## The Union's Submission of Evidence to the House of Lords

**Background**

As a result of the Union's lobbying efforts on the Immigration Bill after the Union's stance on the issue was passed at Council, the House of Lords Select Committee on Science and Technology announced an inquiry into the effects of existing and proposed legislation on international students. The inquiry is called 'International STEM Students' and invites relevant parties to submit evidence to the inquiry.

As is tradition, the timeframe for creating a document of evidence has been extremely short but given the importance of the project, it is important to have student oversight. This paper contains information as to the scope of the evidence we will be submitting and the final document will be sent around Council in the next week or so for an email vote.

Scope of the submission:

Effects on international students

- Appeals
    - How the proposed change of visa appeals to administrative reviews could jeopardise students' futures – using data from the International Office
- Landlord checks
    - Possibility of discrimination against international students or racial profiling
    - Widely criticised, including by agencies such as UK Association of Letting Agents and the National Landlords Association
    - Immigration Bill survey data on students who have already had difficulty finding accommodation as international students and who are dissatisfied by the proposal
- NHS fee:
    - Students already pay high tuition fees, visa fees, upfront rent costs – survey data on the number of students who would find this extra charge a financial struggle
    - The estimates of the cost on implementing this scheme seem incredibly optimistic
    - Students are financial contributors to the government and are unlikely to use the service due to the healthy migrant effect.
- Overall
    - Students would be discouraged from applying to Imperial if these changes went ahead
    - Although Imperial relies on its reputation to continue attracting international students in the face of this policy, the sector has seen the first drop in non-EEA students since records began

Effects on Imperial:

- Course availability
    - Some courses rely on international student funding to continue operating, particularly small Masters courses, drops in international students may mean these courses will no longer be able to run

- Imperial's finances
    - The majority of Imperial's academic fee income is from international students, so relatively small drops in international students translates into large losses of money
    - International alumni often hold senior positions in the corporate sector and go on to make philanthropic donations to the College
- All students
    - Government's educational strategy acknowledges the benefits to home students on international students – our diverse student body is important to all of our experiences
- Imperial's standing as a world-leading institution relies on us attracting the best students
    - Increasing global competition from other institutions – offering English-speaking courses, aggressively targeting international students, encouraging students to remain in their home country

Effects on the sector:

- There are trends in decreasing international students in the sector, particularly from India and Pakistan
- Many higher education institutes are very reliant on funding from international student fees
- International student perceptions of the UK indicates it is increasingly perceived as a hostile environment for applicants
- STEM courses are particularly under threat due to the high proportion of international students, particularly in postgraduate study
- Students go on to become the future researchers and academics, turning international students away from the UK or cutting funding to STEM courses will have knock-on effects in the UK's STEM industry and innovation

**Matters for discussion:**

1. Does Council agree with the scope of the evidence?
2. Does Council have suggestions for additional topics for the submission?