

Universities will be able to charge fees of up to £10,000 a year in the face of savage cuts to teaching budgets. Under far-reaching proposals, ministers may slash money for teaching by two-thirds and remove state funding altogether for arts and humanities degrees. The expected fee reforms — among Lord Browne's suggestions for a shake-up of university funding — could come into effect as early as 2012. This will require universities to set the prices of their degrees by next February or March. The changes will be unveiled in two weeks' time when Browne, the former BP boss, publishes his review of university finance. Ministers will detail the cuts in the comprehensive spending review a few days later, on October 20. The package will bring a decisive move away from state-funded higher education towards degrees mainly paid for by students from their future earnings. While teaching budgets may be slashed by as much as two-thirds, research will suffer much smaller cuts. The overall reduction in state funding for universities is likely to be about 37%. (*Sunday Times* 26-9-2010)