

Review of Support for Postgraduate Research Students: Q7. Should we prioritise specific subjects where the scientific and economic case is strongest, or instead provide broad support to all subjects, even if this means capping the total number of loans or offering them on less generous terms? If we prioritise certain subjects, how should we go about it?

Q7 seems to raise the prospect of the kind of manpower planning from which governments have increasingly resiled since the 1970s. Preferences of this sort have been rejected because they have been seen to be self-defeating, economically unfounded, unresponsive to the social benefits conveyed by higher education, and incompatible with the democratic, demand-driven basis on which higher education has been maintained in this country at least since the Robbins Report. They would also represent a U-turn from the government's stated position at the time the new undergraduate fee regime was introduced, that the differential T grant between arts and sciences was strictly defensible only in terms of the sciences' infrastructural needs. At the time government protested vehemently against unfair accusations that the sciences were being unduly favoured. Asking this question now implies that those accusations may have had some foundation.

Architectural Humanities Research Association
Association of University Professors and Heads of French
British Association for Korean Studies
British Association for the Study of Religions
Council of University Classics Departments
National Association for Music in Higher Education
Political Studies Association
Roman Society
Royal Historical Society
University Council for Modern Languages

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