

This poster provides a graphical illustration of data collected to identify when Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRB's) that accredit UK undergraduate degrees began their accreditation programmes. PSRB's were identified from data held by the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) and contacted individually to establish when they began accrediting, leading to the collation of a unique set of figures that can be archived. The data is shown alongside the growth of HE institutions in the same period and key events that may have impacted on their numbers.

### KEY EVENTS IN UK HIGHER EDUCATION SINCE 1945

- 1945:** Tuition fees abolished, maintenance grants offered by local authorities following the end of World War II
- 1986:** *Research Assessment Exercise (RAE)* launched in order to rank universities for the allocation of research funding
- 1992:** *The Further and Higher Education Act 1992* saw polytechnics abolished, most becoming 'new universities'. 34 universities were formed by individual institutions or the merging of two that were previously 39 polytechnics, increasing the number of universities in the UK from 46 to 84.
- 1993:** The Times university rankings launched in *The Times Good University Guide* (the first UK University ranking table)
- 1994:** The Russell Group of universities formed
- 1997:** *The Dearing Report* published, suggesting the re-introduction of means-tested tuition fees
- 1998:** Tuition fees re-introduced, £1000 for UK students, maintenance grants abolished and replaced by student loans
- 2001:** *The Guardian University Guide* rankings launched
- 2002:** Welsh residents eligible for maintenance grants toward cost of higher education to study in Wales or elsewhere
- 2004:** *The Higher Education Act 2004* leads to a rise in tuition fees to £3000 for UK students, *THE (Times Higher Education Supplement)* university rankings launched
- 2005:** *The National Student Survey (NSS)* launched
- 2007:** *The Complete University Guide*, ranking British universities, published for the first time
- 2010:** *The Browne Review* leads to a rise in tuition fees to £9000 for UK students
- 2012:** KIS (*Key Information Set*) data introduced demanding the display of key information to inform student choice on undergraduate degrees; post-study work visa abolished
- 2014:** *Research Excellence Framework (REF)* replaces the RAE
- 2015:** Student number cap removed; *Higher education Green Paper* published highlighting the need for quality in higher education, including the *Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework (TEF)*, widening participation and fair access, the introduction of the *Office for Students (OfS)*, a greater need for *Competition and Markets Authority* compliance (CMA), and a simplification of the process of becoming a university
- 2016:** Means tested grants abolished in England, not in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland; *Stern Report* changes the way the REF is measured
- 2017:** Results of the TEF released for the first time; tuition fee limit raised to £9250 for students for institutions with a TEF rating in England, remaining at £9000 for those without - fees in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland not impacted by TEF rating
- 2018:** 143 Universities now registered in the UK (according to latest statistics), with a further 16 bodies with degree awarding powers
- 2019:** *Knowledge Exchange Framework (KEF)* pilot conducted including 21 participant institutions, with full implementation proposed for 2020

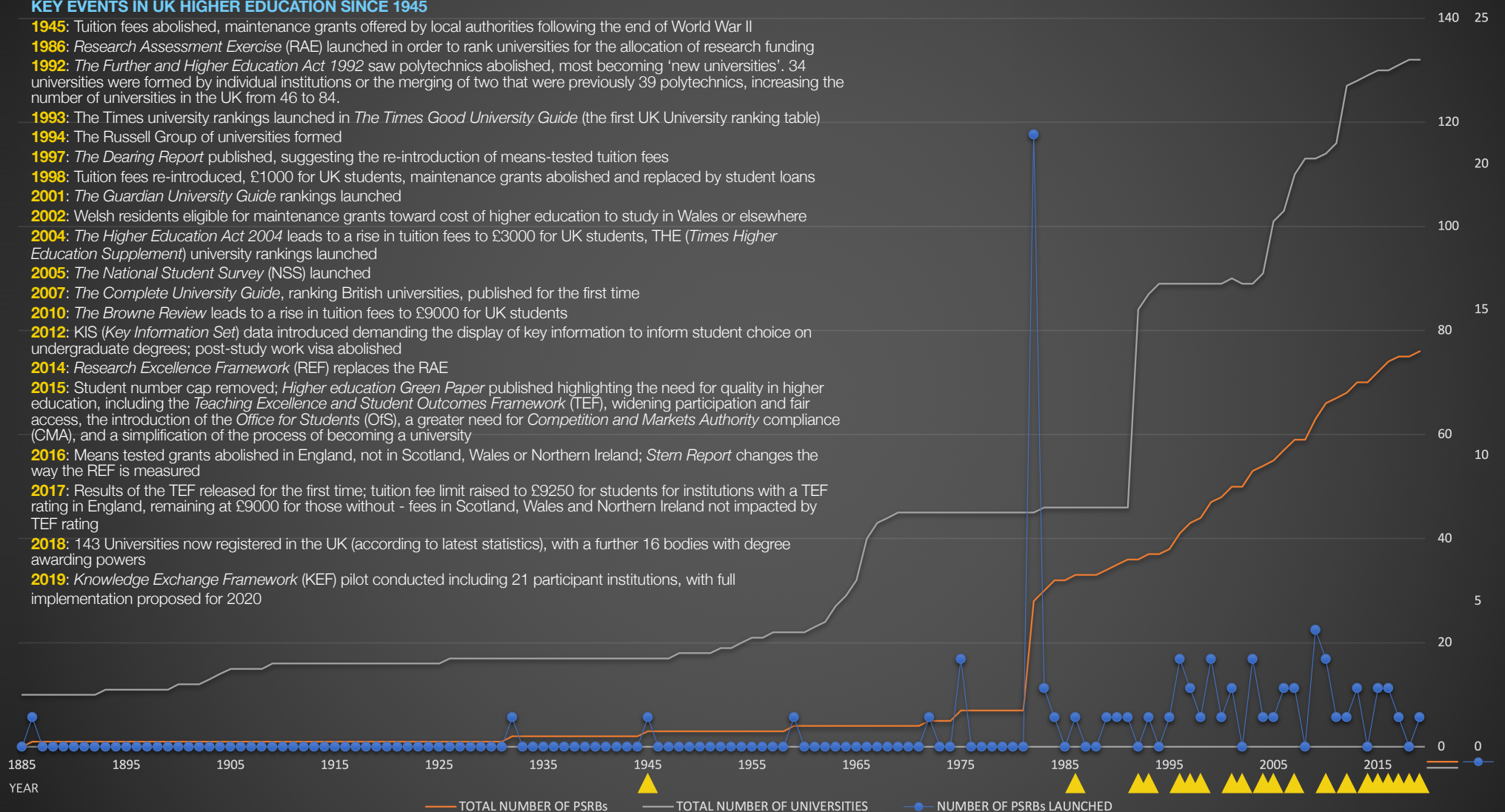


Figure 1: PSRBs and Universities in the UK since 1885

### Methodology

PSRBs that are currently registered in the UK are listed by HESA in their Unistats Record 2019/20 HESA-2 (downloaded from the HESA web site in April 2019). Despite HESA's list being the most up-to-date available, a small number of PSRBs have ceased operation, amalgamated with other bodies or stopped their accreditation programmes. These have been built into the rationalised list which also identified repetitions that name the same organisation more than once. This took the list from 341 to 179 accrediting bodies.

HESA do not hold information regarding each organisation's first accreditation, so every one on the list was contacted individually and asked if they were able to provide a year in which they began accrediting degree courses in the UK. If a response wasn't received, efforts were made to establish dates by trawling through web sites and other online resources.

The data was organised in a spreadsheet to generate the graph in figure 1. The graph shows how many accrediting bodies began their programmes each year from the earliest to the latest, and a cumulative graph that shows increases year-on-year, including any closures. This is accompanied by a cumulative graph showing the increase in UK HE providers as well as a list of key dates of events that have taken place that may have had an impact on the changes illustrated in the graphs.

NB: several bodies are listed by HESA as being part of the Engineering Council (ENGC). Unless they stated otherwise, it has been assumed that these bodies began their accreditation in 1982 in line with the ENGC. This creates a peak of PSRB start dates in 1982, which is almost certainly an anomaly.

### References

HESA (2019) *Unistats record 2019/20 - Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) and professional accreditation of undergraduate programmes* (Version 1.0 Produced 2019-04-17) [online]. London: HESA Available from: [https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c19061/accreditation\\_guidance](https://www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c19061/accreditation_guidance) [Accessed April 2019]

The Higher Education Better Regulation Group (2011) *Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies: An exploration of their Engagement with Higher Education.*, London: HEBRG

Boliver, V. (2015) *Are there distinctive clusters of higher and lower status universities in the UK?*, *Oxford review of education.*, 41 (5). pp. 608-627.