

The higher education reforms of recent years under which student tuition fees have more than tripled, have made equality of access to university more difficult and have created one of the most expensive systems in the world. Yet they have failed to create the competitive market between universities that their architects envisaged, the Prime Minister, Theresa May has admitted.

Announcing a yearlong review of tertiary education last Monday, she said: "Making University truly accessible to young people from every background is not made easier by a funding system which leaves students from the lowest-income households bearing the highest levels of debt, with many graduates left questioning the return they get for their investment." She hinted that variable fees, dependent on the cost of running the course, might be an option on the agenda. "The competitive market between universities which the system of variable tuition fees envisaged simply has not emerged. All but a handful of universities charge the maximum possible fees for graduate courses." At the same time, there has been no change on the length of degrees, as also envisaged, with three-year courses remaining the norm. "And the level of fees charged do not relate to the cost or quality of the course. We now have one of the most expensive systems of university tuition in the world." She said the review will focus on "how we ensure that tertiary education is accessible to everyone, from every background, how our funding system provides value for money, both for students and taxpayers, how we incentivise choice and competition right across the sector and how we deliver the skills that we need as a country". (Fonte: universityworldnews.com 20-02-18)