

1 **A new way towards making tuition fees more progressive?**

2 (original at

3 <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2010/oct/11/tuition-fees-interest-rates-increase>)

4 The British coalition government was today seeking a compromise over
5 plans to make higher earning graduates pay more for their degrees. A
6 Tory minister confirmed that a variable interest rate on student loans was
7 a favoured option.

8 A review of higher education funding due out this week is expected to
9 recommend that universities should be allowed to charge higher tuition
10 fees and that the interest rate on student loans should increase. Reports
11 today suggested the review would recommend abolishing the cap on fees,
12 currently set at £3,290, and allowing the market to decide the cost of a
13 degree.

14 A government minister said that a variable interest rate would allow the
15 most high-flying graduates to subsidise the rest.

16 The National Union of Students said last night it is an "insult to the
17 intelligence" to try to "re-brand" an increase in fees as "progressive".

Questions

- 1) What is a 'variable interest rate' (line 6)
- 2) What steps is the review of university funding likely to recommend to the British government?
- 3) The members of which British political party are referred to as Tories (sg. 'Tory' (line 6))?
- 4) Paraphrase 'allowing the market to decide the cost of a degree' (line 12-13).
- 5) In what way are tuition fees to become more progressive and what does 'progressive' mean anyway? (Hint: think about progressive taxation.)
- 6) Who are 'high-flying graduates' (line 15)?
- 7) The National Students Union is strongly opposed to the government plan. What is, in its opinion, the most important part of the proposed reform?
- 8) Give a brief summary of the text in your own words.
- 9) What is your opinion on tuition fees? Would you like to see them introduced in the Czech Republic?

Vocabulary

tuition (line 1 and elsewhere) – teaching or instruction, as of pupils

cap on (line 11) – a maximum limit, as one set by law or agreement on prices, wages, spending, etc.

due (line 8) – expected to be ready, be present, or arrive; scheduled. Cf. *The plane is due at noon*

abolish (line 11) – to do away with; put an end to; annul; make void, cancel

You can find additional explanation and more examples to help you understand and use English words and phrases at <http://dictionary.reference.com>, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/>, <http://www.merriam-webster.com/> or <http://www.ldoceonline.com/>

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