change. There is a possibility that a piecemeal approach to implementation will be taken but it is impossible to accurately predict what, if anything, the Government will choose to implement.

What would the recommendations mean for student finance?

Augar proposes lowering student tuition fees to £7,500 and recommends reintroducing non-repayable maintenance grants for lower income students. The maintenance grant would be in place of part of the maintenance loan so would not increase the overall funding for healthcare students.

The review also recommends reducing the loan repayment threshold and increasing the repayment period from 30 to 40 years.

Should I delay entry to my course?

It might seem tempting to delay entry to your degree course in the hope that the Government will lower fees and reintroduce maintenance grants. However, implementation is very uncertain. More importantly, because of the proposed changes to loan repayment rules, if these recommendations were implemented many healthcare professionals under the new system would end up owing less but paying back more every month - around £15 a month more for those earning £27,000 a year - and more overall in the long term. Note that debt levels may be higher under the current system but loan repayment is

income contingent and many healthcare professionals will not pay off their full loans before they are written-off.

If Augar's recommendations were implemented we would expect some of the most senior healthcare professionals to repay their full student loans but to pay back less than they would under the current system.

I am thinking of doing an apprenticeship. How will this affect me?

Augar does not believe that people should generally be allowed to undertake a degree level apprenticeship if they already have a publicly funded degree. This could reduce the number of people eligible for degree apprenticeships in the healthcare professions. However, Augar notes that *'exemptions may be required under certain circumstances, particularly in the public sector'*. Policy makers in health are expected to lobby hard for exemptions to this rule for healthcare professions.

What about Foundation Year programmes?

Some universities offer Foundation Year programmes, which allow students an extra year to prepare for entry to healthcare courses. Augar is not in favour of this provision continuing in universities and would rather see students prepare for higher education in further education settings. However, the review states that *'there may be compelling reasons why HE [higher education] courses with subject-specific entry requirements – for example, medicine – should offer foundation years as an entry route for students from disadvantaged backgrounds'*. We cannot predict what will happen to Foundation Year programmes in this sector in the next few years.