

Browne Jacobson comments on the government's announcement of tuition fee rises

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Commenting on the government's announcement that university tuition fees for students in England will rise by 3.1% to £9,535 from the 2025/26 academic year, [Nathalie Jacoby-Danesh](#), Partner in the [higher education](#) team at UK and Ireland law firm Browne Jacobson, said: "Raising tuition fees in line with inflation has been one of the biggest government policy priorities for universities as they continue to grapple with significant financial pressures resulting from a cocktail of high inflation, frozen fees and falling student numbers.

"While the Education Secretary's promise to finally raise fees for the first time in a decade, together with a modest increase in maintenance grants, is welcome, the new amount fails to plug the gap with higher education costs, which is estimated at about £12,500 per student.

"Therefore, universities must continue their drive to maximise their own assets. Success in commercialising research rests upon the development of an innovation lifecycle strategy that is aligned with research strengths, ensures intellectual property is effectively recorded and protected, while keeping an open mind on the best routes to monetising knowledge.

"We expect closer collaborations between institutions to take place, ranging from shared services to formal mergers. We would anticipate institutions to collaborate increasingly in large metropolitan areas or regions across the tertiary sector, or along subject specialism lines.

"With an estimated 40% of higher education institutions to be in budget deficit in 2023/24, restructuring could also become necessary in some cases.

"It will be vital that universities are proactive in their communications with students to offset any impact this could have on their mental wellbeing. Today's [publication by HEPI](#) showed that one-third of students worry about the financial health of their university.

"At the same time, universities need to be attuned to rising fees creating increased student expectations. It's vital that universities ensure now that student contracts are aligned with CMA guidance and OfS requirements regarding consumer protections."

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