The Policy Work of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the United Kingdom (the Dearing Committee, 1996-97)

By:

Rhiannon Birch

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Sheffield
Faculty of Social Sciences
School of Education

Submission Date: September 2017

The Policy Work of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the United Kingdom (the Dearing Committee, 1996-97)

Acknowledgements

Many people supported me in writing this thesis: a big thank you for your support.

The seen and unseen staff at the National Archives made my data collection as painless as possible.

My family, friends and colleagues kindly nodded and smiled through years of random comments on the history of higher education and more information on the Dearing Inquiry than they possibly wanted.

Dr Tony Strike made the initial suggestion that I embark on my PhD journey, offered advice when sought and flexibility when needed.

My supervisor, Professor Gareth Parry, offered good humour, well-founded criticism and pointed out my preference for circumlocution!

Dr Heather Ellis kindly stepped in at the last moment to offer welcome guidance and support.

Finally, the three most important people in the world: Charlotte who made cups of tea and squeezed the stress out; Tom who made me laugh; and Stephen who commented, proofread and always believed I would finish it.

The Policy Work of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education in the United Kingdom (the Dearing Committee, 1996-97)

Abstract

Appointed with bi-partisan support in the context of a funding crisis, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Inquiry) was asked to make recommendations to a new UK Government in the summer of 1997. Employed to tackle complex, difficult and controversial questions, national committees have been a favoured policy instrument in the British tradition. They represent an independent, expert, consultative and deliberative policy process. The thesis is a study of the policy work undertaken by the Dearing Inquiry. Policy work is the totality of people, methods, activities and processes deployed by a national committee to meet its terms of reference and the expectations of ministers and politicians. Based on a systematic analysis of archival documents, an account is given of how the Inquiry approached its work, how evidence was collected and weighed, how expertise was used, and where, when and how these sources informed the National Committee.

The main argument of the thesis is that, while external commentary focused on specific issues, the larger purpose of the Inquiry was to equip higher education with the architecture for a post-binary mass phase of development and that in completing its work the Committee undertook a process of codification. The findings highlight three key features. First, the Inquiry demonstrates common features of the National Inquiry form of policy-making, being organised using a hierarchy of groups which developed collective views informed by evidence. Second, the Inquiry demonstrates the adaptability of national inquiries. The Committee supplemented existing data and reports with commissioned research, including a significant national consultation exercise, and sought stakeholder views to inform recommendations. Third, the effectiveness of a national inquiry depends on participating actors. A small group within the Committee provided direction and momentum while the Chair and Secretariat provided coherence, ensuring that the Inquiry met its reporting deadline.

Contents

List of abbreviations

AHRC	Arts and Humanities Research Council
AUT	Association of University Teachers
CAT	College of Advanced Technology
CATS	Credit Accumulation and Transfer Scheme
CBI	Confederation of British Industry
CDP	Committee for the Directors of Polytechnics
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CIHE	Council for Industry and Higher Education
CNAA	Council for National Academic Awards
COSHEP	Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals
CPD	continuing professional development
CUC	Committee of University Chairman (later Committee of University Chairs)
CVCP	Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals
DENI	Department for Education Northern Ireland
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DSIR	Department for Scientific and Industrial Research
ERWG	Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group
FE	Further education
FEC	Further Education Colleges
FEFC	Further Education Funding Council
FWG	Funding Working Group
GNVQ	General National Vocational Qualification
GSG	Governance Sub Group
HE	Higher education
HEFC	Higher Education Funding Council
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEFCW	Higher Education Funding Council for Wales
HEIs	Higher education institutions
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Council
HESA	Higher Education Statistics Agency
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
ITWG	Information Technology Working Group
JISC	Joint Information Systems Committee
LEA	Local Education Authority
MaSN	Maximum Student Number
MP	Member of Parliament

NAB	National Advisory Body for Local Authority (later Public Sector) Higher Education
NAO	National Audit Office
NATFHE	National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education
NC	National Committee
NCIHE	National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education
NPM	New Public Management
NUS	National Union of Students
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PCAS	Polytechnics and Colleges Admissions Service
PCFC	Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council
PGT	Postgraduate taught courses
PSBR	Public Sector Borrowing Requirement
QAA	Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
RAEs	Research Assessment Exercises
RWG	Research Working Group
SC	Scottish Committee
SCE	Select Committee on Estimates
SCEWG	Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Group
SCOP	Standing Conference of Principals
SCOTVEC	Scottish Vocational Education Council
SGWG	Structure and Governance Working Group
SHEFC	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
SLC	Student Loans Company
SOEID	Scottish Office Education and Industry Department
SRHE	Society for Research into Higher Education
SSG	Structure Sub Group
TE	Tertiary education
TLTP	Teaching and Learning Technology Programme
ToR	Terms of Reference
TQA	Teaching Quality Assessment
TQWG	Teaching Quality Working Group
TTA	Teacher Training Agency
UCCA	Universities Central Admissions System (later UCAS, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service)
UCEA	Universities and Colleges Employers Association
UFC	Universities Funding Council
UGC	University Grants Committee
VC	Vice-Chancellor

Chapter 1. Introduction

The Dearing Report was published on 23 July 1997. It marked the completion of 14 months of intensive work by the Committee and its Secretariat to conduct the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Inquiry). Shortly after publication, the physical characteristics of the Dearing Report (1997) were described as an indicator of the quality and impact of the Inquiry's work:
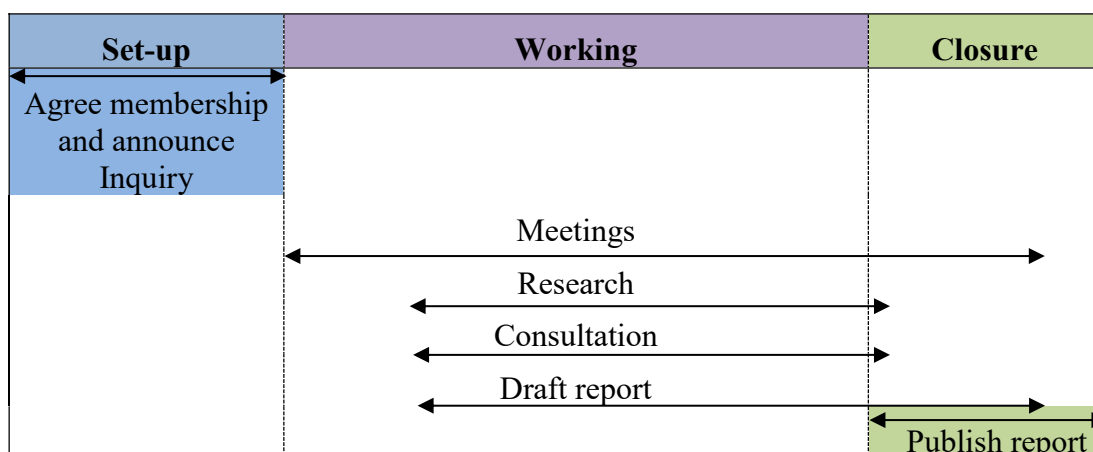
> Despite its several virtues the Dearing Report is unlikely to have a long shelf life. Like, I imagine, most other readers I turned first to Chapters 17 to 21 on funding issues and the pages of densely argued text literally came apart in my hands – quicker even than their contents in David Blunkett's mind. Most of the other chapters did withstand a first reading, but looked distinctly tattered after a second. This is a pity because the Report will be of most use in the long term to PhD students who will use it as a primary source on the state of British Higher Education, and modish debates about it, in the final years of the twentieth century. (Williams, 1998, p.1)

Williams highlights three perceptions which are expressed in the commentary and critique of the Inquiry: the Inquiry was expected to have a limited and short-term impact; the chapters of most interest to the academic community were on funding; and the Dearing Report did not live up to expectations. In summary, Williams reduces the work of the Inquiry to a cumbersome document which will be of most use to future students of the history of higher education.

The Dearing Inquiry was the second of only two national committees of inquiry on higher education. The Robbins Inquiry (1961-1963) is remembered both as an example of the use of the national inquiry process and for the landmark Robbins Report which established the principle that places should be available for all applicants who were suitably qualified and wished to enter higher education. Robbins provided the basis for the future growth and expansion which led to the development from elite to mass higher education. In comparison, the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (the Dearing Inquiry) is remembered primarily as a vehicle for the Government to deal with a funding crisis in higher education. The Inquiry was established to defer discussion of highly contentious issues regarding higher education in the run up to the 1997 General Election. Dearing was the Inquiry which established the principle that students should be asked to contribute to the costs of their education upon graduation and this recommendation led to the introduction of tuition fees.

The Inquiry process included features common to a national inquiry of this type as mapped in Figure 1.1 below:

Figure 1.1: overview of the Dearing Inquiry process

Set-up	Working	Closure
Agree membership and announce Inquiry		
	Meetings ⟷	
	Research ⟷	
	Consultation ⟷	
	Draft report ⟷	
		Publish report

Its work was conducted in three main phases: a set-up phase where the Inquiry was initiated and the membership announced by Government; a working phase where committees and working groups were established and completed research to inform recommendations which were included in a draft report; and a closure phase where the report was finalised and presented to Government.

The scale of the enterprise is summarised in Figure 1.2 below.

Figure 1.2: summary of the scale of the Dearing Inquiry

ACTIVITIES	PEOPLE	MATERIAL
90 Committee and Working Group meetings	18 Committee members	800 written evidence submissions
7 conferences attended by over 115 participants	27 members of the Secretariat	169 files transferred to the National Archives 95 files held at the University of Sheffield
33 visits in the UK and 8 overseas visits	37 oral evidence sessions held and the Chair met with 150 interested parties	1,500-page Dearing Report

The work of the Dearing Inquiry and the Dearing Report form part of the literature in two fields of study: the history of higher education and policy studies. The historical literature considers the Inquiry as an event in the history of UK higher education. The Inquiry is referenced in the literature considering the development of higher education policy which tends to concentrate on specific issues. The Inquiry is also considered as an example of policy-making both within a political studies context and in the literature on national inquiries and royal commissions where it is cited as an example of a tool of Government policy-making.

This area of research is important for two main reasons. There is no systematic account and assessment of the Inquiry as a policy inquiry process. The National Committee followed the process for conducting a national inquiry and was equipped with terms of reference, a chair, a committee membership, a secretariat and a timeline. It commissioned research and analytical studies and undertook wider consultation exercises which informed the drafting of a main report and recommendations for publication. It also attempted to meet the expectations of ministers, politicians and the academic community whose view of the Inquiry was influenced by its recollections of the Robbins Inquiry. The Inquiry is remembered as an event and is referenced accordingly as a touchstone in the history of higher education but the focus has been on the Inquiry as a means to an end rather than as a policy event.

Commentary and discussion of the Inquiry has focused mainly on themes and specific recommendations rather than a consideration of the range of policy work it attempted. Policy work refers to the activities and actors required to conduct the national inquiry process. This definition includes the people, methods, activities and processes deployed by a committee of inquiry to meet its terms of reference and, more generally, to meet the expectations not only of ministers and politicians but also wider stakeholders and interested parties. The importance of this thesis is in understanding how inquiries of this kind can pursue different orders and levels of policy work, some of which is little acknowledged in the academic, professional and practitioner literature on higher education. The wider literature uses the Inquiry to inform discussion of ongoing policy issues or to reference the longer-term impact of the Dearing Report, usually with regard to student tuition fees. An account of this work and its processes will contribute to the body of knowledge on politics and policy-making in higher education and, more broadly, the conduct of national committees of inquiry. The research is not concerned to evaluate the impact of the Dearing Report and recommendations.

The value of historical policy research of this type is that it develops a deeper understanding of the past which can inform the future. Bruner (1991, p.20) observes "The perpetual construction and reconstruction of the past provide precisely the forms of canonicity that permit us to recognize where a breach has occurred and how it might be interpreted". Where this description is applied to a process, such as the

Inquiry, it suggests that the deconstruction of the Inquiry process can be used as the basis for a new reading or interpretation of the event.

1.1 Situating the Dearing Inquiry within a historical context

In the middle of the twentieth century the relationship between Universities and the State began to change. In the first half of the century, academic research had proved critical to the war effort; after the Second World War Universities found themselves in financial difficulties and the State intervened by investing in education. In 1961 the Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Robbins Inquiry) was established to "…review the pattern of full-time higher education in Great Britain and in the light of national needs and resources to advise Her Majesty's Government on what principles its long-term development should be based" (Robbins, 1963, p.1). The Robbins Inquiry established the basis for the development of a higher education system. It also set the standard for later committees of inquiry and in the early stages of Dearing there was a tension between external expectations that the Committee should reference Robbins and the National Committee's desire to be independent both of Government and history.

Following the Robbins Report (1963) there was a period of significant change and expansion which moved the nascent higher education system from an elite to a mass model. For much of this period, the higher education system operated under a binary structure where Universities and Polytechnics were separated by ethos, management and funding model. The Higher Education Act (1992) marked the end of the binary policy and replaced it with a new unitary higher education system which operated under a single funding model administered by the Higher Education Funding Councils. The move from the binary to unitary system was concurrent with an extended period of under-funding under the Conservative Government. This created a funding crisis in higher education which escalated and threatened to become an election issue in the run up to the 1997 General Election. In February 1996 the Government, with support from the Opposition, asked Sir Ron Dearing, a career civil servant with a reputation as a Government 'fixer' to lead an inquiry into the state of the higher education system. The terms of reference asked the Committee:

> To make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years, recognising that higher education embraces teaching, learning, scholarship and research. (NCIHE, 1997, Main Report, p.1)

While the Inquiry was initiated by the Conservative Government with bi-partisan support, the publication of the Report followed the landslide Labour Party victory in the general election which elected the Labour Party led by Tony Blair. Their campaign was characterised by promises of significant change following an extended term of leadership by the Conservative Party. The Labour Party's use of D:Ream's 'Things Can Only Get Better' as its campaign soundtrack, suggested that it would be

difficult for things to get worse. This implicitly captured the zeitgeist of the socio-political landscape. It was particularly appropriate in higher education where long-term erosion of student funding had led to threats from Universities to charge top-up fees to students from the 1997/98 academic year. The Dearing Report was published on the 23 July 1997 following fourteen months of intensive work to meet the requirements of its terms of reference through a comprehensive review and analysis of the UK higher education system.

1.2 Evolution of the thesis topic and personal motivation

I am a member of staff in Academic Services at the University of Sheffield working in Planning and Insight, with an undergraduate degree in Classics and professional training at Masters level as an Archivist. My motivation for undertaking a research project looking at higher education arose from an interest in comparing higher education institutions to see whether there is evidence of genuine differentiation between them. My initial research proposal outlined a project which would attempt to develop an understanding of how policies encouraging institutions to be simultaneously similar and different had influenced the development of the higher education system. However, preliminary exploration with my supervisor, Professor Gareth Parry, suggested that this topic would be difficult to define and that there was already a significant body of work exploring different aspects of this question.

In conversation with Professor Parry, I decided that the Dearing Inquiry could provide an interesting topic and an early literature search suggested that this was an area where there was scope for new work. In 1996-97, Professor Parry was a member of the team which analysed the submissions which the Dearing Inquiry received in response to its National Consultation exercise. His personal records are held at the University of Sheffield but were uncatalogued. The process of cataloguing the records led to the development of a potential research question involving the evaluation of the written evidence submissions made in response to the national consultation exercise. This later grew into a wider study of the policy work undertaken by the Inquiry. The background of the author and the supervisor's involvement with the Inquiry therefore had a direct influence on the development and evolution of the thesis topic.

1.3 Statement of research questions and initial definition of key terms

The main research question identifies the work undertaken by the Inquiry as its main area of interest and asks: what order and level of policy work was undertaken by the Inquiry? Here policy work refers to the exploration of an issue which requires Government to develop a considered and appropriate response. The work is undertaken independently through a committee of inquiry. Order refers to the scope of the policy work in terms of the scale of the question, while level refers to the extent of the work being undertaken. The Inquiry was asked to consider a comprehensive order of policy work at the level of the higher education system.

There are three supplementary questions which frame the collection and analysis of research data:

   i.   Why was it necessary to establish a Committee of Inquiry?
   ii.   Who was involved in the Inquiry process?
   iii. How did the Committee undertake its work?

To address the main research question, the process of the Inquiry is used as a vehicle to consider the process and dynamics of the Inquiry and the policy work being undertaken. Process here means the structured stages which were used to manage the work of the Inquiry and to define its activities and policy work was defined earlier in the chapter as the activities and actors required to conduct the national inquiry process and the external expectations of ministers and politicians. The supplementary research questions support and deepen the analysis by exploring the Inquiry as an event which responded to the wider political context and comparing the themes identified by contemporary commentators with the evidence of the Dearing Committee. This allows consideration of specific aspects of policy work in line with the definition used. The focus on policy work is the basis for a new and different reading of the Inquiry from previous commentaries and critiques which have predominantly used the themes covered by the recommendations in the Dearing Report to consider questions around specific areas of higher education, for example, student or research funding, widening participation and quality assurance. The thesis considers the Inquiry as an example of the national inquiry process applied to higher education rather than a means by which recommendations are formulated to inform the development of policy by Government.

1.4 Approach, methods and sources

The research used a qualitative design and applied an interpretive approach to trace the policy work of the Inquiry through an examination of documentary sources. The nature and topic of the research question attempted to explore the Inquiry as an event situated within its contemporary historical context. The question sought to understand a social process. An interpretive approach which enabled an understanding to develop and be revised during the research process allowed the study to look beyond a simple re-telling of the facts and to explore how the Inquiry was conducted in greater depth.

Documentary source material was chosen as the basis for a single case study because it provided a focus on contemporary evidence generated through the Inquiry process. The evidence of the Inquiry falls under two main types: primary and secondary evidence. Here primary evidence is defined as documents created through the Inquiry process. The primary evidence of the Inquiry refers to the working papers generated by the Inquiry which are held in the National Archives and at the University of Sheffield. 169 files are held at the National Archives and 6,022 pages of text were read. 95 files held at the University of Sheffield were catalogued and read. Secondary evidence is defined as documents concerned with the Inquiry which

were created outside the Inquiry process. The Inquiry led to the publication of reporting and analysis by commentators and critics during and after the Inquiry; and formal responses were also published shortly after the Dearing Report (notably the Higher Education Funding Council for England and the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals).

Figure 1.3: Summary of documentary source material read during the research

Primary

6,022 pages of text

169 files at the National Archives

95 files at the University of Sheffield

Secondary

212 Journal Articles

121 Newspaper and Periodical Articles

3 published responses to the Dearing Report
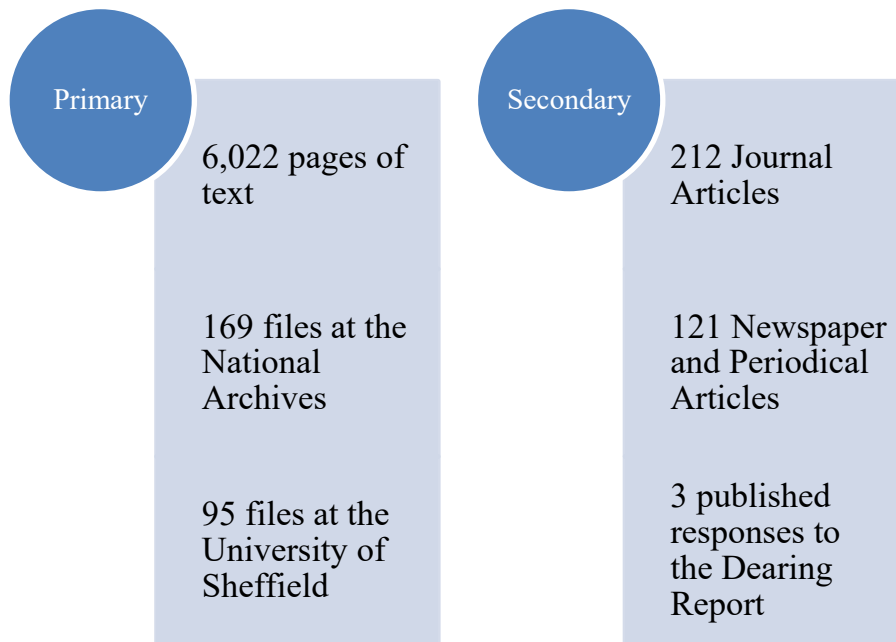
The analytical framework for the study was derived from a review of the commentaries and critiques of the Inquiry. It was informed by the literature on the purposes and processes of royal commissions and national committees of inquiry. The approach treated the Inquiry as a single discrete event. It reflected Hill's (2009) suggestion that "... all social reality should be understood as a historical construct, situated in time and space" (p.151).

The analysis applied the analytical framework to enable interpretation of the documentary source material. This was consistent with the research question which sought to understand the Inquiry as a policy process. This analysis was used to develop an understanding of its process and the policy work being undertaken. The research treated the documents created by the Inquiry as evidence of a process rather than as evidence of official policy. By using the secondary documents to develop an analytical framework it was possible to compare the external perceptions of commentators with the internal documents to develop a new reading of the Inquiry. The focus of the research was the Inquiry process and not the Dearing Report which was the output of that process. The work excluded consideration of later developments in higher education policy, the social and cultural environment and the impact of the Dearing Report.

1.5 Contribution to the field

The thesis is expected to make two distinctive contributions to knowledge which run across the fields of the history of higher education and policy studies.

The findings chapters present a systematic and detailed account of the policy work of the Inquiry based on primary source material. There is no such account in the academic literature and it will serve as a basis for comparative and contextual studies in contemporary policy history.

Based on this account, an argument for a new or alternative understanding of the policy work of the Dearing Committee is developed. While other interpretations have focused on undertaking critique of specific aspects or themes, this argument highlights the role of the National Committee in establishing principles and devising arrangements to support and sustain a mass system of British higher education.

1.6 Thesis structure

The thesis is organised in four sections:

- **Section 1: The Dearing Inquiry as a policy inquiry process** considers the themes emerging from the historical and political context for the Inquiry.
- **Section 2: Approach, methods, and analytical framework** provides an overview of the approach and sources used including a presentation of the research methods and identification of research questions. The analytical framework for the research is developed.
- **Section 3: Findings** develops a systematic account of the Inquiry process which considers the work of the Inquiry and identifies the themes of interest to the National Committee, Scottish Committee and Working Groups.
- **Section 4: Analysis and Conclusions** considers the main findings and conclusions with reference to the research questions and consider the implications of the findings.

Within the sections are eleven chapters which are summarised below:

Chapter 1. Introduction: an overview of the thesis including the structure, purpose and approach.

SECTION 1: The Dearing Inquiry as a policy inquiry process

Chapter 2. A brief history of UK higher education: a brief history which narrates the development of higher education in the UK from the 12th century to the 1990s.

Chapter 3. Themes and trends in the development of UK higher education: a literature review which identifies ten themes which influenced the development of UK higher education from the Robbins Inquiry (1961-1963) to the Dearing Inquiry (1996-1997).

Chapter 4. Committees of Inquiry and Royal Commissions in the British tradition: an overview of the policy-making tools which are available to Government and how these have developed over time. This chapter provides an overview of the key facts of the Inquiry and a high-level comparison with the key facts of the Robbins Inquiry.

SECTION 2: Approach, methods and analytical framework

Chapter 5. Identifying and developing the research question: identifies the field of inquiry in which the work is situated and develops the core and supplementary research questions. The chapter provides a description of the data sources used and their limitations, the basis on which they were selected and the methodological approach.

Chapter 6. Literature review and analytical framework: a review of the published responses to the Inquiry using secondary evidence from newspapers, academic journals and books which considers who was writing about Dearing, their relationship with the Inquiry and identifies the main themes emerging from the literature. The chapter concludes with the development of the analytical framework.

SECTION 3: Findings

Chapter 7. Set-up phase: establishing the Dearing Inquiry

Chapter 8. Working phase: undertaking the work of the Dearing Inquiry

Chapter 9. Closure phase: synthesising findings, identifying recommendations and drafting the Dearing Report.

The three chapters develop a systematic and detailed account of the Inquiry process. They are structured using the three phases of work undertaken and consider: the actors involved in the Inquiry and their role in the process; the structure of the Committees and Working Groups; the research programme initiated by the Inquiry; and the main areas of interest to the Committees and Working Groups.

SECTION 4: Analysis and Conclusions

Chapter 10. Interpretation and analysis: what order and level of policy work was undertaken by the Dearing Inquiry? a reflection of the outcomes of the research and conclusions which address the research question

Chapter 11. Concluding comments: an argument for codification: the final chapter presents an argument for a new reading of the policy work undertaken by the Inquiry which emerged from the research.

SECTION 1: The Dearing Inquiry as a policy inquiry process

This section provides a more detailed context for the study. It is structured as three complementary chapters. The first chapter outlines a history of higher education in the UK which concentrates on the development of higher education policy. The second chapter develops a history of the development of Government policy-making tools and provides a high-level comparison of the Dearing and Robbins Inquiries. The final chapter provides a review of the wider political context for higher education in the 1990s.

Chapter 2. A brief history of UK higher education

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a chronological overview of UK higher education. The chapter covers the period from the creation of Universities in the 12th century to the late 1990s and considers developments in teaching and research informed by the wider social context. The chapter concentrates on the development of higher education policy, the changes which led to State funding of higher education and the changing relationship between Universities and the State. Where appropriate, reference is also made to further education colleges who delivered higher education provision under local authority control. The chapter does not consider the student voice or refer to the establishment of the NUS.

2.2 Early history: the Ancient Universities

The history of higher education in the UK begins with the five ancient institutions[1.] These Universities were private institutions, funded by endowments and student tuition fees. Their purpose was to teach rather than to generate knowledge or undertake research. Their students were drawn from the male elite with the leisure to study or aspirational members of society who sought education to enter the professions of the law, medicine or the Church. At this point research was undertaken by independent scholars and the Royal Societies. These individuals and organisations provided an impetus for the curiosity-driven scientific research which had a significant impact in defining and shaping the modern world.

2.3 19th century social reform and the Redbrick Universities

The early model of higher education remained relatively unchanged until the end of the 19th century when the impetus and drive of the industrial revolution created demand for an educated and skilled workforce capable of meeting the needs of industry. Tight (2009) summarises the effect on Oxford and Cambridge as:

> Seen from a national perspective, for Oxford and Cambridge much of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were spent in a, at times painfully slow, reform process, designed to make them more relevant to the developing needs of an expanding and industrializing nation. (p.6)

The type of education previously offered by universities was criticised by some as lacking relevance and, while the older universities retained their popularity and began to offer a wider range of subjects, social change led to the establishment of new universities and technical colleges who could deliver education more aligned with an industrial age. Initially this change was slow and incremental with the establishment of four universities[2] but the start of the nineteenth century saw the

---

[1] Oxford (12th century), Cambridge (13th century), St Andrews (1410), Glasgow (1451) and Aberdeen (1495)
[2] Durham (1832), London (1836), Manchester (1880) and Wales (1893)

foundation of a further six institutions[3] located in wealthy industrial towns whose purpose was to deliver the technical and skills training required to support local industry. The foundation of the Redbrick Universities improved the scale and geographical spread of higher education and this expansion continued as the number of universities doubled between 1850 and 1910.

The Redbricks also changed the type and quality of education which they offered to students. The University of London recognised the need for a consistent approach to the quality of the courses provided. This led to the development of a franchise model of external degrees which were delivered through local colleges:

> Colleges and Universities were under increasing pressure in the late nineteenth century to meet various public, if nebulous criteria of quality...The external degree soon and throughout its history raised questions about the appropriateness and justice of examinations divorced from teaching. (Silver, 1990, p.36-7)

While there was no formal regulation of the quality of higher education provision, the University of London scheme promoted consistent quality and addressed the geographical patchiness of higher education without threatening the status of universities as monopolistic holders of degree awarding powers. However, while degrees were only awarded by universities, they were operating in an unregulated, competitive market and faced competition for students from schools and colleges.

2.4 The start of State funding for higher education and the changing relationship between Universities and the State

The early twentieth century saw a fundamental shift in higher education provision in the UK as the conceptual model of the university moved from the teaching only institutions advocated by Cardinal Newman to the Humboldtian model. The Humboldtian model described universities devoted to the pursuit of knowledge through both teaching and research and free from society. The model was based on five principles:

> 1. The unity of research and education/teaching.
> 2. The holistic nature of knowledge.
> 3. The primacy of research — that is, an education 'infested' and controlled by research.
> 4. A national culture dominated and distinguished by higher learning ('Bildung').
> 5. The promotion of higher learning, science, and 'Bildung' as a core obligation of the central state. (Nybom, 2003, p.144)

The core purpose of Universities now included both teaching and research. Teaching and subject provision was influenced by the needs of local employers while their research was influenced by the State. Universities began to receive funding from the State with the first national grant paid to the University of London in 1839 in recognition of its special administrative relationship to the State (Berdahl, 1959,

---

[3] Birmingham (1900), Liverpool (1903), Leeds (1904), Sheffield (1905), Belfast (1908) and Bristol (1909)

p.24). State funding increased and by the 1920s and 1930s most universities received around a third of their income from Government (Shattock, 2012, p.214). The Government's willingness to fund research led to the establishment of the Medical Research Council in 1913 and the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) in 1916. The development of academic research also led to new research degrees rather than the D. Phil which had previously been offered. The PhD in its current form was developed in Germany and was offered in the UK from 1917.

As Universities adapted to a new model of teaching and research they also began to align with each other and to receive funding from the State. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Vice Chancellors began to meet informally and in 1918 the group was formally established as the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP).

The increase in State funding for teaching and research required new structures to enable management of universities. The University Grants Committee (UGC) was established by Treasury Minute in 1919 to advise on the distribution of recurrent and capital grants and the resource and funding requirements of Universities. The membership of the UGC was drawn from the academy and represented Universities with strong personal connections between Universities and Government. Under the new arrangement, Universities could exert a strong influence on funding decisions and reinforce the tacit principle that it was inappropriate for the State to devise or seek to implement higher education policy.

For much of the inter-war period the informal relationship between the Treasury, UGC and Universities preserved autonomy and independence while enabling receipt of State funding. Following the First World War, university finances were precarious due to significant reductions in student numbers and income from tuition fees. The State provided financial support in exchange for research which it saw as being of benefit to the nation.

2.5 Higher education policy after the Second World War

During the Second World War, the Government began to develop a more consistent approach to its education policies. The Education Act (1944) implemented free secondary education for all pupils. The school leaving age increased to 15, new types of secondary schools were established and the new 11-plus exam enabled pupil selection for different types of secondary education. Free secondary education increased participation and led to higher demand for university places. To meet this demand, there was a need for expansion of higher education.

In addition to the student demand created by the Education Act (1944), the Percy Report (1945) identified that there was insufficient provision of technical education and recommended increasing provision in science by converting some technical colleges into universities, and establishing new institutes of technology. This led to the establishment of University College of North Staffordshire (later Keele

University). The Committee also highlighted the problems of technological education being divided between Universities with degree awarding powers and local authority colleges offering three-year higher technological courses. Shattock (2012, p.19) suggests that while the issue of comparable quality between qualifications and institutions was identified in 1945, it was not resolved until the creation of the unitary structure in 1992.

A year later, the Barlow Report on Scientific Manpower (1946) identified a critical shortage of scientists and recommended an ambitious programme of university expansion which would double the annual output of science graduates. The UGC forecasts also predicted growth in student numbers into the 1950s because of increasing demand from school leavers combined with increasing demand from applicants whose studies had been interrupted by the Second World War. At this point the CVCP, contradicting its previous position, suggested that Government advice to Universities on devising and executing policies in the national interest would be welcome (Shattock, 2012, p 14). The timing of the CVCP statement suggests a growing maturity and a confidence as this suggestion would previously have been unpopular with Universities. However, the Universities' response to the UGC predictions was not positive and there were concerns that the levels of growth predicted by the Government could not be achieved without sacrificing quality (Shattock, 2012, p.215). While there was demand for increasing higher education provision, the additional investment required to enable expansion was delayed by ongoing Government discussion with the result that the latter half of the 1950s was characterised by increasingly frustrated calls from Universities for funded expansion rather than actual development of coherent higher education policy by Government.

By 1945, Universities were in receipt of state funding, their role had expanded to encompass both teaching and research and their purpose had adapted from teaching a small number of the elite to educating a wider section of the community. A governance structure had been established which allowed Government to influence the operation of universities while retaining institutional autonomy. Relationships between Universities and the State were characterised by gentle cooperation and based on gentleman's agreements:

> With the reality of financial dependence upon the state came a significant amendment to the traditional liberal idea of the university. Whereas previously it had been the universities' ultimate financial independence which had been seen as the guarantor of their autonomy, now the UGC was accorded that honour and duty. Within this revised system of values, the Committee was the 'buffer' between universities and the state and the relationship between universities and the state was characterised as a 'partnership' based on mutual dependence. (Salter and Tapper, 1994, p.131)

However, rapid change in the latter half of the twentieth century created a new environment where management of critical policy and funding issues could no longer be based on informality and personal connection. The State needed to take greater control of higher education and took a stronger stance regarding universities.

One of the earliest manifestations of a more directive approach from the State came from the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) and the Select Committee on Estimates (SCE). The PAC was appointed by the House of Commons to retrospectively scrutinise public expenditure granted by Parliament while the SCE was tasked with investigating the efficiency and economy of activities including quinquennial bids from the UGC. In the pre-war years UGC funding and expenditure was too small to warrant their attention. Post-war, increases in State funding of Universities led to greater scrutiny from the PAC:

> When in the immediate post-War years the UGC grant rose to well above 50 per cent, the PAC's normal point of entry for scrutiny, the PAC began to show interest, and in the 1948-1949 Parliamentary session it took evidence on the issue from the Treasury. The Treasury was strongly opposed to its informal but supportive relationship with the UGC being exposed to the kind of cross-examination that the C(omptroller) and AG (Auditor General) might provoke; it also had a principled view of the need to maintain the independence of universities from state interference and saw itself as a guardian of university autonomy. (Shattock, 2012, p.189)

The PAC argued that the UGC had not based its bids on sufficiently robust evidence and was too generous in its treatment of the Universities. It also suggested that neither the Treasury nor the Chancellor of the Exchequer had any real control over Universities.

2.6 The Robbins Inquiry and the move towards a system of higher education

In the early 1960s, higher education was considered a public good which should receive public funding. The Anderson Report (1960) recommended that all candidates admitted to university should automatically receive support for tuition fees and be eligible for means tested maintenance support from their local authority. The recommendation was implemented in 1961 and further work was initiated to consider the implications of increasing student demand. Increases in demand had already led to the opening of new Universities and caused the CVCP to establish the body which was to become the Universities Central Council on Admissions to manage the increase in applications.

The Government initiated the first national inquiry into higher education to review the situation in more detail. The Robbins Inquiry was initiated by a Treasury minute in February 1961 and was asked:

> to review the pattern of full-time higher education in Great Britain and in the light of national needs and resources to advise Her Majesty's Government on what principles its long-term development should be based. In particular, to advise, in the light of these principles, whether there should be any changes in that pattern, whether any new types of institution are desirable and whether any modifications should be made in the present arrangements for planning and co-ordinating the development of the various types of institution. (Report of the Committee on Higher Education, 1963, p. iii)

In 1962, the UGC's quinquennial bid for funding was rejected because Government finances could not accommodate the growth in investment necessary to meet increasing demand from students. Carswell (1985) describes the difficult position in which the Treasury found itself:

> Having set up the UGC as a 'chosen instrument' for assessing the needs of universities, it was in no position to dispute in detail the traditional but expensive submission that the UGC produced to justify the settlement proposed down to 1967. Nor was it easy to ask the UGC (as another department would have been asked) to go away and produce a cheaper solution. (p.35)

The rejection of the quinquennial bid had two effects. The significant difference in the projected student numbers from Government compared with those from the UGC caused the Government to await the outcome of the Robbins Inquiry before acting. It also became clear that the cosy relationship between the Treasury, the UGC and the CVCP needed to be replaced by an arrangement which would allow Government to lead the development of policy in the national interest and reduce the influence from the Universities in shaping the policies established around them, "The events of 1962 represent, therefore, a watershed between the universities privileged existence under the Treasury and the less protected position as a small cog in the larger machinery of government" (Shattock, 2012, p.122).

The Robbins Committee reported in 1963 and proposed that places should be available to all students with ability. The Robbins Report met with Government approval and agreement that the additional resources to fund projected growth would be found. The conflicting approaches to funding adopted in 1962 and 1963 suggest that the Government's approach to the development of higher education policy remained reactive and piecemeal. Although the State had taken steps towards a system of higher education, the links between policy intent and strategy were not robust. This, combined with increasing levels of Government investment under greater scrutiny from the PAC, meant that the mid 1960s presented the first turning point for higher education since the development of policy immediately post-war. Halsey (1995) notes this as:

> The growth of state interest in the universities in the twentieth century and the emergence of government as overwhelmingly the most important source of funds had slowly produced a structure of universities and colleges which Robbins explicitly recognised as a national system of higher education. (p.152)

While State funding and control of higher education grew in the twentieth century, at the point of the Robbins Inquiry there was a nascent system and unmet demand which would require expansion of the student places and providers. The Robbins Report was clear that:

> Higher education has not been planned as a whole or developed within a framework consciously devised to promote harmonious evolution. What system there is has come about as the result of a series of particular initiatives, concerned with particular needs and particular situations, and there is no way of dealing

conveniently with all the problems common to higher education as a whole. (Report of the Committee on Higher Education, 1963, p. 5)

The system proposed by Robbins sought to balance accountability with autonomy. The system would need to be supported by changes in policy and the creation of a new partnership between Government and the new higher education system. The Robbins Report recommended that a new department, the Department of Education and Science be established and in 1964 this took over responsibility for the UGC from the Treasury. The relationship between the UGC, CVCP and the new Department was very different from that enjoyed under the previous arrangements:

> Budget requests could no longer be settled, if they ever were, over a monthly dinner but were part of a formal process of discussion between a Treasury officer responsible for pre-determined areas of public expenditure and a designated Principal Finance Officer of the DES. (Shattock, 2012, p.109)

One of the immediate post-Robbins changes was that universities no longer enjoyed a unique relationship which enabled their receipt of public funding while retaining full autonomy. From a Government perspective, the new arrangements brought a rigour to the process but for universities they created a level of oversight and accountability which had not been anticipated when they accepted Government funding.

2.7 The announcement of the Binary Policy and establishment of research councils

The Government accepted that expansion of higher education was essential to meet increased demand created by free secondary education and that higher education should be funded by the State. The emerging dilemma was how Government could achieve expansion of higher education while retaining control and how universities could respond to the Government steer for growth without losing their autonomy and freedom. The Government's first response was to increase the number of Universities and, in 1966, seven new English Universities and one new Scottish University were founded. Its second response was to implement a policy which changed how the nascent higher education system was structured and managed. In 1965 Anthony Crosland, the Secretary of State for Education and Science, announced the Binary Policy. This changed the size, shape and culture of higher education in the UK for the next 18 years by creating a two-stream model of higher education providers: the autonomous sector of Universities and Colleges of Advanced Technology (CAT) (which were attaining University status); and the public sector of the leading technical colleges and colleges of further education

Tight (2009, p.63) suggests that Crosland's policy built on a structure which was already in place. In 1956, eleven CATs had been created from the twenty-four Colleges which existed nationally. Although the CATs originally remained under Local Authority control they were given greater independence and became autonomous in 1962. The provision offered by the CATs and Colleges

complemented that offered by the Universities because it was more vocational in nature. The hierarchy which emerged was a model which was applied more widely to Universities and Polytechnics through the binary policy. Carswell (1985) notes the expectation that post-Robbins a system of higher education would emerge and within the system it would be possible for institutions to be raised up the ranks from Colleges to Universities:

> It is perfectly true that many of the existing universities had originated at humbler levels; but their advance had been achieved over a long period of laissez-faire. In the aftermath of the Robbins Report the expectation was for a system, and therefore a system for institutional promotion. The Department was besieged with applicants from the more prominent technical colleges for advancement into the autonomous world. (p.70)

The development of the Binary Policy suggests a departure from the previous ad-hoc approach by Government and is evidence of a new and stronger role played by the Civil Service who were predominantly responsible for its development. The policy was announced by Crosland as Secretary of State for Education and Science but was developed by the DES Deputy Secretary responsible for higher education policy, Toby Weaver. Shattock (2012, p.61) suggests that Crosland was highly reliant on his officials and Carswell (1985) supports the view that as Government took control of education policy and increased both the complexity and detail, this gave Government officials a stronger and more influential policy development role.

The announcement of the binary policy prepared the ground for the 1966 White Paper 'A Plan for Polytechnics and Other Colleges' which announced the creation of a new type of institution, Polytechnics (Pratt, 1997, p.7). Demand for vocational education could not be met by the existing universities and the public sector could not be downgraded if Britain was to compete internationally. A unitary system (characterised as a 'ladder system') was not seen as desirable because it would create constant pressure to reach the top which would be unhealthy and would not achieve the diversity required by society. A separate sector with its own outlook and tradition would be created to deliver vocational education. The non-university sector would be directly under Local Authority control and this would encourage it to be responsive to social needs. Institutions would have degree-awarding powers and would be encouraged to develop undergraduate and postgraduate provision. The two parts of the system would be independent of each other to ensure that there was not a constant drive for institutions to move from the private to the autonomous sector, leaving the public sector as a poor relation.

The binary policy established a framework which featured two streams of education providers. The polytechnic policy consolidated this approach with the creation of new providers who would meet the demand for vocational education as part of the public sector based on an underlying assumption that this separation would prevent the phenomenon later termed academic drift. However, the two sides of the binary divide were operating under different quality and funding regimes which led to

competition and tribalism, "The polytechnics resented the autonomy of the universities: the universities saw the regulated status of the polytechnics as a threat" (Carswell, 1985, p.137).

Government policy regarding the funding and management of research was also changing. While the Haldane principle, that the research agenda should be independent of Government policy, remained valid, there was concern at the growth in research funding and the effectiveness of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) in allocating research funds. The Trend Committee (1963) recommended that the DSIR be abolished and a set of new Research Councils be created which would report to the new Ministry of Technology. The DSIR's final report suggested that universities should be guided on where they could make the most effective contribution to Science. The Science and Technology Act (1965) implemented the recommendations of the Trend Committee. It abolished the DSIR and established research councils for science, medicine, agriculture and the natural environment (a further council for the social sciences was established shortly afterwards). The Council for Scientific Policy was also established as an umbrella body. The Act formalised the dual support system. This recognised that research (including projects and students) contributed to both the research and teaching output of universities and should be funded both by a block grant administered by the UGC and separate research funds allocated by the research councils.

The announcement of the binary policy demonstrates a new and directive Government approach to the higher education system. Crosland was even more directive in 1966 when he announced plans to increase fees for overseas students without prior consultation with the UGC or CVCP. This announcement signalled a renewed focus on funding and the UGC came under increasing pressure to ensure that the 1967 quinquennial bid was based on rigorous student number projections. The bid was submitted to the Department of Education and Science rather than the Treasury and was one of the first tests of the new relationship between the UGC and Government. Carswell (1985) notes that the UGC had implemented a range of changes intended to professionalise its work including more formal reviews of universities and improving its data collection and analysis, "These changes were backed up by a steadily improved plan of statistical information, removing forever the reproach that the UGC was a remote, amateurish body which relied on obsolete and imperfect data" (p.64).

While the UGC had improved its planning activities, it was also operating in an environment which called for greater scrutiny and accountability. The Wilson Government had a more interventionist approach to higher education and the UGC responded with greater rigour by providing detailed student number projections as part of its funding bid. At the same time, the PAC reviewed UGC independence from universities and its approach to accountability. While arrangements for the management of university funding remained unchanged, Shattock (2012, p.192-3) suggests that this was the defining moment in bringing university funding into the

standardised management practices employed in Whitehall. It also highlights the PAC's continued concern with accountability for public funds managed via the UGC.

Accountability and the need for greater efficiency was also reflected in the changing relationship between Universities, Government and the CVCP. In response to calls for greater efficiency and financial stringency, the CVCP launched reviews to investigate and improve university efficiency. In September 1969, the CVCP and UGC met with Shirley Williams, Minister for Higher Education, to discuss the future shape of the higher education system and its relationship with the public sector. This future of the higher education system was summarised in 'Shirley Williams' 13 Points' which outlined a new vision for higher education including: sharing services between institutions; improving space and estate utilisation and efficiency; increasing the number of part-time and distance learning courses available; and the opportunities afforded by two-year degrees. Shattock (2012, p.143-144) notes that while the 13 points were discussed with the UGC they were not formally endorsed and further discussion of this vision for higher education ended with the subsequent election of a new Conservative Government. However, the discussion indicates a change in the relationship between the Government and the buffer organisations. Crosland's management of the policy announcements in the mid-1960s demonstrated Government's ability to develop policy with limited consultation. In comparison, Williams' discussion of emerging higher education policy with the CVCP and UGC suggests the potential for a more open approach to policy-making from Government.

The final years of the 1960s saw the establishment of two further universities, Cranfield and the Open University. The Open University was founded by the Labour Government to develop adult education and use innovative delivery methods including broadcasting and multi-media. It represented a radical departure from the standard university model as it offered many its courses on a part-time basis via distance learning.

2.8 The economic difficulties of the 1970s and 1980s

The early part of the 1970s was characterised by economic difficulties. In 1970, a Conservative Government was elected and, while some of the previous Labour initiatives such as the Open University continued to attract support and funding, others were quietly dropped. Thirty polytechnics were established between 1969 and 1973 and no further institutions were founded until 1983. The Polytechnics were quick to organise themselves and the Committee of Directors of Polytechnics (CDP) was established in 1970 as a complementary body to the CVCP. The 1972 White Paper *'Education: a framework for expansion'* announced a change in approach from the planned system devised by Labour to a more organic system based on competition. The development of the system was aligned with greater Government management and direction of higher education at a macro level:

> As the polytechnics developed in the environment of increasing constraint that the 1972 White Paper had described, these competitive pressures were heightened. The government increasingly sought to effect change in the direction and management of higher education. The ideals of the 1960s that education should develop individual potential were augmented by demands for economically useful skills and industrial relevance. (Pratt, 1997, p.21)

The new Government sought to provide greater direction regarding the skills required to meet national need. While the return to the idea of education as a social good and the requirement for courses which delivered relevant, skills-based learning for students was in line with the ideals of the nineteenth century, the desire for efficiency to be delivered through competition was new.

This change of approach was also reflected in funding for research. In 1971 Lord Rothschild was appointed as an advisor to the Cabinet Office and asked to investigate the management and allocation of research funding. Rothschild's remit included consideration of a range of possible approaches including some contrary to the Haldane Principle. The subsequent report informed the 1972 White Paper. This recommended the transfer of 25% of funds previously administered by the Medical Research Council back to government for allocation as part of an emerging customer-contractor relationship with the Department of Health and Social Security which would allow a direct influence over the research in this area.

The 1972 White Paper also outlined the Government's plan to continue the expansion recommended by Robbins but actual growth in student numbers was far lower than expected. Despite increasing numbers of mature and overseas students, the overall participation rate was in decline. While Government was concerned by the discrepancies between forecast and actual participation, the declining economic situation meant that funding additional growth in higher education could have been difficult. In 1973 the national economic situation, exacerbated by the oil crisis and global events, meant that the quinquennial funding agreement could no longer be honoured and Margaret Thatcher, Secretary of State for Education, was forced to declare a provisional one-year agreement. Further decisions on funding were deferred until the 1973 White Paper on Public Expenditure. The result of the White Paper was significant cuts in capital expenditure which forced Universities to abandon building programmes and re-adjust to significantly lower block grant income.

The early 1970s saw a combination of financial difficulties for Government and a lack of public support for universities, in part due to violent student protests against the Vietnam War. The social context for higher education and financial constraint in the economic environment led potential students to show a preference for work over higher education and demand for higher education fell. The financial situation led to the quinquennial funding system being abandoned in 1975 and universities would no longer enjoy the security of confirmed medium term funding. From this point, higher education was funded on the same basis as all public services and, in the broader

social context, this meant increased scrutiny and accountability for efficient use of funds. The 1976 White Paper *'Public Expenditure to 1978-1980'* reduced targets for expansion in student intakes. Following nearly a decade of expansion, the system was now required to shrink as a financial necessity. Shattock (2012) summarises this as a pivotal moment, "These developments constituted a remarkable shock to a university system which, although it did not at the time recognize it, had been enjoying the most secure planning and funding framework at any time in its history" (p.123).

In reviewing the policy context of the later 1970s, Kogan and Hanney (2000) observe that:

> Whilst policies were created largely on the hoof, they cumulatively pulled higher education into the public policy arena in which its essentialism, based on the nature of the work that it performed, was in contention with overriding economic and social policy. (p.116)

From the mid-1970s there was an acceleration in the number of committees and reports initiated to evaluate and make recommendations on different aspects of higher education. The first of these, the Oakes Report (1978), had a focus on finance and accountability in the public sector. It recommended the establishment of a national Committee for Colleges and Polytechnics and highlighted the lack of system wide planning and mechanisms for financial control. While the UGC controlled university funding using one mechanism, the public sector was funded using a combined funding pool which benefitted larger providers who could expand their student numbers. However, the priority for the Thatcher Government which came to power in 1979 was to cut costs and maximise efficiency in response to the economic downturn. For the public side of the higher education system which had previously operated under the pool system this meant that funding was quickly capped and in 1982 the National Advisory Body for Public Sector Higher Education (NAB) was created to allocate resources on behalf of the Treasury.

The creation of the NAB in 1982 followed the third of four higher education funding crises in the twentieth century (Shattock, 2012). In higher education, savings had already been made by cutting the levels of subsidy paid for overseas students which forced institutions to charge full cost fees. While this reduced Government expenditure it also caused serious concerns for institutions who anticipated that demand from overseas student would be severely reduced. However, further cuts followed with a 3.5% reduction in the UGC budget in 1981-82 and a further 5% reduction forecast for 1982-1983 and 1983-1984. Universities were heavily reliant on the UGC block grant and the severity of the cumulative cuts would have a significant effect on institutions and the system more generally:

> At this distance in time it is hard to realise the shock to the university system that the 1981 cuts delivered. Apart from the 1962 event...the universities had since 1946 enjoyed a continuous expansion in student numbers and in matching recurrent grant. (Shattock, 2012, p.127)

In response to the cuts, the UGC imposed a 3% reduction in student numbers to preserve the unit of resource while negotiating a generous early retirement scheme and persuading Government to fund new academic posts in Science. The Merrison Report (1982) suggested that additional funding should be made available via the dual funding system and that this should be allocated within Universities by Research Committees. In practice, the cuts were allocated selectively by institution and were mitigated for research-active institutions with academic strength in Science. However, the overall impact of the cuts was uneven: staff numbers and the unit of resource for students were reduced to increase efficiency; staff workloads increased; and research funding became more selective and concentrated on Science and Technology.

The early Thatcher Governments lacked any real policies for higher education beyond increasing efficiency and cutting costs in line with more general priorities. The UGC aligned with this approach and was increasingly seen as an extension of Government rather than as an independent buffer body. In response to the new national direction on research policy it amended its funding model to meet national need with little regard for the impact on individual institutions. The 1981 financial situation demonstrated that Government would act to ensure that universities responded to the national financial position and to its research agenda.

In 1980, concerns from the academic community regarding the lack of strategic direction and forecasts of demographic decline had crystallised in a proposal from the Society for Research into Higher Education (SRHE) to undertake an independent enquiry into higher education. The initial proposal outlined a full Robbins-style exercise but was unable to attract funding. A more modest study was undertaken by the Leverhulme Programme of Study into the Future of Higher Education (1981-1983). The Programme led to the publication of eleven monographs and two volumes of conclusions. Shattock (2015) suggests that the impact of the Leverhulme Programme was to provide a forum for discussion of higher education which encouraged a range of viewpoints but that its impact was "…overtaken by the Secretary of State's request to the UGC and NAB to give him public advice on a strategy for higher education" (p.11).

Efficiency and the effective use of funding remained a priority and after the 1979 election, the Government established a new Efficiency Unit which reviewed the Civil Service (Haddon, 2012, p.5). In line with this agenda, the CVCP commissioned the Steering Committee on Efficiency Studies in Universities led by Sir Alex Jarratt to conduct efficiency studies informed by best practice from business. The NAB commissioned an equivalent report which was published in 1985. The Jarratt Report (1985) was critical of existing university management practices. It made a series of recommendations to bring university management closer to the private sector including recasting Vice-Chancellors as a Chief Executive Officers (CEO), requiring the development of corporate plans and performance indicators to enable longer term planning, monitoring and measurement of comparative performance across institutions. The Report also questioned whether academic tenure was appropriate

and highlighted the differences in governance structures which existed between the universities and polytechnics. The Jarratt Report proposed a more formal structure for universities in line with the emerging idea of a market place for higher education and the concept of the student as a customer.

The Lindop Committee (1985) was concurrent with Jarratt. It reviewed the validation of degree courses and evaluated the effectiveness of the external examiner system. The Lindop Report made recommendations to promote the validation and quality of degrees in the public sector. The Reynolds Report (1986) provided a counterpart to Lindop for universities and established codes of practice for the maintenance and monitoring of standards. Research was also under scrutiny and the first Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) took place in 1986. The Government were keen that the RAE should serve to promote research impact in line with the national research agenda.

These Reports informed the ideas of Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, which were articulated in the 1985 Green Paper *'The Development of Higher Education into the 1990s'*. This outlined the need for universities to respond to national needs for skills in Science, Technology and Engineering, proposed closer and clearer links between universities and local business, and made proposals on how institutions could mitigate an anticipated decline in student numbers in the 1990s. The 1985 Green Paper may also have marked the start of a more politicised context for higher education:

> The Green Paper was so at variance with the spirit of the Leverhulme Programme and the reports from the UGC and NAB that it created a new strongly politicised agenda for higher education which raised a new set of issues which had to be addressed. (Shattock, 2015, p.11)

However, broader discussion of higher education policy was deferred due to a further financial incident. The financial problems at the University of Cardiff have been viewed as a political response to the 1981 cuts (Shattock, 2012, p.77). The University auditors refused the UGC access to financial reports which hid the fact that the University was close to bankruptcy. The UGC's management of the incident led to widespread criticism of its practices. In response, the Croham Committee was established by the Department of Education and Science to review the UGC. The Croham Report (1987) recommended that the UGC be abolished and replaced by a new University Funding Council.

The 1987 White Paper *'Higher Education: meeting the challenge'* set out the Government's plans for modest growth in students in response to a forecast demographic downturn and responded to the recommendations in the Croham Report. The UGC and the NAB were to be replaced by the Universities Funding Council (UFC) and the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (PCFC). From the perspective of the autonomous sector, the replacement of the UGC with the UFC marked the emergence of a new relationship between Government and Universities.

Kogan and Hanney (2000, p.154) suggest that the Cardiff incident acted as a catalyst to create a new funding body with a direct and accountable link to Government. This change also provided a reason to remove the polytechnics and colleges from local authority control. The 1987 White Paper and subsequent Education Reform Act (1988) marked the start of a period of significant change in the higher education system which began with the creation of the UFC and PCFC.

The funding of higher education remained a critical issue. The UGC had reduced student numbers to protect the Unit of Resource and this had created unmet student demand. In 1988, the Government considered its options for financing higher education and undertook a consultation on top-up fees as a potential mechanism for meeting the additional costs of higher education. The Working Group on Funding Mechanisms was initiated and reported in August 1990:

> This altogether more robust body ...offered four models for funding the system: full costs tuition fees plus scholarships; 'top up' fees paid by students supplementary to government paid fees varying according to subject; a repayable loan scheme operated either through the tax system or national insurance; a graduate tax. These ideas were to frame the search for a new model for the next decade. (Shattock, 2012, p.132)

2.9 The end of the binary policy and the creation of the unitary higher education system

The early 1990s saw the development of policy in a sequence which echoed the Robbins and Anderson Reports of the 1960s. First the legislative basis for private funding of higher education was established by the Education (Student Loans) Act 1990 which allowed students to take out loans to fund their maintenance. This established the principle of loans rather than State funded grants for student maintenance. The 1991 White Paper *'Higher Education: a new framework'* then predicted continued expansion of the higher education system and proposed a target for a 1 in 3 participation rate for 18-19 year olds by 2000. This expansion ran contrary to policy articulated in the 1987 White Paper which had recommended a contraction in student places due to a decline in the traditional student population. The 1991 White Paper announced fundamental changes to the system which were implemented through the Further and Higher Education Act and Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act (1992). The changes included: the end of the binary policy; the establishment of new national funding councils for England Wales and Scotland; allocation of research funding on an entirely selective basis; and quality assessment to inform funding which would be the responsibility of institutions and funding councils.

The 1992 Act fundamentally changed the structure of the higher education system. It was intended to prepare the system for the levels of expansion required to increase the participation rate in response to demography and the political agenda. By the time of the 1992 reforms, academic drift had reduced the differences between autonomous and public sector higher education institutions and the shift from elite to

mass higher education was complete. The political context for the decision to end the binary divide suggests a shift in how Government developed higher education policy. There was limited consultation prior to Kenneth Clarke's announcement of the change in policy and the thinking behind the decision was unclear:

> It is worth noting that the civil servant's analysis was never laid open to external scrutiny, or the issue, one of the most important ever faced in educational policy, put out for public discussion prior to the announcement being made. The issue was decided by the interaction of quite closed interests and politics. (Kogan and Hanney, 2000, p.139)

The social and political landscape for higher education had shifted to such an extent that fundamental changes, however popular, could be developed and announced without consultation with the wider higher education system.

Parry (2006) notes that the first half of the 1990s saw rapid and largely unplanned expansion with the policy and quality assurance regimes struggling to meet the changing needs and demands of the system. The figure below is used by Greenaway and Haynes (2003) to demonstrate the dramatic expansion in student numbers from the late 1980s that created mass levels of participation. This increase in student numbers was concurrent with a reduction in funding per student, and the rapid and unplanned expansion in the early 1990s noted by Parry coincided with an increase in the rate of decline for funding per student.
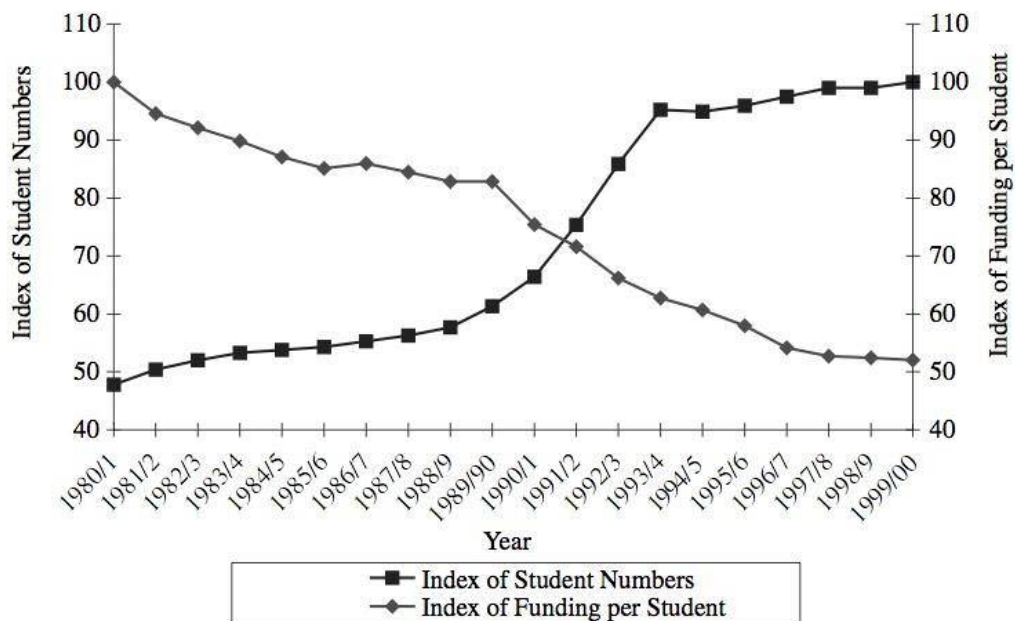
Fig. 1. *Index of Student Numbers and Public Funding for Higher Education, 1980/1–1999/2000*
Source: Department for Education and Skills

By 1993, participation in higher education had increased to the levels which the 1991 White Paper had predicted as likely by 2000. However, the development of a mass higher education system did not lead to an increase in participation from students in the lower socio-economic groups. While participation from the highest socio-

economic groups was consistently above Government targets at between 40-45%, the rates were far lower at 15% or less for all other groups (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003, p.F155).

In response to the system expanding too rapidly the Government attempted to regain control of student numbers by imposing a Maximum Student Number (MaSN) on intakes. The MaSN froze student intakes at 1993/4 levels and arrested the rate of increase. The MaSN was managed by the newly created Higher Education Funding Councils whose remit extended to planning as well as funding higher education. Increasing participation at undergraduate level also led to increased demand for postgraduate taught provision. However, at the same time as seeking to manage increasing demand and maximise efficiency, the Government was also increasingly interested in the quality of higher education and in ensuring that standards were consistent across the system. In 1990, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) was established to manage and monitor quality assurance (it was replaced by the Quality Assurance Agency in 1997) and in 1993 the continued focus on educational and teaching quality led to the development of the Teaching Quality Assessment (TQA) which sought to provide comparable scrutiny for teaching to that provided by the RAE for research.

By the mid-1990s, Government-led regulation and control of higher education extended across all areas of university activity and quangos had been established to scrutinise, evaluate and manage the effectiveness of teaching, research and funding. The system retained its autonomy but operated under increased levels of regulation. While expenditure was scrutinised and efficiency demanded by Government, the system faced a wider funding issue. The Unit of Resource, which had been declining since the mid-1970s, had fallen dramatically from 1990 onwards with the effect that the system was chronically under-funded, as demonstrated by Greenaway and Haynes (2003). In addition to declining funding for teaching there had been limited investment in capital since the 1980s and the university estate was deteriorating.

The financial position of universities was becoming increasingly precarious. While declining levels of Government funding and increasing number of graduates meant that the system was increasingly efficient and cost effective, the impact of the deterioration in the Unit of Resource was having an increasingly detrimental effect. OECD data showed that the percentage of Gross Domestic Product being spent on higher education in the UK was at the lower end of the range and below the OECD average (Greenaway and Haynes, 2003, p.F153). The lack of funding was evident in the declining quality of university estate and in the value of staff salaries which were declining in comparison with other professions. While it was recommended that Universities should seek alternative funding sources, it quickly became apparent that this approach was unlikely to realise the necessary additional funds and the CVCP began to lobby on fees.

In November 1994, the Government launched a review of higher education which was overseen by Mrs Shirley Trundle from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). The first stage of the review was a consultation on the aims of higher education with a view to determining its appropriate size and shape. The consultation exercise received around 100 responses from: professional and representative bodies; higher education institutions and academics; funding bodies and local government. A report was drafted in June 1996 and considered the wider purposes of higher education, concluding that an updated version of the Robbins objectives may include: imparting lifelong skills; providing opportunities for adult lifelong learning; and "…promoting general powers of the mind; advancing learning and research; promoting culture and high standards in all aspects of society; and serving local and regional communities as well as national interests at home and abroad" (DfEE, 1996, p.10). The circulation of the Report appears have been restricted within Government (HL Deb (1995) *col. WA22*) and did not recommend further action. Instead wider circumstances led to a crisis which forced the Government to take more definite action.

In November 1995, the Government announced a further round of cuts which Hillman (2013) suggests tipped the higher education system into crisis:

> In the aftermath, the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals refused to meet Gillian Shephard, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment, and threatened to act unilaterally by imposing an upfront levy of £300 on first-year students. This heightened tension was the catalyst for the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education, which was established under Sir Ron Dearing in May 1996. (p.259)

Shattock (2001) argues that the financial crisis had its roots in the higher education policy of the mid-1980s which led to a sudden increase in student numbers without an associated increased in resource. The financial crisis of the late 1990s was the result of a combination of factors which included: increasing student numbers leading to increasing staff workloads; declining funding for universities leading to declining condition of the estate; declining value of academic salaries and associated loss of status; and residual differences between former polytechnics and pre-1992 universities. The cumulative effect of these factors meant that the higher education system was already under extreme pressure. The announcement of further cuts and the absence of other viable funding sources led to what could be termed a 'hot' political response from the CVCP which threatened to charge fees to make up the deficit in funding.

The idea of student fees had been investigated and rejected periodically over the previous decade, most recently by Kenneth Clarke in 1991, and the Government was reticent about establishing the principle that students should contribute to the costs of their education. The CVCP threat to implement top-up fees from the start of the 1997/98 academic year was made in the political heat of 1995. It undermined Government policy and asserted the autonomy of universities. The CVCP threat met

with a 'cooling' political response from Government. Rather than act quickly to address the crisis, the Government chose to defer action and establish a National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education under the chairmanship of Sir Ron Dearing with Mrs Shirley Trundle, who had previously overseen the 1994 Government review of higher education, appointed as Secretary. Shattock (2001) suggests that the timing of the Dearing Inquiry was "…like opening the strategic door after the horse had bolted" (p.562). Dearing was asked to find a way to pay for the expansion of the system and to find a solution to a crisis which had already happened.

The Dearing Inquiry was announced in February 1996 and asked to undertake a review of the higher education system:

> to make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years, recognising that higher education embraces teaching, learning, scholarship and research. (National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE), 1997, Foreword, p 1)

The National Committee was asked to deliver its report in July 1997. The broad terms of reference led to a report which Tight (2009) describes as "...a summation of official thinking on higher education of its time" (p.84). The Labour Government's policies on education were not radically different from their Conservative predecessor and during the 1990s and 2000s, the Government continued to seek a coherent policy and vision for higher education which would enable it to meet the needs of the economy, educate a skilled workforce and to develop the national knowledge base.

Chapter 3. Themes and trends in the development of UK higher education

3.1 Introduction

This chapter considers selected themes and trends from the wider reading around higher education and Government policy-making. Each of the themes and trends played a significant role in the changing policy landscape for higher education. They are likely to have had a direct influence and impact on the work of the Inquiry.

The chapter is structured in two parts. In the first part, three groups of themes which provide a broad conceptual basis for understanding the policy work of the Inquiry are identified and discussed.

The first group consists of high-level themes emerging from Government thinking which were applied to the higher education system through the Inquiry: Managerialism, New Public Management (NPM), Neo-liberalism and Audit Culture.

The second group of themes focuses on wider social trends: the emergence of mass higher education, globalization, regulation and the Learning Society. The Inquiry was initiated at the end of a significant period of change including globalization and expansion from an elite to a mass system. As the higher education system grew there was a perceived need for greater regulation to ensure Government control while enabling growth, consistency and quality. Within the wider environment there was also the emerging concept of the 'Learning Society' which encouraged a social change in the ethos of higher education from traditional three-year courses to a culture of ongoing learning.

The third group of themes considers power, autonomy and accountability which were concepts applied by Universities to their relationship with the Government. The responses and evidence which higher education institutions submitted to the Inquiry will have been significantly influenced by the author's view of their relationship with Government which was shaped by these concepts.

The second part of the chapter explores three key concepts which are more directly related to the work of the Inquiry. The three themes of Audit Culture, codification and accountability are drawn out and considered in more depth as a conceptual underpinning for the analysis of the policy work of the Dearing Committee undertaken in the thesis.

Finally, the policy process as a whole is discussed. It is considered as an umbrella concept which draws together the various themes discussed in this chapter.

3.2 Government policy concepts: Managerialism, New Public Management (NPM), Neo-liberalism and Audit Culture

Shattock (2012, p225) notes the emergence of New Public Management (NPM) as a preferred method of university governance following expansion of higher education. NPM also highlights the lack of a consistent agenda in higher education policy-making:

> the State's policy initiatives towards higher education have been driven by a cross-Government concern for public sector reform based on NPM approaches rather than by a distinctive higher education agenda and that the various individual policy initiatives have been derived from a quiver of public service reform ideas not from issues that grow directly out of higher education itself. (Shattock, 2012, p.227)

Shattock goes on to suggest that the emergence of managerialism (a term which is frequently used to describe the effect of NPM) was evident in the increase in circular letters in the 1990s which demonstrated a shift in the style of governance exercised by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE). Trow (1994), Scott (1995), Shattock (2012) and Tight (2009) agree that there was a change in the relationship between institutions and funding bodies which had the hallmarks of a more managerial approach: the cosy relationship between the Treasury, Universities and the University Grants Committee (UGC) being replaced by a more directive relationship with HEFCE as buffer body and Government quango.

NPM was one of several Government management models which emerged in response to the economic and social change of the 1980s and 1990s and there is a consistent view that the Jarrett Report (1985) was the starting point for a more managerial approach towards Universities by Government. Deem and Brehony (2005), Nolan (2001), Power (1997) and Broadbent and Laughlin (1997) propose that NPM and managerialism, as cognate concepts, provide a comprehensive approach to the creation, regulation and use of a market by Government. Hood (1991) identifies seven NPM doctrines as: hands-on-professional management; explicit standards and measures of performance; emphasis on output controls; a shift to disaggregation of units in the public sector (i.e. breaking up larger units to create more manageable structures); greater competition; private sector style management practices (i.e. greater flexibility and rewards); and greater discipline and parsimony in the use of resources.

Trow (1994), Parker and Jary (1995) and Deem and Brehony (2005) relate the NPM doctrines to the internal management of Universities noting similar broad trends of: reduced resources and increased staff: student ratios; an increase in managers and managerial power; standardisation through the introduction of cost centres and standardised structures; increased internal and external surveillance; an increase in the internal and external audit of activities; and increased emphasis on marketing and business generation fed by greater computerisation of administrative tasks. Willmott (1995) considers the effect of managerialism on academic staff and suggests that the

stronger management approach came at the cost of wider collegiality which had previously been a hallmark of university decision making. Flynn (1999) and Broadbent and Laughlin (1997) observe a more nuanced distinction between professionals (the 'elite' identified by Broadbent and Laughlin) whose status is linked with their position as autonomous experts and managers whose privileges are based on organisational hierarchy. This suggests a link between NPM, autonomy and accountability which highlights a conceptual chasm between universities and government. Universities are the autonomous experts whose power is intellectual while Government acts with managerial power created through hierarchical authority.

Parry (2001) considers the effect of NPM on the changing relationship between Government and Universities as reflected by the move from the University Grants Committee (UGC) to HEFCE and suggests a direct link with the desire to embed the principles of NPM. He argues that the creation of the Universities Funding Council (UFC) and the Higher Education Act (1992) swept away the last vestiges of the old funding regime for UK universities and enabled a highly regulated market to replace the managed market which was in place under the binary system, "Over a period of 20 years, under successive recessionary, expansionary and consolidative policies, British higher education became not simply a more managed environment but one subject to 'soft' and 'hard' forms of managerialism" (p 128). Miller (1998) concludes that the effect of this change is seen in "...a degree of agreement that there is in general increasing interference, pressure and control from Government in tandem with increasing market orientation" (p. 20).

The concept of Neo-liberalism which also emerged during the 1980s aligns with NPM. The concept highlights the benefits of a commitment to employing market forces to drive efficiency by allowing free movement of goods and resources and promoting privatisation as a means for more effective self-regulation within sectors. It also promotes the idea of individual rather than public good and individual rather than collective responsibility. Rhodes (1994) suggests that this is part of the 'hollowing out' of the State whereby privatisation and the market replace the control mechanisms previously provided by Government. Hammersley (1992) and Willmott (1995) note the effect of neo-liberalism and the market on changing perceptions of education and suggest that while higher education has previously been considered a social good, the effect of market forces being brought to bear on higher education means it has begun to be treated as a commodity:

> Students are increasingly enjoined to understand themselves as consumers of educational services. Likewise, academics are drawn into this commodity discourse as they are encouraged to identify and treat students as customers, and aspire to receive "excellent" ratings by the HEFC quality assessors for their services. (Willmott, 1995, p.1002)

Willmott links the development of a market with the emergence of Audit Culture. This connection is also observed by Deem (1998), Parker and Jary (1995), Shore and

Wright (in Strathern, 2000) and Deem and Brehony (2005). Power (1997) and Apple (2007) suggest that the shift to a market based economy requires goods and services to be reconfigured to allow trading under market conditions. This requires a degree of standardisation which Shore and Wright suggest is implemented and enforced through the emergence of an audit culture: "...a veritable panopticon of inspection" (Shore and Wright, 2000, p. 70). Broadbent and Laughlin (1997) consider the effect of NPM in developing an audit culture in Government and observe the changing role and remit of the Audit Commission. They suggest that Government itself is moving to a culture of greater scrutiny which is consistent with Power (1997) and Shore and Wright (in Strathern, 2000). Parker and Jary (1995) relate this directly to the university dilemma noting that:

> At an institutional level these forms of scrutiny will hence be translated into committee structures and audit technologies to ensure that goals are being met.... [and] will require bureaucratized regimes of surveillance to ensure that it is achieved, labelled and rewarded. (p.326)

The rise of NPM, neo-liberalism and audit culture informed the direction of Government policy-making and created a managerial culture. The effect within institutions was to become more corporate in their approach to meet the requirements of external scrutiny and performance management. This made it possible for Government to control Universities in a way which promoted standardisation, drove efficiency and ensured quality. By aligning Universities to a standard model, a quasi-market was created which used self-regulation, internal and external audit to manage performance and ensure efficiencies. The creation of a market also suggests a change in social attitude towards the principle that higher education is an individual rather than collective good. It is for individuals to identify and demand the products and services required in response to their needs and for individuals to pay for the services from which they benefit or higher education products which they purchase in a competitive market.

3.3 Social trends: mass higher education, globalization, regulation and the Learning Society

Scott (1984, 1995), Bell and Tight (1993), Salter and Tapper (1994), Pratt (1997), Ainley (1998) and Mayhew, Deer and Dua (2004) consider the effect of the emergence of mass higher education in the political context of the changing welfare state. Trow (1994) and Scott (1995) identify trends in the higher education environment as: the increase in participation since the 1960s; the creation of a unitary higher education system; ongoing issues with funding higher education; and the effect of a market being created. Scott (1995, p.5) suggests that, "In the short term, the creation of a unified system has produced a number of unintended, even contradictory, effects which seem likely to reinforce its elitism".

Pratt (1997) and Taylor (2003) also identify unintended consequences in the move to a single mass system and highlight the phenomena of academic drift and

isomorphism. They argue that while there was previously a distinct plurality of higher education types, they moved closer together under the binary system. Neave (2000) and Meek (2000) dispute the effects of academic drift under the binary system and argue that a formally differentiated system is required to prevent isomorphism. In their view, this system needs to be carefully regulated and controlled by a more interventionist Government to achieve the desired stratification.

Pratt (1997) suggests that the binary policy fulfilled a specific purpose. The polytechnics enabled expansion from an elite to a mass system of higher education while offering subject breadth and innovative pedagogy. Pratt and Scott agree that the emerging unitary system was expected to retain the breadth and volume of the binary system. It was also expected to be cost effective with some stratification based on esteem or reputation rather than institutional type. Spours (2000) provides context for this assertion, noting that the expansion of higher education in the 1980s and early 1990s was demand led but from the mid-1990s, the growth in attainment of 16 to19 year olds was slower and as a result there was a slowing of expansion and participation in higher education.

Scott suggests that the creation of a complex system led to the "…imposition of more elaborate control mechanisms" (Scott, 1995, p. 43) as well as fuzziness created by volatility in the new system. Trow (1994) and Flynn (in Exworthy and Halford, 2001) develop a similar idea in observing that the Thatcherite agenda of the 1980s was to roll back state influence and develop quasi-markets to control the performance of public sector activities and improve quality. Scott (1994) and Pratt (1997) suggest that greater regulation and standardisation created through a market may be followed by or combined with an increase in diversification from new entrants to the market. These are likely to be private providers responding to niche requirements not met by existing providers of higher education. Flynn also notes the loss of clarity regarding whose interest will be served by the market which is likely to effect efficient use of resources and make the prioritisation of resources more difficult.

The use of NPM and the creation of quasi-markets by Government highlights an internal tension between 'professionals' and 'managers'. Within universities, academic credibility is based on expert status but organisational credibility is based on an individual's position in the hierarchy. Government can attempt to control how universities operate through the creation of a quasi-market but the depth and effect of its intervention depends on the structure of management relationships within the institution. Scott (1995) develops this idea and suggests that there may be a further move from managerial to strategic institutional cultures in an attempt to reconcile institutional reflexivity with managerialism. A strategic culture responds to the external environment by creating an internal model which allows creativity and responsiveness to be balanced with an external drive for standardisation, managerialism and audit. This is evident in the changing role of the state with regard to universities. Scott (1995, p.80) observes that "In the contractual state the emphasis

shifts from the State as provider to the State as regulator, establishing the conditions under which various internal markets are allowed to operate, and the State as auditor, assessing their outcomes".

The development of a mass, market-based higher education system in the UK took place within a global context. Eggins (2003, p.8) describes globalisation as a force which affects all aspects of global and national higher education systems. She highlights the tension between the co-operation and cohesion required to increase participation and the neo-liberal agenda which calls for competition and market dominance. Tight (2009) notes the early connections created between Universities in the UK and those established in the British Empire. Later, the UK's entry into the European Union enabled student mobility by supporting schemes to encourage students to study abroad, for example the ERASMUS scheme. Closer European links also encouraged greater consistency and standardisation of qualifications and the ambition to develop standards was articulated through the Sorbonne Declaration (1998) and Bologna Declaration (1999).

Tight (2009) and Shattock (2012) consider the effect of changes to international student fees on the globalisation of UK higher education. The Robbins Report (1963) notes that international students accounted for 10% of the student population with an even split between undergraduate and postgraduate students. In 1966, fees for international students were increased to constrain demand and reduce Government subsidy. In 1980, the Government subsidy for international students was removed and institutions were forced to increase fees to cover the full cost of courses. Shattock (2012) notes that the decision did not have the anticipated effect of reducing recruitment from overseas. The creation of a market increased demand and developed a new income stream:

> Conceived as a Treasury-led budget cut, the income deriving from international student tuition fees not only enabled the system to survive the financial stringencies of the next decade or so but fuelled a spirit of self help in universities which had not been apparent in the immediate post Robbins era of the 1970s…Globalization opened new possibilities for universities both academically and as mixed economy institutions. (p.245)

The mass higher education system was controlled through the market mechanisms preferred by Government and these extended to both home and international students.

The Government's action on international student fees suggests a more interventionist approach to universities. Majone (1997), Neave (2000), Meek (2000) and Moran (2003) observe the rise of the regulatory state in the UK and the EU and the implications of greater regulation for quality, standardisation and efficiency. Dill (1997) and Jongbloed (2003) suggest that the move to more than a quasi-market in higher education was prevented by Government intervention and regulation which sought to alter market behaviour. Trow (1994) takes a similar line in suggesting that the British Government was more concerned with the development of policies and

regulations to control the academic community. This argument is supported by Scott (1995) and Pratt (1997) who suggest that the development of the higher education environment in the mid-1990s led to the development and application of regulatory tools and regimes to ensure the quality of higher education following the end of the binary divide.

The literature suggests that the emergence of a higher education system followed by a higher education market changed the way in which university management functioned internally while changes in political thinking altered the external context. Temple (2006) describes the market as a tool for achieving government policy aims. Meek (2000) makes the same point from a regulatory perspective suggesting that regulation was required to make universities cost less, operate efficiently and meet the needs of government agendas. This change had a range of implications for universities: Trow (1994), Davies and Glaister (1996) and Williams (1997) observe the development of mission statements and corporate identities in response to external requirements; Deem (1998) observes the emergence of performance management which Trow (1994) suggests has led to academic departments concentrating their efforts on what counts towards metrics driven performance; Broadfoot (1998) notes the increasingly formal assessment of higher education in order to provide assurance and evidence of quality and standards.

This suggests a link between the emergence of managerialism and the development of management tools which enable institutional comparison and measurement of performance and efficiency. The development of performance measures forms the basis for an increase in regulation and audit. Scott (2000) and Power (1997) suggests that for audit to be successful it is necessary to establish a technical baseline which has the additional benefit of making organisations more auditable. The concept of a technical baseline against which to measure the performance and efficiency of higher education is closely linked with the social trend of codification and regulation and the imposition of more formal monitoring tools by external auditors and regulators.

The literature suggests that codification is the first step towards effective regulation and standardisation. Lodge and Hood (2010) note the emergence of standalone regulatory bodies which can be used by Government to create a buffer and suggest that distance is required to enable effective regulation. Young (2010), Mayhew, Deer and Dua (2004), and Moran (2003) observe that this is symptomatic of Government no longer being able to rely on hierarchical authority or club regulation which necessitates a move to regulated domains. Osborne and Gaebler (1992) summarise this as Government "…steering rather than rowing". Trow (1994), Salter and Tapper (1994) and Taylor (2003) apply the same concept to higher education suggesting that the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) operated as an instrument of government which lacked the knowledge of the University Grants Committee (UGC) and replaced the relationship of trust which had existed between Government and Universities with one of regulation.

The development of a regulatory framework also has implications for the organisations being regulated. Meyer and Rowan (1977) describe ceremonial conformity whereby the internal and external priorities and activities of an organisation become inconsistent because external activities are driven by the requirements of the regulatory framework and the creation of bureaucratic structures which standardise and control sub units while codifying new and extant domains of activity. Conformity is enforced by inspection, monitoring and evaluation against the codified regulatory standard which is then used to measure performance. Bowker and Starr (1999) take this concept a stage further observing that regulatory codes: 'wipe the slate clean' in terms of what has gone before; instruct the system in its new focus; and confirm what and how the system should forget.

The 1990s were a period of significant regulatory change. For higher education, a further conceptual change was presented by the emerging concept of the Learning Society. Hughes and Tight (1995) trace the concept of lifelong learning back to the 1960s and describe it as an underlying belief by politicians, industrialists and educators that lifelong education, learning and training are the solution to current economic, political and social problems. They conclude that "...the function of the learning society myth is to provide a convenient and palatable rationale and packaging for the current and future policies of different power groups within society" (Hughes and Tight,1995, p.302). Broadfoot (1998) considers the implications of the concept on quality, standards and control, suggesting that the Learning Society is redefining learning standards in terms of economic commodity values. The Learning Society provided a concept which the Government used to draw together its thinking on the management of systems, wider social trends and the opportunity for education to provide an economic solution. The Learning Society characterised the Government's desire for a regulatory partnership between Government and the Higher Education system to emerge and provided a link between contemporary social and policy trends.

3.4 The relationship between Higher Education and the State: Autonomy, Accountability, Power

The "…subordination of the universities to the war effort during the second world war produced an unprecedented acceptance of state intervention in their affairs" (Salter and Tapper ,1994, p.131). This changed the balance of power and manifested itself as increased regulation of the higher education system and reliance on State funding. Regulation eroded the position of Universities as independent institutions and increased their direct accountability to the State.

Eustace (1994) and Salter and Tapper (1994) suggest that university autonomy was an essential precondition for the disinterested search for knowledge and the preservation of social values. They argue that there was anxiety regarding state encroachment, the concurrent growth of internal bureaucracy and the erosion of funding body power as the UGC became the UFC and then HEFC. In order to bring

universities under "…the irresistible orbit of state power" (Scott, 1988, p.34) the Government needed a reason to intervene. Eustace (1994), Salter and Tapper (1994) and Trow (1994) argue that the case was made for universities to be responsive to economic need and accountable for carrying out this role correctly. The move from the UGC to the UFC was evidence of this changing relationship. The UFC's role was not to advise but to "...receive its orders and pass them on to the universities" (Salter and Tapper, 1994, p.89). Trow (1994), Tapper and Salter (1997), Williams (1997) and Salmi (2007) characterise this as a transfer of power, a demonstration that the new buffer bodies were an arm of Government and evidence that Universities chose to forego accountability to retain a degree of autonomy. Neave (1996) summarises this point as conditional autonomy based on management of university finances, the privatization of higher education and the introduction of specific contracts by Government.

The close relationship between autonomy and accountability characterises much of the relationship between Universities and the State. Watson (2007) suggests that "Accountability is inescapable and should not be unreasonably resisted" (p.372). This idea of the inevitability of accountability in the changing relationship with the State is also described by Trow (1994), Salter and Tapper (1997), Dill (1999), Peters (2002), Ranson (2003) and Huisman and Currie (2004) who present a consistent view that during the twentieth century the State required greater accountability from Universities and developed mechanisms by which this could be evidenced. Ranson (2003) describes this as the regulatory regime of answerability and suggests that "Public accountability articulates a theory of political authority grounded in the consent of society" (p. 475). Power (1994), Strathern (2000) and Dill (1999) suggest that regulatory mechanisms and structures are created to enforce accountability and Sizer and Howells (2000) suggest that Government policy-making offers a mechanism for the development of such structures, observing that exercises such as the Jarrett, Hoare and Dearing Inquiries provided focus for this policy work. The effect of institutional accountability is highlighted by Dill (1999), Coate, Barnett and Williams (2001) and Ranson (2003) as leading to the deprofessionalisation of the individual in a manner which is inefficient, reflects low trust and leads to low morale. This suggests that Power's (1994) observation of the alienation created by audit culture is also true of the rise of accountability in higher education.

In contrast, Barberis (1998) considers accountability from the perspective of the State and draws on the suggestion that "The hollow State erodes accountability" (Rhodes ,1994, p.147) to consider the accountability gap created by changes to the administrative construct of the State. Barberis suggests that although Government can create buffer organisations which will allow responsibility for managing the market to be devolved away from Government, final responsibility and accountability will remain with Ministers. The creation of buffer organisations therefore consolidates rather than dilutes State control and increases accountability.

Salter and Tapper (1994), Scott (1995) and Gibbs (2001) argue that the shift towards a knowledge based and service orientated economy also led to a rethinking of the welfare state with implications for the traditional university. Scott (1995), Meek (2000) and Neave (2000) observe that changes in knowledge production where knowledge becomes a form of social capital have led to a shift in the power balance of the relationship between the State and Higher Education. Scott (1995) concludes that the development of a knowledge society requires an environment which is wider, more socially accountable and reflexive with different patterns of quality control requiring a new type of relationship with the State.

Gleeson and Keep (2004) propose that the relationship between the State and Higher Education changed as the State became the agent for wider societal well-being. They argue that the State acts as a broker for agreements between external bodies (such as trades unions and pressure groups), Universities and employers who require specific outcomes from higher education. Education has become part of economic policy with a primary purpose of developing national skills while being allotted a subordinate role as supplicant in the discussion regarding what it is required to deliver for employers. Scott (1995) describes the State as acting increasingly as 'purchaser', 'dominant sponsor', 'market maker' and 'over-mighty contractor' of a range of teaching, research and consultancy services on behalf of the taxpayer but suggests that at the same time the move to a mode 2 knowledge society (Gibbons et al, 1997) means that the university loses its monopoly or primacy in the knowledge industry. The balance of power has moved from Universities to the State because of wider societal change and institutional autonomy has been lost to greater accountability created by the regulatory environment.

3.5 Conceptual underpinning for the study: Audit Culture, codification and accountability

Thus far, this chapter has identified and considered a series of concepts which influenced relationships between Universities and the State from the viewpoint of Government thinking, wider social trends and concepts which were applied to Universities' relationship with Government. However, the relationship between three of these concepts is particularly important in exploring the Dearing Inquiry as they relate more directly to its work. The interplay between the concepts of Audit Culture, codification and accountability provides a foundation for understanding the work of the Inquiry and the contemporary commentary and critique across the three perspectives explored in this chapter. It aligns with the analytical framework developed in Chapter 6 in providing a conceptual basis for the research.

The emergence of Audit Culture was considered earlier in this chapter as a concept about government policy aligned with the development of a market. The creation and operation of a market is expected to be self-regulating, but the literature suggests that markets also require regulation to be imposed through mechanisms which promote standardisation and performance measurement. Power (1997) argues that the

development of Audit Culture provides that mechanism but also that there is a wider effect on how organisations operate: "In short, audits work because organizations have literally been made auditable; audit demands the environment, in the form of systems and performance measures, which makes a certain style of verification possible" (p.91).

The effective development of performance management mechanisms therefore relies on systems being mapped in order for a baseline to be defined and used for later measurement and comparison. As discussed in section 3.3, this can happen through a process of codification. Power (1997) considers the emergence of Audit Culture and its origins in financial auditing where he describes "…a codified body of operational doctrine" (p.19). Stevenson (2012) and Alfange (1969) discuss the development of judicial law as an example of codification where the articulation and agreement of law promoted consistent application through the Courts. The process of codification therefore complements the emergence of Audit Culture by providing a means by which the State can develop regulatory mechanisms as well as aligning with wider social interest in clear evidence of control and performance improvement in public and quasi-public services, such as education.

The literature also suggests that an increase in regulation can be the result of financial crisis, a shift in power and changing levels of accountability. Ranson (2003, p.460) argues that "Public trust is secured by specifying performance and regulating compliance. It is this form of accountability with its potentially punitive image, that has become an anathema to professional communities who reject its instrumental rationale and techniques." The Government of the late 1990s was dealing with a significant and system-wide financial crisis in higher education. Its expectation was that the creation of formal mechanisms to monitor and evaluate compliance would enable greater control of quality and efficiency. This had a direct effect on the levels of accountability required from higher education institutions.

The history of UK higher education in Chapter 2 notes how institutional accountability changed over time as Government funding for Universities increased. It also argues that the Government expected an increasing level of funding not only to buy commissioned research but also to provide the grounds for influencing the running and performance of institutions across the higher education system. In contrast, as an academic and professional community, the higher education system was unwilling to be regulated more directly or to provide greater accountability to Government.

The tension between Audit Culture, codification and accountability suggests an emerging conflict between Government and Universities which coalesced around expectations of accountability. The development of regulation and control mechanisms by Government in response to the realities of the unplanned expansion of student numbers and the reduction in the Unit of Resource was countered by threats from institutions to assert their independence and autonomy by charging top-

up fees. This tension was at the heart of the crisis in which the Inquiry was initiated and the intersection of these three concepts is critical in understanding the conceptual context for Dearing.

3.6 The Policy Process

Scott (1995, p.82) suggests that "Prospectively, as the welfare state evolves into the welfare society and elite systems of higher education are replaced by mass systems, the articulation between polity and academy is likely to become both more complex and more direct". The dialogue and the process of making Government policy changes as a result of external and internal factors. These include the needs of a more complex society and a response to the hollowing out of the State noted by Rhodes (1994). Policy processes become more direct as a response to accountability. Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992), Hill (2009), McConnell (2010) and Howlett (2010) outline a continuous dialogue of policy creation populated by a range of actors where options and possibilities are considered through an evidence-based process. The literature proposes that the policy process can be split into three areas: the mechanical process; the involvement of actors; and the outcome.

The mechanical process of developing policy is enabled by a range of policy-making tools. These have similarities in terms of structure but vary in terms of the length of time given to policy development, the proximity to Government and the degree of political sensitivity. This is represented in Figure 3.1 below which shows a continuum of policy-making tools. Departmental Committees tend to be long-term, closer to Government and are less politically sensitive because they are contained with the Government bureaucracy. They consider broader questions and take a more evidence based approach in contrast to Taskforces or Reviews (for example the Browne Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance, 2010) which are shorter, sharper and less research-led. At the other end of the scale, Taskforces have greater independence from Government and will also differ from each other in terms of the amount of research undertaken and the extent to which evidence is used to inform policy-making. They also have low political sensitivity because they tend to be focussed on smaller, single issue problems which creates less political 'heat'. Royal Commissions and National Inquiries are used to explore complex, large scale and/or highly political policy questions which have a high profile which creates wider interest in their activities. These forms of policy-making are initiated and defined by Government which means that there may be a need for them to validate Government policy, but their work is undertaken independently and with a high degree of public scrutiny.

Figure 3.1: continuum of policy-making tools

Long term	**Duration**	Short term
Internal	**Proximity to Government**	External

Departmental Committee → Royal Commission → National Inquiry → Taskforce

Low	**Political sensitivity**	High
Open	**Remit**	Directed
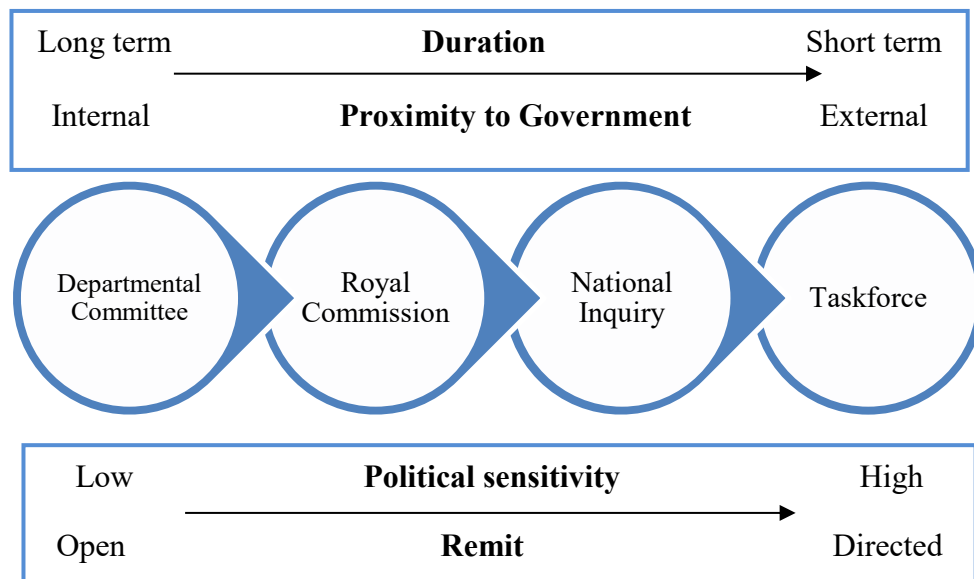
Howlett (2010) splits the policy process into a substantive component which aims to resolve the issue and a procedural component which develops a method of policy implementation. McConnell (2010) considers the importance of the quality of the process undertaken and suggests that evidence based policy-making is the gold standard and safest way to ensure policy success. Dror (1968) complements this point, noting that the process of policy development cannot be judged by the success or failure of the policies developed and that establishing special units to develop policy is beneficial as it separates policy from action. However, McConnell (2010) also notes that where there is a need for quick policy development the use of time constrained exercises, such as National Inquiries, can be effective but that consultation can also be a fig-leaf for decisions which have already been made especially where quick policy-making does not allow time for consensus building.

Policy development processes involve a range of actors with different motivations and interests. Silver (1990) links the policy development process with the actor noting that it is important to pay attention to the underlying political and economic realities and not to "...the surface play of policy interests" (Silver, 1990, p.26). In contrast, Howlett (2010) considers the role of the actors involved in the policy process and classifies them into: proximate decision-makers at the top tier who act as consumers of policy advice; knowledge producers at the bottom tier who produce data and analysis on an issue; and knowledge brokers in the middle tier who work between analysts and decision-makers to develop policy. Dale (1989), Hill (2009) and McConnell (2010) observe that the process can be controlled and manipulated by individuals: to shape or restrict the agenda (either overtly or covertly); to reach a decision or answer which was pre-determined; as a symbolic gesture; to give the impression of action; or to enable political self-preservation. Dror (1986) and Hill (2009) also note the importance of an administrative structure (or civil service) in

providing continuity to the policy agenda as part of representative bureaucracy (Hill, 2009, p.183).

Dror (1968) suggests that there are benefits to be derived from the inclusion of scientists and academics in the policy process which is at odds with the observation in Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) that the State is in control and has, more recently, chosen to exclude practitioners. Dror (1986) and Hill (2009) observe the rise of the pluralistic state which uses multiple policy-making processes within and outside Government control. They suggest that pressure groups and thinktanks have diluted the process of Government which Rhodes (1994) predicted as an effect of the hollowing out of the State. In contrast, Shattock (2006) argues the that the State has become infinitely less pluralistic in the way it makes policy with greater but more marketised autonomy being used to develop and control the policy environment.

The policy process and policy is itself transient and evolutionary in its response to social context. Dror (1986) considers the jump in policy paradigms, policy orthodoxy and the effect of sudden change. While he notes that the policy-making discourse is dominated by the electoral cycle this is counter-balanced against an "...illusory secure haven of incrementalism" (Dror, 1986, p.158). While policy-making may promote what Dror terms selective radicalism, the rate of change in actual policy is slower. The outcome of the policy process is a text or piece of legislation but this can also become the subject of a wider process or discourse. Bowe and Ball with Gold (1992) suggest that:

> Policy is not done and finished at the legislative moment, it evolves in and through the texts that represent it, texts have to be read in relation to the time and the particular site of their production...the texts themselves are the outcome of struggle and compromise. (p.21)

Policy-making relates to decisions, choices and compromise. Bowe and Ball with Gold suggest that the outcome of policy-making is a statement which will itself change over time and the interpretation of that document will be dependent on the audience, the reader and their cultural viewpoint and experience. Scott (1990) and McCulloch (2004) support this viewpoint in considering literary sources more generally and there is a consistent view that the reading and interpretation of a document is personal to the reader. While a policy may represent the end of a policy-making process, it does not reflect the end of the thread of policy development.

Preferred methods of policy-making vary depending on political context and Government preference. International comparisons of policy-making (Lockwood, 1967, Kogan and Atkin, 1982, Rowe and McAllister, 2006) suggest that processes and tools for policy making show strong similarities across countries. There is similar use of independently funded inquiries to consider policy questions which are not being directly addressed by Government, for example the 1973 Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (Kerr Report) was funded independently of Government by the Carnegie Foundation. In the UK, there were two independent,

research-based policy processes which considered higher education: the SRHE's Leverhulme Programme of Study into the Future of Higher Education (1981-1983) and the CVCP initiated the Jarratt Committee which reported in 1985. These reviews attempted broad consideration of higher education in a way which was not initiated under the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and 1990s. These comparisons highlight that similar policy-making tools can be adapted to national contexts and to different policy questions but that they may be initiated and funded outside Government when it is not perceived to be taking the necessary action.

The use of specific policy tools by Government varies depending on political preference. Chapman (1973) and Bulmer (1980) provide case studies which demonstrate the range and adaptability of the national inquiry form in terms of the scale of the exercise and the variation in topics considered. Cartwright (1975, p.43) considers the frequency of royal commissions and national inquiries in the UK. He observes their gradual decline in number from the 1870s and notes that this form of inquiry falls in and out of favour depending on Government preference.

Between the Robbins and Dearing Inquiries there was a notable reduction in the use of national inquiries and greater reliance on the use of single issue reports. Tight (2009) and Shattock (2012) note that the Conservative Governments of the 1980s and 1990s saw national inquiries as cumbersome and expensive and preferred not to initiate them, choosing to develop policy through Committees which were shorter, sharper and under closer Government control. As a result, between 1978 and 1996 there were six single-issue Government reports which addressed different areas of higher education and provided quick answers to specific questions using a more concentrated inquiry process. There was no Government-led review to consider the wider higher education system until Gillian Shepherd initiated a departmental committee in November 1994.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has outlined the broad policy context for the Inquiry. It highlights that policy-making is an ongoing process which adapts in response to the changing social and political environment. Similar forms of inquiry process are seen internationally and there are shared instances of inquiries initiated independently of Government. The policy environment for the Inquiry was characterised by the emergence of a more managerial approach from Government. This aligned with trends such as new public management which endorsed the use of market control to implement self-regulation and control. It also influenced the policy process favoured by Government and its choice of policy development tools. The 'hollowing out' of the State led to a greater reliance on independent and short-term methods to undertake evidence-based policy-making on behalf of Government.

Chapter 4. Committees of Inquiry and Royal Commissions in the British tradition

4.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the development of Government policy-making tools in the British tradition. The chapter begins by defining policy, policy work and policy-making, discussing the differences between them. It considers why Governments make policy and how they do so by outlining the different inquiry-based tools available to Government; it identifies how different policy-making tools emerged and compares the differences between them. It outlines the development and uses of Royal Commissions and the emergence of national inquiries. The stages in the national inquiry process are identified and discussed. The chapter concludes by using the national inquiry structure as the basis for a high-level comparison of the two national inquiries into higher education: Robbins (1961-63) and Dearing (1996-97).

4.2 The development of evidence-based policy-making tools

Government uses policy to articulate its thinking and to confirm its approach to a policy issue. A significant amount of government activity relies on the effective development of policy. This includes both review of existing policy and the development of new policy. When governments undertake policy work they have a range of options, processes and tools which can be used to investigate an issue and devise a response. Pratt (1997) suggests that policy and its development is linked to social imperative in the same way that the evolution of higher education institutions is influenced by the wider needs of society:

> Policy is a social artefact, in the sense that it is a device to achieve particular purposes, or as an attempt to solve particular problems or to achieve some change in a state of affairs and even if the intent is absent it can be so regarded. (p.310)

The process of policy development is closely linked with society and culture more generally and the tools for the development of policy adapt in response to wider change. Rowe and McAllister (2006) note that academic commentary on policy-making tends to concentrate on three areas: the work of specific committees and inquiries; the process of inquiries and identification of good practice; and the value of social research in informing the work of inquiries. Analysis of the tools used to develop policy has been subject to more limited academic scrutiny and there are only two significant volumes on the subject of National Inquiries as a form of policy tool, Clokie and Robinson (1969) and Cartwright (1975).

4.3 What is policy, policy work and policy-making?

The concept of policy is open to a range of interpretations. At its simplest level, it can be defined as a statement of principles, intent or action regarding a specific issue which is developed from a position of knowledge and in response to a clear set of circumstances. For example, higher education policy is a generic term. It may refer

to the development of policy which shapes the higher education system or to a specific area of work undertaken by higher education providers such as teaching or research. The purpose of policy has been described as "...an activity intended to achieve the purposes of politicians in government" (Hallsworth, 2011, p. 19) but also more pejoratively as "...the reign of indifference and masterly inaction" (The Spectator, 1867, p.4). This suggests that policy can be defined in simple terms as a plan for action but the process of policy development and implementation requires a more complex definition.

Policy work is defined for the purposes of this study as the arrangements, practices, processes and guiding assumptions which enable identification and understanding of a specific set of issues. This includes the totality of people, methods, activities and processes deployed by a committee of inquiry to meet its terms of reference and, more generally, meet the expectations of Ministers and Politicians. The scope of the policy work to be undertaken by a committee of inquiry is defined by a set of terms of reference and leads to the development and proposal of a future direction. It is driven by contextual and political considerations including the preferences and expectations of Ministers. In this context, political refers to the wider context of Government and the consideration of the conflicting agendas and intentions of the different political parties and Members of Parliament in representing different constituencies and interests.

Policy-making is used to refer to the wider process of policy development. This is defined here as a wider process which covers three main stages: policy investigation; policy development; and policy implementation. The investigative stage is where data and information are collected and used to inform the development of a proposed direction for future development. For example, a national inquiry may be asked to complete policy work on behalf of Government to collect data and provide an initial set of recommendations to address the issue. Policy development refers to the formulation of a plan of action. It builds on the investigative phase by articulating how the issue will be addressed and what action will be taken. The Civil Service may be asked to draft policy based on the outcomes of a national inquiry for consideration by Ministers prior to publication of any resulting report or other policy text. Policy implementation is the final stage in the process. This is where work is planned to implement and evaluate the policy which has been developed and approved by Government. At this stage, Ministerial ownership of the policy is important in ensuring that it can be successfully implemented.

The development of policy is responsive rather than proactive in nature and is a symptom of causal factors. In terms of Government policy, this means that a set of circumstances have led Government to identify a need to develop a view on a topic, to consider the issue and plan a response. This is articulated and addressed through policy which is intended to deliver a preferred solution. The role of Government in this process is to direct the work and to respond to the output. However, although the investigatory and research elements may be delegated, Government has the final

decision regarding whether to use the evidence and/or report as the basis for a new or emerging policy; to ignore the outcomes; or to undertake further investigation.

The development of policy is generally summarised as a series of simple steps: identification of an issue; selection of the most appropriate policy-making tool; initiation of a process to explore the issue in more detail and conduct research, collation of evidence and drafting a report; conclusion of the exercise when the report is received and (usually) published. The literature on policy-making approaches suggests that this process may be linear or cyclical in nature depending on the issue, the method of investigation chosen and the political context. Hill (2009) argues that policy is not a rational or linear process. He identifies a series of criteria which summarise the cyclical and irrational nature of the policy-making process: policy is a series or web of decisions, it changes over time and does not exist in isolation. In studying the development of policy, the range of different actors involved in the process is a result of the pluralistic nature of policy development and Hill argues that this renders the view of policy-making as a linear process invalid because multiple influences demand a cyclical approach towards an outcome. Hill's description of the elements associated with policy-making approaches suggests an organic and iterative approach reflecting multiple voices, views and stages in the development of a plan.

Dror (1986) takes this view of cyclical policy-making to a more strategic level by suggesting that the dynamic and variable nature of policy-making is itself defined and affected by the cyclical nature of politics. He suggests that electoral cycles, frequent changes of ministers and/or the overall administration lead to limited policy-making memory. This contributes both to the cyclical nature of policy-making and the incremental approach taken to developing policy in specific policy areas. In terms of higher education, the incremental and cyclical nature of policy-making is observed by Shattock (2012, p.3) who suggests that formal mechanisms (such as the quinquennial review and funding system) combined with a preference for incremental policy-making led to piecemeal policy development with change at the margins rather than a linear process with clarity and direction.

Policy-making can be defined as a process working within a specific context. While the process itself may be simple, it is responsive to its wider context and is shaped by those initiating and using the process. The political nature and purpose of Government policy-making shapes how the process operates and Government controls the process, receives the output and acts in response to implement the policy to achieve the desired outcomes.

4.4 Why do Governments make policy?

Governments make policy out of necessity and in response to a wider set of circumstances. The development of policy highlights that Government itself is operating within a political context. Government is one element of a wider State

apparatus which exists to support the functioning of society. Dale (1989) suggests that:

> Government is the most visible, and arguably the most important and the most active, part of the State, but it is not the whole of the State. If it were, states would cease to exist when governments fell; quite clearly states are able to operate (cynics say far better!) in the absence of governments. (p.53)

Government is an extension of the State tasked with the active management of society through the creation and implementation of policy to identify and achieve desirable outcomes for society.

While Governments make policy in response to a range of political factors and motivations, policy development can also fulfil different purposes. The development of policy can provide legitimation of a pre-agreed direction, it can support the development of an evidence base in a new or emerging policy area and it can provide an acceptable reason for a delayed response. The selection of policy-making tool can suggest the approach being taken by Government to the issue under consideration. Hennessy (1986) suggests that high profile inquiries and commissions are used in three circumstances: ground-breaking inquiries in areas where there is limited or no extant evidence; taskforces to address urgent problems; and grand consensus forming exercises on cross-party or cross parliamentary issues. The order of Government policy-making also varies from small single issues, to broad and system level policy which has a significant impact in a policy area.

This suggests a tension between the neat and transparent theoretical process for making policy and the actual political context which may be more dynamic. The process of policy development enables Government to delegate the creation of an evidence base and supporting knowledge but does not allow Government to abdicate responsibility for policy-making. Dror (1968, p.7) makes a distinction between the type of knowledge required to inform policy and the type of knowledge required to inform policy-making. Policy requires knowledge relevant and specific to the problem. Dror's example is that medical knowledge is required to inform policies on public health. In contrast, knowledge to inform policymaking deals with 'metapolicy' or "…the problem of how to make policy about making policies" (p.8). He argues that changes in society and the expansion of technology have increased the need for public policy-making and as a result the amount of policy knowledge has increased with a positive effect on the quality of policy developed. However, a tension between the development of improved and informed policy-making and an increase in social barriers to the implementation of policy has the counter effect that, despite better policy-making, there is a diminishing return in terms of the effectiveness of policy implementation by Government.

4.5 Who makes Government policy?

Prior to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 policy was created and implemented by or on behalf of the Crown. After the revolution, the apparatus of the State became more

complex and required a different type of support for administration and policy development. By the nineteenth century the existing Civil Service was no longer fit for purpose:

> As State control grew it became ever more difficult for members of Parliament and the Cabinet to comprehend and compose the details of their programmes and their laws, and consequently the more had they to turn to the Civil Service for the production of expert information upon which to base their programmes and for completion of the Statutes by Rules made in the Departments. (Finer, 1927, p.15)

The Civil Service of the nineteenth century was an institution which recruited staff based on patronage rather than merit or talent. There was a high degree of inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the Service. The Northcote-Trevelyan Review of the Civil Service which reported in February1854 recommended a series of changes to develop an efficient body of permanent Civil Servants with the skills to support the needs of Government. The review set a model for the Civil Service which was in place until the publication of the Fulton Report in 1968. The recommendations in the Fulton Report restructured the Civil Service, improved accountability and planning and established a new Civil Service College to support the training and development of staff. The Civil Service grew into a permanent administration which provided consistent professional support for the changing politics and personnel of Government. It also had a more influential role to play in supporting the development of policy and providing an institutional memory for Government as the political environment became more complex.

Howlett (2011, p.34) provides an overview of the actors involved in policy-making and defines four communities of policy advisors: core actors, public sector insiders, private sector insiders, and outsiders. In his view, each group makes a different contribution to the policy advisory system which operates to develop policy and operate on a spectrum from abstract to practical. The emergence of different methods of policy development and the involvement of different actors creates pluralism in policy-making. Pluralistic policy-making describes an environment where there are a range of means by which policy can be developed which engage a wider range of stakeholders. When directed effectively by Government it can be useful in supporting robust development of policies which reflect the views and voices of a range of different actors.

The use of pluralistic policy-making in relation to higher education in the UK did not emerge until the 1990s. Prior to this it ran contrary to a Government agenda which valued control over the interests of the higher education community and sought to limit external involvement in policy-making:

> The higher education community may like to think that it ought to develop its own policies tailored to its own interests but in fact, since 1945, higher education has always been closely integrated with government itself and its interests. What changed was the tone of the relationship...Mass higher education increasingly signalled an increase in state control; with the merger of the two sectors in 1992,

universities were no longer special in the way they had been before 1981. (Shattock, 2012, p.254)

Under the Thatcher regime of the 1980s the Government initiated a series of single issue reports on a range of issues relating to higher education before drafting the 1991 White Paper. *'Higher Education: a new framework'.* In comparison, in the early 1990s it was a significant and escalating financial crisis which led to the initiation of the Inquiry. This was tasked with taking a wider review of higher education while more discrete issues were considered by further single-issue reports (notably the Kennedy Report on widening participation and the Fryer Report on Lifelong Learning). While pluralistic policy-making has been observed as a more general trend across the developed nations, in the UK the opposite was true. The UK Government became less pluralistic, especially in the 1980s and early 1990s, when policy-making was restricted to processes which fell within Government control.

4.6 Tools and instruments for Government policy-making and their application to higher education policy questions

Government has a range of policy-making tools which have been developed to enable different policy-making processes. The development of policy-making tools reflects the transfer of power from the Crown to Government. Early policy-making was undertaken through Royal Commissions acting on behalf of the Crown. There was one form of inquiry-based policy-making process which reflected a context of simple social governance. The emergence of a more complex society and government supported by a professional Civil Service enabled the basic inquiry-based approach to policy-making to develop in line with the increasingly bureaucratic nature of Government.

Royal Commissions are the earliest form of State policy-making tool. Over time, variants of the Royal Commission form emerged as it was adapted in response to the changing needs of the State and Government. Royal Commissions and Inquiries have been used to address a range of issues of differing size and complexity. Cartwright (1975) calculates that between 1945-1969 there were 358 instances of major Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees which covered nine main subject areas. These covered the full remit of government policy-making and ranged from wide-ranging issues such as the organisation of government to specific areas such as fishing and hunting.

However, despite the emergence of a professional Civil Service, few permanent units have been established to support long-range policy-making, surveying knowledge and undertaking research. More recently policy units and thinktanks have been established to develop evidence for policy-making and/or comment on policy as it emerges. This supports Dror's (1968) observation that most countries ensure a distance between the units that make policy, those that execute it and those that motivate the execution of policy.

The table below summarises the tools available to the State or Government to develop policy by the twentieth century. The table includes the range of committees and ad-hoc exercises which emerged across Government. It excludes committees which could be appointed by local authorities and the associated bureaucracy of statutes, codes of practice, budget and resource allocation mechanisms which support the implementation of policy. Bold text indicates where these tools have been applied to the development of Higher Education policy.

Table 4.1: Government policy-making tools

	Statutory (Appointed by Parliament)	**Statutory (Appointed by Minister)**	**Non-statutory (Appointed by Crown OR appointed by Minister?)**	Quango (Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisation)
Permanent	• Statutory Parliamentary Committee • Joint Parliamentary Committees are appointed separately by both houses. • House of Commons: General Committees, Grand Committees, Select Committees, Speakers' conferences, • House of Lords: General Committees, Select committees	• General (advisory) Committee • Cabinet Committees	• General (advisory) Committee • Interdepartmental Committee • Committees of the Privy Council	
Time-limited		• Cabinet Committees • **Public Inquiry (National Inquiry)**	• Committees of the Privy Council • **Departmental Committee** • Interdepartmental Committee • **Taskforce** • Internal Committee • Advisory Committee • Royal Commission • Administrative Tribunals • Tribunals of Inquiry • **Thinktank**	•

Note: From 15 November 2006, Standing Committees became known as 'General Committees' and Standing Committees on Bills became known as 'Public Bill Committees'

The table indicates the full range of policy-making tools available to Government and highlights that only a small number of these have been applied to questions related to higher education policy. Where these tools have been applied to higher education, their use and form has also changed over time. The figure below maps the different forms of policy tools which have been used by the UK Government for policy-making in higher education. It includes new groups and forms which emerged from the 1980s onwards in the wider environment. The chart plots the tools against

two factors: the degree to which they operate internally or externally of Government and whether they are permanent or time limited in nature.

Figure 4.1: Higher Education Policy-making tools over time

Taskforce? | **Time limited** | Taskforce?

National Inquiry: Dearing

National Inquiry: Robbins

Thinktank (type 1) (Bright Blue, Institute for Public Policy Research)

Taskforce? | Taskforce? | Thinktank (type 2) (HEPI, Million+)

Internal ←——— Non-departmental Committee (HEFCs, QAA, OIA, OFFA) ———→ **External**

UFC ←——— Non-departmental Committee (HEFCs, QAA, OIA, OFFA) | UGC

Mission Groups: RG, Million+, 1994, University Alliance

Select Committee Public Accounts Committee | Higher Education Commission

CVCP ————→ UUK

(**Key: black** indicates tools within Government control; **blue** indicates tools which are closely linked to Government but have some independence; **purple** indicates higher education tools; **green** indicates national inquires; and **red** indicates taskforces which could be placed in several places depending on their subject and nature.)

Four forms of Government policy-making tool have been applied to higher education: Government committees; non-departmental committees; national inquiries; and Government thinktanks. Outside Government there are independent thinktanks; mission groups and representative bodies which act on behalf of higher education providers. The chart maps the impact of three factors on these policy-making tools: the proximity to Government; whether the tool is transient or permanent; and whether this has changed over time. This suggests that there is a continuum from the tools under direct Government control to independent forms operating in the wider higher education environment.

Committees are Government-led, internal in focus and more permanent in nature. Some, such as the Public Accounts Committee, have a presence and reputation beyond individual Governments. Select Committees are less permanent and are established to consider specific issues and develop a Government view. Select Committees often use evidence sessions to develop an understanding of wider stakeholder views. Where this relates to higher education, members of the academic

community may be invited to discuss their views with the Committee as part of the process.

Committees may also be established with a more administrative function. In higher education, the University Grants Committee (UGC) was established to oversee the allocation of budget to Universities. It was an example of a Committee which was established to oversee a specific set of administrative responsibilities devolved from Government rather than for the purposes of investigating a specific issue. While the UGC was established by the Treasury, which suggests strong control from Government, Tight (2009, p.24) argues that in reality it was under the control of the Vice-Chancellors. Following the Croham Report (1987), the UGC was disbanded and replaced by the University Funding Council (UFC). Shattock (2012, p.78) suggests that the creation of the UFC allowed the Secretary of State to exercise greater control over the funding of Universities. The creation of a single funding body for Universities and Polytechnics also enabled Government to centralise its control of higher education away from the local education authorities. After the abolition of the binary divide, responsibility for higher education funding moved to the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC).

The new HEFCs were quangos which were responsible to the Government but had a degree of independence and freedom compared with the UGC and UFC. Quangos (Quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) were established during the 1990s to undertake a range of specific policy and regulatory activities in the post-binary world and acted as a buffer between Government and higher education providers. Their position enabled a more indirect relationship with Government. While higher education policy was controlled centrally it was implemented and managed through quangos.

There have been two national inquiries into higher education: the Robbins Inquiry (1961-1963) and the Dearing Inquiry (1996-1997). The different positions which Robbins and Dearing occupy in the chart reflect the leadership of the Committee, the contexts in which they were operating and the time taken to complete the inquiry process. The Robbins Inquiry ran over a longer timescale, it was seen as being academically-led and independent from Government. There is also the suggestion that the Robbins Committee was more influential that Dearing because it had better academic credentials (Tight, 2009, p.86). The Dearing Inquiry ran over 14 months, had comparatively less involvement from the academic community and was more closely managed by Government, although still operated independently. In comparison with Robbins, the Inquiry was perceived to be of lower quality because it was not chaired by an academic and the Committee was not dominated by academics (Tight, 2009, p.86).

The national inquiry form has also been applied to smaller and more specific issues in different higher education contexts, for example, the National Commission on Education which was established following the Croham Report to consider demand

for education and training (Shattock, 2012, p.78) and two instances where the University of Oxford has used a version of the national inquiry process to review its workings. The Franks Commission of Inquiry (1964-66) considered the present and future role of the University of Oxford in the UK system of higher education and responded to criticism of Oxford's administrative structures in the Robbins Report. The commission generated a significant body of evidence (1 million words of written evidence and 1.5 million words of recorded oral exchange) and its findings were published as two volumes in 1966. "No royal commission could have been more thorough or better informed" (Halsey 2004, p.155). The North Commission of Inquiry (1994-1997) considered the operation and structure of the collegiate University and its decision-making machinery. Its members included Sir Ronald Oxburgh who was also a member of the National Committee and its report was delayed until after the publication of the Dearing Report.

Thinktanks have emerged in three forms: internal government policy units aligned with a political party (for example, Bright Blue and the Institute for Public Policy Research); independent bodies which include membership representing the major political parties, leaders from higher education, and representatives of business (Higher Education Commission); and external independent policy commentators which may also have a lobbying function (Higher Education Policy Institute and Million+). The purpose and work undertaken by thinktanks is relatively consistent across the different forms but their perspective and the political context for their work will differ depending on whether they are affiliated to a political party or undertake independent scrutiny and commentary of a specialist area. Bale (2012) suggested a new role for thinktanks in making connections between academics and Government. Proactive engagement with thinktanks may present an opportunity for academics to draw Government attention to their work and in particular, perhaps, to contribute to a longer-term policy agenda.

Taskforces (which may also be called Reviews or Working Groups) are similar to thinktanks and national inquiries but tend to be shorter in nature; appointed to address a single issue and more likely to involve external representation. The nature of taskforces means that they are not intended to be comprehensive or authoritative and their conclusions may not be evidence-led. They operate quickly rather than taking a deliberative approach to their work which is based on a selective evidence base and limited consultation. Like thinktanks, they may be associated with a specific political party or agenda. They are shown four times on Figure 4.1 as their position will depend on the circumstances under which they were established, the constitution of the membership and the task assigned. In terms of their structure and method of working they are similar to Commissions or Inquiries in form although the main difference between them is the speed with which work is conducted and the scope of the issue to be addressed. Taskforces tend to be used in response to less complex policy problems requiring a quick response whereas Commissions and Inquiries tend to be used to address larger and more complex policy problems over a

longer timescale. The Kennedy and Fryer Reviews which were initiated at a similar time to the Inquiry are examples of a more taskforce based approach to a specific policy problem. The Kennedy Review considered the issue of widening participation in higher education which was also being considered as part of the wider work of the Inquiry while the Fryer Review considered continuing education.

The establishment of the Committee of Vice Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) reflected the development of closer relationships between Universities. Initially the CVCP's role reflected a policy context characterised by personal relationships and friendly accord between Government and Universities. The triumvirate of the UGC, CVCP and the Treasury worked together to control funding and policy around higher education until the abolition of the UGC. This close relationship meant that the CVCP was less of a lobbying organisation. However, as the political and financial environment changed, the role of the CVCP changed and it was later re-branded as Universities UK (UUK). UUK had different role and remit as a lobbying organisation working to promote the views of Universities to Government. The timing of this change coincided with the establishment of the UFC and reflected the shift in policy-making ethos by Government. The CVCP/UUK is an academically-led organisation whose purpose has changed over time and in response to the policy environment but has also remained consistent with its mission to "…[speak] out in support of the higher education sector, seeking to influence and create policy, and to provide an environment in which our member institutions can flourish" (Universities UK, 2015).

4.7 The emergence of National Inquiries from Royal Commissions

National Inquiries, along with Select Committees and Departmental Committees, have their early roots in Royal Commissions and retain many of the features of this type of investigative body. They are one of a range of policy tools which can be used by Government to undertake independent analysis and investigation to develop knowledge for policy-making rather than knowledge of policy (Dror, 1968). National Inquiries represent executive action rather than simply political motivation. However, critics (Hennessy, 1986 and Herbert, 1961) suggest that Inquiries can be used as a delaying tactic to take an issue off the political agenda and to provide time for reflection. In their view, this means that National Inquires reflect a failure of Government.

Royal Commissions were originally developed to fulfil the dual role of knowledge collector and policy advisor. They were used to investigate significant individual issues in preparation for the development of policy or legislation. The Domesday Book compiled in 1086 is one of the earliest examples of the type of inquiry-based research which would later emerge as Royal Commissions. Royal Commissions enabled the Crown to initiate bespoke fact-finding and research on specific issues in a manner which allowed the evidence and findings to be distanced from the later development of policy, "...a Royal Commission is a transient body, directing itself

usually to the consideration of a single, isolated problem and possessing no consciousness of continuity or of obligation to later and wider implications" (Clokie and Robinson, 1969, p14).

The nature and form of Royal Commissions presented numerous advantages for the Crown. In their early form, Royal Commissions were an effective policy-making tool which could be initiated quickly, required limited resources which meant that they could be deployed for a range of issues concurrently and were adaptable to different requirements. Royal Commissions were also effective in creating a sense that there had been impartial consideration of the issue. They were initiated but not controlled by the Crown and sought the views of both experts and laymen, which meant that the outcomes of the investigation were considered as impartial. However, later Royal Commissions were criticised as costly and inefficient due to an increase in the number of commissioners, greater used of expensive witness proceedings and an increase in printing costs (Clokie and Robinson, 1969).

In their nineteenth century heyday, Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees were used as tools to prepare for radical changes and developments in social and industrial policy. The industrial revolution led to a need for greater regulation of industry and a response to the social problems created by significant population migration from rural areas to cities. However, there was an inertia in changing Government policy due to the likely impact on the business and wealth of industrialists:

> It must be remembered that the use of Commissions for informational purposes, as well as for administrative control, was very largely in direct opposition to the theories and the economic and social interests of the dominant groups at the middle of the nineteenth century. (Clokie and Robinson, 1969, p89)

With no effective civil service in place to support government in independent research and development of knowledge for policy-making, the use of Royal Commissions was a necessary part of the development of a national social conscience and supported the development of policy which was unpalatable to social leaders.

Royal Commissions were closely linked to the power of the Crown and "…prospered or declined with the fluctuations of the supremacy of the Crown" (Clokie and Robinson, 1969, p25). The transfer of governing power from the Crown to Parliament led to the development of new tools which fulfilled similar functions. The growth and professionalisation of the Civil Service following the Northcote-Trevelyan Review (1858) reduced the need for separate inquiries to be initiated and different forms of Committee emerged which were used to undertake high-level work and research on specific issues. The purpose and form of Royal Commissions was replicated in a new form of Government policy-making tool, the National Inquiry which emerged as a variation of the Royal Commission and Departmental Committee forms.

National Inquiries typically followed the totality of features used by Royal Commissions but were initiated by Government rather than the Crown. Over time the legislative distinction between Royal Commissions and National Inquiries became obsolete. As parliamentary power increased, Royal Commissions and National Inquiries both became appointed by Ministers on behalf of the Crown. However, a distinction between the two remains. Royal Commissions report to the Crown whereas National Inquiries report to Ministers. Reports from Royal Commissions are published as Command Papers because they are presented to Parliament by command of the Crown whereas other types of report, including those created by National Inquiries, are published as Non-Parliamentary papers. This creates a hierarchy in the papers published by Government from similar policy-making processes. A further complication is that in some instances, the final report of a National Inquiry may be published as a Command Paper while the earlier evidence and supplementary documents may be published as Non-Parliamentary Reports. While the process of Royal Commissions and National Inquiries has become standardised over time, a legacy of the earlier distinction between the two remains in the publication and status of their reports.

4.8 The National Inquiry process

The literature suggests that policy process undertaken through Royal Commissions and National Inquiries features a series of steps. The evidence from comparisons of national inquiries, such as that undertaken by Chapman (1973) and Bulmer (1980), is that there is a high degree of similarity in the process followed by national inquiries regardless of the topic of policy question being addressed. The steps in the process are summarised in Figure 4.2 below:

Figure 4.2: the process of a national inquiry

Phase				
Propose	Inquiry proposed by Minister(s) or by the Crown	Terms of reference drafted and approved		
Initiate	Inquiry formally initiated (Treasury Minute, or Royal Warrant)	Chairman nominated and agreed	Secretary nominated and agreed	Committee membership established
Establish (i)	Committee review and interpret the Terms of Reference	Committee agree working methods	Committee agree research method(s)	
Establish (ii)	(If required) Research staff and/or Assessors appointed	(If required) Sub committees established	(If required) Research commissioned	
Conduct	Call for evidence circulated	Committee meetings held and documented	Written evidence considered	Written evidence may be supplemented by oral evidence at hearings
Synthesise	Evidence is compiled for consideration	Research outputs are drafted and presented	Chair and Secretary may steer consideration of evidence	Conclusions and draft recommendations emerge
Draft	Report is drafted	Report is reviewed and redrafted until final		
Conclude	Report is submitted	Report is published	Committee may be formally disbanded	

This inquiry process, with its seven main phases and sub-phases, can be applied as readily to the process of writing of the Domesday Book as it can to the Robbins and Dearing Inquiries. However, while the process is simple, it hides the more political aspects of National Inquiries and masks where there is a degree of variation between different exercises. While National Inquiries follow a relatively consistent process, there are differences between them in terms of the time, scale, reach and complexity of the exercise. There is a further degree of difference depending on whether an inquiry is judicial or non-judicial in nature. The scale and complexity of a national inquiry depends on the question under consideration and on the preferences of its Chair. The scale, complexity and nature of the question will dictate the levels of external scrutiny applied to an inquiry as much as any imperative from Government to complete the work within a specific timescale. A recent example of this is the Chilcot Inquiry into the Iraq War which ran from 2009-2016 and was subject to extensive media scrutiny which led to the Inquiry being made public rather than being conducted in private as originally intended.

For ease of reference the term Inquiry is used in this section to refer to both Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees (which includes National Inquiries) and points are made with reference to the Government, although these would be equally true of the Crown when applied to Royal Commissions.

4.8.1 Propose

Inquiries are proposed in response to wider circumstances where an independent and detailed response is required by one or more Ministers of the Crown. The terms of reference and remit are devised when the Inquiry is proposed which allows a high degree of steer and control from Government.

4.8.2 Initiate

Inquiries are formally appointed by Treasury Minute (or by Royal Warrant prepared by the Home Secretary for a Royal Commission[4]). While this formal appointment legitimises the Inquiry, and reflects an interest from Government more widely, the official form of appointment may not be followed consistently and more informal means of initiation may be used depending on the circumstances of the Inquiry.

When an Inquiry is initiated, an early task is to identify a suitable Chair. As an Inquiry is a prestigious exercise, the Chair tends to be selected from a small group who are already known to Government and are deemed to have knowledge and experience of the subject area, a relevant professional background and ideally have already been involved in at least one previous Inquiry. The identification of a suitable Chair is particularly important because Inquiries are independent of elected representation and Government. The Chair must be credible both for those initiating the Inquiry and for the wider public who will observe the work of the Inquiry and, potentially, be affected by its recommendations. The appointment of the Secretary is similarly important. The Secretariat is often drawn from the Civil Service and appointment to an Inquiry carries a great deal of cachet. The role of Secretary is also critical throughout the Inquiry process as the wider secretariat will be responsible for much of the preparatory work as the Inquiry becomes established, for managing the process and for drafting the report on behalf of the Chair and Committee. The combination of an experienced but independent Chair supported by an effective Secretary provides assurance to Government and wider stakeholders that the process will managed robustly and the emerging report will be credible.

Following the appointment of the Chair and Secretary, the preliminary work can begin and potential members of the Committee identified and recruited. Cartwright (1975) describes the need for diversity in committee membership as follows:

> The chairman is the single most important part of a royal commission or a departmental committee. Insofar as the major post-war government committees are concerned, departments have tended to be relatively conservative in their choices. They seem to look for experience and age, and they clearly favour men who are judges, academics or businessmen and who are or have been connected with government in some capacity. These tendencies in the selection of chairman are counterbalanced to some extent by greater diversity in the choice of members. Members come from a broader range of occupations and backgrounds. They are

---

[4] In Scotland, the Royal Warrant is prepared by the Secretary of State for Scotland. Cartwright (1975) notes that in either case, the Crown has 'no choice but to sign the warrant'.

often chosen to make up for characteristics lacking in the chairman or in other members: thus the references to so-called 'statutory' women, academics, politicians, Scotsmen, and so on - although these are in fact unlikely to appear all on the same committee. (p.83)

While Cartwright's description is something of a caricature, it highlights the role of the Chair and Secretary in working with Ministers to identify potential Committee members. Inquiries are a response to external circumstances and the membership of the committee will need to reflect the conditions under which the Inquiry was established as well as including a cross-section of society and at the same time ensuring the right mix of expertise. The success of the Inquiry is, in large part, dependent on the Chair and Secretary. However, the skills, experience and involvement of the Committee Members more broadly is also a key factor. Clokie and Robinson (1968) note that although the Inquiry is independent from Government, its work and findings may have a significant impact on the reputation of Government and it is therefore in the Government's interest that Committee Members are credible experts:

> First, that whatever the members' affiliation, aptitudes or avocations, they must be men whose integrity and impartiality cannot be impugned. Second, that they be men whose reputation for sound judgement is such as to give their recommendations considerable weight with Cabinet, Parliament, and the public. (p.165)

Given this list of requirements, it is perhaps not surprising that the list of potential candidates is small, especially when Inquiries are concerned with a very specific topic. Cartwright (1975) provide data on the size of committees which shows that between 1945-1969 committee membership for national inquiries ranged from one-24 members with an average of eight members. Smaller committees were constituted more frequently and there was a preference for appointing odd numbers of members to allow the Chair to have the casting vote. Cartwright does not consider the rationale for smaller committees but it is likely that the preference for smaller committees may lie in a genuine assessment of the scale of the work to be done, or reflect the degree of specialism articulated in the terms of reference. Where Inquiries have a very specific focus the already limited list of suitable committee members will be further reduced by the need for expert knowledge which means that smaller committees become a pragmatic response to a tighter set of terms of reference.

4.8.3 Establish

The establishment of the Committee provides an opportunity for Members to agree working practices and preferred research methods. The Treasury Minute or Royal Warrant which initiated the Inquiry will include a statement of the work to be undertaken. This may be articulated as a short instruction or more detailed terms of reference. It is one of the early tasks for the Committee to interpret its remit and plan its work accordingly. The Secretary's role in supporting this task will be critical as they act as the main point of contact between the Chair, the Members and the Government and will be able to inform the committee's interpretation to ensure that

the work proceeds in line with the intent of the terms of reference. The general trend which emerges from the literature suggests that in interpreting their remit, Committees often seek a steer from Parliament or the relevant Minster to inform their interpretation and that most terms of reference are drafted in a form of words which allows flexibility. Committees will rarely seek to reduce the size and scope of the task involved but will attempt to focus their work carefully to ensure that they work effectively and produce a suitable set of recommendations for their report.

This stage of the process demonstrates the flexibility and responsiveness of National Inquiries. The literature both on the general process and on specific inquiries observes that inquiries are adaptable to a wide range of requirements. One area where there is greater opportunity for using a range of methods is in the working practices established and the research undertaken. Inquiries can choose to supplement the Committee Membership by appointing additional research staff and/or assessors to broaden knowledge and expertise. Research staff are usually experts in a particular field and will be tasked with supporting the Inquiry in obtaining sufficient data to consider the issue in hand, draft its report and make recommendations. The appointment of assessors is more unusual, "Whereas virtually every committee has a secretariat, but only a few have assessors" (Pearce, 1979, p.66). Assessors are experts appointed from the Civil Service or externally. They are involved where the interests of Government need to be acknowledged and their role is to support the committee in undertaking its work by attending meetings, assisting with examining witnesses. They may also draft briefings and technical papers.

4.8.4 Conduct

Inquiries have a choice of research methods available to them and can be flexible depending on the area to be investigated, the requirements of the terms of reference and the Chair's preference. The research exercises undertaken by Inquiries fall into two types: passive research where a general invitation to submit evidence is issued and the resulting submissions analysed; and active research where key questions are identified and specific research commissioned. Inquiries may also choose to supplement written submissions with formal hearings to enable further questioning and the submission of oral evidence from key individuals and organisations as required. The Committee may undertake visits to hear from individuals directly involved in the area under consideration.

The role of the Research Staff will be directly shaped by the Inquiry's choices regarding the type of research it wishes to undertake. In this phase, the work of the Research Staff will contribute directly to the committee's discussion but there is also a role for the Secretariat in ensuring that the appropriate body of evidence is considered, in recording the oral evidence and in arranging a schedule of visits.

4.8.5 Synthesise

The research initiated by Inquiries generates a significant quantity of new evidence and data on a specific issue. It is unusual for Inquiries to be undertaken in the same area twice and a new research exercise is required for each Inquiry. However, the volume of data obtained is significant and Research Staff play a critical role in analysing and drawing conclusions from the evidence which can inform the Committee's discussions and assist the development of recommendations.

4.8.6 Draft

Following the conclusion of the research exercise, the Chair is responsible for agreeing recommendations with the Committee for drafting Inquiry's report. The Secretary will also play a significant role in supporting this part of the process and ensuring that the draft report is approved by the Committee.

National Inquiry reports tend to be clear and structured. They conclude with a set of recommendations to inform and guide future policy-making. Cartwright (1975, p.180) provides a breakdown of the number of recommendations made by inquiries 1945-1969. Most inquiries made 40 recommendations or fewer with a few reports including over 200 recommendations. Cartwright also analyses the size of report produced and his data indicates that most the reports over the period were 99 pages or less. This suggests that while the exercise of an inquiry is prestigious and the volume of data collected and analysed is significant, most Chairs manage to draft a report which is comparatively concise and contains a surprisingly small number of recommendations.

Cartwright (1975) and Clokie and Robinson (1968) consider the level of committee consent required before a report can be considered as approved and suggest that in most cases, although the Chair has a casting vote, unanimity is generally achieved prior to the final version of the report being approved. In some instances, a 'minority report' is published where consensus was not achieved by the Committee. The high degree of unanimity suggests that the form and process of inquiries creates a high degree of consensus from the Committee regarding the recommendations and confidence in the report.

4.8.7 Conclude

Following Committee approval, the Report is presented to Government before being published as a Command Paper or a Non-parliamentary paper. The literature suggests that reports drafted as an output of the National Inquiry process may be landmark; anodyne and predictable; lengthy; or used as a further political delaying tactic. The levels of interaction with the media post-publication will also vary depending on the reception of the report by Government, the profile of the inquiry and the recommendations made. The Committee is deemed to have completed its

task and is disbanded at the point of publication. The fate of the report and its recommendations falls outside the Inquiry process.

The publication of the report and the acceptance of its recommendations is at the discretion of the Government, "In fact, the fate of a committee's report can range all the way from ... total disregard...to wholesale acceptance and implementation of its recommendations" (Cartwright, 1975, p.204). The development of new policy following an inquiry process does not necessarily build on older policy-making. There is often little explicit and conscious determination of policy which is usually developed in an incremental and piecemeal manner, and its links with a wider strategy can be tenuous. Dror (1968) argues that public policy-making tends to follow the path of least resistance supporting the view that the recommendations inform emerging policies which are usually economically and politically feasible rather than radical. The recommendations made by inquiries may also have a long lead-time to implementation following Government acceptance. The literature evaluating the effectiveness of policy notes a tendency to reflect a shorter-term approach. The long-term results and legacy of policy-making exercises like National Inquiries are often ignored.

4.9 Comparison of National Committees of Inquiry into Higher Education: Robbins and Dearing

This section compares the processes undertaken by the Robbins and Dearing Inquiries. The table below is structure using the main stages of a national inquiry process and provides an overview of the two inquiries. This is used to consider the similarities and differences between the two Inquiries into UK Higher Education.

Table 4.2: headline comparison of the Robbins and Dearing Inquiries

The Robbins Inquiry	The Dearing Inquiry
Propose: The Robbins Inquiry was initiated in response to a need for national policy-making on higher education in response to significant unplanned expansion which threatened the stability of the higher education system.	**Propose:** The Dearing Inquiry was initiated following a review of higher education undertaken by the Department for Education and Employment in November 1994. The review was overseen by Shirley Trundle from the Department for Education and took the form of a consultation exercise. After some prevarication, a statement by Gillian Shephard suggested that a further paper on the issue would be presented to the House. This paper was never issued as wider events led to the initiation of the Inquiry.

Initiate: The Inquiry was initiated by Treasury Minute on the 8th February 1961:	**Initiate:** The Inquiry was announced by Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, on 19 February 1996. It was established with support from the main political parties in May 1996:
The First Lord states to the Board that he proposes to appoint a Committee to review the pattern of full-time higher education in Great Britain and in the light of national needs and resources to advise Her Majesty's Government on what principles its long-term development should be based. In particular, to advise, in the light of these principles, whether there should be any changes in that pattern, whether any new types of institution are desirable and whether any modifications should be made in the present arrangements for planning and co-ordinating the development of the various types of institution. (Robbins Report, 1963, p.1)	To make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years, recognising that higher education embraces teaching, learning, scholarship and research. (NCIHE, 1997, Main Report, p.1)
	The Committee was later provided with more detailed terms of reference and additional contextual points.
The Committee was announced by Sir David Eccles, Minister of Education. It was not subsequently provided with a separate Terms of Reference.	Sir Ron Dearing was appointed as Chair and Mrs Shirley Trundle, from the Department for Education was appointed as Secretary.
Professor Lord Robbins, Professor of Economics at the London School of Economics was asked to Chair the Inquiry with Mr P.S. Ross, Treasury acting as Secretary.	The National Committee had 18 members which included: a Chair and Secretary from the Civil Service; eight senior academics (which included three Vice-Chancellors, two Rectors, one Pro-Vice Chancellor and two Professors one of whom, Professor David Watson, had a research interest in Higher Education); five senior members of the business community; one member each from a Trade Union, a secondary school and a Students Union.
The Robbins Committee had 11 members which included: an academic Chair and a Secretary from the Civil Service; six senior academics (a Vice-Chancellor, a Rector, a Principal and three academics including one Professor and one Professorial Fellow), a headmaster and headmistress, two senior members of the business community and one representative who sat on the governing bodies of a Technical College and University)	
	The Inquiry was conducted over 14 months and reported in July 1997.
The Inquiry was conducted over 32 months and reported in October 1963.	
Establish: The Robbins Committee initiated an extensive research exercise	**Establish:** Prior to the announcement of the Committee membership, comments

to inform policy-making in an area where data was limited. The Committee appointed dedicated researchers (led by Professor Claus Moser as Statistical Adviser) and assessors to undertake research work.	on the terms of reference were sought from interested parties. The Committee initiated a wide range of evidence gathering activities. Where possible, the Committee drew on data and reports which already existed. The Committee appointed dedicated researchers and commissioned a wide range of research to inform its recommendations.
Conduct: The Robbins Committee held 111 meetings. They commissioned six major surveys and six smaller surveys. They received over 400 written evidence submissions. The Committee formally interviewed representatives of 90 organisations and 31 individual witnesses. Informal discussions were held with government departments and individuals. The Committee visited universities, Colleges of Advanced Technology, technical colleges and training colleges in Great Britain. The Committee also made 7 overseas visits.	**Conduct:** The Committee and its nine Working Groups met on a total of 90 occasions during the process. They commissioned a major written consultation exercise and six smaller surveys. Seven conferences were also held. They received 840 written evidence submissions. The Committee held 37 oral evidence hearings and the Chairman met with 150 interested parties (NCIHE, 1997, Main Report paragraph 2.5). The Committee visited 33 higher education institutions in the UK and made 8 visits overseas.
Synthesise: The Committee was supported by a dedicated research team led by Professor Claus Moser.	**Synthesise** An independent exercise to analyse the written consultation responses was commissioned in July 1996 and led by Professor Ronald Barnett. New, independent research was commissioned by the National Committee.
Draft: The Robbins Report was a lengthy, landmark report. It was structured as a main report with five appendices. The Report was 335 pages long and included 178 recommendations. The Robbins Report was not unanimous and includes a reservation by Mr. Shearman on teacher training and the machinery of government.	**Draft:** The Dearing Report was a lengthy report but was not judged to have the same landmark status as Robbins. It was structured as a main report with five appendices and 14 additional reports. The Report was 1500 pages long and included 93 recommendations. The report was unanimous with no minority reports.

Conclude: The Robbins Report was presented to the two Houses prior to publication as a Command Paper. The Report generated considerable media interest and the Government immediately issued a brief statement which accepted the Robbins principle and the student number forecasts. The Government agreed to make resources available to accommodate additional growth (Tight, 2009, p.68).	**Conclude:** The report was presented to the Secretaries of State for Education and Employment, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland in July 1997 and announced in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords at which point the Committee was thanked and disbanded. The Dearing Report was published as a non-parliamentary paper. The media interest at the point of publication focussed on the fees and funding recommendations, although a different approach to that recommended by Dearing was later implemented.

The Robbins and Dearing Inquiries were both strong examples of the National Inquiry process which followed similar phases and process. Both Inquiries were initiated in response to specific political circumstances and asked to provide recommendations. They were initiated using one of the two common initiation processes: Robbins being initiated by Treasury Minute and an announcement by the Minister for Education, and Dearing by an announcement to the House by the Secretary of State for Education and Employment.

The Committees had high profile Chairs and were supported by senior Civil Servants. The membership of both Committees was expert and impartial. Their work was characterised by a level of independence from Government which is common to national inquiries. The membership of both Committees included expertise from senior management in higher education, academic representation, senior representatives from private schools and from business. The Dearing Committee was significantly larger than Robbins and its membership was from a wider range of backgrounds. It also included a higher proportion of members from outside higher education.

The Inquiry chose to establish Working Groups to increase its working capacity and to ensure it could cover its remit effectively. Robbins did not establish additional Working Groups but had a larger research staff and employed four assessors to undertake additional work on the Inquiry.

The research methods employed by both Committees were aligned with the remit set by Government in the terms of reference. Both Inquiries used a range of research methods including surveys, interviews and visits both in the UK and overseas. The Robbins Inquiry made greater use of experts, notably appointing assessors as well as research staff, and its statistical work was led by Professor Claus Moser. The Robbins Committee was unable to draw on a reliable source of high quality data or reports on higher education. Much of its research work was necessary to generate the data and analysis required to inform its recommendations. In comparison, the Inquiry

could draw on reliable and robust data and analysis from Government and from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). The availability of data and analysis enabled the Committee to define and conduct an extensive research programme which supplemented the available data and enabled the Inquiry to conclude its work in a shorter timescale.

Robbins and Dearing both undertook policy work and made recommendations at system level. Robbins was asked to undertake a review and set out principles to develop the nascent higher education system, support and enable further expansion and inform long-term plans. Robbins recognised that the emergence of a higher education system would require set attributes and its recommendations established the need for further growth in the higher education system. The Robbins principle articulated that there should be sufficient capacity such that all qualified applicants wishing to enter higher education could do so. This was set in the broader context of specifying the needs and associated resources necessary to deliver those principles and on the basis, articulated by the Anderson Committee, that there should be funded places in higher education for those with the academic ability to attend university regardless of background.

Dearing responded to significant and unplanned growth in higher education and the implications of a mass higher education system. The Committee was asked to provide recommendations covering the scale and purposes of higher education as well as developing a new funding mechanism. The outcome was a wide range of recommendations but the coverage of the Report concentrated on the recommendation to implement a student fees regime.

Both Inquiries were recognised for the quality of their work which is consistent with the expectations of national inquiries as a robust evidence-based process. Robbins was a 'blue ribbon' example of a Royal Commission and became a standard for later exercises. In comparison, Dearing operated more as a quick response taskforce and the scale and quality of its work was judged by commentators to be of lower quality than Robbins. The Inquiry was also seen as a solution to a political problem and as a delaying tactic to defer decisions until after the 1997 General Election.

Robbins and Dearing produced reports with a significant number of recommendations and adopted a similarly prescriptive approach. The commentary suggests that in both cases the coverage of the recommendations was wider than the initial remit of the Inquiry. The Robbins Report was judged to be a landmark report but did not achieve consensus from the Committee and the dissent of one member was suitably documented. In comparison, Dearing did achieve consensus, but the view of commentators receiving the Report was that it was not sufficiently radical and was a missed opportunity.

Where the two Inquires differ is in how the work was undertaken, how data was collated and used and the staff employed. The variations in the two processes are a

response to the wider context for the two inquiries. Robbins was unable to call on extant data and research which meant that its evidence base needed to be developed. It therefore employed a larger research staff. Robbins was also seen to be led by an academic on behalf of academics and there was less of an onus to undertake extensive consultation with the higher education community. In comparison, Dearing could draw on existing data and analysis as a starting point. But, as it was deemed to be an Inquiry led by Government which excluded the voice of the academic community, it needed to operate more transparently and undertake wider consultation with the higher education community and with other stakeholders including employers. Dearing's invitation to participate through the national consultation exercise generated twice the number of responses received by Robbins. The Inquiry also used workshops and consultation conferences to ensure a wide range of views were heard by the Committee. Dearing employed an independent group of researchers to analyse the written consultation responses which informed its Report and the results of much of its commissioned research was published as supplementary reports.

The Robbins and Dearing Inquiries show a high level of similarity in terms of the process and work undertaken. Their work was guided by an inquiry process which is consistent with other national inquiries. They were working at system level and making recommendations which would shape the future development of the higher education system. Where the two Inquiries differ is in areas where the wider context for the Inquiry required a different approach. The Robbins Committee included a greater number of academic representatives compared with the Dearing Committee which had a greater number of representatives from business. Robbins undertook a more extensive research exercise whereas Dearing undertook a greater level of consultation. Robbins had a longer timescale to complete its work and did not have a future horizon for its recommendations whereas Dearing was asked to report within 14 months and to make recommendations using a 20-year horizon.

4.10 Summary

This chapter has defined policy as a statement of principles, intent or action regarding a specific issue which is developed from a position of knowledge and in response to a clear set of circumstances. Policy-making has been defined as the process of identifying, exploring and proposing a means of resolving a significant issue identified by Government. It has highlighted that policy-making processes are dynamic and adaptable in responding to their social context. The process of policy-making is a cyclical rather than linear process. It concludes with a series of recommendations contained in a formal report.

Over time a range of policy-making tools have developed. The selection of policy-making tools changes over time and is dependent on the scale and nature of the issue as well as Government preference. National Inquiries have fallen in and out of favour with Government.

High profile National Inquiries and Royal Commissions are used in three circumstances: i) ground-breaking inquiries into an area where there is limited or no extant evidence; ii) taskforces established to address urgent problems; iii) grand consensus forming exercises on cross-party or cross-parliamentary issues.

They follow a series of set steps (Propose; Initiate; Establish; Conduct; Synthesise; Draft; Conclude) and involve different sets of actors: i) core actors (the Chair, Secretary and possibly a small group of Committee members); ii) public sector insiders (the Secretariat); iii) private sector insiders (members of the Committee); iv) private sector outsiders (the wider stakeholders consulted during the process).

SECTION 2: Approach, methods and analytical framework

This section provides the foundations for the study. It begins by identifying and developing the research question and providing the rationale for the research. It then justifies the chosen approach, methods and sources and explains the methodological choices made in designing the study. The section concludes with a review of the contemporary commentaries and critiques which are used to inform the development of an analytical framework for the study.

Chapter 5. Approach, methods and sources

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to explain and justify the chosen approach, methods and sources used for this study. It begins by situating the Inquiry in the field of study and identifying the main and supplementary research questions. The research questions are explored in more detail and the scope and extent of the study is defined.

The chapter then presents and discusses the research approach and design. It considers the different options and choices made in designing the study. The chapter provides an overview of the data sources available for research into the Inquiry and describes how they have been used for this research. An overview of the evidence selected and the rationale for this selection is provided. The chapter concludes by discussing how the different types of evidence have been treated and analysed to address the research questions.

5.2 Field of study

Tight (2012, p.7) identifies eight themes or issues for higher education research. The focus of this study is the process undertaken by the Inquiry which suggests that this study fits under the broad category of system policy, which includes policy context and historical policy studies. The category of system policy is divided into five related sub-themes and historical policy studies is most closely aligned with this study. Tight (2012, p.123) suggests that much of the work on historical policy in higher education is focussed on individual institutions but that the category of historical policy studies also covers more general studies of system policy.

Tight (2004) identifies the two dominant approaches to higher education research as policy critiques and small-scale, evaluative case studies. This thesis develops a single case study which seeks to evaluate the policy work undertaken by the Inquiry.

These two factors situate the study in the field of historical policy studies with a focus on system policy.

5.3 Statement of the research questions

The research questions draw on the key elements of the national inquiry form developed in the previous chapter. They seek to explore the Inquiry as an example of a Government policy-making process. The research questions are informed by two assumptions: that the Inquiry was a strong example of a national inquiry process; and that, although the Inquiry was initiated in response to a financial crisis and with a short timescale for its work, the scope of its terms of reference meant that it was in the mode of a grand consensus forming exercise rather than a taskforce established to address an urgent problem.

The main research question asks: what order and level of policy work was undertaken by the Dearing Inquiry?

There are three supplementary questions which frame the collection and analysis of research data:

    i.   Why was it necessary to establish a Committee of Inquiry?
    ii.   Who was involved in the Inquiry process?
    iii.   How did the Committee undertake its work?

The main research question is concerned with understanding the policy work which was being undertaken by the Inquiry. Policy work is defined here as the arrangements, practices, processes and guiding assumptions which enable identification and understanding of a specific set of issues. This includes the totality of people, methods, activities and processes deployed by a committee of inquiry to meet its terms of reference and, more generally, meet the expectations of ministers and politicians. It leads to the development and proposal of a future direction for policy. In this context, 'level' refers to the extent of the work undertaken. The Inquiry could have been asked to consider higher education at the system, regional or institutional level. The terms of reference suggest a system level to the work and the extent of the actual work undertaken through the Inquiry process will be explored through the study. 'Order' relates to the scope of the policy work. The terms of reference for the Inquiry asked it to make recommendations which covered the main activities of higher education and suggested that its scope was of a comprehensive order rather than being concerned with a single or small number of issues.

5.4 Statement of research philosophy

In Chapter 1 the positionality of the author and supervisor with regard to the thesis were noted. My background as a historian meant that the research philosophy for the thesis was grounded in the disciplinary conventions of history and informed by a wider research philosophy drawn from the social sciences. The theoretical underpinnings of this thesis combine elements drawn from different fields and disciplines as the basis for the work, but the core principles, for example, the definitions of primary and secondary materials. applied throughout, reflect the viewpoint of an educational historian. This philosophy guides both the data collection and the development and use of the analytical framework in exploring the documentary evidence of the Inquiry and the wider commentary and critique.

5.5 Boundaries of the research

The research questions consider the policy work undertaken by the Inquiry. The study is situated in the wider historical and political context of UK higher education and its focus is on the Inquiry as a discrete event. The research questions signal an intent to consider the Inquiry within its contemporary historical context. It is useful here to define the extent of the study before considering the approach in more detail.

The study considers the work of the Inquiry. This is defined as the work undertaken by the National Committee, the Scottish Committee, the seven Working Groups and two Sub-Groups. The timescale covered by the study runs from the announcement of the Inquiry on 19 February 1996 to the publication of the Dearing Report on 23 July 1997.

The focus of the study is the policy process undertaken by the Inquiry. The study uses the archival documents created by the Inquiry within its timeframe (i.e. February 1996 to July 1997).

The study uses an analytical framework which was developed using a review of the wider literature concerned with providing commentary and critique of the Inquiry. This review informed the selection of sources and ways of reading the material. Academic journals, newspapers and periodicals were reviewed between 1996 and 2015 to allow for publication timescales for academic journals and for later references to the Inquiry where they relate to its working process. The commentary published at the time of the Dearing Report is included in the literature reviewed. Reading of the material was undertaken in a series of cycles which meant that the application of the analytical framework allowed for a degree of flexibility and enabled themes to be added or elaborated as they became evident in the material.

The published responses to the Dearing Report, the fate of its recommendations and its longer-term impact are outside the scope of this work. Watson and Bowden (2000) published a mid-term report which considered the fate of the Dearing recommendations. Given the twenty-year horizon set for the Committee's work will be reached in 2017, it may be timely to revisit this analysis and consider the impact of the Dearing Report. This could usefully form the basis for a further study.

The study does not attempt to compare the Inquiry with other examples of national inquiries or with similar exercises used to develop higher education policy after the Inquiry. This could form the basis for a study comparing the longer-term impact of Dearing and Robbins or the development of policy-making processes as applied to higher education through comparison of Dearing with later exercises, for example the Browne Review (2010).

Other potential areas and research questions were identified but not pursued while undertaking this study. These included questions of how the tools used for policy-making follow political fashion and the longer-term development and fate of topics identified by the Inquiry which have not been considered in the wider literature such as the development of the Learning Society and teacher training. The research also led to questions about figures who were involved in the development of higher education policy over an extended period but remained in the background, for example Oliver Letwin who appears to have been influential in the development of higher education policy from the mid-1980s. This could form the basis of further work to explore the interplay between high profile policymakers, the visible and less

visible State machinery and individuals operating in the background to support policy development.

5.6 Contribution to knowledge

This study seeks to make two contributions to knowledge. First, there is no systematic account and assessment of the Inquiry as a policy inquiry process. The Dearing Committee followed the process for conducting a national inquiry and was equipped with terms of reference, a chairman, a committee membership, a secretariat and a timeline. It commissioned research and analytical studies and undertook wider consultation exercises which informed the drafting of a main report and recommendations for publication. The Inquiry is referenced as a touchstone in the history of higher education but the focus has been on the Dearing Report rather than the work of the Inquiry.

Second, its importance is to understand how inquiries of this kind can pursue different orders and levels of policy work, some of which is little acknowledged in the academic, professional and practitioner literature on higher education. The wider literature uses the work of the Inquiry as the basis for discussion of ongoing policy issues or in reference to the longer-term impact of the Dearing Report, usually with regard to student tuition fees. Commentary and discussion of the Inquiry has focused mainly on themes and recommendations rather than a consideration of the range of policy work it attempted. An account of this work and its processes will contribute to the body of knowledge on politics and policy-making in higher education and, more broadly, the conduct of national committees of inquiry. The research is not concerned to evaluate the impact of the Dearing Report and recommendations.

5.7 Overview of the research approach and design

The research used a qualitative design and applied an interpretive approach to trace the policy work of the Inquiry through an examination of documentary sources. The nature and topic of the research questions explore the Inquiry as an event situated within its contemporary historical context. The questions sought to understand a set of social, political and policy processes. An interpretive approach, which enabled an understanding to develop and be revised during the research process, allowed the study to look beyond a simple re-telling of the facts and explore how the Inquiry was conducted, including its assumptions and decisions.

The qualitative design was appropriate to the research questions. The research questions relate to a historical event which generated policy, and the records of the event are in the form of a large volume of texts, both the internal written documents of the Inquiry and the external commentary and critique. Tight (2004) notes the prevalence of articles in higher education studies based on some form of documentary analysis and suggests that this approach is commonly used for research into system policy and for historical studies. This supports the idea that the nature of

the research questions and the texts available meant that an approach based on documentary analysis was coherent with the intention of the research.

McCulloch (2004) is critical of documentary analysis being increasingly dismissed as an approach in the social sciences and suggests that the use of archival sources has become evidence of the demarcation of research into the past and the present. He suggests that the use of archives has become associated with historical rather than social research because "…the bureaucratic records of the modern state were designed to illuminate the official and public outlooks of the social and political elite. They were essentially top-down in nature" (p. 26). This research attempts to use documentary analysis as a social science method. The approach also rejects the idea of a demarcation between past and present and the implication that understanding a historical event as a social process cannot be achieved through analysis of documentary source material. The records of the Inquiry were bureaucratic but were not generated through a top-down process. Rather they were generated through an inquiry process which sought to explore a series of issues relating to higher education. This means that they are appropriate to research questions which explore policy development processes.

The research design was also informed by other relevant studies of the Inquiry. There are a small number of PhD theses available through online repositories which consider the Inquiry, including Rhodes (1999), Webb (2003) and Wallace (2008). These tend to focus on a specific element of the Inquiry including close readings of the Dearing Report, consideration of particular themes and the longer-term impact on a specific policy area or use the Inquiry as part of a wider selection of case studies. Other published studies (Clokie and Robinson, 1969, Chapman, 1973, Cartwright, 1975 and Bulmer, 1980) sought to understand national inquiries as a process and undertook comparative analysis using case studies of inquiries which took similar forms or considered similar topics. These studies had similarities in approach and design which shaped this research. This review also suggested that a detailed narrative account of the work of Inquiry had not been written as previous studies had more often chosen to focus on single thematic area.

5.8 Justification for the research approach

The research used documentary analysis to develop a single case study. The source material, meaning the written evidence of the Inquiry, used for the study was in the form of documents. The volume and provenance of the material made it a reasonable source to address the research question. The material can be distinguished into two types: primary and secondary material. Primary source material is defined as the written material generated as a direct result of the event or process. Here this refers to the documents written by actors in the Inquiry and to documents written externally but requested and considered by the Committees and Working Groups when conducting their work. This set of documents forms the main evidence of the Inquiry. Secondary source material is the literature concerned with the Inquiry which

was created externally and was not considered as part of the inquiry process. This refers to documents, used here as a broad term to indicate articles in journals, periodicals and newspapers, which were written about the Inquiry. These documents provide analysis, commentary and critique of the Inquiry but are a step removed from its work.

The value of a single case study was that it offered a strong focus on the work of the Inquiry which was consistent with the intention to understand it as an inquiry process and as a single discrete event which was considered in depth through comparison between the primary and secondary source material. The research treated the documents generated by the Inquiry as the evidence of a process rather than evidence of official policy. The focus was the Inquiry process and not the Dearing Report which was the output of that process. The approach reflects Hill's (2009) suggestion that "... all social reality should be understood as a historical construct, situated in time and space" (p.151).

The design used a literature review to generate an analytical framework which was used to inform selection and reading of sources. It did not use external comparison with a second case study as the basis for analysis and the validity of this approach was considered when designing the research. The Inquiry was the second of two major national inquiries which reviewed UK higher education. The first national inquiry, the Robbins Inquiry, not only reviewed higher education (albeit mainly full-time higher education) but was also considered to be a strong example of a national inquiry process. The official records of the Robbins Inquiry are held at the National Archives and it may have been possible to develop case studies for each Inquiry which could have been used to make a direct comparison of an inquiry process and how it was applied to higher education in these two cases. A further alternative design could have been to use a similar approach to Chapman (1973), and select a contemporary national inquiry on a different topic to develop comparative case studies of the use of the inquiry process.

These alternative designs were rejected as they were inconsistent with the research questions. If the research questions sought to understand whether the Inquiry was a good example of a national inquiry process, then comparison with a second case study would have a been a valid approach. This type of comparison would not develop an understanding of the Inquiry as an event. Similarly, while high level comparison with the Robbins Inquiry is a useful basis for understanding the key facts of Dearing, a more detailed analysis of the similarities and differences between the two inquiries would not have been a suitable basis from which to address the research questions.

The research is qualitative in nature. Bryman (2008) sets out a range of options for undertaking research into the Social Sciences. Many of these would not have been appropriate to the research questions and Bryman appears biased towards the common assumption that interviewing is the first choice of method for Social

Sciences research. Given the research questions and the nature and extent of the archival source material, the research was based on documentary evidence. The need for oral testimony and the use and value of interviews was reviewed regularly during the research. A series of interviews with members of the Dearing Committee and the secretariat could have been used to triangulate the written evidence. The death of several of the key members of the National Committee, including the Chair, meant that the range of interviewees would have been limited to the Secretary and members of the Committee. Twenty years after the event it was likely that any interviews would have presented a partial view of events rather than triangulation of the documentary evidence. As Webb et al (1981, p.196) note, "In any event, the Chinese proverb still holds: The palest ink is clearer than the best memory".

In considering the research design, the potential for using quantitative methods for textual analysis, for example by using content analysis approach, was also considered. This approach was rejected because this type of analysis would have developed a one-dimensional understanding of the Inquiry and been limited to a small number of selected texts considered in greater depth. Content analysis of selected texts would emphasise the document content rather than informing a more holistic understanding of the inquiry process. Similarly, while alternative qualitative methods such as ethnography and phenomenography were interesting, they were rejected as relevant alternatives being more applicable to analysis of current rather than historical events.

The research design needed to be feasible given the time and resources available to complete the work. Data collection of secondary source material was conducted at the start of the research process using electronic resources. This included searching databases of newspaper articles and archives of academic journals and relevant periodicals. Collection of primary documents was carried out during two visits to the National Archives. These took place on the 15-17 May 2016 and 14-16 June 2016. This allowed for around four full working days in the Archives. During the visits, the 169 files of the Inquiry were consulted consecutively by catalogue number and 6,022 pages were photographed. This approach to data collection meant that a large volume was collected in the available time. The documents were not read at this stage and no attempt was made to understand the data beyond developing a very high-level overview of how the work of the Inquiry was conducted. The documents were later analysed using printed copies of photographs.

5.9 Overview of documentary source material

The documents generated by the Inquiry were made publicly available in the National Archives soon after publication of the Dearing Report. They are held as 169 files of material which include the papers of the National Committee and its Working Groups, the transcripts of evidence sessions and the evidence submissions made in response to the national consultation exercise.

There are two copies of the 800+ items of public evidence submitted to the Committee, one in the National Archives and the other at the University of Sheffield (deposited by Professor Gareth Parry who was a member of the team commissioned to read, analyse and report on the pattern and balance of this evidence). In the Sheffield collection, there are 95 files of material, predominantly marked-up copies of written submissions and associated papers.

The available primary and secondary source material had a large volume and scope. Much of the secondary material was available online and the primary source material was held as paper copies in the National Archives and the University of Sheffield. In considering the source material, the approach outlined by McCulloch (2004) and Scott (1990) was drawn upon to appraise the documents. This appraisal has four steps:

1. Establish authenticity;
2. Appraise reliability (or 'credibility');
3. Consider the meaning of the document;
4. Develop a theoretical framework thorough which to assess the document.

The documents in the Dearing Archive were created as a result of the inquiry process and submitted directly to the National Archives. The direct progression from the Inquiry to the National Archives establishes that the documents are authentic.

The Dearing Archive is incomplete and the documents were created to support and administer the inquiry process. This means that their reliability should be questioned because they were written for a specific purpose and audience within a particular context. Scott (1990, p.60) notes that "Administrative records therefore are not, and never were, merely neutral reports of events". The Dearing Archive is a collection of documents, which can be defined as a type of record. Documents provide evidence of an event in a written form held, often, on paper. Scott suggests that in considering the content of a record it cannot be assumed that the author was impartial and notes that this is true of administrative records. This suggests that the reliability of the documents in the Dearing Archive should be questioned rather than accepting the texts at face value. The documents were drafted by or on behalf of the Committee for the purposes of administering the Inquiry and developing an evidence base. The Dearing Archive was also created in the knowledge that it would be made available to the wider public three years after the publication of the Dearing Report. These two factors suggest that reliability of the documents should be questioned. The question of reliability is also affected by the completeness of the Dearing Archive. The archive contains very few informal administrative records or draft versions of documents. This suggests that the archive was subject to extensive document selection prior to deposit at the National Archives and only selected formal documentation has been retained.

In comparison, the records held at the University of Sheffield are restricted to the working files generated by the exercise to analyse responses to the national consultation. They have a reliable provenance but mainly represent one part of the larger documentary collection held at the National Archives.

The research used the secondary documents to create an analytical framework based on the questions and issues which were considered in the contemporary secondary literature. This enabled the emphasis of the research to be placed on the primary source material and allowed use of the secondary documents for comparison and to indicate the themes likely to be covered by the Dearing Archive.

This application of contemporary views directly drawn from the secondary material creates rigour in the design by creating a focus which excludes consideration of later events, policy developments and viewpoints. Scott (2004, p.45) suggests that writers cannot control the meaning of the text because the reading will be subject to the reader's knowledge and viewpoint. This creates pluralism in the meaning of the document depending on the author and the reader in question, and a tension between the meaning which the author intended to convey and the message received by the reader. In reading the Dearing Archive nearly twenty years from its creation it would be easy to unintentionally misinterpret the original meaning of the documents by applying a contemporary viewpoint and knowledge of later developments in UK higher education. As a reader, it is necessary to 'bracket-out' more recent social, cultural and political developments to read the work of the Inquiry based on its own historical context as far as possible. Applying an analytical framework based on contemporary views will help to avoid this potential pitfall.

5.10 How the selection strategy was applied to the source material

The volume of source material made it necessary to develop a rationale for the selection of relevant evidence which was consistent with the research questions. The nature of the primary and secondary material meant that two different selection strategies were developed to choose which documents would be used as the basis for the study.

5.10.1 Primary documents: Dearing Archive

The selection strategy applied to the primary documents sought to distinguish between the documents which provided evidence of the inquiry process and the documents which provided content relevant to the development of Committee and Working Group's understanding of the issues identified and explored through the Inquiry process.

The National Archives catalogue for the Dearing Archive classifies the files into three document types: working agendas and papers; oral evidence transcripts; and written evidence submissions. These categories broadly indicate how each type of document was created: working agendas and papers refers to the administrative

documents created to manage the business of the Inquiry and to inform discussion; oral evidence transcripts refers to the transcripts used to record verbatim discussion at the evidence sessions held by the National Committee, Scottish Committee and Working Groups; and written evidence submissions refers to the responses received to the national consultation exercise. The categories were useful in identifying the main types of document at a high level.

The working agendas and papers were considered first. In selecting the evidence, each file was reviewed using a three-stage process. First, the contents were listed to develop an overview of the documents in the file. Second, the list of contents was classified using two types: working papers which included agendas, minutes, secretary's notes and correspondence; and reports which referred to external reports accompanied by a covering paper drafted by the Secretariat. Third, the documents were photographed systematically. In total 6,022 photographs were taken of individual pages of text. All pages of the working papers were photographed. The reports were photographed selectively: the cover paper from the Secretariat and the covers of the reports were photographed to indicate the title and author of the report.

The oral evidence transcripts were considered second. The files contained two types of documents: lists of attendees; and transcripts. The lists of attendees for each session were photographed and brief notes were made on how the evidence sessions were run by the Chair and the main topics of discussion.

The written evidence submissions held at the University of Sheffield were reviewed and catalogued as part of the early reading around the Inquiry. This meant that the written evidence submissions did not need to be reviewed at the National Archives. The written submissions from organisations who were also invited to make an oral evidence submission were selected as a sample of the written evidence submissions. These were read in detail with particular attention to the coding applied during the analysis exercise.

The submissions to the national consultation exercise were interesting in providing a baseline of stakeholder views which informed discussion by the Committees and Working Groups. However, the focus of the research questions is the Inquiry process. This meant that the identity of those submitting evidence and participating in the evidence sessions was more relevant as evidence of the Inquiry process. The oral and written evidence submissions were an input to the Inquiry process but, as they did not record or reflect the work of the National Committee, they were not considered in more detail during the research.

5.10.2 Secondary source material: commentaries and critiques of the Dearing Inquiry

The secondary source material forms a significant body of evidence. The selection strategy sought to ensure that a broad sample of evidence was considered which reflected the range of material available. The secondary material was identified by

searching databases of newspaper articles and archives of academic journals and relevant periodicals. This material was considered first to inform thinking on how the primary material should be used and to prepare an analytical framework.

Early reading of the wider literature suggested that there were four main types of document which had been used to publish commentary and critique of the Inquiry: books, academic journal articles, newspaper reports and periodicals. Wider reading around higher education and policy-making also suggested that this selection would cover the main viewpoints and authors writing about the Inquiry.

A systematic process was used to select the secondary evidence which can be summarised as follows:

5.10.3 Books

Books (including single chapters) were identified during the literature review. There are two histories of UK Higher Education which consider the role and influence of the Inquiry (Tight, 2009 and Shattock, 2012). A third book (Palfrey man and Tapper, 2014) includes a chapter on the influence of the Inquiry on more recent changes in UK higher education. This was published during the research and compared with the two earlier histories and early drafts of the thesis.

5.10.4 Academic journals

Journals were identified using a search of journal databases supplemented with citations from authors identified from wider reading and further citations from journal articles. Two journal databases were used:

- Scimago Journal Rankings for Education was used to identify journals which focus on higher education and was used to compare rankings between 1999 and 2007 to identify the main titles;
- ProQuest Education Journals provides a partial picture and was used to check the list of journals from Scimago.

Eight journals were selected based on the Scimago rankings. Tight (2004, p.1) provides a list of 17 established specialist higher education journals published in the English language outside North America. This includes six of the journals selected for the study.

212 articles were identified using a keyword search of journal databases supplemented with citations from authors identified from wider reading and further citations from journal articles. 54 of these were relevant to the study.

5.10.5 Newspaper reports and periodicals

The main broadsheets were searched using the Nexis database which provides full text access to UK national newspapers from the 1980s onwards, including The Times, Guardian, Independent and Daily Telegraph, as well as UK regional

newspapers. The search was narrowed down to UK publications to enable a focus on the response in England.

The Nexis search was supplemented by separate searches using two databases which provide searchable, full text access to specific newspaper archives.

- ProQuest provides access to the Guardian (1821-2003) and the Observer (1791-2003);
- Artemis Primary Sources provides access to the Daily Mail Historical Archive, 1896-2004 and the Times Digital Archive, 1785-2008

491 items were identified using a keyword search of the Nexis database, ProQuest and Artemis Primary Sources. 121 of these were relevant to the study.

The Times Higher Education (previously Times Higher Educational Supplement) is the main weekly periodical reporting on higher education and is included in the Nexis database. This publication was the key source of regular reporting during the Inquiry. 73 of the relevant articles were published in this periodical.

The *Times Higher Education Supplement* also published a series of open letters between July and November 1996 as the 'Dear Ron' series. The letters in this series were searched for specifically so that the full set of letters could be considered.

5.10.6 Description of the search terms used

When searching the databases, the search timescales were set to take consideration of the lifespan of the Inquiry:

1. Announcement of the Dearing Inquiry: 19 February 1996
2. Reporting during the term of the Inquiry
3. Publication of the Dearing Report: 23 July 1997

All sources were searched up to 2015. For newspaper reports and journal articles it was assumed that a publication timescale of 10 years after the start of the Inquiry was likely to locate the relevant material.

In each search, a set of relevant key search terms was used drawn from initial reading around the topic. To maximise the effectiveness of the search, several different combinations of the search terms were tested before it became clear that to maximise results a slightly different set of search terms were required for different source materials. The final search terms used were:

- Dearing AND higher AND education for newspaper searches;
- Dearing was used for scholarly articles because in most cases the articles referred to the Inquiry as 'Dearing' or made reference to the Chair by name.

However, while these search terms were effective, the long lists of search results included coverage of other work undertaken by Dearing (for example the Dearing

Review of Qualifications for 16 to 19 year olds which took place in 1996 and material relating to Dearing's later work on the University for Industry (UFI)). The initial long lists of search results were reviewed to exclude items which did not relate to the Inquiry.

5.11 Other source material

The potential use of other source material in the form of biographies and autobiographies was considered and rejected early in the research. These texts were not selected on the basis that they would present a partial picture from those who had published this type of document. They were also likely to present a more biased and subjective view and to have been written significantly after the event, so their reliability would depend on the strength of the author's recollection.

The Inquiry was initiated and run on behalf of the Government and may have been discussed by contemporary groups and committees operating within the Government administration. However, the extent of the source material which would need to be searched to locate these discussions was significant and the literature does not provide any indication as to likely groups or committees which could help in reducing the extent of the search. Many UK Government records are subject to a 30-year closure period which meant that many of these records would not have been available in the National Archives. Also, the additional insight which could be gained from wider consideration of how the Inquiry was reflected and considered in contemporary Government research and policy papers would be small compared with the resources required to identify the relevant papers.

5.12 Reading and analysis of sources

The purpose here is to provide an overview of how the analytical framework was developed and used to inform reading of the primary documents produced by the Dearing Committee. The analytical framework for the study is developed in detail in Chapter 6.

The analysis used the following method which another reader could reasonably match. Here article is used to refer to the secondary material which includes journal, periodical and newspaper articles.

1. A preliminary reading of the commentaries and critiques of the Inquiry (discussed in Chapter 6) was undertaken without an analytical frame to develop a high-level impression of the themes discussed in the documents. The reference information for each article was collected in a spreadsheet which used the following headings: author, publication, year, title, major theme, minor theme.

2. The name of the author of each article was noted and checked against the list of actors included in the Dearing Report (1997). The relationship of author with the Inquiry was then classified as 'Insider', 'Outsider' or 'Insider and Outsider'. Insider was defined as a member of one of the Committees or Working Groups

which were established by the Inquiry; Outsider was defined as someone who was not a member of one of the Committees or Working Groups; Insider and Outsider was defined as a member of one of the Committees or Working Groups who also wrote from the perspective of an Outsider due to their research interests.

3. A careful reading of the articles was used to identify the major themes which were added to the spreadsheet. Major themes refer to the main subject of the article. Many articles also considered a minor theme which referred to a particular aspect of the main subject. A major theme was noted for each article using the language adopted in the article. Where a minor theme was also identified then this was noted separately from the major theme. Where articles identified a gap in the work of the Inquiry this was also noted.

4. The major and minor themes identified through this process were reviewed. The list of themes was read to identify where authors had possibly used different language to discuss the same theme. Where this was the case, the content of the two articles was compared and where possible the terms used were refined to develop a consistent language for referring to the subjects identified in the articles.

5. The data on major and minor themes collected from this process were considered using frequency analysis. This involved counting the number of times an article was coded to a theme. This analysis gave a high-level indication of the importance of the theme based on the number of articles.

6. The outcome of this exercise was the analytical framework. To make a broad comparison between the commentaries and critiques and the work of the Inquiry, the analytical framework was compared with the terms of reference. This provided a high-level indication of whether the themes were similar to the remit set by the Government for the Inquiry.

7. A systematic account of the work of the Inquiry was developed using the records of the Inquiry:

   i.   The minutes and agendas were used to develop a detailed timeline of events in the Inquiry process;

   ii. The minutes and attendance lists were used to develop a comprehensive list of the actors involved in the Inquiry;

   iii. The minutes, supporting papers and working papers of the National Committee were read carefully to identify the major and minor themes considered. This used the same process applied to the secondary material. The inducted analytical framework was expanded as required;

   iv. The themes were reviewed and refined to create a list of major and minor themes considered by the Inquiry;

v. The themes identified from the Inquiry documents were compared at a high level with the terms of reference.

8. The two sets of themes were compared, and this is discussed in Chapter 10. The analysis considered similarities and differences and identified gaps and silences in the work of the Inquiry. This was used to identify differences between external perceptions of the work of the Inquiry expressed in the commentaries and critiques compared with the internal view of the National Committee;

9. The analysis was used as the basis for addressing the research questions and developing the main argument of the thesis.

The methods of reading evolved during the research as the research questions were more clearly defined. As the analytical framework developed it became clear that the research questions would be better addressed by considering the Inquiry as a process. The focus of the work developed into a wider analysis of the primary documents and the secondary material formed the basis for the development of an analytical framework. As the scope of the analysis widened to cover the Inquiry, the work of the Committees and Working Groups became important to understand the process. The role and contribution of the Committee members also became important in understanding how the process worked and what order and level of policy work was being undertaken.

In the early stages of the study, it was assumed that the evidence submitted in response to the national consultation exercise would form the basis of an understanding of the Dearing Report which could be used to explore the Inquiry process. The Dearing Report was considered to be the key document and was read closely to look for evidence of how it had been written. The working assumption was that it had been written by Committee and that comparison of the Dearing Report and the written evidence submissions could be used to analyse links between the points made in the evidence submissions and the recommendations made in the Dearing Report. The early research design envisaged use of a sample of the written evidence submissions. The sample would be the organisations who were invited to give oral evidence to the National Committee. This would be used to compare the submissions with the recommendations made in Dearing Report. This comparison would be used to address the question of the policy work undertaken by the Inquiry by analysing the extent to which the recommendations reflected the views in the written evidence submissions.

The impact of the change in methodology was to deepen the analysis undertaken and to create a more rigorous research design. Rather than relying on a simplistic comparison between inputs and outputs of the process, the revised methodology looks at the documentary evidence of the Inquiry in depth to understand how the process worked. The comparison between the primary and secondary sources guided by the analytical framework forms the basis for analysis of the order and level of policy work undertaken. This lifts the research from the development of a

comprehensive narrative of a process and allows critical analysis of the Inquiry process and the order of policy work undertaken.

5.13 Treatment of the source material

In undertaking analysis of the texts, the analytical framework developed from a literature review of the commentaries and critiques, was used to guide reading of the primary source material. Three cycles of reading were used to develop the analysis and deepen understanding of the selected source materials guided by the analytical framework, although themes were added and elaborated during the cycles of reading. A slightly different approach was taken for the two sets of documents.

The secondary material was collated in hard copy and a spreadsheet was used to create a catalogue of citation information. Under the first cycle of reading the articles were skim read to check that they were relevant to the Inquiry. Articles which considered other work undertaken by Dearing or reported facts such as the progress of the Inquiry were removed from further analysis. Articles which appeared to warrant a closer reading were marked on the catalogue.

Under the second cycle of reading the shorter list of articles were read in detail, potential quotes were highlighted and the major and minor themes were noted on the catalogue. A series of pivot tables were then used to undertake a high-level frequency analysis of the terms used and to identify the main authors.

The third reading of the texts informed Chapter 6 which provides an overview of the secondary literature, the development of the analytical framework and its use in establishing the major themes for the study.

The primary source material was also collated in hard copy and filed in chronological order by Committee or Working Group. Under the first cycle of reading a general overview of the process was developed. This was used to develop a timeline of meetings which gave an overview of the inquiry process and a catalogue of agenda items which gave an overview of the discussion at the meetings. The apologies for each meeting were then mapped onto the timeline to collate levels of attendance at meetings.

The themes covered by National Committee agenda items were noted using the analytical framework and a high-level frequency analysis was used to develop a list of the major themes discussed by the National Committee. This was compared with the themes from the secondary material to look for gaps and silences in the two sources. These also were the compared with the terms of reference.

The third reading of the National Committee working papers was a close reading which formed the basis of the systematic account of the work of the Committee in Section 3. The account was initially written in strict chronological order. Each agenda item was considered in turn, the main points from discussion were noted and the use of papers to inform discussion was recorded with the author of the papers.

The Section was later restructured to focus on the major and minor themes considered by the National Committee.

The working papers of the Working Groups were treated slightly differently. The business of the Working Groups had a more restricted scope. This meant that on the second cycle of reading, the papers could be read in depth and used to inform development of a systematic account. This account focussed on the issues considered by the Working Groups and how these were reported to the National Committee.

This treatment of the source material meant that the weighting of the primary and secondary evidence changed over the course of the research. While the initial stages were heavily focussed on developing an understanding of the context for the Inquiry from the commentaries and critiques, during the later stages of the research the emphasis moved to the primary source material. Also, the use of different readings of the texts enabled the focus to move to the work of the National Committee supported by the Working Groups and the wider context. The process of reading and re-reading the texts allowed a deeper understanding of the work of the Inquiry and the major themes to emerge through comparison and understanding of the source material.

5.14 Presentation of findings

The findings are presented in the form of a systematic account of the Inquiry which is structured using the inquiry process (summarised in Figure 5.1). The findings consider the work of the Inquiry and include work undertaken by the National Committee, Scottish Committee and Working Groups.

Figure 5.1: outline of the Dearing Inquiry process

Set-up			Working		Closure	
Propose	**Initiate**	**Establish**	**Conduct**	**Synthesise**	**Draft**	**Conclude**
Identify Chair and Secretary	Announce ToRs and membership					
		First meeting (May 1996)	←	Meetings cycle		Last meeting (June 1997) →
		Agree ToRs, remit and methods.	←	Work plan		→
		Agree and undertake research activities		←	Receive research outputs (February 1997)	→
←						→
←				Stakeholder consultation		→

Draft report	← Re-draft report →	Final approval (July 1997)
		Receive and publish report.

The section is structured as three chapters which are aligned with the three stages of the inquiry process. The hierarchical structure of the Inquiry is also reflected in the presentation of findings. The National Committee acted as a central point for the collation of research outputs and the development of collective views on the issues identified in the terms of reference. The findings reflect how the National Committee's work was linked with the work undertaken independently by the Scottish Committee and Working Groups during the Inquiry.

5.15 Summary

The study is situated in the field of historical policy studies with a focus on system policy. The main research question asks: what order and level of policy work was undertaken by the Dearing Inquiry?

There are three supplementary questions which frame the collection and analysis of research data:

    i.   Why was it necessary to establish a Committee of Inquiry?
    ii.   Who was involved in the Inquiry process?
    iii.   How did the Committee undertake its work?

The study seeks to make two contributions to knowledge: it develops a systematic account and assessment of the Inquiry as a policy inquiry process; and it attempts to understand how inquiries of this kind can pursue different orders and levels of policy work, some of which is little acknowledged in the academic, professional and practitioner literature on higher education

The research used a qualitative design and applied an interpretive approach to trace the policy work of the Inquiry through an examination of documentary sources. The secondary documents and wider literature on Royal Commissions and National Inquiries were used to develop an analytical framework. This was used to guide exploration of the primary documents.

The findings are presented as a systematic account of the Inquiry. This is structured using the three phases of the inquiry process and considers the work of the National Inquiry, Scottish Committee and Working Groups.

Chapter 6. Literature Review and Analytical Framework

6.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews how the Inquiry was evaluated and reported by authors writing during the Inquiry and at the point of publication of the Dearing Report. In reviewing these sources, a greater emphasis has been placed on expressions of personal opinion or political positioning statements and less emphasis placed on purely factual reporting and narrative regarding the progress of the Inquiry.

The first part of the chapter considers who is writing about Dearing, their relationship with the Inquiry and viewpoint. It then considers what the commentators said about the process, membership of the Committee and Secretariat, recommendations and Dearing Report.

The second part of the chapter identifies the themes which are considered by the commentary and critique. This is used to develop and discuss the analytical framework which was outlined in Chapter 5.

6.2 Who is commentating and undertaking critique of the Dearing Inquiry?

Watson and Bowden (2000, p.1) characterise the response to the Inquiry as ranging from "triumphalist" to "profound excoriation" depending on the author's views, relationship with the Inquiry and whether their ideas had been reflected in the Dearing Report or not. Wider reading around higher education, policy-making and the Inquiry suggests that the authors writing about Dearing can be grouped depending on their level of involvement with the Inquiry and their viewpoint.

There are a small group of academics and journalists whose work narrates the Inquiry process, and this is supplemented by a wider group with more general interest. Five main groups of commentators can be identified in the wider literature: commentary and critique from those involved in the Inquiry (such as Barnett, Parry and Watson); reporters from the national and specialist press providing factual information on the progress and recommendations from the Inquiry process (such as Baty, Tysome and Macleod); commentary and critique of the Inquiry and its report from senior University and College figures (such as Green, Ward, Gilbert and Fitzgerald); wider critical analysis which includes Dearing, either directly or by comparison, and is written by academics whose research field is higher education (such as Scott, Salter and Tapper, Kogan and Hanney, and Henkel and Little); and histories of higher education which include consideration of the Inquiry as an event in the historical timeline (Tight, 2009 and Shattock, 2012).

In characterising the author's viewpoint there is a distinction to be drawn between those directly involved in the Inquiry (the Insider), those providing commentary and critique but not involved in the Inquiry (the Outsider) and those who were involved

but whose research interests meant that they also wrote from the perspective of an outsider (the Insider and Outsider).

6.3 Insiders: those directly involved in the Dearing Inquiry

During the Inquiry, members of the National Committee were not expected to speak publicly. However, some interviews were given by members and led to articles in the national press. The National Committee agreed that members would not publish papers on their work or engage with the academic press. However, one of the criticisms of the Inquiry was the lack of involvement and engagement with academics with a research interest in higher education (Scott, 1997, p.50). The National Committee chose to keep their work confidential and did not engage in academic discussion until after the publication of the Dearing Report. The Committee was concerned that members expressing personal opinions could undermine the collective view and lead to minority reports.

Sir Ron Dearing, as Chair of the Inquiry, was interviewed both during and after the Inquiry. During the Inquiry, his comments formed part of the factual reporting. After the publication of the report, Dearing was reported to have outlined his fears that post-publication the Report had no champion and its full impact would be lost (Gilbert, 1997). He later noted that the fees and student funding regime as implemented was not the option preferred by the Committee (Watson and Amoah, 2007, p.176). Dearing contributed an Afterword to Watson and Amoah's book writing as an insider and providing a personal retrospective view of his own areas of concern including regrets for the limitations of the Inquiry and its recommendations. Dearing was later interviewed about his advice to Charles Clarke on the raising of the fee cap to £3k.

During the Inquiry journalists were keen to interview members of the National Committee. Professors John Arbuthnott and Diana Laurillard were both interviewed (McBain, 1996 and Greenhalgh, 1996) due to their involvement in the IT working group. The focus of Laurillard's interview was the level of interest in how Dearing was addressing emerging IT capabilities. Arbuthnott was interviewed both due to his involvement in the IT Working Group and later as a member of the Scottish Committee.

Members of the National Committee also contributed their own articles during the process. Mr Ewan Gillon wrote for the Times Higher Education (Gillon, 1997) as a member of the working group on research and his article contributes to the critical commentary on how the research which informed the Inquiry was conducted and the impact of fees on PGT and PGR students. Sir George Quigley (Quigley, 1998) writing as Chair of the Dearing Working Group on Teaching Quality and Standards provided a more positional view of the Inquiry and his article provides a detailed overview of the recommendations and rationale for development in teaching quality and standards.

After the publication of the Dearing Report, the immediate analysis and response included views from academics involved more peripherally in the work of the Inquiry. Professor Ronald Barnett led the team who were commissioned to undertake analysis of evidence collected from the wide-ranging consultation exercise which underpinned Dearing. Professor Gareth Parry was part of the analysis team. As academic researchers into higher education, both subsequently made contributions to edited collections of essays and academic journals writing on aspects of the Inquiry aligned with their research interests. They also provided articles for the Times Higher Education. Parry's contribution to Watson and Amoah's (2007) book provided an insider's view of the methodology used to collect and analyse the evidence while his journal articles explore the silences and gaps in the Inquiry's Terms of Reference. Barnett's (1998) critique of Dearing echoes Scott (1997a) and describes the report as a missed opportunity (p.18). He also explores Dearing as a response to the wider higher education context from an economic viewpoint. Barnett is highly critical of what he judges to be incoherent recommendations which were based on an incorrect interpretation of the evidence of the contemporary higher education environment, "The trouble is that the Committee's incoherence is an incoherence with dogmatic undertones. And it leads it into all sorts of unsavoury and mistaken educational strategies; that is, strategies which are unsavoury and mistaken even on the Committee's own analysis of the challenges of the contemporary world" (Barnett, 1998, p.16).

6.4 Outsider: those providing commentary and critique but not involved in the Inquiry

The Inquiry was subject to extensive commentary and critique both during and after the process from the wider academic community. A national inquiry is initiated by Government and run by Committee. This means that the work of an inquiry is undertaken by a highly selective group chosen by Government and supported by the Civil Service. Inevitably this structure means that there are many more outsiders wishing to comment on the work of an inquiry than there are insiders involved in the process. The Inquiry was the subject of wider scrutiny from the academic community and there were also commentaries and positioning pieces written by those who would become responsible for implementing the emerging recommendations.

The Dearing Report included recommendations which set the agenda for the new Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) which was a new body established shortly before the Inquiry's report was published. During the Inquiry, senior staff from the QAA's predecessor, the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), were asked to provide research and evidence for the Committee to inform the development of recommendations on a new quality assurance regime. These authors were close to the Inquiry but, although their work informed the final report, they are outsiders who provided evidence to inform the Committee's opinions as it undertook its work.

The most significant of these contributors was Professor Roger Brown, a senior member of the HEQC who later lead the QAA. During the Inquiry, he wrote on how the quality and standards agenda would be met by the Higher Education Quality Council. Brown's book on the post-Dearing agenda (Brown, 1998) highlights issues of critical importance in the development of a quality and standards regime in the wake of Dearing which combines factual reporting with an overview of the new framework and positioning for the new QAA. Professor Robin Middlehurst, worked with Brown to inform Dearing's work on quality and standards also provided commentary on the emerging quality assurance regime.

In contrast Mr Norman Jackson, later a senior member of the QAA, wrote a series of articles in Quality Assurance in Education which set out a public statement of the new quality regime. While Brown and Middlehurst concentrate on the facts of the new quality assurance regime, Jackson (1997, 1998) seeks to interpret the Dearing Report. His articles aim to unpack the recommendations and explain what this will mean for the new quality assurance agenda taking the National Committee as a starting point for the development process and emergence of the new QAA.

The most significant body of commentary and critique is provided by academic journals and wider media articles which focus on the content of the report, consideration of the recommendations and undertake some high-level critique. The Times Higher Education published a series of articles from Vice-Chancellors and senior academics who were not directly involved in the work of the Inquiry. These articles include open letters to Sir Ron Dearing which raised concerns, overviews of evidence submissions and commentary and critique of the report and recommendations as the Dearing Report was published. This approach was also used by academic journals. The Journal of Geography in Higher Education published a collection of articles known as 'Arena Dearing' while Higher Education Quarterly published a Special Edition. The articles published in this Special Edition are among the most critical of the Inquiry and Report. They express disappointment in the Inquiry's work on a range of issues including its 'cavalier' attitude to the treatment of research and analysis. These complement the positioning pieces which served to anticipate the implementation of the Dearing recommendations.

There are also several academics writing on higher education who produced books and articles specifically on Dearing and the post-Dearing agenda. These include different viewpoints and suggest that there was range of opinion on the work of the Inquiry. Jary and Parker (1998) take a broad view of the post-Dearing agenda. Their book contains a series of papers which emerged from a conference held before the Dearing Report was published, many of which were updated following publication of the report. The collection considers different aspects of higher education and seeks to identify the issues emerging from Dearing and the impact for institutions. In contrast, Blake, Smith and Standish (1998) write as "philosophers of education" (p.7) attempting a critique of Dearing and the emergent situation from the perspective of the 'ordinary' academic. Their assessment more actively questions the

recommendations and challenges the view of the higher education system put forward by the Dearing Report. Other writers are more direct in their critique of the process, Committee and Report. Scott (1997a) writes independently and is direct in his critique of the process, Report and recommendations, including the suggestion that the Dearing Report pulled its punches when it could have been more radical in its recommendations; Tapper (1997, p.131-132) implicitly questions the lack of academic involvement by suggesting that social scientists are more persuaded by the impact of broad economic, social and political trends than the input of ad-hoc committees; and Trow (1998, p.97), writing from an international perspective, suggests that his reading of the commentary and critique of the Dearing Report indicates that academics in the UK are more interested in understanding how to implement the recommendations and as a result are not looking analytically and/or critically at report.

6.5 Insider and Outsider: those who were involved in the Dearing Inquiry but whose research interests meant that they also wrote from the perspective of an outsider

Professor David Watson was a member of the Dearing Committee and wrote extensively on the work of the Inquiry in subsequent years making clear his viewpoint as either an academic observer of the inquiry process or a member of the Committee.

Watson's chapter in Jary and Parker's (1998) book is written from the viewpoint of an impartial academic and although it considers the wider context, it distances 'Watson the academic' from 'Watson the member of the Inquiry'. In a later article (Watson, 2014, p.125) he makes clear that he is writing as a committee member. However, in his later work on Dearing, Watson uses a range of different viewpoints depending on the topic: writing with Taylor (Watson and Taylor, 1998) he provides a handbook of how to implement the recommendations from the Dearing Report and later writing with Amoah (Watson and Amoah, 2007) and again with Bowden (Watson and Bowden, 2000) he evaluates the impact and progress made in implementing the recommendations. In contrast, Watson and Taylor (1998) is a post-report positioning piece for academics responding to the recommendations in which he explains choices of wording in the report. Watson chooses to use language to indicate his viewpoint as an outsider referring to the Committee in the third person and noting specific areas which Sir Ron Dearing chose to front personally (p.99). Finally, Watson and Amoah (2007) includes a range of contributions from other authors with their own slant but Watson's contribution is a critical evaluation which draws more explicitly on his role as both insider and outsider.

The dual role of insider and outsider can also be applied to politicians associated with higher education generally and Dearing specifically. David Blunkett and Tessa Blackstone wrote contemporary political positioning pieces from their party's viewpoint before, during and after the Inquiry. The minutes of the National

Committee confirm that Sir Ron Dearing met with Baroness Blackstone in her role as Secretary of State for Education and Employment during the Inquiry. Following the General Election in May 1997, David Blunkett became Secretary of State for Education and Employment and received the Dearing Report. Bill Rammell also commented on the longer-term legacy of Dearing in his role as Minister of State for Higher Education.

The different viewpoints expressed in the narrative suggest that there was discussion and debate of the higher education issues which the Inquiry was considering and some which it was not. The insider and outsider groups engaged in a discussion of the work of the Inquiry which allowed different voices to be heard and provided an opportunity for those not directly involved in the Inquiry to make a public contribution. In this commentary, tactical Government positioning is balanced by sector critique and counter-suggestion which provides a more nuanced evaluation of the inquiry process and report. The distinction between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' highlights that a range of authors were writing on the Inquiry from different viewpoints and for different purposes. It also suggests that there was a high level of engagement and interest in the work of the Inquiry and that it was creating ongoing debate of current issues outside the political sphere.

6.6 What do the commentators and critics say about the Dearing Inquiry?

The second part of this chapter identifies the themes which are considered most often in the literature around the Inquiry. These themes were inducted by reading the articles on the Inquiry, selected as described in Chapter 5. This discussion is used as the basis for the development and discussion of the analytical framework.

This section concentrates on the critical commentary and its evaluation of the Inquiry. It is structured using the phases of the inquiry process outlined in Figure 5.1 and considers: the wider context for the initiation of the Inquiry; critique of how the Inquiry undertook its research and analysis; identification of the major themes which the commentary suggests should have been considered by the Inquiry; the gaps, silences and minor themes identified in the work of the Inquiry; speculation prior to the publication of the Dearing Report; initial reactions to the Dearing Report; and perceptions of the Inquiry expressed by commentators and critics.

The commentary and critique of the Inquiry is more concerned with responding to the Inquiry as an event and discussing particular themes. In comparison, discussion of the inquiry process and policy work undertaken is more limited and can be summarised in a few key observations.

6.7 The wider context for the initiation of the Dearing Inquiry

Much of the literature deals with the context for the Inquiry as an event. It outlines details of the Inquiry process, the effect and impact of the Inquiry and subsequent

report and provides thematic commentary. Kogan (1998) summarises this in his evaluation of the wider reception of the Inquiry:

> The broad remit of Dearing is welcomed as creating space for dialogue; encouraging large and abstract thinking; tacitly requesting high level responses; and creating a setting for institutional and personal thinking. However, there is a clear view that Dearing was appointed to follow a specific policy direction which was already set for it (p.48).

The Inquiry is characterised by a range of headline statements throughout the literature. These headlines suggest a range of views and responses to the Inquiry: Dearing is seen as a delaying tactic but also argued to not be a delaying tactic; Dearing is a distraction; Dearing is a manifestation of the regulatory state; Dearing was an "…officially planned systemic examination of the higher education system" (Watson and Taylor, 1998, p.xiii); Dearing was a product or creature of its time (Barnett, 1999, p.304) and the last of its kind (Watson and Amoah, 2007, p.81); Dearing was a fix which tinkered with the rest of the system (Rustin in Jary and Parker, 1998, p.305); Dearing was appointed to follow the policy presumptions set for it (Kogan, 1998, p.48); Dearing was not above politics and had its agenda set by the outgoing Conservative Government (Scott, 1997a, p.45); Dearing was a Treasury fix; Dearing was crisis aversion; Dearing was a Trojan Horse which served to legitimate "…one of the most significant post-war higher education policy changes" (Tight, 2009, p.86).

But the context for the Inquiry is reported in less favourable terms: the actions of the Government are interpreted as an automatic process of identifying an issue and setting up a review. This view that inquiries are initiated without wider thought attracts criticism from the academic community. The Government is criticised for commissioning multiple inquiries and reports (Dearing, Kennedy, Fryer) and seen as ignoring advice which conflicts with its preferred policy (Wagner, 2001, p.17).

However, direct criticism is not restricted to Government and the CVCP is also criticised for its role in the initiation of the Inquiry. The CVCP is criticised as not lobbying hard enough, and it is suggested that the CVCP needed to show that the proposed use of top-up fees by Universities in response to the funding crisis was not an empty threat. In contrast to the criticism of the CVCP, Gareth Roberts (interviewed as outgoing CVCP chair) suggested that the Inquiry was a response to successful CVCP lobbying and that he as CVCP Chair had sounded the alarm bells which lead to Dearing. The changes to the CVCP are also considered and evaluated in the critique with a focus on the emergence of the Russell Group as a CVCP splinter group, with the CVCP presented as supine and too close to Government.

In considering the membership of the Committee, Dearing himself is characterised by a range of descriptors: Dearing as 'Mr Fix-it', trouble-shooter, senior adviser, mandarin, respected, a safe pair of hands and an all-purpose fixer, Dearing transformed from "…senior civil servant to all-purpose educational guru" (Kogan,

1998, p.50), a fixer who sought to find an answer which would be "…acceptable to a new Government" (Shattock, 2012, p.133); Dearing as the "…Red Adair of educational oil field fires" (Watson, 2014, p.135). In comparison with the degree of criticism levelled at the Inquiry, the critique of Sir Ron Dearing is more positive although it does suggest that he was seen as a safe choice by the academic community.

The membership of the Dearing Committee is also considered as part of the establishment of the Inquiry and an early suggestion regarding the Inquiry process is that there needed to be a more radical committee to challenge the Government view. Kogan (1998) also questions the quality of the Secretariat and suggests that there was a lack of experience in the support provided:

> Nor was the Committee furnished with staff of high competence. None of its policy advisers had a significant track record in either policy analysis or research in higher education and science policy. They were mainly junior people from higher education quangos. (p.50)

However, alongside the question of Dearing's own capabilities lies a question regarding the Inquiry's vision and political skill. There is argued to have been a high level of Government influence and the real purpose of the Inquiry is questioned: was the Inquiry just a manpower planning exercise?

The Inquiry is also described by comparison with Select Committees more generally which are seen as unwelcome, secretive and opaque and with Robbins in particular. Dearing is judged to be more qualitative than Robbins which was quantitative; Jones and Little (1999, p.127) also suggest that it was more instrumental than Robbins and geared towards the social need of education and knowledge as a commodity, Dearing was also seen to have less impact than Robbins and not as readily an "…authoritative contemporary statement on the condition of higher education" (Tight, 2009, p.86).

6.8 Critique of how the Dearing Inquiry undertook its research and analysis

The reporting on the national consultation exercise provides different viewpoints of the value of making an evidence submission and questions how this evidence will be used by the Committee. The articles on the submission of evidence mainly focus on providing an overview of the content of selected submissions. These are positional pieces designed to draw out headlines and to highlight specific points from written evidence. This reporting highlights that Labour did a volte-face on fees: their original written submission to the Inquiry opposed student fees which they were later responsible for implementing.

This commentary also includes criticism of the consultation process. The suggestion is made that the consultation exercise under Dearing is a sham and that Government is trying to unduly influence the Inquiry based on multiple submissions being made by the DfEE. The literature raises concerns about the Inquiry's consideration of research and suggests that Dearing was lobbied more on the question of research

funding although this was explored in less depth as part of the work undertaken by the Inquiry. This reporting includes factual commentary on the content of key submissions from Government and main bodies as well as speculation on the expected outcomes of the Inquiry and recommendations which are likely to be included in the Dearing Report.

One comment often seen in the critique of the Inquiry is that, in comparison with the Robbins Inquiry, it excluded the voice of the academic community. The wider coverage of the Inquiry includes articles written by senior academics and Vice-Chancellors expressing personal opinion and seeking to influence the work of the Committee. The Times Higher Education published a series of open letters written directly to the Chair. The letters were not explicitly linked with formal evidence submissions and were written to highlight specific areas of concern from the perspective of Universities. A more formal approach was also taken in publicly sharing a range of reports which included suggestions for the Committee.

The literature on the role of royal commissions and national inquiries in the policy-making process suggests that their work should be objective and independent from Government with recommendations based on deliberation informed by expert opinion and free from political bias. However, in the case of the Inquiry there was direct criticism that it was reliant on Government sponsored research and specially commissioned reports rather than refereed academic papers; that there was exclusion of 'ordinary University teachers' and communities who would be impacted by recommendations and that the lack of a leading social scientist on the National Committee reduced its ability to create a research programme or challenge conventional wisdom. Scott (1997a) is particularly vociferous on this point:

> The Dearing Inquiry was forced to rely on the shoddy paraphernalia of management consultancy, policy reviews, "expert" seminars so popular in the 1990s. The deficiency shows. Some of Dearing's conclusions are wrong-headed because the arguments and evidence to support them are insubstantial and shallow. (p.46)

The wider commentary on the research which informed the Inquiry suggests that some research was less empirical and more analytical in nature; that the research was restricted to looking at a small number of areas in depth; and that a review of the bibliography reveals extensive use of secondary sources. Parry (1999) notes the tension between political expediency and intellectual authority which highlights the limitations of the research and analysis undertaken and suggests that there was some use of short-cuts.

The Committee's lack of a research plan and use of what appear to be disparate sources is also criticised as "A pot pourri of sources reflecting current concerns not longer term perspectives" (Shattock 1998, p.35) and an "…inadequate hotch-potch overweighted by official documents" (Kogan 1998, p.50). Parry (1999) suggests that prior to selection there was no overview of the evidence in totality. He draws attention to the fact that the call for evidence which formed the basis of the national

written consultation exercise was designed by the Secretariat before Committee was formally established; and that there was organic growth of the research exercise as the needs of the Inquiry became apparent rather than it being planned from the start. Certainly, there was wider discussion of the research undertaken as there was little use of senior academics looking at higher education and, despite significant interest in Committee's overseas trips and use of overseas comparisons, it was reported that the Committee did not meet academics on their trips overseas.

6.9 The major themes which the commentary suggests should have been considered by the Dearing Inquiry

The analysis of the articles selected for this study suggests that commentary on the Inquiry was particularly concerned with reporting on the themes of: student funding and support; quality in a mass system; greater use of IT in learning; increasing participation; employability and skills; and the role of universities in the regions. The dice was seen to be loaded towards the standards agenda by their specific inclusion in the terms of reference (Shattock 2012, p. 204) and more generally, authors are concerned about the effect of credentialisation or over-education on job satisfaction and seeing learning for its own sake replaced by narrow utilitarianism (Barnes, 1999, p.166).

The commentary highlights a need for long term solutions to the problems which are seen to have arisen in the new context for higher education. The Inquiry is seen as necessary in order to deal with: mass higher education; the emergence of the mode 2 knowledge environment; marketisation and governmentalisation of higher education; the creation of educational consumerism but also the nationalisation of higher education; the threat to institutional autonomy and the reaction against donnish dominion which has led to an irrational dependence on ill-informed consumer choice.

The coverage of student funding issues considers the current funding context and highlights the key concerns of Universities. Fees are seen as the only solution to the funding crisis; there is a significant effect from the erosion of the unit of resource and cuts to date on institutions and Universities need a sharper commercial edge to both do more with less and use efficiencies to counteract further cuts in funding. Issues in the wider funding context are also considered, including: the role and purpose of funding councils and research councils; funding for PGRs and research; the potential for private loan schemes; and a need for better funding of the research infrastructure. There are also suggestions for solving the financial crisis and opportunities for private funding initiatives and funding from the City are seen as one way to solve the financial issues in higher education.

The need to create quality in a mass system is considered including: the development of standards and comparable curricula; the abolition of degree classifications; credit transfers and accreditation of prior learning to enable partnerships and create

flexibility in courses and modularisation; and ensuring quality of teaching through teaching qualifications for staff.

The commentary on quality also extends to the need to provide a range of qualifications and build greater flexibility and institutional diversity into the higher education system at lower cost. The commentary considers the possibilities offered by: the potential expansion of sub-degree provision although it is noted that the development of a '2+2 model' and shorter degrees would not be supported by employers; the value of a 4-year Scottish degree; exploring the value of vocational PGT (including reference to the Harris Review of PGT which was rolled into the Dearing Inquiry); and consideration of mature learners (60+) to develop a lifelong learning agenda which, according to Shattock (2012, p.251), had little traction.

The role for universities in their region and locality including increasing collaboration is also considered and there is speculation regarding recommendations on research concentration, retaining the dual funding system and the potential means by which labs and research infrastructure may be funded.

6.10 The gaps, silences and minor themes identified in the work of the Dearing Inquiry

The commentary identifies a series of gaps and silences in the work of the Inquiry. The Inquiry was judged to have ducked or deferred key problems due to pressure of time. The problems which were not considered included consideration of: what Universities are 'for' or the nature of Universities; the role of part-time and CPD; and the need for student diversity with no detailed consideration of PGT and Mature students.

The Inquiry was also deemed to have considered issues in insufficient detail and these are identified as a series of minor themes. There commentary notes omissions around the concept of the Learning Society. The Inquiry considered the use of a higher education market but failed to consider the possibility that standards and quality could be provided through a market solution. The decision to use a conventional definition of higher education excluded further education and only hinted at alternative providers. In considering the question of research funding, the Inquiry concentrated on research infrastructure rather than the issue of what full funding meant for research; failed to consider a credit-based funding model, and left gaps in its consideration of the governance of institutions.

The terms of reference of the Inquiry gave its work a broad remit of developing a vision for the higher education system but the critical commentary around the Inquiry identifies a number gaps and silences. Jary and Parker's (1998) book is an attempt to explore ways to deal with the issues which were ignored by the Inquiry, but other authors concludes that there were simply too many loose ends and unanswered questions in the Dearing Report to provide certainty (Shattock 1998, p.36).

The commentary identifies several significant gaps in the work of the Inquiry and there is the impression from several authors that the Inquiry ducked or deferred key problems due to pressure of time. At a system level, there was no consideration of what Universities are 'for' or the nature of Universities (Blake, Smith and Standish, 1998, p.6 and Barnes, 1999, p.166), the Inquiry failed to consider the possibility that standards and quality could be provided through a market solution (Tapper and Salter, 1998, p.34) and, while recommendations were made on diversity, the Inquiry and its research were silent in this area. Several authors note that the Inquiry retained a conventional definition of higher education which excluded further education and only hinted at alternative providers. In the commentary considered there is a single reference to private or alternative providers as a means for further expansion.

At institutional level, there are gaps in the issues considered for both teaching and research. On teaching, there is criticism that issues regarding PGT and Mature students were not considered in detail (Tight, 2009, p.248) and that a credit-based funding model was not considered as a possibility despite consideration of credit accumulation and transfer models (Wagner, 1998, p.72). The role of part-time and CPD is deemed to have received little attention and there is criticism that the report does not include a recommendation for how employer-based training would be funded. On research, the Inquiry is argued to have ignored the issue of what full funding means for research and restricts concern to the research infrastructure: it does not address the issues in sufficient detail or depth and the research priorities are wrong for most disciplines. There were also gaps around the governance of institutions and merely 'nods in the right direction' on institutional autonomy (Barnes in Henkel and Little 1999, p.166).

Barnett considers the Inquiry's omissions from the perspective of the concepts put forward in the Report and notes omissions around the concept of 'the Learning Society' which was one of the main proposals for the development of the higher education system. He suggests that this can be identified as a lack of discussion regarding: what it is to be a student; where critical thought fits in a learning society; and the challenges of being a professional in a learning society (Barnett, 1998, p.17).

The gaps and silences in the Inquiry are mainly identified by authors writing after the Inquiry had concluded and the report had been published. The effect of the gaps and silences is judged to be that the Inquiry "…fails to engage the strategic issues" when the view is that "…the Dearing Report should have thrown some light on the loose ends and unintended consequences of the abandonment of the binary system" (Scott, 1997, p.52). This view is consistent with Trow (1998, p.103) "…nowhere does [Dearing] confront the problems of meeting its elite expectations at levels of funding for a mass system" and "The easy rhetoric of the Report successfully evades difficult problems" (p.107) suggesting that gaps, silences and limitations in the report are hidden by its written style.

6.11 Speculation prior to the publication of the Dearing Report

During the final stages of the Inquiry, there were pre-report leaks and mounting speculation on likely recommendations. The commentary has a sense of waiting for the Inquiry to report and an expectation that the recommendations would not be implemented until 1999 at the earliest. The extent of the pre-report speculation is highlighted by Smith et al (1999, p.294) who report an anecdotal assumption from a Vice Chancellor that the report will build on Dearing's review of 16-19 qualifications and will not be about funding.

In responding to the Dearing Report, the media suggested that the Inquiry was asked to find a means to fund a revolution which had already happened (Cowell, 1997) and there were concerns regarding the proposed fees regime (Castle, 1997). More significantly, it was suggested that the anticipated Fryer Report would be more relevant and would have a more greater impact than Dearing by raising the profile and importance of further education and developing a foundation for lifelong learning (Baty, Thomson and Swain, 1997). The Report was deemed to contain little in the way of new ideas and was not seen as a radical report, instead it was seen to complete the nationalisation of higher education begun under the Thatcher Government and to provide valuable recommendations which should alleviate current difficulties without real consideration of the longer term (Macfarlane, 1998). Wagner (1998) is particularly critical of the Government response to the Inquiry:

> And what happens? Before Sir Ron has even been allowed the courtesy of presenting his report, up pops the Secretary of State to say how grateful he is to Sir Ron and his colleagues for their work but he prefers a different funding solution to the one suggested by the Committee. (p.65)

While the Dearing Report was the new standard work of reference and an impressive study of higher education (Tapper and Salter, 1998, p.33), the scale of the final report was also seen to "...defeat intelligent reading and analysis" (Blake, Smith and Standish, 1998, p.1). Criticism also extended to the summary report which was judged to be bland and anodyne with language which was "…bafflingly reasonable" (Blake, Smith and Standish, 1998, p.2). Although there is the suggestion that "The fact that many of the recommendations are unsurprising need not deserve criticism" (Kogan, 1998, p.60), the broader commentary suggests that the response to the Dearing Report was more disappointment than challenge and that the expectations of the wider academic community had not been met. It attempted "…double-guessing at the unknowable" (Blake, Smith and Standish, 1998, p.3) and as a result became a statement which delivered too broad an agenda in too little detail, becoming uncontentious as a result: "The Dearing Report is all things to all persons" (Barnett, 1998, p.20).

The Report was judged by Barnett (1998) to be a complex report for multiple audiences with complex agendas in the emerging urban village of the global economy. While the Report provided something on everything for everyone; the

dominant voices are the economic interest and not the voice of students as learners. However, the Report was not seen to contain a coherent vision for higher education due to the changing landscape and context, it was "…part of the problem not the solution" (Trow, 1998, p.94). The commentary asks questions about the purposes of the report and what it is trying to achieve through this longer-term vision. While several authors refer to the report as a blueprint, the possibility that it is not a workable blueprint is also considered (Macfarlane 1998, p.91). This uncertainty undermines the status of the Report and reduces it to a vehicle for recommendations rather than a marker in thinking about higher education policy which includes a contradiction in the development of a national frame when "…deregulation appears solidly rooted in the official mind" (Neave, 1998, p.128).

However, sharper criticism of the Dearing Report suggest that it reads like a civil service report, is stiflingly bureaucratic, quashes innovation, is safe, proscriptive and prescriptive, conservative and petty, lacks a big idea, and is not a radical document. The perspective of the report being "…written from the outside looking in" (Trow, 1998, p.96) supports the idea that the Dearing Report was detached from the higher education community and that this affected its relevance, "…its recommendations, aside from those on funding and student support are largely irrelevant to the real problems of academics and their institutions" (Trow, 1998, p.98). The Dearing Report met the needs of Government but not the needs of Universities. It reflected a "…schizophrenic state of mind" (Tapper and Salter, 1998, p.24) in policy-making terms where expansion and innovation in higher education should be encouraged but should also be regulated. The Report was therefore "…mindful of its masters" (Tapper and Salter, 1998, p.102) but lacked understanding of academic life and how institutions really work, which meant that it created a "…managerial illusion" (Trow, 1998, p.113) rather than articulated genuine understanding.

In short, "The National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education... produced a number of well-considered recommendations but was unable to articulate a bold new strategic vision" (Scott, 2009, p.414). It failed to deliver a suitable response to the crisis and did not go far enough in providing a vision for the future:

> But Dearing, despite its espousal of innovation, is not a radical document - unlike Robbins which, for all its conservative inclinations, was. It is too rooted in the here-and-now; its arguments are tiredly familiar; less than a year after its publication it already seems dated. A missed opportunity indeed. (Scott, 1997, p.55)

The Dearing Report was seen as a missed opportunity but, despite its volume, one which was likely to have a short shelf-life as it was predicted that the Report would be quickly superseded and forgotten by Government:

> the Report will be of most use in the long term to PhD students who will use it as a primary source on the state of British Higher Education and modish debates about it, in the final years of the twentieth century. (Williams, 1998, p.1)

6.12 Initial reactions to the Dearing Report

"No-one expects the twenty-year review to be 'accurate' and certainly no one is seriously going to check in 2016 to see whether Dearing got it right" (Wagner, 1998 p.67). The initial reactions to the Dearing Report speculated about its potential longer-term impact. The literature includes consideration of the political context into which the Inquiry reported and the treatment of the report and recommendations by the newly elected Labour Government.

The Dearing Report was seen as a plan which was already dated and described as being "…prepared for the last war not the next one" (Macfarlane, 1998, p.91). Shortly after publication, the Inquiry was described as a "…the victim of a process which increases the probability of unsatisfactory policy development" (Robertson, 1999, p.117) with its output judged to be a pacification. The impact of the report was viewed as limited with Dearing's only strategic view being through the rear-view mirror (Robertson, 1999, p.120).

The Inquiry was seen to have created a "…highly marketable political package on standards and quality control" (Tapper and Salter, 1998, p.30) and the literature suggests that while the Committee got the technical recommendation on fees right they misjudged the political landscape (Robertson, 1999). Sir Ron Dearing requested that the recommendations should be treated as a package but this was not the Government's reaction to the Dearing Report. Several authors suggest that the fees recommendation was undermined both by a prior agreement made between the National Union of Students (NUS) and David Blunkett and by adherence to the outcomes of the spending review undertaken by the previous Government which meant that the fees recommendation was 'hijacked' or 'dumped' before it was even announced. The effect of the focus on fees during the Inquiry and the subsequent treatment of the recommendation was that a substantial piece of the Inquiry's work was wasted:

> It is a pity it could not have made the Dearing Committee aware of these objectives either before or after the election. If it had done so, much energy and effort would not have been wasted and could perhaps have been spent on other parts of the report which look in need of some further attention. (Wagner, 1998, p.75)

There is also a discrepancy noted between the quality of the Inquiry process and the fate of the recommendations: while the research on funding was a first-class intellectual exercise it was quickly made irrelevant due to politics (Wagner, 1998, p.76). The recommendations were seen as watered-down rhetoric from the Committee in order to be politically acceptable and upon publication of the report, "The Dearing proposals were holed below the waterline by backstairs politics inside government" (Shattock, 2008, p.198)

Later commentary on the Dearing Report criticises the Committee for not being radical beyond questioning the effectiveness of market control which had been a significant policy principle of the previous government. More widely the conclusion

seems to have been that the recommendations were largely irrelevant to the problems facing academics and institutions (Trow, 1998, p.98) and while higher education was treated as a national asset, the recommendations ran with the grain of best practice and historical commitments in the sector (Watson and Taylor, 1998, p.xi)

The role of the Dearing Report in consolidating a change in the balance of power from Universities to Government is also evidence in the suggestion that there was a limit placed on the independence of higher education and that Blunkett failed to take the chance to make effective reforms to the student funding regime which led to a need to undertake further review in 2003. The Inquiry is cited as an example of the limitations of public policy-making:

> The state has also become infinitely less pluralist in the way it makes policy. This began in the 1980s and has continued. But the state does not seem to be aware of the potential shortcomings of the present condition of policy-making or of the dangers of seeing higher education policy simply as a sub-branch of public policy-making as a whole. (Shattock, 2006, p.139)

The Government was seen to have initiated multiple inquiries to deal with overlapping issues. This may have created tension between the Dearing, Kennedy and Fryer reports which were all published in 1997. While the three reports were asked to consider different aspects of lifelong learning there were tensions between their terms of reference. The Inquiry looked at higher education; the Kennedy Committee was asked to review widening participation; and the Fryer Committee looked at lifelong learning. Tight (1998, p.477) observes that "…there are substantial commonalities between the Kennedy, Dearing and Fryer reports in the understandings of lifelong learning which they present, and in their strategies for developing a learning society"

The critique of the policy-making landscape suggests that terms of reference of the Inquiry and the traditionalist definition of higher education adopted by the National Committee proved insufficient to consider the issue of participation in sufficient detail. The critique also suggests that the Inquiry was detached from the higher education system which it was evaluating. This led to the initiation of the Kennedy Inquiry which had a focus on widening participation but also used a wider definition of higher education and considered, by extension, higher education provision offered in Further Education.

Despite the criticism of the detailed points of the Inquiry process and Dearing Report, the Inquiry is seen as a marker point in how we think about higher education. The process and outcomes were a comparable exercise to the German process of 'juridification' which served to reinforce centralisation at a time when other nations were moving away from this model (Neave, 1998, p.128). In evaluating the report, Neave suggests that cohesion and transparency were the leitmotifs of the Inquiry and were used to justify the emerging standards and benchmarking agenda. He puts forward the view that the Report shows the outstanding characteristic of

nationalisation of higher education. It seeks codification but does not support legislation and creates a regulatory system which works via quangos and is distanced from state machinery. An example of this can be seen in the creation of the QAA in advance of the Inquiry. If the Dearing Report did not endorse the quango it would have undermined its future role and the Government agenda it sought to deliver (Tapper and Salter, 1998, p.27).

In evaluating the longer-term legacy of the Inquiry, there is the suggestion that the Government was wrong to 'cherry pick' the recommendations and use the machinery of a quasi-state to implement recommendations on behalf of the Nation rather than the State. The recommendations therefore led to increased bureaucracy through the imposition of additional regulation implemented via quangos and limited tangible change.

The response to the Inquiry can therefore be summarised in three points: Dearing provided a "…framework for the evolution of higher education during the first half of the twentieth century" (Tapper, 1997, p.131); it delivered "…the State's manifesto for compliance and control drawn up by biddable public servants and deaf to the concerns of the academic community" (Robertson, 1999, p.130) and created a "…corporatist control model", a system which was "…over-regulated and under-planned" (Martin Harris quoted in Watson and Bowden, 2000, p.12).

Sir Ron Dearing (in Watson and Amoah (2007, p.175-179) later provided an outline of his regrets from the Inquiry. He outlined four main areas where the Inquiry could have done better: the Inquiry missed the needs of part-time learners; there was no analysis on the international business of HE; the Inquiry could have done more to develop the idea of the 'compact' at local, regional and national level; and the creation of differential fees was unfinished business. Dearing suggested that in some instances his personal interests shaped the emphasis of the Committee's work, noting that he had a personal interest in the possibilities of extending ICT use. However, with hindsight, his summary was that the recommendations on fees were remembered but the difficult and challenging recommendations were on standards.

6.13 Perceptions of the Dearing Inquiry expressed by commentators and critics

From the commentaries and critiques considered in this chapter it is possible to draw out the key themes regarding perceptions and impressions of the Dearing Inquiry and the Dearing Report based on a frequency analysis of how often the same themes are discussed in the secondary source material. General statements on the Inquiry suggest that it was considered and judged by contemporary commentators as a product of its time which was burdened by its terms of reference. The work of the Inquiry was constrained by the policy assumptions around it and was a response to the financial crisis rather than a considered evaluative process.

The research and evidence base were more qualitative and limited compared with that used by the Robbins Inquiry. The evidence base drew on existing and

Government data sources and papers and commissioned a small amount of additional data analysis on key areas of interest. The research undertaken on behalf of the Committee was uneven and covered a range of areas at a high level with a small number of areas being considered in any depth.

In undertaking its work, the Committee was deemed not to have engaged sufficiently with the academic community. The Committee membership excluded academic representation and the Secretariat consisted of staff lacking in experience of the national inquiry process. The knowledge and experience of the Committee and the Secretariat lacked the knowledge and experience required to undertake the Inquiry to the standard desired by the wider academic community.

The Dearing Report was noted for its physical rather than intellectual significance. The Report was judged to be silent in several areas and to have gaps both in its content and the quality of its argument. The recommendations were seen as prescriptive but also broad and inclusive with something for everyone.

The Report was seen as the victim of an unsatisfactory policy-making process with its most significant recommendation quickly undermined by Government (Robertson, 1999, p.117). The medium-term impact of the Inquiry was anticipated to be a system which was over-regulated and under planned but its longer-term legacy was likely to provide a blueprint for the higher education system which made an attempt to work to the 20-year horizon set by the terms of reference.

6.14 Development of the analytical framework

The concepts discussed in Chapter 3 and the secondary literature considered in this chapter form the basis for an analytical framework which is used to explore the primary source material of the Dearing Inquiry. Audit Culture, codification and accountability provide the necessary conceptual underpinning and a frequency analysis of the secondary literature informs the more detailed analytical framework which works at two levels: it considers the comments on the wider policy work undertaken by the Inquiry; and identifies themes in the secondary literature to guide the analysis of the primary documents. This is visualised in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1: outline of the analytical framework developed from the literature review and commentary and critiques of the Dearing Inquiry

Conceptual level	Audit Culture, codification and accountability		
Level 1	Statements on the Dearing Inquiry process		
Level 2	Major themes	Minor themes	Gaps and silences

The research questions are concerned with the policy work undertaken through the Inquiry process. This means that it is helpful for the top level of the analytical framework to be based on high level observations regarding the Inquiry process from the commentary and critique. These provide context for the more detailed themes and features of the Inquiry.

Discussion of the Inquiry process and policy work undertaken by the Inquiry is limited in the wider commentary and critique. It can be summarised in five statements. The Inquiry was seen to be burdened by its terms of reference which required it to follow a specific policy direction which was already set for it. National inquiries should be independent of Government and objective with recommendations based on deliberation informed by expert opinion which is free from political bias. The Inquiry lacked a coherent research plan and relied on consultancy and management reports which meant that it was not seen as independent of Government. It was also deemed to have ducked or deferred key problems due to lack of time. The Inquiry was argued to be a victim of an unsatisfactory policy development process and an example of the limitations of public policy-making.

The frequency analysis used to interpret the thematic coding of the articles was used to inform the selection of major and minor themes. This enabled the major and minor themes to be distinguished using a quantitative criterion. These were identified during the first reading of the material and refined in later reading cycles. The gaps and silences were identified during the second reading of the articles. Analysis of the articles selected for this study suggests that the main body of the analytical framework should use a three-level structure: major themes, which are defined as areas which the commentary suggests formed the main focus of the Inquiry's discussion; minor themes, which are defined as areas which are identified in the commentary as being considered in insufficient detail; and gaps in the work of the Inquiry which are defined as areas which the commentary suggests warranted discussion as part of the Inquiry process but were perceived to have been omitted.

The commentary on the Inquiry highlights the following major themes: student funding and support; quality and standards; greater use of IT in learning; increasing participation; employability and skills; and the role of universities in the regions.

Minor themes are identified as: the concept of the Learning Society; the use of a higher education market to control standards and quality; full funding for research; student diversity and institutional governance.

The commentary identifies gaps and silences in the work of the Inquiry: further education and alternative providers; consideration of the purpose and nature of Universities; the role of part-time and CPD; PGT and Mature students; and consideration of a credit-based funding model.

6.15 Summary

This chapter reviewed the secondary material selected to inform the study. It considered who was writing about the Inquiry and discussed these under the categories of: Insider; Outsider; and Insider and Outsider. It considered the themes highlighted in the commentary and critique and used this as the basis for developing an analytical framework which establishes the major and minor themes and gaps in the work of the Inquiry. This framework will inform analysis of the findings and the conclusions developed in Chapters 10 and 11.

SECTION 3: Findings

This section uses the documentary evidence of the Dearing Archive to develop a detailed and systematic account of the Inquiry process. The section is structured in three chapters. Chapter 7 considers the set-up phase. It provides an overview of the process which builds on the outline provided in Chapter 4. It considers how the National Committee approached its work including the structure of Committees and Working Groups, the actors involved in the Inquiry, their roles and level of involvement. The working phase of the Inquiry is discussed in Chapter 8. The chapter outlines how the work of the Inquiry was conducted, how evidence was collected and when, where and how these sources were significant in the thinking of the Inquiry. The links between the National Committee and the Working Groups and the role of the Chair and Secretariat are also considered. The final chapter in this section considers the closure phase of the Inquiry. The substantive work undertaken during this phase was the final drafting and approval of the Dearing Report. The chapter considers how the National Committee received the final reports of the Working Groups, how the evidence was weighed by the National Committee and where evidence was used to inform the Dearing Report and its recommendations.

Chapter 7. Set-up phase: establishing the Dearing Inquiry

7.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the inquiry process and actors involved. It begins by developing an overview of the Inquiry process and considers how the National Committee approached its work. The actors involved in the Inquiry are considered in terms of the roles they played and their level of involvement in its work.

The discussion is supported by two appendices: Appendix 1 provides a timeline and structure for the Inquiry. It maps the sequence of meetings and shows the order in which the Working Groups and Sub Groups were established. Appendix 2 lists the actors involved in the Inquiry. The appendix includes three tables: the first provides details of the membership of the committees, working groups and sub groups and the secretariat. This table includes the members' substantive employment at the time of the Inquiry. The second maps attendance at each meeting and indicates the number of meetings attended by each member. The third lists attendees at the seminars arrange by the National Committee.

7.2 Overview of the Dearing Inquiry process

In Chapter 4 it was observed that the National Inquiry form is adaptable to the specific needs of the issue at hand and that Committees of Inquiry can make choices in how they conduct their work to respond to their terms of reference. The Inquiry followed the process for national inquiries and is a strong example of this type of Government policy tool. It demonstrates the common features of a National Inquiry. The Inquiry was structured as a hierarchy of Committees and Working Groups which undertook an extensive and bespoke programme of research to inform the National Committee's views on the issues identified in the term of reference. The Inquiry also demonstrated the adaptability of the National Inquiry process. For example, the use of commissioned research to supplement existing data and reports and the employment of an independent research team to analyse responses to the national consultation exercises is a variation not seen in other national inquiries.

Figure 7.1 summarises the process of the Inquiry.

Figure 7.1: summary overview of the Dearing Inquiry process.

Set-up			Working		Closure	
Propose	**Initiate**	**Establish**	**Conduct**	**Synthesise**	**Draft**	**Conclude**
Identify Chair and Secretary						
	Announce Committee					
	Agree and announce ToRs and membership	First meeting (May 1996)	← Meetings cycle →			Last meeting (June 1997)
		Agree ToRs, remit and methods. Draft Workplan	← Revise Workplan →			
		Develop early individual views on issues	← Revise and agree collective views on issues →			
		Agree research requirements and initiate activities	Revise Research Plan ←		Receive research outputs (February 1997) →	
			← Discussion with stakeholders →			
		Identify WG topics and members	*First meeting (July 1996)*	*Meetings cycle*	*Last meeting (June 1997)*	
				1st WG report to National Committee (December 1996)	*Final WG report to National Committee (March 1997)*	
		Draft report	← Re-draft report →			Final approval (July 1997)
						Receive and publish report.
						Thank and disband Committee (July 1997)

Committee and WG views inform drafting and re-drafting of the report

(Note: shaded boxes indicate activities undertaken outside the Inquiry including those undertaken by Government, *italics* refer to processes undertaken by Working Groups).

The Inquiry was structured in three main phases: a set-up phase to establish the work of the Committee; a working phase where collective views were developed,

informed by consultation and research; and a closure phase which drew together ideas and recommendations for the Dearing Report. Within these phases, the Inquiry followed the stages of the national inquiry process identified in Chapter 4.

7.3 The announcement of the Dearing Inquiry

The Inquiry was asked to consider complex and wide-ranging questions regarding UK higher education. It was initiated in the form of a national inquiry which offered a level of independence and rigour as well as the scale of exercise required to address the level of complexity. A departmental committee would not have provided the same level of rigour or process being more applicable to single issue problems. The Kennedy and Fryer Committees, which were contemporary with Dearing, were both examples of less complex questions being addressed through departmental committees.

The Inquiry was unusual in being established with bi-partisan support. The timing of the announcement and the political context for the initiation of the Inquiry suggest that, while Hansard is silent on how this consensus was achieved, it was an important precursor to the Inquiry. Explicit bi-partisan support of this type is unusual in inquiries in the UK. It is more common in inquiries initiated in America where it is used to indicate that an issue is sufficiently significant to rise above party politics. In the UK, large-scale inquiries have been established since Dearing but have not included explicit statements of bi-partisan support. The Inquiry followed an initial review by the Department for Education and Employment which had identified the range and complexity of the questions to be addressed although there was no explicit link drawn between the DfEE Review and the work of the Inquiry either at its announcement, in the terms of reference or during the Committee's early discussion. The announcement of the Inquiry, its cross-party support and the appointment of Sir Ron Dearing as its Chair, were welcomed by the House of Commons.

The Inquiry was announced by Gillian Shephard, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, on 19 February 1996. The purpose of the Inquiry was "…to make recommendations on how the shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the UK over the next 20 years" (HC Deb, 19 February 1996, vol.219 c22). In responding to the announcement of the Inquiry, Members of Parliament (MPs) welcomed the appointment of Sir Ron Dearing and sought reassurance that the Inquiry would build on the principles established by the Robbins Committee, include a commitment to lifelong learning and finding a solution to the funding crisis. This suggests an expectation of public accountability which was strengthened by bi-partisan support for the Inquiry. MPs' comments at the time of the announcement may also indicate an expectation that the Committee was accountable to Government and not to Universities. The Secretary of State emphasised that the Inquiry would use a broad definition of higher education. It would seek to ensure the future success and

strength of UK higher education in a global context and to develop a system which would be suitable for future needs.

The terms of reference expanded this statement and the Committee was asked:

> To make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years, recognising that higher education embraces teaching, learning, scholarship and research. (Dearing Report, 1997, p.5)

7.4 Who was involved in the Dearing Inquiry?

The announcement of the Inquiry initiated a process which was populated by actors. Its establishment led to the appointment of members of the Committees, Working Groups and Sub groups and the Secretariat. It also involved wider stakeholders through consultation activities and individual academics who were commissioned to undertake research.

The Inquiry conforms to the three-tier model developed by Howlett (2010). This classifies actors in the policy process as: proximate decision-makers at the top tier who act as consumers of policy advice; knowledge producers at the bottom tier who produce data and analysis on an issue; and knowledge brokers in the middle tier who work between analysts and decision-makers to develop policy. The members of the National Committee form the top tier with a role of receiving advice and developing collective views which informed recommendations. The Secretariat form the middle tier of knowledge brokers. Their role was to act between the different activities initiated by the Inquiry, for example creating a link with the independent analysis team which was appointed to work on the national consultation responses. The bottom tier of knowledge producers is represented by members of the Working Groups, external data providers including the DfEE and HEFCs, academics commissioned to undertake research and wider stakeholders who submitted evidence in response to the national consultation exercise.

Appendix 2, Table 2.1 provides a list of those involved in the Inquiry and their professional background. This has been compiled using the Report of the National Committee, the Report of the Scottish Committee, Annex B (Dearing Report, 1997) and supplementary sources where there are gaps in the detail.

Appendix 2, Table 2.2 has been compiled using the minutes of the Inquiry to create an overview of those in attendance or sending apologies to each meeting. It includes attendance by individuals commissioned to undertake research.

Appendix 2, Table 2.3 provide a list of attendees at workshops and consultation events who were invited from the wider stakeholder group.

7.4.1 Appointing members of the National Committee, Working Groups and Sub Groups

The circumstances under which the Inquiry was initiated meant that it needed to be independent of Government and this may have created a tension with Ministerial expectations of accountability. The Dearing Committee was asked to consider controversial questions in a highly political context. The members of the Committee, particularly the Chair, needed to be credible. Sir Ron Dearing was asked to Chair the Inquiry because, as a career Civil Servant, he was trusted by Government and had experience of running similar reviews. As the former chair of the Universities Funding Council and CNAA he also had direct experience of higher education which meant that the choice of Dearing was also palatable to the academic community.

The National Committee comprised sixteen members and a Chair who were drawn from a range of professional backgrounds. The Chair and Secretary were announced several weeks before the Committee first met. Sir Ron Dearing and Mrs Shirley Trundle were asked to act as Chair and Secretary because they had relevant experience and expertise. Mrs Trundle oversaw the initial review by the Department for Education and Employment and her appointment as Secretary created a direct link between this work and the Dearing Inquiry. The reasons for the appointment of the other National Committee members is less clear. The early minutes do not include any comment on how members were selected or approached to join the Committee and it is possible that the Committee met for the first time at its first meeting.

The majority of members were employed in roles in Further or Higher Education and several had experience in organisations which worked between higher education and the Government (for example, funding councils or qualification regulators); six were current or recent students, the majority being current sabbatical officers; the remaining members represented a range of industries including banking, retail, technology, pharmaceuticals, power property, the NHS and urban regeneration, this group also included a solicitor and a former leader of a trade union; three were involved in secondary level education and skills; and the Chair was a former civil servant and Chair of private and public sector organisations. Appendix 2, Table 2.1 lists the members and provides details of their professional backgrounds.

The National Committee noted at its first meeting that it lacked representation from further education institutions and the North of England. The Committee intended to address this gap by involving suitable representatives in other areas of the Inquiry. The establishment of Working Groups offered an opportunity to broaden the scope of the Inquiry and to increase the range and expertise of those involved in the process.

The National Committee agreed that it should establish Working Groups early in the process. The Working Groups provided an opportunity for members of the National

Committee to become more involved in exploring specific topics and a separate committee was established to review higher education in Scotland. The establishment of Working Groups provided an opportunity to co-opt individuals who would help to fill any gaps in expertise or interests and members were co-opted either because they were known to members or following a recommendation to the National Committee.

The Scottish Committee was an important addition to the Inquiry. Its establishment reflected the need to consider the specific national context and model of higher education in Scotland and the differences between this and the English model. In contrast, higher education in Wales and Northern Ireland was considered as part of the work of the National Committee and, while there were recommendations specific to Northern Ireland, these were developed as part of the wider work of the Inquiry rather than independently. The Scottish Committee was led by Sir Ron Garrick and operated with more independence from the National Committee than the other Working Groups. Its report, which was published as part of the Dearing Report, was also referenced separately as the Garrick Report.

7.4.2 Appointing the Secretariat

The Secretariat was led by Mrs Shirley Trundle, a senior Civil Servant in the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE). It provided administrative support to the Inquiry process. The Secretariat attended meetings and evidence sessions, provided written briefings, presentations and guidance to the Groups and managed administrative business of the Groups. This included interacting and corresponding with members and invited attendees on behalf of the Chair.

The Secretariat consisted of 29 staff who were employed in four different roles: fifteen acted as Secretaries to the Groups, twelve were personal and/or support assistants to members of the Inquiry and there was also a Media Adviser and a Support Manager. The Secretariat was drawn from a more limited range of backgrounds compared with the members of the National Committee: seven were working at the DfEE; a further three are likely to have been working at the DfEE although their background is not noted in the Report; seven were working for quangos and regulatory bodies (HEFCE, SHEFC, FEFC, the National Council for Vocational Qualifications and the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority); one was working at a University; and one was from Coopers & Lybrand the assurance, accountancy and professional services firm. The backgrounds of ten staff acting as PAs or support assistants were not recorded.

7.5 Establishing the National Committee's working practices

The establishment of a National Inquiry implied a consistency and rigour of process. The use of this policy-making tool brought a history of quality and effectiveness which characterised the working practices of national inquiries.

The early meetings of the National Committee completed three main pieces of work: they considered and confirmed the terms of reference; agreed a research programme; and established working practices. The National Committee's consistency with the process for national inquiries brought a rigour to its work but the Committee was not constricted by the national inquiry form. The Committee selected research and consultation tools which were appropriate to its purpose and remit.

The National Committee took a broad view of its terms of reference while adhering to a higher education rather than 'tertiary education' remit. Consideration of the terms of reference formed part of a discussion of broad philosophical questions on the purposes of higher education. Members provided their thoughts in advance of the meeting and the initial scope of their ideas was wide and diverse. The scope of the Committee's interest included developing benchmarks and performance management of higher education, consideration of how to quantify student demand and an enthusiasm for providing genuine lifelong learning which included a range of progression opportunities. The Committee was also keen to consider the need for investment in higher education and its national role in supporting economic growth. The broad early discussion identified key themes of student funding and support, ensuring value for money through efficient use of resources for teaching and research, and a need to understand consumer sovereignty in a world where students pay for education.

The Chair was directive in how the National Committee should undertake its work. The foundation of the Inquiry's working methods was defined by the Chair who made proposals for the logistics of the process at the first meeting. This included the number and length of meetings, how many working groups should be initiated, how wider stakeholders would be consulted and the role of the Secretariat. The practical aspects of the National Committee's work were managed by the Secretariat through a project plan. During the Inquiry process, the Committee's business was managed through agendas and covering letters circulated with the meeting papers. Updated versions of the project plan were also circulated later in the process.

The Committee was mindful that it would need to manage wider interest in its work and was keen to make its discussions transparent after its work was complete. To achieve this the Committee agreed that the papers from the Inquiry should be made available in the Public Records Office three years after the Committee concluded its work. In the early stages of the Inquiry, the Chair emphasised the need for confidentiality during the Inquiry process. He proposed that National Committee meetings and evidence sessions should be confidential whereas wider consultation events should be open to members of the press. The National Committee established two key principles at the start of the process: members would not take public positions beyond the Committee's statements to avoid the need for minority reports; and they would not be involved in drafting submissions from bodies with whom they had an existing relationship.

7.6 How did comparison with the Robbins Inquiry inform the process of the Dearing Inquiry?

The National Committee considered the process followed by the Robbins Inquiry (1961-1963) and discussed the vision for higher education developed by the Robbins Committee. However, contrary to ministerial expectation, the Inquiry did not build on the work of the Robbins Inquiry. The Committee noted the Robbins Committee's vision for higher education but chose to develop its own view of the aims and purposes of a mass higher education system in its contemporary context. It compared its own context with that for the Robbins Inquiry but did not compare its work with other national inquiries and select committees (Tight, 2009).

The Robbins Inquiry had smaller impact on the work of the Inquiry than was anticipated by Ministers. Ministers expected that the Inquiry would follow the process of a national inquiry. The Robbins Inquiry was a strong example of the form and it was expected that there would be a similarity of process between the two inquiries. The Inquiry was also expected to build on the four principles for the higher education system established by the Robbins Inquiry. The National Committee considered the Robbins Inquiry process and the Robbins Report as part of its early work to establish its working practices and develop collective views on the main issues it had been asked to address. However, while the Inquiry was informed by the work of Robbins, the comparison between the two inquiries was used as a starting point for the Committee to develop its own process and views.

The Committee's discussion of the aims and purposes of higher education was informed by comparison of the higher education context for the two Inquiries. The Committee was keen to "…consider developing its own terms for describing the purposes of higher education and to avoid simply repackaging Robbins" (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/15). Contrary to expectation, while the National Committee considered the work of the Robbins Inquiry, it chose to be informed by Robbins rather that to build on its recommendations.

Rather than using the Robbins Report as a starting point for its work, the National Committee used the structure of the Robbins Inquiry as a model to inform development of its workplan. The Secretariat provided a paper which outlined the work of the Robbins Inquiry and included key facts on how the Robbins Committee undertook its work. The National Committee considered the operational detail of the Robbins Inquiry in terms of the number and length of meetings held, the scale of the research programme, how the research was reflected in the final report and the use of overseas visits.

The National Committee considered the operation of the Robbins Inquiry in more detail in a meeting with Professor Claus Moser, who had acted as the Chief Statistical Officer to the Robbins Inquiry. Professor Moser attended for a private evening dinner which followed the fourth meeting of the National Committee

(*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16). The discussion with Professor Moser covered three areas: an overview of how the Robbins Committee had operated; the main issues which the Committee had sought to highlight in its report; and areas where Professor Moser wanted to see recommendations from the Dearing Committee. The discussion identified several issues which were later considered by the Inquiry including a need to more closely integrate teacher training with higher education; concern that if the development of higher education were determined by student choice then it might become totally divorced from employer needs; and the level of consistency between the Robbins Report which advocated a general first degree to force greater breadth in the sixth form and the Dearing Review of 16-19 qualifications which, if implemented, would broaden the sixth form experience. The discussion also considered specialisation at postgraduate level and the case for accelerated study to achieve a standard higher education qualification which were not later pursued.

Following the meeting with Professor Moser, the Committee considered the work of the Robbins Inquiry and was critical of how the Robbins Committee conducted its work. The Robbins Committee was judged to be inward looking and to have used few external groups to understand the wider needs for higher education. This meant that its recommendations would not meet contemporary expectations of the system.

The comparison with Robbins led the National Committee to agree that it should work to develop an understanding of the current changes in higher education in its own context. The Committee considered that the cultural and social role of higher education was to equip students with the skills to understand and debate issues rather than for cultural transmission. They considered that this fitted with the emergence of the concept of lifelong learning and learning as a leisure pursuit. These points were echoed in its consideration of the form of higher education which considered how higher education could adapt to meet the changing needs of students and stakeholders in a society which, the Committee suggested, was markedly different from how the Robbins Committee conducted its work.

7.7 Defining a research plan and commissioning research

The National Committee developed a work plan which aligned with the main issues under consideration and commissioned a range of research activities. The work plan was supported by an outline of the activities to be undertaken and evidence for consideration. The Committee drew on existing data and reports, collected evidence through evidence sessions and surveys and commissioned additional research from subject specialists.

The short timescale set for the Inquiry meant that the National Committee needed to quickly establish its research needs and initiate a programme of work. The Committee agreed that its research activity needed to be wide ranging to reflect the breadth of the terms of reference but this created tension with the time available to

complete the work. To save time, the Committee made the decision to take a wide view and only go into depth in selected areas. The Committee often chose to draw on pre-existing work where it was available and to supplement this by commissioning new research.

The National Committee was keen to ensure that, as far as possible, its recommendations were grounded in evidence. The Committee initially identified five areas where it wished to focus its research efforts:

- the wider context for higher education in the UK: the Higher Education market; the wider role and function of HE in society; and the beneficiaries of higher education;
- the choices students make in going to university: what students get out of higher education or why they choose not to go to university; the location of study relative to home; student expectations and experiences; and the effect of student financial support;
- learning and teaching considerations: the length of academic year; the use of part-time teaching staff; costs of courses and modules; and the structure and nature of curriculum;
- skills and employability: graduate prospects; the needs of graduate employers and the skills gap between graduation and employment; and local and regional economies;
- comparisons with higher education overseas: overseas graduates; higher education in other countries; and comparative information on USA, Europe, East Asia, Thailand, and Taiwan over the next 10 years.

The Secretariat used this list as the basis for an initial research plan. The key elements defined by the National Committee were considered in July 1996. The Secretariat provided details of the sources of evidence for issues to be addressed. This list was structured into five categories: aims and purposes; the activities of higher education; the tools of higher education; the framework of higher education; and the drivers of higher education. The research activities and discussion points were listed by process but there is no indication of how the different sources would be weighed by the Committee in terms of their importance. The plan was shared with the funding councils, the CVCP and the DfEE to avoid duplication and to manage the research programme. During the Inquiry, members were encouraged to add to the plan as they identified additional areas for research.

The development of the research plan early in the Inquiry process provides an insight into how the Committee chose to undertake its work. In sharing its plans with Government, the CVCP and the funding councils, the Committee suggested that it had an awareness of its accountability to stakeholders. The Committee also retained a degree of independence by treating its stakeholders consistently and not allowing greater influence from any one area. The research plan also helps to demonstrate the range and depth of the Committee's work in a way which implies that there may

have been a wider and tacit agenda of codification at work. The Committee chose to operate across its terms of reference but its research went into depth in selected areas where there was a perceived need for future performance management and, potentially, more formal regulation and audit of institutional activities in line with the emerging Audit Culture.

The national consultation exercise was established early in the Inquiry process. This was the largest single piece of research undertaken by the Committee and sought stakeholder views on issues across the Committee's remit. At its first meeting, the National Committee agreed to undertake a national consultation exercise. The Secretariat had already prepared a draft questionnaire as the basis of the national consultation exercise stakeholder views on the main issues being addressed by the Committee. The National Committee quickly approved the draft questionnaire and the national consultation exercise was launched in July 1996.

7.8 Establishing the inquiry structure: a hierarchy of Committees, Working Groups and Sub Groups

The National Committee's choices about how it would work were driven by the need to cover the breadth of its terms of reference within the given timescale. The rationale for establishing the Working Groups was that it would increase its working capacity and, in the case of the Scottish Committee, operate as an independent exercise to review a specific national context for higher education. The Working Groups served three further purposes: they allowed the Inquiry to consider specific themes in greater depth; enabled the Committee to operate effectively across its terms of reference; and provided an opportunity for engagement with the academic community.

The Working Groups were established to consider thematic areas identified by the National Committee. The Chair submitted a paper to the first meeting which proposed that the National Committee should establish five working groups (on the developing role of higher education in teaching; the developing contribution of higher education to the UK research effort; the effective use of staff and other resources in higher education; the implications for teaching and learning of information and communications technology; and quality and standards). The Committee agreed that groups in four further areas should be considered (funding, the structure of higher education, governance issues and the economic impact of higher education).

In practice, the two thematic lists were consolidated as the final seven Working Groups. A separate committee, referred to in the media as the Garrick Committee, was established to address Scottish higher education. (The Scottish Committee is referred to as a Working Group after this point.) The impetus for establishing a separate Committee is less clear from the discussion of the National Committee. While the other Working Groups were established through discussion and

identification of thematic areas for further investigation, the Scottish Committee was initiated early in the process without prior discussion. During the Inquiry, the Committee maintained a high profile in the media and there was significant interest in its work from the Scottish press which was more concerned with report and critique of the work of the Scottish Committee than the Inquiry more generally.

The Inquiry was structured using two Committees and seven Working Groups, one of which also had two Sub Groups. The initial steer from the National Committee was that the Working Groups should identify overarching themes and explore these in sufficient detail to provide the National Committee with a range of considered options.

Appendix 1 provides a timeline which notes of the sequence of first meetings and the dates of the meeting held. This is summarised in the table below:

Table 7.1: sequence of first meetings of the Committees and Working Groups

Group	Date of first meeting	Number of meetings
National Committee	21 and 29 May 1996	20
Research Working Group	8 July 1996	7
Scottish Committee	15 July 1996	11
Information Technology Working Group	20 July 1996	7
Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group	24 July 1996	5
Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group	2 September 1996	6
Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Group	11 September 1996	8
Funding Working Group	30 October 1996	13 (12 held)
Structure and Governance Working Group	15 November 1996	6
Structure Sub Group	9 January 1997	2
Governance Sub Group	5 February 1997	3

The Working Groups operated independently from the National Committee but their work was aligned through the membership and secretariat. The National Committee Chair actively encouraged involvement in the Working Groups which ensured good links between the Committee and Working Groups. Each Working Group was chaired by a member of the National Committee and included at least three National Committee members. The National Committee were also asked to recommend external experts who could be co-opted to provide additional expertise and agreed that each Group should include student representation. The Working Groups were provided with support by the Secretariat and the level of this support varied depending on the scale of business being managed by the Group.

7.9 Overview of the terms of reference of the Working Groups

The National Committee established Working Groups to consider specific themes in more detail. Their terms of reference provided a structure for the work but there were areas where the remit of the Groups overlapped. The need to co-ordinate the activities of the Groups was managed by the Secretariat and through cross-membership of the Working Groups and National Committee.

This section provides an overview of the terms of reference for each of the Working Groups. The Groups are ordered chronologically by date of first meeting.

7.9.1 Research Working Group (RWG)

The Research Working Group was asked to provide information, analysis and comment on two main areas: higher education's distinctive contribution to the country's research base and how excellence in research could be promoted.

At its first meeting, the Group agreed to expand its terms of reference to include "…the need to provide structured careers, training and support to post-graduate research students within Universities, including preparations for commercial research management and consideration of the appropriate quantum, sources and mechanism for funding research" (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/43).

The Group's initial discussion was informed by reports on different aspects of research. These included research capability and equipment, papers on Industry/University links and a summary of the Harris report on Postgraduate Education. The Group sought additional information on the post-graduate research student market and international comparisons on research expenditure and links with industry. The Group also considered the National Committee's thinking to date on issues relating to its terms of reference including funding research in the Humanities and Social Sciences, the arguments to support funding of research and the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE). The discussion formed the basis of the Group's later work and highlighted a need for clarity regarding the definition of selectivity and concentration and the balance between teaching and research.

7.9.2 Scottish Committee (SC)

The work of the Scottish Committee was more significant than the other Working Groups in terms of its importance and the scale of its activity. Its working process mirrored that of the National Committee and its work adopted the same standards and rigour applied to a review of higher education in Scotland. The Inquiry was asked to consider UK higher education but it is notable that while there was a separate Scottish Committee, consideration of higher education in Wales and Northern Ireland fell under the National Committee.

The Scottish Committee was established to consider and advise the National Committee on: the distinctive aspects of Scottish higher education; the potential

contribution of, and the requirements for and of, Scottish higher education, in the Scottish, UK and international context; and factors particularly relevant to the future shape, range, organisation and funding of Scottish higher education (Dearing Report, 1997, *Report of the Scottish Committee,* Annex B). The establishment of a separate Committee recognised the distinctive nature of Scottish higher education and its national context. The Committee operated as a smaller version of the National Committee both in terms of process and opinion. The views expressed in its discussion often aligned with that of the National Committee but the Scottish Committee disagreed with the National Committee on its use of a higher education rather than a tertiary education definition for its work, the creation of a single quality assurance agency and the recommendation to implement a student fees regime.

The Scottish Committee followed the same process as the National Committee and drew on the work undertaken by the Working Groups to inform its recommendations. There was a formal announcement of its membership and the Committee's remit outlined a wide agenda which it managed through a separate workplan from the National Committee, initiating its own evidence sessions and drawing on relevant submissions to the national consultation exercise. The Scottish Committee membership included Sir Ron Dearing and the Committee received regular updates on the work of the National Committee. The Committee was concerned that there was insufficient representation from the financial sector and agreed that Professor Euan Brown should be asked to fulfil that role through evidence to the formal consultation process.

The Scottish Committee operated independently but was keen to align itself with the National Committee and to draw on the work of the Inquiry. The Scottish Committee discussed how it could contribute to the working groups and intended to write to the Working Groups where there were specific points to be made from a Scottish perspective. The Scottish Committee also drew on the work initiated by the National Committee. However, the timing of its first meeting meant that the National Committee had already begun to develop its views on some issues and had almost finalised arrangements for the national consultation exercise.

The Committee's early discussion identified areas of distinctiveness for Scottish higher education and areas where it needed to undertake work independently of the National Committee. The Committee identified issues relevant to a Scottish context as: four-year degrees; articulation of courses which enabled collaboration and student choice; higher than average participation rates; a tendency for Scots to study in Scotland; and more democratic governance structures than in other UK institutions. The Committee agreed to develop a database of information on Scottish institutions which would create a snapshot of the current situation and enable benchmarking to inform its discussion.

The Scottish Committee noted early in the process that it was interested in developing an understanding of the tertiary education sector and applied a broader definition than that used by the National Committee which was concerned with

higher education. The Scottish Committee's view differed from the National Committee. It was mindful of the distinction between further and higher education and felt it necessary to consider both publicly funded and non-publicly funded higher education. The National Committee was aware that SHEFC's preference was for a Tertiary Education Funding Council and that this had been echoed by their counterparts in Wales and Northern Ireland. It felt that this would be harder to achieve in England due to the volume of funds which would be committed to a single funding body under the tertiary model.

During the Inquiry, the Scottish Committee worked differently from the National Committee and Working Groups. It engaged directly with the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) and other quangos, for example the Scottish Vocational Education Council (SCOTVEC). Its meetings featured a larger number of attendees who were asked to provide presentations and to engage in the Committee's discussion. The Scottish Committee developed views which were specific to a Scottish perspective but also made proposals which directly influenced the National Committee. The idea to develop a qualifications framework which was more like a climbing frame than a ladder was made by a representative from SCOTVEC to the Scottish Committee and was later adopted by the National Committee.

The Scottish Committee also made more use of findings from institutional visits in Scotland. Members reported on visits to: the University of Paisley where it discussed CAT schemes at a University with a distinctive access mission and strong links with further education; the University of Stirling where it explored the impact of semesters on higher education provision; Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design provided an opportunity to consider art and design in higher education; and discussion at the University of Edinburgh considered the contribution of universities to public life and their economic role.

The Scottish Committee also met with national bodies to discuss the specific needs of Scottish higher education. An example of this was a meeting with the Universities Association for Continuing Education (UACE(S)) to discuss the role of the UACE, funding for continuing education, developing the concept of lifelong learning and developing new qualifications which were more marketable to students.

7.9.3 Information Technology Working Group (ITWG)

The Information Technology Working Group had a more confused start to its work and spent several meetings agreeing suitable terms of reference. The Group's original terms of reference asked it to consider how new technology could impact on learning and teaching. The first revised terms of reference expanded the main statement to include consideration of how the exploitation of information resources and the application of new technologies across higher education would impact on teaching and learning, research and the management of institutions. The terms of reference were eventually agreed at the third meeting through further revision. This expanded the remit of the Group to identify opportunities and developments which

would be technologically feasible, educationally practical and desirable to ensure cost effectiveness, quality, accessibility and support research, the wider role for higher education and further education and the competitiveness of UK Higher Education.

The Group agreed that it needed to set its priorities quickly. It identified the cost effectiveness of higher education, quality and effectiveness of learning and teaching and the accessibility of higher education to learners as the three main themes for consideration. The Group developed a workplan and a framework for its report to the National Committee early in the process. These documents informed its discussion of working practices. The Group was concerned to engage with stakeholders and agreed that its discussions may need to be supplemented with visits to institutions and possibly a seminar to discuss relevant issues with experts.

7.9.4 Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group (ERWG)

The Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group's terms of reference covered four areas: the economic case for expansion of higher education; the supply of highly qualified graduates to meet changing employment needs; the role of higher education in regional and local economies; and the potential of higher education as a major UK export. The Group noted a degree of overlap with the remit of the Funding Working Group. Its proposed schedule of work envisaged that four meetings and one seminar would be held.

The Group's early discussion considered a set of key themes: general issues about quantifying rates of return to higher education, specifically private and social rates of return; whether additional research would be required to inform the work of the Group; the regional impact of higher education; education/industry links; the potential for a record of achievement; student support and the levels of debt accumulated by students; the potential of a voucher system or learning bank and the potential for transferring purchasing power to students to change the size and shape of higher education; the dual support mechanism and the Teacher Training Agency; the potential for improving utilisation by extending the academic year and the implications of the global nature of economic activity for higher education.

7.9.5 Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group (TQSWG)

The Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group was unusual in quickly drawing on external expertise and discussion papers provided by members to inform its discussion.

The terms of reference asked the TQSWG to assist in formulating recommendations on research and scholarship by providing information, analysis and content on: higher education's role in personal development for the benefit of individuals and society; the implications of changes in employer needs and an enlarged and increasingly diverse student body; and the maintenance of quality and standards. The Group agreed that the terms of reference should also include consideration of taught

postgraduate education, mechanisms to quality assure modular provision, and the balance of subject provision to meet wider demand for graduates.

The Group identified specific areas for consideration as: franchising of higher education provision in further education colleges; standards and the work of the Joint Planning Group (JPG) which proposed the creation of a single quality assurance agency; quality and standards in teaching and research; use of IT in teaching; employers' views of teaching; postgraduate education; and the development of generic and specialist skills in graduates.

At its second meeting, the Group received a presentation from the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) which highlighted four substantive themes: postgraduate education; the development of intermediate awards; the breadth and depth of the curriculum; and student support services. It also drew on comparisons with the Australian model of quality and standards assurance to identify potential for lessons to be learned from the Australian system.

The Group drew on the expertise of its members to inform discussion early in the process. Its discussion of employer needs was informed by Ms Anne Bailey's representation of the needs and views of employers in general. Professor David Watson provided papers on the issues in postgraduate education arising from the Harris Report and the development of intermediate awards. Sir Ron Dearing presented a paper on breadth in the curriculum which built upon his review of qualifications at 16-19 which provide wider context and Dr Madeleine Atkins proposed the development of a new type of role between a personal tutor and careers advisor to provide better advice for students.

These views supported the Group in developing its thinking. The Group agreed that postgraduate provision required more discipline and more standardisation but that this should not be created at the cost of innovation and change. It agreed that the broader qualifications framework should be sufficiently flexible to allow students to move between academic and vocational qualifications but that there should be an awareness of the 'shelf life' of qualifications and that admissions practices would need to change to enable the development of broader degrees which encompassed a greater range of generic skills.

7.9.6 Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Group (SCEWG)

The terms of reference asked the Group to consider two main areas: the effective recruitment and deployment of staff in higher education; and the effective use of other resources in higher education. The Group was aware that it would share common issues with the other working groups and that the National Committee had already initiated work which would be relevant to its remit. The early discussion covered a range of issues: use of IT; patterns of learning; supporting learning; assets and estates management; balancing mechanisms for responsible asset management with institutional autonomy; and the barriers to generating efficiencies in higher education. The Secretary also provided a draft schedule for the work of the Group.

This envisaged a total of five meetings to consider the main issues and draft the report for the National Committee.

The Group was keen to hold its own evidence session however, there was some hesitation in taking the idea forward. The Chair was concerned not to set a precedent which may lead to other Working Groups proposing to hold evidence sessions and felt that it should be clear that this was a being arranged to consult specific organisations on issues which would not be suitably covered elsewhere. The Group's terms of reference also meant that it was asked to consider staffing issues at a time of wider unrest and dispute. The National Committee provided a steer that the Group should avoid discussing the current pay dispute and concentrate on long-term issues. The evidence session was held on the 10 December 1996 and included representation from a range of trades unions and professional bodies. The sessions focussed on specific themes and a longer timescale to avoid conflation with the current dispute. The evidence session enabled discussion of: human resources issues and trades unions; human resources issues and Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA); staff development issues; finance and estates issues; and more general human resources issues.

The Group began to develop content for its report to the National Committee early in the process. It quickly developed a view on the potential for increased use of IT in higher education and agreed that the final report should refer to work over the last twenty years to develop learning and teaching practice. As the IT industry was beginning to develop learning packages, Higher Education would need to move fast to lead this development rather than working against it. This presented both barriers and benefits to greater use of IT in learning and teaching and the Group agreed that it should set out strategies and models to ensure that this development was costed correctly, and that the development was in line with the principles on which higher education was built.

7.9.7 Funding Working Group (FWG)

The Funding Working Group's terms of reference asked it to analyse the strengths, weaknesses and adequacy of the current arrangements for funding higher education and student support and to consider alternatives to them. The Group's work was highly dependent on the wider political context and its early discussion was informed by a short report from Sir Ron Dearing and papers from Coopers & Lybrand which confirmed members' initial views on funding and the development of a new funding model.

The Group's early discussion was heavily focussed on the development of funding models and agreeing the assumptions which would underpin the model. The Group considered that funding for teaching and research should be balanced with the need for accountability and defined three possible models on this basis: a full market type model where funding for tuition was passed to students and maintenance was available for students from lower socio-economic groups; a combination of public

funding direct to institutions and to students who would be responsible for their maintenance costs; and public funding distributed to institutions with maintenance costs funded by the student.

The Group also considered the options for funding teaching and student maintenance including the need for special funding arrangements for medical education, teacher training and other factors such as museums and galleries. The potential of a learning bank was identified early in the process but was a longer-term option. The Group also suggested that it needed to take a view on the size of the sector and where expansion should be encouraged as well as responding to the Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group's consideration of equity and the implications for funding equal provision.

7.9.8 Structure and Governance Working Group (SGWG)

The Group was asked to consider the future structure and governance of the sector, having regard to the findings of the other working groups. The remit included consideration of the place for regional or sub regional activity by institutions and the effective relationship between internal systems of decision taking and external agencies.

The terms of reference for the SGWG asked it to consider two issues in detail and to respond to the work being undertaken in other Groups. The SGWG was the only Group to establish sub-groups and chose to establish separate groups to consider structure and governance.

The Group agreed that a new vision for higher education would require new governance arrangements which built on current models and considered that it should address issues associated with the structure of higher education including the reorganisation of institutions through mergers and transfers and the issues of regional overlaps in provision rather than collaboration between institutions. The Group was keen to hold 'off the record' discussions with proponents of new structures to understand the rationale for their proposals and to understand the benefits.

The Group's early discussion considered the current structure of higher education and the legal status of institutions providing publicly funded higher education. It was supported by covering papers drafted by the Secretariat which collated existing reports and provided suggested items for discussion. The Group's attention was drawn to a CVCP paper on Governance and accountability and the Nolan Report on Standards in Public Life. This included a table which compared governance features across different types of institution.

7.9.9 Governance Sub Group (GSG)

The Governance Sub Group was asked to consider institutional governance with specific reference to: the purposes of governance and accountability; aspects of effective governance; management, competence and institutional flexibility; risk, borrowing and risk management; appropriate management models; ways of handling

difficult issues and the role of students' unions. In terms of the governance of the sector, the Sub Group was also asked to consider the role and responsibilities of funding councils and the nature and extent of external accountability requirements.

7.9.10 Structure Sub Group (SSG)

The Structure Sub Group was established later in the process in response to a comment from the National Committee that the Structure and Governance Working Group's interim report had a stronger focus on governance than on structure. The Working Group asked the Sub Group to consider: any weaknesses in the current institutional structure; what alternative and better structures may be needed in the future; how the structure of institutions should be determined and managed in the context of further expansion; whether collaboration should be explicitly encouraged and if so, the scope and barriers to collaboration; and whether there should be a closer match between the structure of qualifications and the structure of institutions.

7.10 Early drafting of the Dearing Report

The Dearing Report was not written at the end of the Inquiry process. The National Committee began to identify ideas and recommendations early in the process. The Secretariat played a significant role in drafting and re-drafting the report. In the early stages of the process, draft chapters on the context for the Inquiry and the state of UK higher education were prepared and discussed by the National Committee.

During the early meetings of the National Committee, discussion of the main themes led the Committee to consider its final report. The Committee considered a first draft of the chapter on the aims and purposes of higher education in September 1996. This discussion enabled the Committee to summarise its thinking on key ideas which should be included in the Report.

Three ideas were identified at this stage of the process which were later included in the Dearing Report: higher education teachers should be qualified; courses should be modular; and there should be consideration of a scenario where students paid for their higher education. The Committee also considered the rationale for its establishment which it summarised as:

> the funding crisis in higher education brought about as a result of the three-fold expansion in student numbers in ten years, a 30 percent reduction in per capita payments over the same time period with little thought for how to maintain standards and quality. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17)

The Committee considered its role to be the development of a vision for higher education, which was inspirational, set world class standards and had high aspirations. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17)

7.11 Summary

The Inquiry was established as a national inquiry rather than a departmental or select committee because it offered a level of independence and rigour which could be applied to complex questions. It was unusual in being established with bi-partisan support which may suggest that HE was recognised as a cross-party, national issue which should be taken as far as possible out of politics.

The National Committee comprised of sixteen members and a Chair who were drawn from a range of professional backgrounds. The Chair, Sir Ron Dearing, was a career Civil Servant with experience of higher education. This made him an acceptable choice for Government and the academic community. The Secretary, Mrs Shirley Trundle, was a senior Civil Servant in the DfEE with strong connections across Government.

The work of the Inquiry was structured as three main phases which followed the national inquiry process. The Inquiry established a hierarchy of Committees and Working Groups which undertook an extensive and bespoke programme of research to inform the Committee's views on the issues identified in the term of reference. This included the Scottish Committee which operated as a small, independent inquiry. The National Committee commissioned a programme of research to supplement existing data and reports and employed an independent research team to analyse responses to the national consultation exercises. This is a variation on the common national inquiry model and is an example of the adaptability of the national inquiry form.

Chapter 8. Working phase: undertaking the work of the Dearing Inquiry

8.1 Introduction

This chapter considers the working phase of the Inquiry process. In the set-up phase the National Committee considered its task as defined by the terms of reference, established a structure and process for the Inquiry and commissioned research. In this phase, the Committee and Working Groups investigated issues and synthesised research findings to develop a collective view of the issues and begin to develop conclusions and recommendations. During this stage, the Secretariat drafted and re-drafted chapters of the Dearing Report as findings emerged and recommendations were confirmed.

8.2 Developing independent working practices

As the work of the Inquiry became established the National Committee demonstrated a new confidence and independence in interpreting its terms of reference without seeking further guidance from Government. To enable more effective working the Committee sought greater consistency and control of the Inquiry. The Secretariat was asked to adopt a more formal and rigorous approach to managing committee business.

During the set-up phase the National Committee established a process and working practices informed by an understanding of the terms of reference and demonstrated an awareness that it needed to be accountable to multiple stakeholders. The terms of reference had previously been treated as a directive statement from Government which the Committee needed to address. As the Committee moved into the working phase it revisited the terms of reference as a guide to its work rather than a specification. The Committee discussed its terms of reference with a new confidence which was not evident in the earlier discussion. It agreed that it would not seek further clarification on the Government and Labour Party's respective approaches to future public expenditure on higher education with the rationale that it was within the Committee's remit to consider the issues and develop its own recommendations.

As the National Committee became established it defined a set of guiding principles to support consistency in its work. The Secretariat also began to manage the business of each meeting more closely to ensure consistency and to keep the work of the Inquiry on track. The change in the management of the Committee's business was reflected in the style of the agendas, the provision of more formal reporting and in the style of the minutes. The early agendas contained a few short bullet points. In the later stages of the Inquiry the agendas become more detailed with each discussion item given an objective to specify the action required of the National Committee. The Secretary began to provide a Report to each meeting which updated the Committee on the operational and administrative work undertaken by the Secretariat.

A 'Chair's report' or 'Chair's business' was established as a standing item at each meeting and provided an update on the Chair's work outside the formal meetings. The more rigorous approach to managing the Committee's business was also reflected in the style of the minutes which move from discursive records of discussion to shorter notes of decisions and actions.

In October 1996, there was a change in the Committee's approach to its work. The Committee reconsidered its working methods and expressed concern that meetings based on a high volume, paper drive process could stifle creativity. Much of its work to date had been reading and discussing background materials. The Committee agreed to implement administrative changes to manage its business more effectively: issues would be set out at the start of papers which would be colour coded to distinguish between papers for information and for discussion.

The Committee's concerns regarding lack of time were also exacerbated by growing external interest in the work of the Inquiry. At the start of the process, the National Committee agreed a set of principles regarding confidentiality. However, during the Inquiry there were two leaks from the Research Working Group to the press. This led to further changes to control the circulation of papers to the Committee and there was an increase in the number of papers tabled at meetings. Later in the process, the Chair explicitly chose to table his paper on the Vision for Higher Education rather than circulating it in advance of the meeting because he was concerned about the potential for a leak.

8.3 Managing the short timescale for the Dearing Inquiry

The Inquiry was criticised for ducking or deferring key problems due to lack of time. The Committee worked to a short timescale and its ability to meet the publication deadline was an ongoing concern. The Committee made choices about the relative importance of the themes covered by its terms of reference. This led to variation in how deeply different areas were considered.

Throughout the working phase, the National Committee was concerned about its ability to complete its work on schedule and meet its deadline. In January 1997, the Committee considered what it could achieve in the remaining time and agreed that it would be possible to reach definitive conclusions on major issues. In more minor areas further work would be undertaken by the Committee or other bodies but these would not be considered in the same depth. The Committee reflected on the issues it had not yet covered in depth and identified: collaboration; the international dimension (particularly in Europe); students who were outside the funding net; the role of existing government organisations such as funding councils; the relationship with industry and public/private partnerships; possible use of lottery money; and consistency with the 16-19 agenda. The National Committee also suggested to the Funding Working Group that, teacher training apart, it did not have the time to fully consider professional education and its relationship to higher education. These

considerations suggest that the Committee not only sought to operate across its terms of reference but to understand the range of the higher education system. The tension between depth and breadth in the Committee's work hints at a wish to map the higher education system in detail and to capture an overview of the higher education system of the late 1990s.

8.4 How did the level of involvement by members of the National Committee and Secretariat change over time?

The effectiveness of policy processes depends on the participating actors. The National Committee may have initially underestimated the amount of work to be completed when it established the Inquiry process and working practices. As the Inquiry progressed, it demanded more time and involvement from members. This led to a smaller group of core actors emerging who provided the drive and momentum to complete the work. The wider role of the Chair and Secretariat in linking the different activities and groups was critical in holding the process together and ensuring that the National Committee could meet its reporting deadline.

The National Committee was at the heart of the Inquiry. As Chair, it was Dearing's responsibility to work with the Secretary to ensure that the processes and groups worked effectively and it was the responsibility of National Committee members to play an active role in the Inquiry including membership of the Working Groups. The expectations of National Committee members were outlined early in the Inquiry in a paper on Working Practices. The paper proposed that the National Committee Chair would also chair the Working Groups and that members of the National Committee would volunteer to be members of specific Groups.

The workload of the Inquiry appears to have been higher than the Committee initially anticipated and, as the Inquiry progressed, members of the National Committee became more involved in additional meetings and discussions. The minutes of the early meetings suggest that the Committee expected to conclude its work with a relatively modest time commitment give the scale of its task. The membership of the Working Groups demonstrates an increasing level of involvement from the National Committee in terms of numbers of the Working Groups established and in the breadth of their involvement.

The National Committee formed the core group of actors in the Inquiry but there is a degree of variation in how deeply involved individual members were in the wider work of the Inquiry. The different levels of involvement meant that a core and peripheral group emerged in the membership of the National Committee. This is also true of the Secretariat where a smaller core group acted in the role of Secretary to multiple Groups while a more peripheral group either worked across several groups or attended occasional meetings.

A core group of members emerged who attended several of the Working Groups and took on the role of Chair to the Working Groups. They also gave more of their time

to the Inquiry through attendance at formal and informal events such as the National Committee dinner and the evidence sessions and provided papers to influence the Committee's views. The more peripheral members of the National Committee played similarly important but smaller roles in the Inquiry. Their contribution was made through involvement in National Committee discussions and occasional attendance at other events rather than direct engagement as a Chair or member of multiple Groups.

At the first meeting, members of the National Committee were asked to indicate their preferences for membership of the Working Groups. Six working groups were initially planned with two further Working Groups and two Sub Groups established later. The table below shows the proposed membership of National Committee members on Working Groups as at 19 July 1996, the actual membership collated from attendance at meetings (Appendix 2, Table 2.2) and attendance at evidence sessions as noted in the transcripts.

Table 8.1: comparison of members proposed and actual involvement in Inquiry activities

	Involvement in proposed Working Groups (excluding National Committee)		Actual involvement Working Groups (excluding National Committee)		Attendance at evidence sessions
National Committee Member	**Member**	**Chair**	**Member**	**Chair**	
Professor John Arbuthnott	3	1	2	1	7
Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde	1	0	1	1	4
Sir Ron Dearing (Chair)*, **	6	2	8	1	24
Ms Judith Evans	1		2	1	0
Sir Ron Garrick**	1	1	0	1	3
Sir Geoffrey Holland	2	1	2	1	3
Professor Diana Laurillard*	2	0	3	0	7
Mrs Pamela Morris	1	0	1	0	12
Sir Ronald Oxburgh	3	0	4	0	5
Dr David Potter*, **	2	0	1	1	0
Sir George Quigley**	1	0	0	1	7
Sir William Stubbs*	1	0	4	2	3
Sir Richard Sykes	1	1	1	0	7
Professor David Watson*, **	1	0	4	0	8
Professor Sir David Weatherall	1	0	1	0	0
Professor Adrian Webb*, **	2	0	4	0	4

Mr Simon Wright*	2	0	3	0	16
* chaired or attended a seminar on behalf of the National Committee ** attended dinner for National Committee held 19 November 1996 (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/18)					

In the proposed Working Groups membership, Sir Ron Dearing has the highest levels of involvement, with representation on the rest of the Groups being spread more evenly across the other members of the National Committee. The actual membership suggests that as the Inquiry progressed a core group emerged who played a greater role. The data on attendance at the evidence submissions also highlights that there were some members who attended a greater number of the sessions but overall had lower involvement in the Working Groups.

At the start of the Inquiry process Dearing intended to attend and chair all Working Groups but as the work of the Inquiry expanded, he delegated and shared his responsibilities which created opportunities for other members of the National Committee to take the lead in some areas. During the Inquiry process, Dearing was a member of eight groups, including the Scottish Committee, but in most instances the role of Chair was transferred to other members of the National Committee. Dearing chaired all the evidence sessions and was the only member of the National Committee to be present at all the sessions. He also read all the written evidence submissions, attended formal and informal meetings, drafted and presented papers to the National Committee, proposed a new student funding model and was directly involved in drafting the Report. This high degree of involvement was made possible as Dearing was working full time on the Inquiry from January 1997 having resigned from the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority.

During the Inquiry, Professor David Watson and Professor Adrian Webb both took on larger roles than initially planned. This included greater involvement in the Working Groups, chairing seminars and presenting papers to the National Committee. Sir George Stubbs also played a greater role on the Scottish Committee as Dearing's alternate and attended the John Kay Seminar. Sir Ron Garrick and Professor John Arbuthnott were involved in fewer groups but were more involved in the Scottish Committee which required a higher level of involvement than the other Working Groups.

Several members attended more of the evidence sessions. Mr Simon Wright attended 16 of the sessions, was a member of three of the Working Groups and attended the John Kay Seminar. In comparison, Mrs Pamela Morris attended 12 of the evidence sessions, was involved in one Working Group and reported on the visit to the USA with Professor John Arbuthnott and Sir William Stubbs.

Other members of the Committee had more limited involvement in the wider work of the Inquiry either due to other commitments, or ill health in the case of Dr David Potter. Baroness Brenda Dean, Professor Sir David Weatherall and Sir Richard

Sykes were involved in fewer Working Groups, attended fewer evidence sessions and had a higher number of apologies to National Committee meetings.

8.5 How did the National Committee engage with the Working Groups during the Inquiry?

The Working Groups operated independently of the National Committee. Their working practices were consistent with those of the National Committee and followed the same process. Links between the Working Groups and the National Committee were created through their membership and the Secretariat.

The Working Groups reported twice to the National Committee. Interim reports were presented in December 1996 and final reports were submitted in March 1997. The interim reports provided an overview of the work to date, the areas of investigation and evidence considered, and the early conclusions drawn. The reports informed discussion of the areas of agreement and disagreement between the Groups and provided a clear overview of their intentions for future work which enabled the National Committee to delegate specific questions to the Working Groups. The National Committee noted that there was an encouraging degree of consistency in the interim reports with many common themes arising and no substantive areas of disagreement.

Following consideration of the interim reports, the National Committee amended its steer to the Working Groups. In addition to creating a range of options to inform the National Committee's recommendations, the Groups were also asked to consider how a transition from the current position to the desired outcome could be achieved.

8.6 How did research inform the work of the Dearing Inquiry?

The Inquiry was criticised by commentators as lacking a coherent research plan and relying on consultancy and management reports. In the set-up phase the National Committee developed a high-level research plan. This drew on three main sources: existing data and reports; new research commissioned by the National Committee and Working Groups; and specialist advice sought from invited experts. The research plan was designed to meet the perceived needs of the National Committee. However, its connection to the research needs of the Working Groups is not clear.

The research activities undertaken during the Inquiry can be summarised as:

- A major national consultation exercise undertaken through a formal call for evidence;
- 6 smaller surveys to consult with staff in higher education, employers, schools and embassies;
- 7 conferences and consultation events including 2 workshops;
- 4 workshops arranged for the National Committee;
- 37 formal evidence hearings;

- 150 informal meetings
- 33 visits to higher education institutions in the UK
- 8 visits to higher education institutions overseas.

The Inquiry's use of research was an area where direct comparisons between Dearing and Robbins were likely to be drawn by commentators. The Robbins Committee was notable for the scale and quality of its work and the legacy of Robbins had an influence on the quality and authority which the National Committee sought to achieve. In the absence of standardised and routine data being collected on higher education, much of the work of the Robbins Inquiry was devoted to collecting and presenting a detailed statistical picture of the nature and range of British higher education. In contrast, the Inquiry could draw on a wide range of data but its short timescale meant that the Committee needed to be selective in its use of data.

The National Committee's research plan sought to balance three key factors: the Committee needed to consider a wide range of data on a variety of topics; the political context for the Inquiry meant that the Committee needed to engage, and to be seen to engage, with a wide range of stakeholders including employers and the academic community; and the Inquiry was conducted over a short timescale which meant that the amount of additional work which could be commissioned and completed was limited.

The Committee used a range of sources of data and drew on existing, high quality data and analysis from organisations including the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS), the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP), Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Council for Industry and HE (CIHE) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) at reasonably short notice. As the Committee's work developed, the Secretariat were regularly asked to obtain additional data on specific topics. The Secretary's notes report on progress with requests for data and suggest that personal connections between the Secretariat, the DfEE and other bodies were drawn upon to obtain new and bespoke analysis as new requirements and themes emerged.

During the Inquiry, the National Committee continued to consider and review reports and analysis as it became available. Similar work was also undertaken by the Working Groups and reported to the National Committee. While the National Committee was criticised for its use of management reports, the minutes of the tenth meeting suggest that external reports were not necessarily accepted at face value. The Committee had requested that the DfEE develop data to inform a vision for the future direction of the system. The paper provided included a cover paper from Government and annexes from the DfEE which noted that accurate forecasting was difficult because the Committee was also planning a model which moved to lifelong learning and more part-time. Members questioned the origin of the paper which was

felt to express strong views and give undue emphasis to selected pieces of work. The Committee was critical of the exclusion of part-time projections, international comparisons and growth of HNC/D work in Scotland.

8.7 How did the Inquiry seek the views of internal and external experts?

The National Committee drew on the expertise of members as well as external experts. During the Inquiry, members of the National Committee and the Secretariat provided reports on a range of topics and undertook research to inform the Committee's discussion. Members of the National Committee provided reports on overseas and UK visits and drafted papers on specific topics. For example, a paper on the National Health Service and Higher Education, drafted by Sir David Weatherall; academic drift from Professor David Watson; stakeholder analysis by Professor John Arbuthnott; and a memo on student funding options proposed by Professor David Watson and Professor John Arbuthnott.

The use of invited experts enabled the Inquiry to seek views from a wide cross section of stakeholders but also to restrict ongoing involvement to a select few. Experts were invited to contribute to the work of the Inquiry in one of three ways: as regular attendees at meetings; as occasional attendees to present the results of commissioned research; or as experts attending a single meeting or seminar to discuss a specific issue. Representatives of selected organisations were also asked to contribute through evidence submissions as part of a wider consultation exercise.

Appendix 2, Table 2.2 list where individuals were 'in attendance' at meetings in an expert capacity. Experts attended meetings of five of the Committees and Working Groups (excluding members of the Scottish Committee who attended the National Committee). Experts were not invited to attend the Working Groups on Research, Economic Role of Higher Education, Teaching Quality and Standards and Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Groups.

The most significant contribution from external experts was the work undertaken by London Economics who were commissioned to develop and test a new student funding model. Senior staff from London Economics regularly attended the Funding Working Group. They also attended occasional meetings of the National Committee. As the work of the Inquiry progressed, experts were also invited to meetings to present research findings which informed the Committee's discussion. Professor Ronald Barnett attended both the National Committee and the Scottish Committee to present early findings from the national consultation exercise. Professor Claire Callendar also attended to present findings from survey work commissioned by the National Committee.

The experts 'in attendance' represented a range of organisations and specialisms. Many were academics providing expert views or representing specialist projects (including research undertaken on behalf of the Inquiry). The views of the academic community were presented more broadly by the Committee of Vice Chairs and

Principals and Standing Conference of Principals. The Committee also sought views from a wider stakeholder group. Representatives from quangos and regulatory bodies including funding councils and quality assurance organisations were invited to specific discussions as were representatives from Government departments, the National Audit Office and from the private sector.

Most experts were invited to attend one meeting for a specific discussion. Two experts were asked to attend two groups. Professor Alistair MacFarlane, Principal, Heriot-Watt University gave presentations to both the Information Technology Working Group and the Scottish Committee in September 1996 and Professor Bill Robinson from London Economics attended both the Funding Working Group (19 December 1996) and the National Committee (22 May 1997).

Experts were also invited to attend one of the four seminars which the Inquiry arranged as an opportunity for wider discussion. The experts invited to attend the seminars supplemented, rather than duplicated, those already attending other Groups. Each of the seminars was also attended by members of the Inquiry. The full list of attendees at the seminars is included in Appendix 2, Table 2.3.

The National and Scottish Committees held a series of evidence sessions with selected bodies to collect further evidence and views on the work of the Committee. 123 individuals were involved in the evidence sessions and, except for Mr Cliff Allan (HEFCE) and Mr David Wann (SHEFC), those attending the evidence submissions were not otherwise involved in the work of the Committees, Working Groups or Sub Groups.

8.8 How did the Dearing Inquiry seek views from stakeholders?

The consultation work commissioned by the National Committee served two purposes: it informed the Committee's thinking; and it provided an opportunity for engagement with stakeholders including the academic community and employers. The broad consultation undertaken by the Committee was an attempt to base its recommendations in a robust and reliable evidence. It also suggested a wish to ensure that there was transparency and accountability in its work.

During the set-up stage, the National Committee commissioned the compilation of written evidence through the national consultation exercise, invited written evidence and surveys. It also sought engagement with stakeholders through evidence sessions, seminars, conferences, meetings and visits in the UK and overseas. This work was undertaken during the working stage of the Inquiry and the results were reported to the National Committee and Working Groups to inform their discussion.

8.9 Consultation through the national consultation exercise, invited written evidence and surveys

8.9.1 National consultation exercise

The most substantial research project initiated by the National Committee was the national consultation exercise. The questionnaire was developed by the Secretariat in advance of the first meeting of the National Committee where it was agreed that there should be separate questionnaire developed to collect the views of employers and schools. The consultation was launched in July 1996 and the Committee noted the receipt of early responses in September 1996.

The table below summarises the responses to the national consultation exercise using the classification system created by the team which analysed the responses. The Dearing Report (1997) states that the consultation exercise elicited 840 responses from a range of stakeholders. 803 are listed in the Dearing Report. The table below includes two further responses which were received but not listed in the Dearing Report.

Table 8.2: summary of submissions to the national consultation exercise

Type of organisation	Number of submissions
Awarding/Assessment Body	9
Funding Body	17
Government Office/Department	8
Institution of Further Education	86
Institution of Higher Education	165
Learned Society	23
Local Education Authority	19
Personal Response	129
Professional Body	65
Representative Body	159
Schools	18
Training and Enterprise Council/Local Enterprise Company	21
Other	86
TOTAL	**805**

The responses were analysed by a dedicated team. The analysis team was appointed early in the Inquiry following a competitive tender process. The team selected operated independently of the Inquiry and were led by Professor Ronald Barnett from the Institute of Education, University of London. Report 1 (Dearing Report, 1997) provides a full account of the consultation process and the method used to analyse the responses written by the analysis team.

Although the analysis team operated independently of the National Committee, the Committee was keen to see early outcomes from the analysis. Professor Barnett was invited to the sixth meeting of the National Committee to discuss the analysis

exercise and later to present the results more formally. The Committee was keen to ensure that the method of analysis guarded against introspection from those already in the higher education system and suggested that it wanted early notice of good ideas. The National Committee also suggested changes to the method of analysis used and suggested that the use of electronic text analysis should be explored to help the analysis process. The Secretariat reported to the subsequent meeting that it had written to all HEIs to request copies of responses on disk as well as hard copies to enable electronic analysis and that Professor Barnett had appointed an additional project assistant and a consultant with relevant experience of electronic text analysis.

The Chair was concerned that wider reading was essential to ensure the credibility of report and the National Committee were encouraged by the Chair to read evidence submissions to gain insights from reading the original documents which would not be evident in the summaries provided by the analysis team. The Chair's concern was a response to the Council for Academic Autonomy which had written with a direct challenge to publicly justify any recommendations. In the Chair's view, this meant that reliance on consultant summaries rather than reading original evidence may leave the Committee vulnerable to criticism from the academic community. The Chair asked Committee members to request any specific submissions they would like to read and to write up points of interest which the Committee needed to pick up and cogent arguments which ran counter to the Committee's thinking. The Chair's letter to the Committee notes that the Secretariat provided proformas to provide evidence that consultation responses had been read although these were not transferred to the National Archives.

The Scottish Committee also undertook an equivalent exercise to read all the evidence submissions relevant to Scotland.

The Committee later reviewed the results of the national written consultation exercise in more detail. It noted that opinion was generally in line with its own thinking and consistent with themes it had identified elsewhere, but that the evidence tended towards short termism and was weakest on staff development, pay and issues relating to the use of resources. One area where the Committee agreed there should be further investigation was the issue of 'Tertiary Education' which had been raised at an evidence session and where it felt there was a clearer vision in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The main findings from the analysis highlighted the following themes: globalisation including recruitment of international students and expanding the use of IT to deliver higher education internationally; partnership and collaboration; flexibility and responsiveness including the need for information, advice and guidance for students, credit award and transfer schemes, more flexibility between further and higher education and greater diversity in pathways and qualifications; there was strong demand for professionalisation of teaching and management; and a dominant theme

of lifelong learning including transferable skills, increased access, collaboration with the workplace and ensuring student funding over a lifetime of learning.

8.9.2 Other written evidence submissions

During the Inquiry, the Chair corresponded informally with organisations and individuals. This correspondence took place outside the national consultation exercise. The personal submissions received informally were discussed by the National Committee in contrast to the national consultation exercise which was analysed independently with the submissions being read by a few members of the National Committee.

The correspondence with Professor David Taplin and John Lackie, Director of the Yamanouchi Research Institute (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/1) suggests that they were both approached directly by the Chair and asked to make a submission to the Inquiry. Dearing wrote to Professor Taplin in February 1996 to request that he make a personal submission and wrote to Mr Lackie following a meeting on "The Future of Higher Education" held in June 1996. The National Committee discussed submissions from the following organisations:

- National Audit Office
- Joint Information Systems Committee
- University of Cambridge and University of Oxford (this joint submission in response to the CVCP submission that proposed the establishment of a Humanities Research Council was in addition to the institutional responses submitted to the consultation exercise)
- Yamanouchi Research Institute
- Canterbury Diocesan Board of Education
- Campaign to Promote the University of Salford
- Catholic Education Service (Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Department for Education and Formation)
- Trades Union Congress
- British Society for Plant Pathology
- Real Time Club
- Commission for Racial Equality
- 60-3 Group
- The Royal Society
- Sir John Meurig Thomas
- Dr Ali El-Ghorr
- Eric Ash
- Dr Zakaria Erzinclioglu
- Sir Peter Parker
- Professor AR Michell
- Professor D Taplin

Apart from the personal submission from Professor A.R. Michell, these evidence submissions are not listed in the Dearing Report (1997).

8.9.3 Surveys

The National Committee used a series of smaller surveys to seek views from staff working in higher education, employers and schools. Where possible the National Committee sought to shape surveys, which were already under development rather than initiating new work. However, response rates were generally lower than expected which meant that the results were of limited use. The Committee found it particularly difficult to engage employers in this process and used both surveys and consultation events to elicit their views.

The Committee was selective in its use of surveys and declined opportunities which did not align with the Committee's terms of reference or would have undermined its independent view. The Secretary notes that a proposal for a joint study with the Council for Industry in Higher Education (CIHE) on comparative costs of higher education across different countries was declined because the intention was to demonstrate that UK higher education was under-funded. It was not felt appropriate for the Committee to associate itself with this work.

Annex B (Dearing Report, 1997) notes the main surveys used by the Committee, which are summarised below:

Table 8.3: summary of surveys commissioned by the Dearing Inquiry

Survey lead	Purpose	Role of the Committee
The Policy Studies Institute	Large-scale survey of full and part-time undergraduate students in their second or subsequent year of higher education	The Committee commissioned the survey.
Professor Lee Harvey and colleagues at the Centre for Research into Quality, University of Central England	Survey of graduates in employment with a wide range of different types of employer	Commissioned by The Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR), the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) and the Department for Education and Employment. The Secretariat joined the project steering committee.
Higher Education Funding Council for England	Large-scale survey of two English graduate cohorts from 1985 and 1990.	The Committee contributed funding so that the survey could be extended to cover the UK, holders of Higher National Diplomas and graduates of the Open University and the University of Buckingham.

The Policy Studies Institute	Two surveys were undertaken to find out the views of academic and support staff.	The Committee commissioned the survey.
Dearing Committee	Questionnaire dealing with skills, research and development and continuing professional development to a range of large and small employers.	The Committee undertook the survey.
Dearing Committee	Questionnaires were to several embassies based in the UK	The Committee undertook the survey.

The Policy Studies Institute was responsible for the most significant surveys which sought the views of staff and students in higher education. The three surveys sought the views of students and staff in both academic and support roles.

The student survey included comparison of English and Scottish students. It concluded that: full and part-time students had similar reasons for their course choices; Scottish students were remarkably loyal to Scottish institutions; 41% of part-time students were employed but only a minority were studying courses relevant to their employment; most students found assessment methods acceptable but had concerns regarding class sizes, feedback, contact, computer based learning and library facilities; students felt that university lived up to their expectations but was not preparing them for employment; and part-time and mature students felt that institutions were insensitive to their requirements which meant that some services provided were not fit for purpose.

The academic staff survey highlighted: a move towards fixed-term contracts; confirmed that most staff recognised the importance of teaching competence but only half of academic staff held a teaching qualification; that most respondents taught and researched but spent less time than they would have liked on research with much of this being their own time; poor pay and stress meant 25% of respondents expected to leave the sector before retirement and the majority felt that levels of pay did not recognise their skills; there was also support for a pay review body. Free text comments highlighted the de-professionalisation of academic work and the absence of career development. The Committee's discussion noted a paradox between discontented staff and contented students and requested more evidence on staff workloads and stress.

The Committee also commissioned a project to undertake focus groups with staff in technical support roles, administrators, computing staff and library staff. The headline findings were that all support staff reported increasing workloads, changing roles and responsibilities. Most wanted to develop their skills but felt dissatisfied with their status and esteem in institutions. They reported both an absence of professional development and pressure from academic colleagues to pursue

academic qualifications. The staff involved reported little staff appraisal and a degree of scepticism regarding the benefit of this approach. Staff wanted to see a more strategic approach to management and better decision-making in their institutions.

The National Committee also used the Secretariat to undertake small surveys on specific issues. These sought views on higher education from employers, graduates, schools and asked embassies for their views on higher education in Europe.

The National Committee was particularly interested in seeking the views of employers but found it more difficult to engage with this stakeholder group. The Secretariat arranged additional consultation events for employers and the National Committee initiated a bespoke survey to try and reach them. The number of responses received from employers to the main consultation and to the employers' survey was not as high as the National Committee had hoped. However, there as a higher response to a separate survey commissioned by The Association of Graduate Recruiters (AGR), the Council for Industry and Higher Education (CIHE) and the Department for Education and Employment which provided some compensation for low attendance at employer consultation events.

The Secretariat undertook a postal survey to gather Employer and Graduate views and a graduate cohort study which was jointly funded with HEFCE. The Employer survey suggested that employers had no extreme criticisms of higher education and presented a diverse and sophisticated view. Employers felt that students had stronger analytical and learning skills rather than applied skills; they did not feel that there was an over-supply of graduates; and wanted to extend links with institutions despite a tendency for this to make institutions more selective. The cohort study highlighted a general satisfaction with the experience of higher education and suggested that there was a positive graduate premium. The Committee noted that there had been a fundamental change in the nature of the labour market but that there was not an oversupply of graduates. However, general employer satisfaction should not mask concerns which had also been raised regarding skills as it was notable that more employers were expecting an immediate contribution to the workplace.

The National Committee circulated a bespoke questionnaire intended to seek views on higher education from schools. The Committee received a low response rate and did not discuss the results. The Dearing Report notes that the Committee did not attempt to draw any conclusions about the views of schools from this exercise and the responses were included in the wider analysis of the evidence (Annex B, paragraph 4, Dearing Report, 1997).

The Secretariat also drafted a paper for the National Committee on Higher Education in Europe. This paper was based on responses to a questionnaire which was sent to Embassies by the Secretariat. The common themes were identified as: rapid growth in participation from the liberalisation of centrally controlled systems leading to difficulties in meeting demand in market-based systems; a move towards

decentralisation of management and deregulation; and confirmation that tuition fees were not changed except in Spain and Portugal. The survey responses suggested that Governments were increasingly interested in the amounts spent on research to support regional development. The National Committee noted that the UK appeared to be ahead of Europe in tackling student funding issues; that there was little evidence of the development of lifelong learning; and that there were areas where UK graduates were perceived to be of lower quality than their European counterparts, for example German and French graduate engineers were considered to be better educated than those from the UK.

8.10 Direct engagement through stakeholder events: evidence sessions, seminars, conferences, meetings and visits in the UK and overseas

The Inquiry engaged directly with stakeholders at consultation events and visits both in the UK and overseas.

8.10.1 Evidence sessions

The National Committee held 24 evidence sessions with 37 organisations over six days in the Library of the Science Museum, London. Further evidence sessions were also held by the Scottish Committee in Edinburgh. The sessions were used to discuss specific issues and were fully transcribed. The table below summarises the organisations invited to provide evidence using the classification created for the national consultation exercise:

Table 8.4: summary of organisations invited to formal evidence sessions

Type of organisation	Invitees
Funding Body	12
Learned Society	2
Other	3
Professional Body	1
Representative Body	13
Training and Enterprise Council/ Local Enterprise Company	1
Invited to give evidence; written submission direct to the National Committee	2
No written submission; invited to give evidence by the National Committee	1
No written submission; invited to give evidence by the Scottish Committee	2

The evidence sessions were all chaired by Sir Ron Dearing and were attended by members of the National Committee and Secretariat. Some sessions were also attended by members of the Scottish Committee and the Structure and Governance Working Group. The sessions were fully transcribed and the National Committee intended to consider the transcripts in more detail in March 1997. However, the National Committee did not subsequently receive a report of the evidence sessions.

The Secretary's Notes confirm the completion of the evidence sessions and the circulation of the transcripts for information and the Committee received a brief report from the Chair which summarised the key headlines as: student opposition to tuition fees; concerns about under-represented groups and the need for targets to promote participation; and support for a "tertiary" approach to higher education.

8.10.2 Seminars

The National Committee used seminars for two purposes: consultation with employers and discussion of specific topics with experts. The Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) were commissioned to deliver a series of six seminars which provided an opportunity for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) to discuss employer needs. These sessions were reported to the National Committee but no further discussion was held to consider the outcomes of the events. The Secretariat also arranged seminars for the Committee to discuss specific issues in more depth with experts. Two of these seminars are noted in the Dearing Report (1997).

NCIHE 'The Learning Seminar', chaired by Professor Diana Laurillard, was held 5 March 1997 in London. The seminar began with presentations from researchers leading into a discussion of seven themes: active learning; independent study; work experience/development of skills; developmental needs of students; impact of Information Technology; staff development; and research and the Learning Organisation. The meeting concluded with a discussion of wider issues including the needs of students with disabilities, which was identified as an issue at one of the evidence sessions.

The NCIHE 'Expert Seminar on Admissions', chaired by Professor David Watson, was held 29 April 1997 in London. A briefing note drafted by Patricia Ambrose of the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals (CVCP) was circulated in advance of the event. The seminar was an informal discussion event which considered the University Admissions process from three angles: an assessment of the current situation; discussion of feedback on the current system and various proposals for 'tinkering' with the current system; and consideration of the longer term (20 year) view.

Four further seminars were also held which were not referenced in the Dearing Report. These events considered: loans and related issues; the role of higher education institutions in their region; widening participation in higher education; and funding and management issues.

The 'Meeting to discuss student loans and related issues' was held on the 28 February 1997. The briefing note circulated in advance notes that the overall aim of the day was to "…identify options including privately funded options for loan schemes for financing student contributions to higher education - whether on living costs, tuition or both - and to measure these options against key desiderata" (*Dearing*

Committee, ED266/9). The key points for consideration are listed as: equity and progressivity; efficiency; financial viability and flexibility. The meeting was structured in three sections: consideration of the relative weightings of the criteria against which the individual options for a loans scheme would be measured; evaluation of the exemplifications of loan schemes provided by the Student Loans Company, London Economics and the London School of Economics (LSE); and discussion of the potential for private sector involvement and options for collection mechanisms. The discussion was also informed by a presentation on the current student loan scheme; possible options for future loan schemes, repayment mechanisms; private finance; continuing grants and allowances.

'Higher Education and the Regions: a seminar for the Dearing Committee' was held in Manchester on the 17 April 1997 and chaired by Professor Adrian Webb. Background reading was circulated in advance of the seminar which was described as "…an opportunity for about fifty senior and experienced people to explore the feasible and desirable regional role of higher education over the next twenty years and to feed these perceptions into the Dearing Committee" (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/8). Participants received the headlines from a telephone survey conducted by the Centre for Urban Studies at the University of Manchester which were grouped into six thematic areas: regional collaboration across HEIs; funding mechanisms; teaching and learning collaborations; further and higher education; research and regional strategies. The morning session was informed by a presentation on the outcomes of a CVCP project on collaborations in Higher Education and a series of perspectives on the issue from the DfEE, HEFCE and Universities. The afternoon session considered a series of questions on the role of higher education in the regions.

A workshop on widening participation in higher education was held on the 27 March 1997. The workshop had 40 participants and informed the report on widening participation which had been commissioned by the National Committee from Professor Frank Coffield and Professor David Robertson.

A seminar with John Kay, founder of London Economics and Professor at London Business School, on funding and management issues was held on the 29 April 1997 and was attended by Sir Ron Dearing, Sir Ronald Oxburgh, Dr David Potter, Sir William Stubbs and Mr Simon Wright on behalf of the National Committee. The Report from the Secretary to the fourteenth meeting confirms that the event took place but the National Committee did not receive a report and there are no papers relating to the seminar held in the National Archives. (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/10 which is catalogued as relating to the John Kay Seminar contains papers from the 'Expert Seminar on Admissions' which was held on the same day).

8.10.3 Consultation conferences

The Inquiry held seven consultation conferences between October 1996 and February 1997 which involved invited representatives including: academics, senior staff and students from higher education institutions; staff from further education colleges; employers; representatives of Training and Enterprise Councils, Government Offices and development agencies. The report notes that the National Committee found it difficult to ensure good attendance at these events. The outcomes of these events were not formally reported to the National Committee and there are a small number of references in the minutes which could refer either to the consultation conferences or to the evidence sessions.

8.10.4 Institutional visits in the UK and overseas

The National Committee sought to inform its work with comparisons of international higher education practices and to emulate the Robbins Inquiry in making extensive use of visits to higher education providers in the UK and overseas. Members of the Committee met with representatives at selected institutions in the UK and overseas while the Scottish Committee also visited four Scottish higher education providers. However, while international comparisons informed the development of the Dearing Report, the National Committee did not receive a report on the discussions held at any of the visits in the UK and the Dearing Archive does not contain notes or transcripts from the meetings.

The National Committee was keen to use overseas visits to identify best practice and provide comparisons. A list of countries for overseas visits was proposed early in the process and the Secretariat was asked to provide additional briefings on these countries. The National Committee used the models presented by different countries to inform its consideration of different themes in its work. For example, the short discussion on international comparisons at the third meeting considered the context for higher education and provision of two-year degrees in Japan while OECD data on comparative levels of funding for higher education was used to inform a wider discussion regarding international comparisons.

As members returned from overseas visits they were required to provide formal reports and the first report on the Australian higher education system was discussed at the fourth and fifth meetings. The Committee drew the comparison that the Australian system was notable for its coherence and collaboration; in contrast, the English system was felt to be too large to act coherently. The report on the Australian visit informed the Committee's view of the size and shape of the system but also helped to develop the Committee's thinking on the purpose of overseas visits and which countries should be included. The Committee agreed that they should focus on expansion, student funding, student experience and the relationship between higher education and the labour market. Further visits were arranged to the

USA, Singapore, Taiwan, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Australia, France and Germany and where possible members extended trips which were already planned.

The Committee discussed the reports from overseas visits in detail and identified differences between the UK higher education system and the models observed in other countries. The Committee received reports from two visits to the USA. The first report highlighted the American model of student funding and the need to diversify the UK funding base. The Committee noted that the American model of contributions from the State, parents and students meant that institutions had a greater reliance on funding from alumni. The more diverse and flexible system in the USA had enabled an increase in participation through Community and Further Education Colleges which were cheaper to run and could be more responsive to employer needs. The greater diversity of the system and the development of Universities where teaching excellence was recognised and rewarded was also noted. The second report noted the more extensive use of Information Technology in teaching and considered student employability and the labour market. It also noted the model of research funding in the USA.

Other countries were used to make different comparisons. The report of a trip to Malaysia and a paper on Asian Tiger Economies drafted by the Secretariat concentrated on higher education as an export. It led to agreement from the Committee that it should propose recommendations to promote development of higher education as an export in the UK. Germany was considered as an example of a system which was experiencing difficulties following expansion and where employers were more direct in articulating what they required from graduates. A paper on the Dutch higher education system suggested that it was driven by a disciplined and selective secondary school system with few opportunities for students to transfer between streams and the French higher education system provided an example of a system in crisis which was considered in the wider context of a paper on Higher Education in Europe drafted by the Secretariat.

8.11 Informal consultation by the National Committee and the role of the Chair

The National Committee invited two academics to meet with them in the early stages of their work: Professor Martin Trow and Professor Claus Moser. Annex B (Dearing Report, 1997) also suggests that the Committee met with Professor Bruce Chapman but there is no record of this in the National Committee papers. Professor Trow attended the third National Committee meeting for an informal discussion over lunch. The Secretary briefed the Committee in advance regarding his interest in accountability and quality assurance and the Committee were invited to read a paper prepared by Professor Trow entitled 'Aspects of Accountability from a Comparative Perspective' (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/14/1 and ED266/14/2). Professor Claus Moser attended for a post-meeting dinner after the fourth meeting and the discussion informed the Committee's development of its working practices. The Committee

later acted on advice from Professor Moser that it would be necessary to prepare the ground for the Dearing Report with key players.

The Working Groups also held informal meetings. Mr Nigel Brown met with the Department of Social Security (DSS) and Inland Revenue to consider whether the National Insurance Contributions system could be used for the collection of loan repayments on behalf of the Funding Working Group and Ms Eve Jagusiewicz met with the Publishers Association on behalf of the Information Technology Working Group.

The Chair held 150 informal meetings with interested parties. He also met and correspondence with stakeholders and senior politicians during the Inquiry process.

During the Inquiry, the Chair met with the Department of Health to discuss medical education. He also reported that he had addressed the recent CVCP Conference which had approved the final report of the Joint Planning Group on Quality. The Chair subsequently wrote to the Chair of the CVCP to raise concerns regarding the length of the timescale for implementation and the lack of attention to the issue of standards.

He also held regular meetings with Government. Under Matters Arising, at the eighth meeting, the Chair confirmed that he had informed the Teacher Training Agency and the Secretary of State for Education and Employment of the Committee's decision to form a group to look at teacher training and that both parties had requested representation on the Group. In February 1997, the Chair reported that he had met Bryan Davis, Labour Party Front Bench, who had suggested that, if elected, Labour would immediately publish an education bill and would welcome quick publication of the Dearing Report after the general election. Following the election, the Committee noted that Labour Party documents included references to 'lifelong learning' and drew a distinction between near market and blue skies research. The issues of credit frameworks, pay levels and governance were also referenced and would require a response from the Committee.

8.12 How did the Dearing Inquiry identify and develop collective views on the main issues?

The purpose of the Inquiry was to investigate the issues defined in the terms of reference as the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, to cover teaching, learning, research and scholarship and to make recommendations to Government. During the Inquiry, the National Committee's thematic focus changed as findings emerged. It identified major and minor themes. The relative levels of discussion by the National Committee meant that there was variation in the depth to which different topics were considered and some issues were considered in more depth than might have been expected from the terms of reference, for example the proposed development of a qualifications framework. There were also significant

gaps in the work of the Inquiry, for example postgraduate taught courses and international students were not considered.

The National Committee acted as a central point for discussion and synthesised findings from the Working Groups to develop a collective view. The hierarchical structure of the Inquiry and the cross-representation on the Committees and Working Groups supported this way of working. The Chairs of the Working Groups were also members of the National Committee. They presented papers on their findings and informed discussion. This created a direct link between the Working Groups, the National Committee and the recommendations in the Dearing Report.

During the working phase, the National Committee addressed four themes in great detail as indicated by the length and depth of discussion: the higher education system; student funding and support; quality and standards; and mechanisms for funding research. It also discussed five themes in less depth: employability and employer needs including the place of higher education in the regions; the uses of information technology; institutional governance; and staff in higher education. The Committee also considered four issues which emerged from discussion or were proposed during the process: widening participation; teacher training; higher education admissions practices; and institutional collaboration.

The Committee revisited and revised its areas of interest during the Inquiry as a collective view emerged. As the Committee entered its working phase it reconsidered previous conclusions in the light of new findings and suggested that the development of a market was likely to lead to greater diversity and reputational range in institutions. The Committee's view was that the Higher Education community needed to take responsibility for standards, to improve clarity and transparency and to strengthen the external examiner system. They noted the significant CVCP minority view that the Committee should 'sort out funding' and leave rest to the market. The Committee also began to consider research in more detail. They perceived a need to rely more on civil research to increase capacity and research excellence should not be preserved in obsolete subjects but diverted to new areas which should support the national economy and society as well as local economies.

8.13 What themes were explored in detail by the Dearing Inquiry?

During its work, the Inquiry explored considered four issues which aligned with its terms of reference in a great amount of detail. These were issues where the Committee held a significant discussion in terms of length and the range of views considered. This section considers its exploration and discussion of: the higher education system; student funding and support; quality and standards; and mechanisms for funding research.

8.13.1 The Higher Education System

The National Committee's consideration of the higher education system aligned with the terms of reference more broadly. Its consideration initially focussed on sources of funding and current arrangements for student support in the UK. The Committee developed its views on the social benefits of higher education and proposed that a redefined relationship between higher education and society/Government would be required to enable individual needs and aspirations to be met. This view later underpinned the development of the Dearing Compact which defined a new relationship between students, society and Government and was reflected in the Committee's recommendations.

The Committee considered students as 'members' of the University rather than 'consumers'. It saw this as an inadequate metaphor for students who would potentially be paying for their education and would demand more from their University. The Committee's view of the higher education system was linked with its ideas on employer and student perceptions. From an employers' perspective, universities needed to proactively close the skills gap through improved curricula and by delivering lifelong learning. For students, the system should seek to increase participation and provide better pastoral care for all students. In the context of students paying for their education, institutions should inform student choice with better information and guidance on a more diffuse range of courses which were tailored to individual needs to meet a broader range of student expectations.

The need for wider qualifications and skills rather than a focus on full-time first-degree entrants influenced the Committee's view of the future size and shape of higher education. The Committee expected that recent levels of expansion and the current rate of return would not be repeated. They anticipated that demand from young people would slow whereas demand for lifelong learning would increase as there would be a greater need for a more highly educated workforce. The Committee considered whether a market mechanism could be relied upon to determine the size of the system, provided the state could intervene in cases of severe market failure and that the case for long-term public funding was sound.

To respond to changing student demand and to enable a move towards lifelong learning, the Committee developed the concept of a 'Framework for Higher Education'. The framework was characterised by a greater range of providers, further expansion of higher education and more flexibility to move between qualifications and institutions through a national or at least regional system of credits and credit transfer.

The development of the 'Framework for Higher Education' suggests an inconsistency in the National Committee's approach. The implementation of the framework had the potential to create a new tertiary education system because it depended on greater links between further and higher education providers. Despite

an interest in the broader opportunities for lifelong learning, the Committee had rejected a tertiary approach as being beyond the remit of the Inquiry. The framework was reliant on further expansion of higher education in Further Education Colleges and anticipated a role for Further Education Colleges in providing sub-degrees which could be expanded in similar lines to the Scottish model. The Committee also considered that the preconditions for expansion of this type would be greater oversight and management under a new quality assurance body to avoid the potential for eroding quality and control of visible and invisible mission drift.

8.13.2 Student funding and support

The Inquiry was an example of a national inquiry used as a taskforce to address an urgent problem. It was initiated in a context of financial crisis and was expected to find a solution to the higher education funding problem.

The level of expectation placed on the National Committee was demonstrated in a letter sent to the National Committee in June 1996 by Sir Derek Roberts, Provost of University College London. He suggested that the Committee should issue an early summary report outlining recommendations to address the funding crisis with the implication that these should be implemented with immediate effect. The National Committee agreed it should avoid "…getting involved in the game which was being played" (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/15) and agreed to develop recommendations on student funding as part of the Dearing Report.

The question of student funding and support and the development of recommendations covered three broad issues: whether higher education should be funded by individuals or the State; the development of student funding options and associated mechanisms to manage the new student funding arrangements; and quantifying the level of future investment required to support the higher education system.

The Committee's early thinking on student funding focussed on the principles which should underpin the recommendations in the final report. It was mindful of the need to meet the expectations of Minsters by developing short-term funding solutions which would not impact on the Public-Sector Borrowing Requirement because they perceived that this would be important to a newly elected Government. The Committee agreed that the student funding recommendations should allow flexibility and diversity and be able to cope with reduced public funding. They felt that attitudes towards debt and students' willingness to pay for higher education was linked to their perceptions of whether higher education was an investment with subsequent dividends. It was initially agreed that the Committee should not shy away from looking at truly radical funding options on a "what if" basis but this was later moderated by an awareness that radical changes would need a longer timescale for implementation as they would also require institutional change.

The Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group provided evidence which supported the case for moving costs of higher education from the State to individual and the Funding Working Group provided evidence which suggested that students should meet their maintenance costs via an income contingent loan. The National Committee based its recommendation to implement student fees on this evidence. However, the Committee was more reticent in recommending loans as a replacement for maintenance grants which it felt was regressive. In recommending a move to student loans the Committee also recommended a set of principles to inform development of the scheme. The reform of student funding should retain quality and standards but relieve the public expenditure burden. The student loan system should be transparent and equitable and repayment mechanisms needed to relate to ability to pay without acting as a deterrent to participation. The Committee was also mindful that it was not students but graduates in receipt of a substantial investment in their future who would be paying back the loans.

Having established the principle that students should be asked to contribute towards the cost of their education, the National Committee tasked the Funding Working Group with the development of funding options. London Economics, working closely with a Technical Working Group, was commissioned to develop student funding model on behalf of the Group. The funding options assumed: no loan privatisation; income contingent repayments; and no real interest rates during study/deferral. They were later amended to reflect existing Treasury terms and to assume three-year degrees as the base model. The Committee also requested that the models evaluate the changes in the individual's rate of return and the balance of public and private funding to inform a response to the key question of whether Universities should be left free to impose top-up fees. The Committee agreed that a graduate tax should also be considered by the Funding Working Group but would not be recommended as an option.

In developing the new student funding model, the Committee was aware that there could be inefficiency in the proposed market which would require careful transition planning and that price differentiation could lead to social divisiveness. The Committee suggested a need to distinguish between higher and further education providers and agreed that the associated regulatory regime should not prevent new providers from entering the market. It was also aware of concerns from the Funding Working Group that lack of control in a market system could lead to greater volatility for institutions and could be detrimental in areas of economic deprivation.

The Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group advised the National Committee that a market driven system for higher education which maximised student choice and efficiency could be delivered in ways which avoided the extremes of market failure. Modern market systems were characterised by ongoing relationships between suppliers and providers to maximise co-operation and collaboration for the benefit of all parties and this model offered advantages and disadvantages for higher education. The Committee concluded that many members

162

favoured moving towards a more student-led system but saw a need for an active role for Government in safeguarding both the national interest and the student interest in a market system.

The Committee was also aware that the proposed student funding models were likely to have a different impact on students from Northern Ireland and studying in Scotland. Students from Northern Ireland who had to leave the country to access higher education would have higher costs. Students in Scotland were studying for longer degrees which would also mean higher tuition costs. The Scottish Committee submitted a paper to the National Committee which expressed its regret and acceptance of the need for a graduate contribution. The Scottish Committee suggested an amendment to the option to take account of longer honours degrees in Scotland and ensure that graduates made the same contributions for comparable studies regardless of location in the UK. Members were concerned by the possibility of separate funding arrangements for Scotland and the likelihood of a separate recommendation in the Dearing Report. The Scottish Committee later accepted the National Committee's recommendation on the student funding model.

The Funding Working Group developed three student funding options which were presented to the National Committee. These are set out in detail below. The Group's preference was for Option 2, a flat rate non-means tested contribution of £1,000 per year for each year of a full-time course. The National Committee endorsed the Group's recommendation.

Option 1 replaced maintenance grants with loans. This option had been advocated by the Labour Party, the Liberal Party, the CVCP, the NUS and the CBI in their evidence to the Committee. This option did not generate short-term savings and, while it reduced Government expenditure on higher education in the medium to long term, did not create additional funding because there was no guarantee that the savings created would be reinvested in higher education.

Option 2 implemented targeted grants for living costs and income-contingent contributions to costs. This option had three variants. Variant 1: a flat rate contribution with no means test for loans which was similar to the Australian funding model. Variant 2: means-tested loans which were intended to avoid providing access to cheap loans for those who did not need them. This could be supported by the Australian model of offering a discount for pre-payment of fees and a time limited graduate tax was suggested to make the system less regressive. Variant 3 proposed stepped contributions which would establish different levels of contribution for each year of a course. This would reduce the risk in the early years of study and encourage development of short courses.

Option 3 created a grants scheme to replace loans for the living costs of poorest students which would be paid for by increasing contributions from richer students. This option was proposed by Professor David Watson and was seen by the

Committee as a radical option which improved equity by moving resources from the middle classes to lower socio-economic groups.

The National Committee also considered the wider implications of the loans scheme for students studying longer courses and recommended that bursary schemes should be created by the Government and professional bodies to support those wishing to study for occupations requiring courses of four years or longer. It also sought further information on the effect of loan repayments on graduates and asked the Funding Working Group to model loan options at a range of interest rates so that the impact on graduates making repayments could be quantified.

The National Committee argued that a level of continued public investment was '…the price for remaining a player in the world economy' (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/20). The Funding Working Group calculated that an additional £650m would be required to make the higher education system sustainable over the next twenty years. This included the costs of a more flexible qualifications framework, the costs of a credit accumulation and transfer system and assumed equivalence of public support regardless of UK location. The Committee suggested that there needed to be a clear message that the proposed student funding regime brought with it a need for the higher education system to operate more efficiently and thereby reduce costs to students and the taxpayer.

The Committee also considered two more minor student funding issues. At the request of the Secretary of State it investigated funding for students on performing arts courses and agreed that the Dearing Report would refer to all groups of students who currently fell outside the funding regime and to other anomalies rather than making recommendations for one specific group. The Chair wrote separately Secretary of State to provide personal advice regarding performing arts students.

The issue of differential pricing was also considered. While the Committee noted the importance of retaining institutional freedom to charge fees it was concerned that the ability to charge top-up fees might allow discounting as a recruitment tool which could call standards into question. The Committee agreed that State funding of higher education should be sufficient to maintain quality and that if variations in public funding were permitted then the criteria and decision-making process should be transparent. The Dearing Report would include reference to the spirit of the compact between students, Government and institutions and the need to protect students against above inflation levels of fee increase.

8.13.3 Quality and standards

The National Committee argued for comparability of standards through a single assurance agency, the creation of a national qualifications framework and the need for a balance of subjects. The Committee observed the irony that the Government had encouraged expansion and was now concerned about quality. The Joint Planning Group (JPG) had been asked by Government to develop proposals for a single

quality assurance and assessment agency. The Committee's discussion was informed by presentations from the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) which was the predecessor to the new Quality Assurance Agency and the Inquiry was expected to endorse the creation of the new single agency and set a broad agenda for its work.

However, while it endorsed the creation of the QAA, the Committee expressed concern that the single agency may lead to uniformity of degrees and the creation of a national curriculum for higher education which would establish minimum standards. The Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) initially indicated that Scottish higher education may prefer to retain its existing arrangements rather than falling under the remit of the new agency. The Scottish Committee later endorsed the new arrangements and recommended that they should extend to Scottish higher education institutions.

The Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group was tasked with developing a new qualifications framework for UK higher education. The model was compatible with European Qualifications and was designed as a climbing frame rather than a ladder. It was intended for implementation across in UK. The framework was later expanded to take account of ordinary/general degrees for greater breadth, the option of returning to study for two years to change an ordinary degree into an honours degree and sandwich courses. The model informed recommendations in the Dearing Report, although the Committee was mindful that more traditional institutions would need to be coaxed to recognise qualifications at the end of year 2 and that any changes would need to go with the grain of the current system. The Committee's view was that the development of credit accumulation and transfer schemes would support this but there was a need to avoid a cheap and cheerful attitude to first degrees which were established to fulfil a social mission.

In considering the balance of subjects, the Committee observed a tension between a fear of manpower planning and the need to trust the student market which would emerge following the creation of a student fees regime. The Committee concluded that the balance of subject provision should not only reflect the needs of employers but also the needs of people in employment and that managing the market environment would require good, independent advice and planning intelligence amongst institutions.

8.13.4 Mechanisms for funding research

The National Committee was particularly interested in exploring mechanisms for research funding and considering the case for a new research council to administer funding for arts and humanities research. The development of recommendations on research funding was uncontentious. However, the Scottish Committee needed some persuasion to endorse the proposal to establish an Arts and Humanities Research Council.

Much of the work on research was delegated to the Research Working Group but the National Committee provided a strong steer for its work. Following an early discussion, the Committee summarised its view as a recognising '…the arguments for concentration and selectivity in some aspects of research funding as long as this did not lead to ossification and so long as a good range of types of research activity was encouraged and supported.' (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/15). The Committee considered all aspects of research from funding and selectivity to equipment and the output of PhD students. Its steer to the Research Working Group asked it to consider issues of selectivity and concentration of research funding, collaboration between institutions, the place of scholarship for those not in receipt of research funding and creating links between university and industrial research.

The National Committee felt that the case for enhanced research funding was sound but need to be strengthened. Following consideration of the Research Working Group's interim report, the National Committee asked the Research Working Group to explore the quantum for research funding and diversity of institutional mission. This led to consideration of different funding levels for different mission groups and evaluation of the institutional impact of the proposals. The wider implications of changing the allocation and use of research funding were also considered in the context that they would require a review of the thematic approach to funding taken by Research Councils and consideration of how public funding could unlock industrial funding.

The work on funding options informed the National Committee's discussion of how funding levels could be balanced with research concentration. The Committee considered the suggestion that institutional mission statements could be adopted to safeguard against academic drift and ensure complementarities and excellence in provision which would enable institutions to opt in and out of research areas. The Committee also considered the potential for regional centres of excellence and how collaboration between institutions could be promoted.

The National Committee evaluated the implications of a transfer of funds from Funding Councils to Research Councils and agreed that Research Councils needed to be fully funded. However, as additional funding was not available, this was likely to require a transfer away from Funding Councils or a reduction in volume. Members agreed with proposed changes to the Research Assessment Exercise including raising the funding threshold to RAE 3a and 4 together with a per capita allowance for staff who were not entered. The Committee noted that the proposals would lead to a significant redistribution of funding and the objectives of the change would need to be outlined in the Report.

The National Committee's intention to establish a separate Arts and Humanities Research Council was proposed early in the Inquiry but was not initially supported by the Scottish Committee. The Scottish Committee argued that research funding should be made available for a range of interests including quality of life, relevance

of research and regional interests. Following private discussion between Sir Ron Garrick, the Chair of the Scottish Committee, and Sir Ron Dearing, the Scottish Committee relented and endorsed the recommendation to establish the Arts and Humanities Research Council.

8.14 What wider themes were explored by the Dearing Inquiry?

During its work, the Inquiry considered a wider range of issues which were aligned with, but not specified by, the terms of reference. This section considers its exploration and discussion of: employability and employer needs; higher education and the regions; the uses of information technology in teaching and research; institutional governance; and staff in higher education.

8.14.1 Employability and employer needs

Employability and employer demand for graduates with skills emerged from the National Committee's discussion of the size and shape of the system and teaching and learning. The Committee identified the issue early in the Inquiry and considered: the educational benefits of higher education to employers; the potential for growth in employment and employer's perceptions of the declining quality of graduates; and the potential for Records of Achievement as evidence of learning. The Committee also considered the need for higher education to deliver skills based learning through vocational education. This led the Committee to consider the role of different types of higher education providers including whether academic drift was a genuine phenomenon, the value of placements and whether it would be appropriate for higher education to respond to market demand. The Committee was concerned to avoid undertaking a manpower planning exercise but saw employer needs as important in defining the future size and shape of the higher education system.

The Committee delegated further work on this topic to the Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group (ERWG). The ERWG situated its discussion of employer needs within a broader context of 'globalisation' and considered higher education as an international export. The Group noted that the UK market share of overseas students was disappointingly low and suggested that the provision of UK higher education at home and abroad should be of the highest quality to improve its reputation.

The Group also identified factors which would affect higher education for further consideration. These were identified as: the need to improve skills in the workforce; the opportunity to respond to employer needs for skills and attitudes to attract businesses; shorter courses to enable a quicker response to changing employer demand; and the need to respond to small and medium sized enterprises as well as multinational companies. The Committee agreed that the development of skills was important but suggested that employers sought specific skills and work experience rather than generic skills.

The ERWG sought to develop its thinking through wider consultation and held a workshop on the economic role of higher education on the 10 December 1996. This was attended by representatives from the National Committee, Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group, Higher Education Institutions and the DfEE. The purpose of the workshop was to explore three areas: projections of supply and demand for graduates; current and projected private and social rates of return to higher education; and externalities to higher education at the national, regional and local level.

The workshop drew out the issue of rates of return for graduates which received extensive consideration by the Group. The ERWG considered calculations of pay premia for graduates and the forecasts for future demand. They noted that recent levels of demand and expansion had dwarfed the Robbins expansion making it difficult to predict how the market would react in the future. Information provided by the DfEE led the Group to reject manpower planning and the National Committee was keen to clarify that the Inquiry was not a manpower planning exercise. There was support for the development of a market to meet student demand but the Group's interpretation of the data was that it did not indicate the need for very much additional expansion particularly if publicly funded.

While the ERWG was asked to consider the financial and economic implications of responding to employer demand for graduates, the National Committee asked the Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group (TQSWG) to consider the pedagogic implications. The TQSWG was asked to consider the issue of breadth in higher education which it later reported it had found difficult to resolve. The National Committee used this work to inform its consideration of how breadth, generic skills and work experience could be included in curricula as requested by employers. The Chair referred to his Review of qualifications for 16-19-year olds (Dearing Review, 1996) which was used as the basis for a discussion of where breadth already existed in the system. The Government also recognised a link between Dearing's previous review and the work of the Inquiry. During the Inquiry, the Government chose to delay responding to the Dearing Review pending the conclusions of the Inquiry.

The National Committee did not have the time to fully consider professional education and its relationship to higher education. However, it did link funding for professional education with employer training. The Committee's view was that professional education was important but that the professions should not use the employability agenda as an excuse to transfer costs of staff training and development to the taxpayer.

8.14.2 Higher Education and the Regions

The National Committee's consideration of employability and the breadth of subjects led it to consider the role of higher education in the regions. The Committee suggested that regional demand for teaching could be developed through franchise

arrangements. In line with emerging thinking on a qualifications framework and credit accumulation and transfer schemes, it suggested that regional groups would be better placed to address new development of credit accumulation and transfer schemes and consider whether there was a case for developing research in response to local needs.

The Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group was later asked to consider the regional role for higher education institutions. Professor Brian Robson was commissioned to provide a report on the regional role of higher education and recommended that additional funding for institutions to become more involved in regional activities should be sought from Government. The Committee agreed that there was a case for some additional funding and that institutions and industry both needed to do more to build connections and work in partnership.

8.14.3 Uses of Information Technology

The National Committee delegated exploration of the development of Information Technology to the Information Technology Working Group (ITWG) and did not consider the issue until the interim report from the Group was presented in December 1996. The ITWG observed that changes in technology were gaining pace and that there would be a need for collaboration and networking to facilitate development of IT use which may include a greater role for students in managing their own learning. The ITWG identified networking opportunities between Universities, Colleges and Government Research Institutions as offering scope for further and higher education to work more closely and suggested that greater national and international collaboration provided an opportunity to generate funding for investment in courseware and software. As IT was becoming more widely adopted there was a need to develop staff confidence in the use of IT systems which were developed outside their own institution; to meet staff development needs which would arise following adoption of IT and a need to overcome barriers to access to IT for certain types of students. The Group highlighted the changing nature of publishing and accessing IT and suggested that this needed to be managed at institutional level. It was recommended that the requirement to pay VAT on electronic materials should also be addressed.

The National Committee was keen to see costings for the Group's proposals, to understand the benefits of greater use of IT for students and to consider how student personal computers could be funded. It was noted that existing IT networks were underutilised for teaching and the need for more software would incur costs so the Group should consider the best way forward for UK institutions and provide a cost: benefit analysis of new technology.

The Group suggested that the key barriers to the implementation of technology were availability of courseware and cost. The issue of cost both in terms of the costs of IT

development within institutions and the cost to students of portable computers were identified as issues to be highlighted to the National Committee.

8.14.4 Institutional Governance

The Structure and Governance Working Group (SGWG) was asked to consider the wider governance arrangements for the sector and its interim report prompted discussion by the National Committee. The terms of reference for the Inquiry did not specifically refer to consideration of governance arrangements for the higher education system. However, the need to consider governance was aligned with consideration of how a mass higher education system could be managed effectively. The Committee considered three aspects of governance: the need for institutional accountability to stakeholders; the role of funding councils in managing higher education institutions; and the potential uses of performance measures.

The Committee agreed that the purposes of governance should be considered with reference to accountability to stakeholders. The SGWG developed a set of principles which it proposed could form the basis of effective accountability. These included: careful selection of lay members and clarity of roles on governing bodies; establishment of nominations committees; use of performance measures and regular reviews of effectiveness. The Group considered that the practice of auditing higher education could be developed into a more coherent system but noted the potential for over-auditing. The National Audit Office (NAO) routinely reviewed governance arrangements during institutional visits but conceded that it was possible for good governance arrangements to mask a culture which prevented its effectiveness.

Accountability was also considered by the Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Group. This Group suggested that that Universities should regularly review their internal management structures and systems to demonstrate accountability. This review process would benefit from input from external governors, consultants and/or advisers who were part of the wider institutional governance structure.

The Funding Working Group considered how the future role of funding councils may need to adapt depending on the finalised funding options. One possible alternative to funding councils might be a regulatory body to which institutions were accountable. In considering the development of Central Bodies, the Committee later proposed that three separate bodies should be established: a regulatory body funded by top-sliced public funds; a joint IT body funded by Funding Councils; and a combined Teaching and Learning/staff development body to be funded initially by top-slice and later by subscription for core services. In establishing the proposed Teaching and Learning Council, the UK should aspire to be at the forefront of higher education teaching. The Committee agreed that any recommendations on the final role for funding councils should be revisited and adjusted depending on the recommendations for funding higher education.

In considering recommendations for future governance, it was suggested that supra-institutional governance arrangements could be beneficial in managing the higher

education system. Strengthening governance could help to increase collaboration between institutions and governing bodies could be improved by: employing external experts to assist with project work; improving data flows between the executive and the governing body; creating powers for Funding Councils to intervene where they suspected failures of governance; and by extending guidance on governance with some aspects becoming obligatory to strengthen overall governance of the system.

The SGWG also considered governance at an institutional level and reported its findings to the National Committee. It considered the effect of changes in institutional leadership and the use of more managerial forms of governance. The Committee suggested that an appropriate management model for institutions should address the tension between managerialism and collegiality. Universities would need to be prepared to respond to change and there was a case for central direction which would need to be balanced against institutional autonomy without placing further bureaucratic requirements on Universities.

The SGWG considered the effect of size on perceptions of the effectiveness of university governing bodies and noted the importance of regularly reviewing their performance. The Group found an enormous range of institutional governance models across the sector which made it difficult to present general observations but suggested that the proposals were significant given the local impact of universities.

The SGWG also considered the potential for greater use of performance measures. The Group was aware that the development of institutional performance measures could be used to enhance quality but may also have an adverse effect on institutional performance. The Group suggested that there would be a need for analysts on the governing body to annually review performance management of institutions and that discussions of performance could also include funding bodies. The Group agreed that widespread use of specific measures would affect the future direction of the system.

8.14.5 Staff in Higher Education

The National Committee's consideration of staff in higher education, their support and professional development was minimal beyond the work of the Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Group (SCEWG).

The National Committee endorsed the Group's focus on staffing matters but was concerned that it should avoid addressing the current higher education pay dispute. The Committee's view was that academic staff should be rewarded for research, teaching and contributions to economy and society through their connections with industry. The Committee subsequently agreed to amend the terms of reference for the Staff and Cost Effectiveness Working Group to allow it to consider pay and conditions. It later approved terms of reference for a new and independent

Committee appointed by employers to review and assess the options and make recommendations for an employment framework for all staff in higher education.

The Committee agreed that teaching and management of learning were key issues and those engaged in it should be well-qualified and supported. They suggested that greater spend on training and development may be supported but were concerned that there was likely to be resistance to the SCEWG proposal for a mandatory teaching qualification.

8.15 What additional themes were explored by the Dearing Inquiry?

The Inquiry also explored four issues which were not proposed by the terms of reference. These areas emerged from earlier findings or, in the case of Teacher Training, were suggested to the National Committee. This section considers its exploration and discussion of: widening participation; teacher training; higher education admissions practices; and institutional collaboration.

8.15.1 Widening Participation

Increasing participation both in terms of numbers of students and widening the social demographic of the student population was noted as a major theme in the commentaries and critiques (discussed in Chapter 6). While the terms of reference did not require consideration of widening participation from under-represented groups, the National Committee identified the issue early in its discussions and was particularly interested in the needs of disabled students. The Committee linked participation with its consideration of the size and shape of the higher education system. It commissioned Professors David Robertson and Frank Coffield to provide a report on Widening Participation. Their report drew on discussions at a workshop on widening participation in higher education held in March 1997.

The National Committee discussed the report but found it of limited use. The report was not seen to be objective and presented the views of its authors. It also failed to draw on other work including that of the Kennedy Committee, the evidence to the Further Education Funding Council Committee chaired by John Tomlinson on students with disabilities and learning difficulties and the conclusions of the National Advisory Council for Education and Training on Widening Participation. The Committee was dissatisfied with the report and chose not to pursue the discussion further. The authors were asked to address number of reservations and concerns regarding the nature of the data and the analysis and to undertake substantial redrafting. The Committee agreed that the report should be published separately from Dearing Report because it reflected the views of its authors and not the Committee.

The National Committee identified both levels of participation (i.e. the numbers of students pursuing higher education) and widening participation (i.e. the social demographic of students) as an issue early in the process. However, the Committee

struggled to explore the issue in any depth and Chapter 7 of the Dearing Report (1997) on Widening Participation reflects the lack of detailed work in this area. The Report notes that levels of participation from different demographic groups remained consistent during the growth in student numbers in the early 1990s but contradicts this by suggesting that participation will widen as student numbers increase. The Committee's consideration of participation in the Dearing Report is also closely linked to its discussion of future demand from students (Dearing Report, 1997, Chapter 6) which is based on data provided by the DfEE. This has a focus on the traditional student population of 18-24 year olds and notes that projections of demand from other demographic groups are not available. The Dearing Report concludes rather weakly that demand will probably be higher before making a proposal to expand sub-degree provision which appears to have been a response to discussions with employers rather than data on future student demand.

8.15.2 Teacher Training

The review of Teacher Training was initiated in response to comments made by Professor Claus Moser and was not part of the terms of reference for the Inquiry. Sir Stewart Sutherland was asked to undertake an independent review of teacher training arrangements in England and to consider the situation in Scotland. He presented his report to the National and Scottish Committees. The National Committee largely endorsed the recommendations with four exceptions: the recommended use of the single quality agency was questioned because the new body was, as yet, unproven; responsibility for awarding Qualified Teacher Status after a probationary year should lie with the school rather than the higher education provider; there could be greater clarity regarding the proposed diversion of resources from current educational research to pedagogic research; and it was suggested that teacher training should be included in the periodic review of higher education rather than being reviewed again in isolation. The Committee also suggested that the Report could include more detail on the differences between teacher training arrangements in England, Wales and Northern Ireland and that, as the weight of evidence was from higher education, more thought should be given to obtaining evidence from schools

The National Committee agreed that the Dearing Report should focus on issues related to its remit rather than the wider view covered by this report. It agreed that publication of the report on teacher training should be delayed until after the Dearing Report. However, the Committee was also inconsistent in its approach and suggested some level of responsibility for the Teacher Training report by proposing to hold informal discussions on the findings with stakeholders prior to publication including representatives from Wales and Northern Ireland and the trades unions.

8.15.3 Higher Education Admissions Practices

The Committee added consideration of admissions practices to its remit in the middle of the Inquiry process following a paper from the Secretary which identified

concerns with the current system. The Committee noted that the Schools Association had expressed strong support for the establishment of a post-qualifications admissions system. The Schools Association and the CVCP had identified practical issues associated with changing the process, for example the current structure of the academic year. Professor David Watson was asked to chair a small specialist seminar to explore the issue in more detail to inform the Committee's discussion.

Following the seminar, the Committee revisited the issue. It agreed that while it supported the establishment of a post qualifications admissions system, the Dearing Report should not contain a detailed specification of how this should be taken forward. Instead, it was agreed that the Report should note that changes to the structure and operation of exam boards might be required to make the change to a post qualifications system. The wider context for the issue would also be referenced and the Committee noted that IT could have a positive impact on problems of timing between higher education and school years; and that there was a need to establish a means to retain student records and progress files which recorded the student journey in more detail but did not impinge on civil rights.

8.15.4 Institutional Collaboration

The issue of institutional collaboration emerged from a discussion of the sector's financial position. The Committee felt that this was not widely understood and suggested that further study may be required to focus on barriers and identify the personal and political factors which outweighed economic and educational advantages. The Committee also noted the need for a regional perspective in understanding collaboration.

The Committee did not initiate formal work on collaboration and instead invited Professor Gareth Roberts to present a CVCP paper on the issue to the National Committee. The Committee noted advice from the CVCP that it needed to be clear about existing barriers to collaboration, practical measures to remove them and the need to create incentives. The CVCP argued that while cost savings were not motivation for collaboration, current student funding regimes presented a significant barrier. The CVCP suggested that the argument for pump-priming was undermined by examples where this was not the case; and an alternative which would have CVCP support would be to provide loans for institutions to develop collaborative ideas.

8.16 Summary

During the working phase, the Committees and Working Groups became established and developed their own working practices. They developed work plans but were mindful of their large remit and short timescale. The National Committee returned to the question of how it would meet the publication deadline on several occasions. While the Working Groups contributed to the discussion and thinking of the National Committee, the Scottish Committee developed its own views and

challenged the National Committee's thinking on issues such as the development of a qualifications framework, the work of the new Quality Assurance Agency and the recommendation to develop a new funding model based on student fees.

The National Committee acted as a central point for the collation of research outputs and the development of collective views which would inform recommendations in the Dearing Report. During the Inquiry process a core group of actors emerged who made a greater contribution to the work undertaken. The role of the Chair and Secretary were critical in keeping the work of the Inquiry on schedule. The Chair also had a wider role in enabling informal consultation with stakeholders throughout the process and using this to inform the National Committee's discussion.

During the Inquiry, a series of themes emerged which were considered in different levels of detail. The themes aligned with the terms of reference and considered in the most detail were: the Higher Education system; student funding and support; quality and standards; and mechanisms for funding research. The themes considered in less detail were: employability and employer needs; higher education and the regions; uses of information technology; institutional governance; and staff in higher education. There were also several issues not covered by the terms of reference which were considered by the National Committee. These were: widening participation; teacher training; higher education admissions practices; and institutional collaboration. Of these issues, the Committee's lack of detailed consideration of widening participation is surprising given its prominence in the commentary and critique of the Inquiry. Its limited discussion of future demand and participation was included in the Dearing Report in an unevidenced recommendation to increase sub-degree provision which was more aligned with employer interests than anticipated student demand.

Chapter 9. Closure phase: consideration of research outputs, identifying recommendations and re-drafting the Dearing Report

9.1 Introduction

The final phase of the Inquiry was used to consider the research outputs and recommendations emerging from the Working Groups and to draft and re-draft the Report. As the Inquiry approached its reporting deadline, the Chair met with representatives from Government to discuss the recommendations and enable them to prepare for the publication of the Report. The Secretariat planned a launch event supported by a range of communications and publicity to accompany the publication of the Dearing Report.

9.2 How did the Dearing Inquiry receive the research outputs from the Working Groups and the Scottish Committee?

The scale of the task set for the Inquiry meant that discussion of research outputs by the National Committee needed to be effective rather than comprehensive due to time constraints. The National Committee delegated work to the Working Groups and received back their research outputs, reports and recommendations. The hierarchical structure adopted by the Inquiry enabled final consideration of high-level evidence and the development of collective views to be undertaken by the National Committee. This process informed drafting of the Dearing Report.

The National Committee received interim reports from the Working Groups in December 1996 and most of the final reports in March and April 1997. Following the presentation of the final reports it was necessary to continue the work of several Groups, such as the Funding Working Group, to support the collation of evidence to inform recommendations. This point marked the end of the working phase in the Inquiry process and from this point the Committee became increasingly focussed on the development of the Dearing Report.

The Scottish Committee provided both an interim and final report to the National Committee but its work was treated differently from the other Working Groups. While the Working Groups were tasked with exploration of a specific issue, the Scottish Committee operated as a smaller version of the National Committee with the remit of evaluating higher education in Scotland across the Inquiry's terms of reference. The Scottish Committee did not report to the National Committee in the same way as the other Working Groups, rather it was an independent Committee whose recommendations were aligned with the National Committee. This meant that in several cases the Scottish Committee needed confirmation of decisions from the National Committee before it could confirm its own views.

The National Committee endorsed the view that the Scottish Committee's report should be written in its own voice and would form a freestanding document to be

published with the Main Report. However, there were areas of commonality which were identified as requiring consistency between the two reports. While there were areas of dissent between the National Committee and Scottish Committee during the Inquiry, the Scottish Committee later agreed recommendations consistent with National Committee's thinking which were reflected in its Report.

9.3 How did the National Committee discuss and weigh the evidence it received?

The National Committee's discussion of the evidence it received from the Working Groups was managed by the Chair and Secretary. The relative importance of the evidence and recommendations generated by the wider Inquiry was aligned with the terms of reference and the themes identified by the National Committee. A weighting of the relative importance of findings and issues was applied outside the National Committee as part of the agenda setting process.

The National Committee received reports from the Working Groups which provided an overview of their work. In considering the reports, the National Committee considered more of a summary of the work undertaken by the Working Groups and the detailed recommendations rather than the totality of evidence generated and considered by the Working Groups. The minutes of the National Committee suggest that the findings and recommendations from the Working Groups were not all discussed in the same amount of detail. The Inquiry's working process was managed by the Secretariat working closely with Sir Ron Dearing. At the end of the process, the Chair, Secretary and possibly a small group of core members, would have had a detailed understanding of the entire work of the Inquiry. The Chair and Secretary's overview and management of the National Committee's business would have enabled them to influence how the Committee considered different issues in the final stages of the process. Early in the Inquiry the National Committee identified a set of themes which aligned with the terms of reference. A set of wider additional themes and issues were identified during the Inquiry. At the end of the process, there was limited time for discussion of findings and recommendations. The National Committee's agendas were closely managed to ensure its work was completed by the publication deadline. This included applying judgement regarding the relative importance of the evidence which shaped the Committee's discussion.

9.4 How did the publication deadline affect the final phase of the Dearing Inquiry?

The imminent publication deadline meant that a level of pragmatism was often applied to how extensively the Committee could consider issues. The Committee's intention to build on the existing policy direction also suggests that it did not need extensive discussion of the recommendations in the latter stages of the Inquiry. The minutes suggest that discussion was practical rather than theoretical, for example, the vision of the Learning Society was proposed late in the process by the Chair but there was limited discussion of the Committee's collective vision for higher

education. In comparison, practical issues such as the qualifications framework and student funding regime generated more active discussion at the end of the Inquiry.

The Working Groups were also affected by the short timescale and reduced their workplans as a result. The Information Technology Working Group expressed concern that it had not properly examined the impact or the cost-effectiveness of IT in any depth. It also abandoned a questionnaire on research having only received one response. Rather than attempting to increase the response rate, the Group asked the Secretariat to consider a suitable comment on the use of IT in research based on relevant submissions to the Inquiry. The Funding Working Group concluded that it did not have the time or expertise to consider student eligibility for benefits in detail and the Scottish Committee noted requests from the Scottish Polytechnics Group and Bell College of Technology to meet with the Committee which it declined given time pressures.

9.5 Drafting and re-drafting the Dearing Report

The Dearing Report was a document written by a committee through an inquiry process. The report was drafted for a wide public audience and with an awareness that it would be publicly available and subject to extensive scrutiny. The Report was drafted and re-drafted as recommendations emerged with much of the work being undertaken by the Chair supported by the Secretariat.

In the early stages of the Inquiry, the scope of the Report was considered by a small group of National Committee members who met for an informal dinner. This group later reported its discussion to the National Committee. It was proposed that the Report should not fudge or paper over cracks. It would distinguish between the vision for twenty years and what could be achieved in five years with a focus on creating adaptable and flexible institutions characterised by good management and internal control. The Inquiry's remit suggested a focus on full-time University Higher Education which delivered traditional academic knowledge and skills. There was a need to ensure that skills were applicable in the workplace and with an expectation that employers would play a greater role in defining higher education in the future. These ideas shaped the National Committee's discussion of an early statement of the aims and purposes of higher education drafted by the Secretariat.

The development of the Dearing Report was an iterative process which began early in the Inquiry process and ran during most of the Inquiry. Towards Christmas 1996, the Chair gave an overview of the remaining work of the Committee. He confirmed that the timescale for production of the final report would be challenging and depended on the Working Groups completing their work by March 1997. He suggested that there was a need to 'sell' the final report to the academic community and raised concerns regarding the possibility of misinterpretation of messages in advance of the general election.

The National Committee held its first substantive discussion on the structure and main themes for the final report at its tenth meeting. The Committee was aware that the Report would be received by a higher education system characterised by low morale and high stress: the Report therefore needed to recognise achievements, be honest about resource problems and emphasise that, while individual institutions may have maximised their efficiency, the system as a whole had not. The Committee's discussion included early speculation on the likely reception of its report by the wider academic community but a notable silence is the likely reception by Government. The Committee was aware that the Report would be received in the aftermath of the General Election but there is no indication in the minutes of the National Committee that it considered writing its report to align with the policies of either of the main political parties, it was accountable to many stakeholders equally and none in particular. Watson (2007, p.20) later confirmed that Dearing intended the Report to be ready for the incoming government, not that the Report should anticipate the preferences of the new Government, which suggests that the Committee sought to be independent from the wider political context.

The Committee's discussion at this point was concerned with the content and main areas to be covered by the Report. The most significant at this stage was the development of a vision for the next twenty years of UK higher education and the development of this vision provides further evidence of an implicit agenda of codification. The Chair outlined his notion of a "learning society" for the first time. He had attempted to develop a concept which conveyed the Committee's view that it was important to invest in all people, not just the brightest. In order to deliver the "learning society" there would need to be a qualifications framework and a credit accumulation and transfer scheme to create a network of opportunities. His view was that if higher education did not develop innovative and flexible qualifications then employers would start to develop their own and higher education would be unable to keep pace with the wider context for its work.

The Committee welcomed the statement as a synopsis which could be developed into a vision which set out statements of aims and aspirations. These could include: pursuit of world class education; maximising opportunities for all who could benefit from higher education; ensuring the quality and integrity of the system; and being benchmarked against the world. The statement could say more about how higher education fitted with society and develop the idea of a new compact between institutions, students, governments and employers. In developing this vision, the Committee established a baseline for higher education. The Committee then went on to discuss how audit mechanisms could be used to manage the future performance of the system. To support the vision the system should be under continuous review which would preclude the need for a Committee of Inquiry whenever the system went out of line with external needs. The Committee also considered the implications of developing this vision and concluded that not all the costs could be passed on to students. The Committee was concerned that the introduction of student

fees could lead to students suing Universities which would increase the cost of insurance premiums to institutions.

The National Committee also considered the structure and style of the Report. It was keen for the report to have a coherent story with the next steps and vision set out in the first chapter for response by the new Government. To support coherence in the Report, the Committee identified a series of leitmotifs and agreed that there were five recurring themes: globalisation (although a different word or phrase would be sought); partnership and collaboration; flexible responsive institutions; professionalism; and lifelong learning. The Committee was concerned to ensure that there was a sufficient institutional focus and agreed to include an additional theme which outlined a vision of self-governing, independent institutions operating with integrity in an accountable and transparent manner.

The eleventh meeting marked a turning point in the development of the Report and there was greater consideration of the logistical requirements associated with its publication. The Secretariat was asked to investigate the possibility of using a website and CD-ROM for dissemination of the report to a wider audience. It was also asked to plan for copies to be made available in Student's Unions and public libraries.

Shortly afterwards, the Committee began to review draft chapters for the final report. The draft chapters were accompanied by lists of recommendations so that the Committee could confirm that these formed a coherent and cohesive package. In most cases the Committee was not asked to review chapters in detail but the chapter on participation was presented to the fourteenth meeting for more detailed consideration. The Committee recommended that the Government should have a long term strategic aim of increasing participation; should consider the balance of provision within the context of increased participation at sub-degree level; and that collaboration and joint funding could be used to tackle underachievement at level 3. The recommendations should also cover issues around students with disabilities; the need for reviews by governing bodies; and a framework for data collection for post compulsory education. The Committee agreed the recommendations and noted where there were points to be drawn from the wider context, where points should be broadened or where specific language should be used to articulate their views.

The reports from the different Working Groups were not all covered in the same depth, for example the findings of the Information Technology Working Group were incorporated as a separate chapter of the Dearing Report. In contrast, while the findings of the Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group were more broadly influential they did not warrant a separate chapter in the Report. The Committee also considered two issues related to its student funding recommendations in more detail. It agreed that the Report should contain a statement regarding differential pricing and that would suggest that institutions wishing to charge differential fees should be required to make a compelling case to be made to

the Funding Council. The Committee agreed to avoid recommendations on changes to the benefits system or the educational maintenance system but would refer to concerns regarding student's living conditions.

The Committee's development of the Report became more stylistic and high level towards the end of the Inquiry process. At the fifteenth meeting, the Committee agreed that the title of its report should be "Higher Education in the Learning Society". It agreed a set of principles for its recommendations: they should not be repetitive; they should be specific and incisive; and should not mention political parties. The Committee felt that a subset of around ten recommendations should be identified as having particular importance which would give focus to the Summary Report.

During this stage of drafting, much of the National Committee's discussion related to the development of recommendations across its remit. While the Committee had previously considered the recommendations proposed by the Working Groups, the drafting process provided an opportunity to revisit and revise recommendations as a collective view emerged. The Committee's discussion of its recommendations was engaged and active with new ideas being sparked during wider discussion of the Report. The Chair also encouraged members to develop ideas by actively engaging in drafting and commenting on the Report. He encouraged a similar approach to that adopted to reading the evidence submissions from the national consultation and requested that each member should take a close interest in one chapter. Following discussion with members, the Secretary later allocated an 'HE reader' and a 'Lay reader' to each chapter. The Chairs of Working Groups were also asked to review relevant chapters in detail.

At this stage of the Report's development, the Chair circulated a first version of the summary report and the Committee noted that the Secretariat were starting to edit the basic content of each chapter to develop consistent style and tone, remove duplication and ensure key themes were clear and recognisable throughout the Report. The Committee also continued to define the scope of the Dearing Report and considered its connection with other Reports, for example, an OECD thematic review was circulated by the Secretary who noted that several the recommendations overlapped with those of the National Committee. The Committee discussed the review and agreed that the review should not be published as part of the Dearing Report but could be published separately by the DfEE.

At the end of the drafting process the National Committee received two papers which proposed headlines for the Dearing Report. Professor David Watson provided a paper which outlined four 'big ideas': 1) the contribution of HE to lifetime learning; 2) a new compact between the State, the institutions and their students; 3) a vision for learning in the 21st century; 4) supporting the range of research. The Chair also provided a paper which highlighted 'Ten Key points': 1) creating a learning society; 2) the mission of HE in the learning society; 3) teaching: the world's best; 4)

celebrate achievement in research; 5) securing quality and standards; 6) the new framework for qualifications; 7) access; 8) the CIT revolution; 9) the needs of higher education; 10) the need for a major new source of funding. These papers were considered but the detail of the discussion was not referred to in the minutes.

The papers from Professor David Watson and Sir Ron Dearing highlighted the need for the Inquiry to develop a small number of clear messages which could be drawn out from the wider Report. This informed discussion at the following meeting where the Committee considered how different recommendations could be weighted. The Committee agreed that the report should be clear on key and secondary recommendations. The press notice should bring the notion of the "compact" more to the fore and confirm that the report "…rigorously analysed the funding, quality assurance and governance needs for a system which is world class" (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/30).

The 'Dearing Compact' envisaged a new partnership between Students, Institutions, Government and Society which was based on clear obligations from each of the parties which would maximise contributions to and benefits from higher education. The Dearing Report (1997) describes the Compact as being based on: institutions providing a high-quality learning environment and accurate information to inform students' choices; students investing time, effort and money in lifelong learning; higher education taking a more active role in relating the outcomes of research and scholarship to the wider needs of society; industry and commerce making greater use of the knowledge and expertise in higher education and developing closer links to the work of work; the State ensuring the well-being of higher education; and higher education recognising its obligation to society as a whole. The concept of the compact was a device, like the identification of themes and leitmotifs for the Report, which attempted to respond to the range of interests of different stakeholders while drawing the report together as a single cohesive document.

The Committee's final meetings were used for discussion and approval of the Dearing Report and Summary Report. The Committee agreed that it would refrain from commenting on the Chair's Foreword as it was his own introduction to the report. The discussion was supported by a detailed paper from the Secretariat which outlined changes to the text since the previous version. The Secretariat drew the Committee's attention to the substantial re-drafting of the chapters on funding and notes where the Committee were seeing full drafts of the chapters for the first time. The paper notes more moderate editing by the Secretariat. This included drafting connecting paragraphs which link chapters and themes, expanding discussion sections in response to comments from Committee members and tightening or amending wording to reflect advice from the DfEE. The paper also notes the ongoing development of the recommendations. In some cases, recommendations were reinstated and new recommendations added to the latest version.

The final papers give an indication of the speed with which the Secretariat was working at the end of the Inquiry process. The minutes of the meetings became more concise and sketchy and the focus of activity was on drafting the final report. The Secretariat frequently circulated new versions of the final report for consideration at final meeting of the National Committee. The papers suggest that the end of the Inquiry process was characterised by a scramble to complete the Inquiry's work and meet its publication deadline.

9.6 How did the Dearing Inquiry prepare for the publication of the Dearing Report?

The Inquiry was initiated with bi-partisan support by a Conservative Government. Following the General Election in May 1997, the new Labour Government received the Dearing Report. During the Inquiry, the Chair needed to be politically astute in working with both parties. As the publication of the Dearing Report became imminent, the Chair met with Ministers more often to discuss recommendations and the outcomes of the Report. The Secretariat prepared for the launch of the Dearing Report through a conference and co-ordinated national and regional announcements.

In the early stages of the Inquiry, some members had engaged with the press and published articles on the work of the Inquiry. Towards Christmas 1996, the Committee reviewed its workplan for the new year and agreed that it would not publish any materials or statements "…given the increasingly politicised tone of public debate on all controversial topics in the run up to an election" (*Dearing Committee,* ED266/20).

In the later phases of the Inquiry the Chair began to meet more frequently with Government. The Chair's report to the fifteenth meeting was a single item report on a meeting with the Secretary of State (Baroness Blackstone), Mr Kim Howells and senior DfEE officials. The Chair reported that the Secretary of State had stressed the importance of sticking to the 17 July publication data because it was the Government's intention to legislate in the autumn to allow new student funding arrangements to be introduced from 1998/99.

The Chair also began to correspond with Ministers directly on student funding issues. In May 1997, the Chair wrote to the Secretary of State regarding the setting of student loans against the Public-Sector Borrowing Requirement (PSBR) which affected the recommendations which could be made to address the funding crisis in higher education. The Chair later wrote to the Prime Minister regarding short-term funding issues. He subsequently tabled copies of a letter he had sent to the Prime Minister setting out the dramatic reduction in student funding which would result from unchanged public expenditure plans and urging that the planned reduction be ameliorated by 2%. He also alerted the Prime Minister to the recommendation in the Dearing Report for a contribution from graduates in employment and described the unhelpful restrictions on funding solutions imposed by public sector accounting

conventions (the PSBR). The Chair confirmed that he would be meeting the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State's special advisers to explore matters further.

The Scottish Committee was active in engaging with its Funding Council during the Inquiry. Prior to the publication of the Dearing Report the Chair met with representatives of the Scottish Higher Education Funding Council (SHEFC) to discuss the main recommendations of the final report and held as similar meeting with the Committee of Scottish Higher Education Principals (COSHEP).

The National Committee was also aware of the work of the Kennedy Inquiry and ensured that its work was aligned with the findings of the Kennedy Report. At the seventeenth meeting the Chair reported there had been a leak from the Kennedy Report which was due to be published in early July 1997. The National Committee later discussed the media publicity for the forthcoming Kennedy Report and agreed that its own chapter on widening participation needed to be powerful. The Chair confirmed that he would meet with Helena Kennedy although there was no later report of the meeting given to the Committee.

In the final stages of the Inquiry, the National Committee planned for the launch of the Dearing Report. Mr Tony Millns, the Inquiry's Media Adviser, developed the media strategy which anticipated that there would need to be regional coverage of the event which would take place in London. The actual publication date was dependent on the timing of the Secretary of State's Parliamentary Statement. The Inquiry originally worked to a 17 July 1997 publication date which was later delayed to the 23 July 1997. The schedule for printing the report mean that hard copies of the Report were available on time, but the Secretariat was concerned that the CD-ROM to accompany the report was proving more difficult to produce and may not be ready for the launch.

The National Committee was keen to hold its own conference to discuss the report with institutions, employers and staff unions which was planned for the 24 July 1997. The Committee declined a proposal from the CVCP to host a joint conference as the Committee did not want to be seen to have too close a relationship with the CVCP. However, it was agreed that the Chair should brief the CVCP to help them prepare for their own conference. In the final weeks of waiting for the Dearing Report, media interest and speculation grew. The Secretariat was approached by several journalists and speculative stories appeared in the Guardian and Glasgow Herald.

The publication of the Dearing Report was announced in the House of Commons by Mr David Blunkett, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment. His statement concluded that:

> Today's report presents major challenges, which every Member of this House will have to address. I recommend to the House that we take on this challenge with clarity and courage. To do otherwise would be to betray the next generation. Building on the report, we shall produce a system that will be fair, and will be good

for students, for parents, for the universities, for business and for Britain (HC Deb, 23 July 1997, vol.298 col.955)

The National Committee was thanked for the manner of its work and the short timescale in which it had been completed.

9.7 Summary

The scale of the task set for the Inquiry meant that discussion of research outputs by the National Committee needed to be effective rather than comprehensive due to time constraints. The National Committee's discussion of the evidence it received from the Working Groups was managed by the Chair and Secretary who applied a weighting to the evidence through the agenda setting process and where appropriate deferred issues elsewhere, for example, detailed recommendations on widening participation were effectively deferred to the Kennedy Report. The Scottish Committee developed its report independently with a focus on the issues most relevant to Scotland. Its report was shaped by its own research and that of the other Working Groups, use of the national consultation submissions and additional oral evidence sessions.

The Dearing Report was drafted and re-drafted as recommendations emerged with much of the work being undertaken by the Chair supported by the Secretariat. It was drafted for a wide public audience and with an awareness that it would be publicly available and subject to extensive scrutiny. Although much of the work to draft the report took place during the run up to the 1997 General Election, the Committee sought to write its report independently of Government and did not explicitly consider the implications of a possible change in Government.

As the publication of the Dearing Report became imminent, the Chair met with Ministers more often to discuss recommendations and the outcomes of the Report. The Secretariat prepared for the launch of the Dearing Report through a conference and co-ordinated national and regional announcements. The publication of the Dearing Report was announced to the House of Commons by Mr David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment on 23 July 1997.

SECTION 4: Analysis and conclusions

This section critically reviews the account of the Inquiry and uses this to draw conclusions from the study. It is structured as two chapters which are informed by the commentaries and critiques reviewed in Chapter 6 and a careful reading of the work of the Inquiry for features and themes. The first chapter uses the analytical framework developed in Chapter 6 as the basis for interpreting the policy work undertaken by the Inquiry and discussing how the account addresses the research questions. The second develops an argument for a new reading of the policy work completed by the Inquiry which emerges from this analysis.

Chapter 10: Interpretation and analysis: what order and level of policy work was undertaken by the Dearing Inquiry?

10.1 Introduction

The research for the thesis is an account of the policy work undertaken by the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (Dearing Inquiry). It is concerned with the methods and processes used by the Inquiry to address its terms of reference, consider the issues and make recommendations.

The focus is largely on the internal work of the National Committee, its programme of activities, its sources and use of evidence, and the role of its members and contributors. It is not a study of the impact of the Inquiry on the subsequent development of UK higher education. Nor is it a comparison with other committees of inquiry, although attention is given to the distinctive features of these types of policy inquiry, including the model and example set by the Robbins Inquiry in the 1960s.

Much less addressed in the literature relating to the Dearing Inquiry is an appreciation of its work as a policy inquiry process. This is an important area of investigation in light of the contemporary debates about the role of evidence and expertise in policymaking by national governments. Furthermore, as a national inquiry into higher education, the Dearing Committee was conscious of the standards of evidence and argument it was expected to demonstrate if its report was to have authority within the academic community.

Equally, an inquiry into higher education was a test of its ability to comprehend the scale, diversity, dynamism and complexity of modern-day national systems of advanced education with their multiple functions, overlapping boundaries and global-local reach. These and related themes are discussed in the next and final chapter.

In this chapter, the findings from the reading and analysis of inquiry documents are reviewed in relation to three sets of questions. The first is concerned with the extent to which the National Committee was able to meet its remit, as set out by the UK Government in 1996. The second set of questions considers the specific claims and criticisms made by commentators about the conduct of the Inquiry and the content and character of its report. A third cluster of questions references the general practices and principles associated with national inquiries and royal commissions in the British tradition. The interest here is whether these same distinctive principles were central and active in the organisation and conduct of the Dearing Inquiry, more than thirty years on from the high-water mark of the Robbins Committee.

10.2 What was the inquiry asked to do, what goals did it set itself, and to what extent were these achieved?

Responding to the terms of reference required the National Committee to complete a large volume of work in a short space of time. The Committee devised a project plan to manage this tension. The Inquiry delivered its report on time and its range of recommendations were in line with those expected by Ministers. But in meeting its deadline the Committee arguably laid its work open to the criticism that its treatment of the themes and issues was not sufficiently comprehensive and searching to address the complexities and dynamics of a mass system. In short, the needs of the short term could be seen to have dominated wider, longer term considerations.

The Dearing Inquiry was established as a 'cooling' political response to a 'hot' political issue. It was initiated in response to a funding crisis where the catalyst for Government action was the threat by the CVCP to charge top-up fees to students. The Committee was cognisant of the wider context for its work and acknowledged that its establishment was due to:

> the funding crisis in higher education brought about as a result of the three-fold expansion in student numbers in ten years, a 30 percent reduction in per capita payments over the same time period with little thought for how to maintain standards and quality. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17)

In this context, the Committee perceived its role to be "…the development of a vision for higher education, which was inspirational, set world class standards and had high aspirations" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17). At the start of the Inquiry, the Committee considered its purpose to be supporting the emerging culture of lifelong learning and considering the change in emphasis between education and learning which was emerging as a wider educational philosophy. The Committee felt that the higher education system was already diverse in terms of providers and programmes but that the emphasis needed to change to produce people who had learned how to learn and were equipped for lifelong learning (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12). Later, the Committee questioned whether it was basing its work on the traditional student population of 18-24 year olds rather than considering the needs of all learners:

> some members thought that the Committee was being too constrained in centring its thinking around young people. Breadth and skills were of less relevance to adult students. Learning outcomes were what mattered and these would be attained without recourse to specific timeframes and not necessarily all in a higher education institution. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/21/2)

This new direction and emphasis in higher education provision to enable lifelong learning for a wider student demographic could be seen as an extension of the development of higher education described in Chapter 2. During the nineteenth century, higher education institutions adapted from the predominantly vocational teaching model of the ancient universities to provide skills driven education which responded to the needs of employers. In the twentieth century, there was further

adaptation to a teaching and research model which met national needs as defined by Government. The work of the Dearing Inquiry might be viewed as the next step in the evolution of UK higher education. The Inquiry was asked to develop a longer-term view which responded to a new context of lifelong learning. The emphasis on an employability-led model was similar to the 19th century development of education to develop the skills required by employers but the change was also led by a Government research agenda and set in a new context of lifelong learning. It might be posited that this suggests an adaptability and evolution of higher education which continually reinvents itself in response to changing social need.

10.3 What was the Committee required to do?

The Inquiry was required to address an immediate crisis and to take a longer-term view by recommending a way forward for UK higher education. Arguably, there was a tension between a short-term response and the development of a longer-term vision which leads to a question regarding whether the Committee was successful in accomplishing both tasks. The Committee's work covered the major areas defined by the terms of reference, but there was variation in the depth to which different issues were considered by the National Committee, Scottish Committee and Working Groups. In the later stages of the Inquiry, the Committee selected 'leitmotifs' for the Dearing Report which were intended to highlight a smaller number of selected issues within the broader structure of the more comprehensive report. These themes are wide-ranging in nature and suggest that the Committee may have gone beyond its terms of reference and system-level view in considering issues of institutional governance and management.

The Inquiry drew on the working practices of its predecessor which was seen to have successfully undertaken a high-quality inquiry process. It attempted to emerge from the shadow of Robbins by taking a different view of its vision for higher education from that developed by Robbins on the basis of contextual differences between the two inquiries.

10.3.1 Terms of reference

> To make recommendations on how the purposes, shape, structure, size and funding of higher education, including support for students, should develop to meet the needs of the United Kingdom over the next 20 years, recognising that higher education embraces teaching, learning, scholarship and research. (NCIHE, 1997, Main Report, p.1)

Ministerial expectation (HC Deb, 19 February 1996, vol.219 c22-32) was that Dearing would build on the Robbins Inquiry and cover lifelong learning; find a solution to the funding crisis; and take a broad definition of higher education. The Committee's understanding and interpretation of its terms of reference was informed by the wider higher education and political context as well as further detail provided by Government in the form of an annex to the terms of reference. Its consideration of the terms of reference set the tone for the Inquiry by asserting its independence from

Government. The Committee chose to operate independently of Government and asserted this by deciding not to seek an additional steer from Government to guide its interpretation of the terms of reference.

Early in its work the Committee agreed a set of guiding principles which focussed on six areas: participation and access, structure, employment needs, teaching quality and standards, funding, and diversity in the higher education sector (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16). These areas informed the establishment of thematic Working Groups. However, some issues including widening participation, access and diversity did not fall under the remit of a specific working group.

The Committee also sought to understand the purposes of higher education using a definition of higher, rather than tertiary, education which created a boundary for the work. The Committee considered that recent expansion and the current rate of return may not be repeated. As a result, it anticipated that demand from young people would slow and demand from lifelong learning would increase as the workforce re-skilled and re-trained over time. In this context, the Committee intended to consider wider qualifications and skills rather than concentrating on full-time first-degree entrants but rejected a tertiary definition of higher education as being beyond the remit of the Inquiry. Consideration of further education was excluded from the Dearing remit as a result of this decision.

Towards the end of the Inquiry process, the Committee selected themes which would be highlighted in the Dearing Report. Two papers from Sir Ron Dearing and Professor David Watson were used to identify a small number of issues. Professor Watson outlined four 'big ideas' for the report which were: 1) the contribution of HE to lifetime learning; 2) a new compact between the state, the institutions and their students; 3) a vision for learning in the 21st century; 4) supporting the range of research. The Chairman highlighted 'Ten Key points': 1) creating a learning society; 2) the mission of HE in the learning society; 3) teaching: the world's best; 4) celebrate achievement in research; 5) securing quality and standards; 6) the new framework for qualifications; 7) access; 8) the CIT revolution; 9) the needs of higher education; 10) the need for a major new source of funding. The ideas highlighted in these papers strongly influenced the final report and the phrasing of the recommendations. They also enabled the Committee to select a set of 'leitmotifs' for the Dearing Report: globalisation; partnership and collaboration; flexible responsive institutions; professionalism; and lifelong learning. An additional institutional focus was represented by a theme of self-governing, independent institutions operating with integrity in an accountable and transparent manner which the Committee intended to run through the Report. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/22)

10.3.2 Fixed time period

The Committee was set a short timescale for its work by Government. Despite this, the Inquiry sought wide external consultation and used a range of activities to shape and inform recommendations. This included consultation with the sector and with a

range of actors but was rather selective in nature and there was an exclusivity in involvement being by invitation only.

The Inquiry's business was managed via a workplan and project plans which were revisited on several occasions and adapted in response to the timing of the General Election and pressure from Ministers to complete by the planned deadline. The Committee was aware that its own tight deadline meant that there was less time for the Working Groups to complete their work effectively (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17).

The Committee's concerns regarding its timescale emerge as three turning points for its work. The first turning point was in November 1996 where members began to question the quality of discussion at the meetings:

> There was some discussion of the process the Committee was following. A concern was expressed that the Committee should be coming to a decision about the future of higher education and that the high volume, paper-driven process of the meetings could stifle creativity. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/18)

The Chair and Secretary provided reassurance that the Committee was working to schedule but a revised workplan which aimed to provide a draft report to the incoming Secretary of State by the end of June was considered at the meeting held in January 1997. This was followed by a discussion in February 1997 entitled "Getting the Job Completed: The Last Two Laps" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/21/2). This marked a second turning point in the work of the Committee. The Committee had become concerned that it would not be able to meet wider expectations of its work and suggested that needed to manage external expectations via the Chair:

> The Chairman reported that he had sought to moderate expectations of what the Committee could achieve in the time available. It would be possible to reach definitive conclusions on the major issues but, on some issues, the Committee would either have to leave the detail to those directly responsible for implementation or might suggest the need for further work, either by the Committee or other bodies. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/21/2)

Further pressure was created by the General Election and post-election plans from the main political parties. The Chairman reported to the Committee in March 1997 that he had met Bryan Davis from the Labour Party Front Bench who confirmed that, if elected, Labour would publish an education bill immediately. The Labour Party did not want anything released from the Committee before the election but would welcome quick publication after the election. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/22)

Towards the end of the Inquiry a third turning point suggests a greater urgency in the final stages of the work. The Committee became increasingly concerned with meeting its deadline even if this led to a less detailed report:

> It was also suggested that the report should include an annex on funding which went through the arguments in greater detail than in the main text, but that this should not

be at the expense of getting the main report completed on time. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/26)

Additional meetings were added in the later stages to complete the work and confirm the Dearing Report on time and under pressure from the Secretary of State:

> the Secretary of State had stressed the importance of sticking to a publication date of 17 July because it was the Government's intention to legislate in the autumn to enable new funding arrangements to be introduced from 1998/99. It was noted that the Committee might need to have one or two additional meetings in the first half of June in order to enable that deadline to be met. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/27)

The work of the Dearing Inquiry began in a planned and thoughtful manner. Towards the end of the process, the need to meet the publication deadline appears to have become of greater importance which is suggested by the increase in the number of meetings and the speed of the work. As a result, speed was chosen over substance, with detail and depth being minimised in some areas of the Dearing Report.

10.3.3 A 20-year horizon

Unlike the Robbins Inquiry which was not asked to make recommendations over a specific timescale, Dearing was asked to adopt a 20-year horizon for its work. The Committee was concerned that it needed to develop both short and long-term recommendations. It discussed this tension on several occasions before finally reaching a decision:

> The Committee discussed the tension between planning for long term funding and the need to respond to the short-term imperatives of an incoming Government…It was agreed that the Committee should not be side-tracked by short term considerations but should show awareness of the issues in order to be credible. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/23)

However, where the Dearing Report recommendations include timescales, a greater number are set in the short to medium term (with immediate effect or as soon as possible, by 1998/99, within a year, in 2-3 years, medium term) and very few are set for the medium to long term, and long term. This suggests that despite an intention to work across its timeframe, the Report contains fewer recommendations to be completed in the longer term. Rather than a failure of the Inquiry, this may reflect the context for Dearing. The Inquiry operated in a rapidly changing political and social environment. The work to implement its recommendations and champion its vision would be the responsibility of a Government whose politics were unknown until two-thirds of the way through the Inquiry. In this context, a realistic and credible vision for 20-years in the future was difficult, if not impossible, and a focus on the short to medium term inevitable.

The minutes suggest that the Committee had three main concerns: it needed to plan for the longer term, respond to the short-term policy agenda and be credible in the face of external scrutiny. The 20-year horizon in some ways acted as a 'lightening rod' to draw together these tensions in the development of overarching concepts for

the work of the Inquiry. This emerged through the concepts of the "learning society" and the aligned "Dearing Compact" which attempted to provide a single foundation for the short and long-term recommendations in the Dearing Report.

The wider commentary of the Dearing Inquiry also included speculation regarding how it would respond to this horizon. The Committee was mindful of the implications of this expectation and considered how it would affect its recommendations throughout the Inquiry:

> the Committee should consider describing in its final report what it expected higher education to look like in 20 years' time…Radical proposals which the Committee might wish to make would be considered more dispassionately if set in a long-term context, and in fact any really radical changes could only be considered in the concept of an extended period for implementation (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12)

> the Committee should work towards producing some national targets (for the short, medium and long-term) along with strategies to achieve them and the consequent implications for institutions, society, students and Government. The report would have to enable the machinery of governance within institutions to carry through any proposed changes (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/13)

The Committee intended that the Report would not fudge or paper over cracks and would distinguish between the vision for 20 years and what could be achieved in 5 years with a focus on creating adaptable and flexible institutions characterised by good management and internal control. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/18). The horizon also informed comparisons of the context for Robbins and Dearing. The Committee noted that "…society was more consumerist than in Robbins' day" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16) and that:

> the Robbins Committee worked at a time when it was able to take as read concepts such as free social services including healthcare, pensions and education. The present Committee could not assume that these would be in place twenty years hence. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16)

The need to respond to the 20-year horizon and the question of timescales for recommendations were questions which the Committee kept returning to as it drafted the Dearing Report. The timeframe informed the Committee's development of funding options:

> it would need to adopt a staged approach to funding arrangements over the next twenty years. Any radical changes to institutional funding needed long lead times to enable internal restructuring to match system-wide changes… the Committee should not shy away from looking at truly radical funding options on a 'what if basis'. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16)

It provided context for its consideration of written evidence submissions where the Committee noted consistency with Committee's views but the evidence presented on some issues remained predominantly short-term (ED266/21/2).

Towards the end of the inquiry process the Chair provided a paper setting out a vision for his notion of the "learning society". He proposed that this "…would only be achieved in the next twenty years by individuals taking more responsibility for higher education and paying for part of it" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/22). The Committee later concluded that its report should recommend that that idea of a compact – covering both funding and learning outcomes – should be developed in the medium term and should not, however, be put forward as a short-term proposal. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/26). However, despite these good intentions, the recommendations in the Dearing Report suggest a bias towards the short to medium term, which suggests a degree of consistency with the wider critique that the Committee did not achieve its intention to develop a credible longer-term view.

10.3.4 The shadow of Robbins

> Most recently a UK government review of higher education chaired by Sir Ron Dearing, has reformulated the Robbins purposes and principles. The general tenor of Dearing's four main purposes is more instrumental and geared less towards the needs of the individual learner and more towards the demands of an 'adaptable, sustainable and knowledge-based economy' and 'a democratic, civilised and inclusive society' (Higher Education in the Learning Society; Summary Report 1998). In a sense, the Dearing reformulation of the purposes of higher education has served to formalise the shift, noted above, from the acquisition of knowledge for its own sake to that of knowledge as a commodity to be acquired and used for economic benefit. It brings to the forefront the debate about the role of higher education in preparing people for entry into the world of work, and the continuing relationship between the world of employment and higher education. (Jones and Little, 1999, p.127)

> While the higher education system was much larger in 1997 than it had been at the time of the Robbins Report in 1963, and a much greater proportion of the population had a direct or indirect experience of it, the Dearing Report, in some ways still had a lesser impact. Like the Robbins Report, Dearing was replete with appendices and commissioned research, but it had more the feel of a rushed job, and it did not come across so readily as an authoritative contemporary statement on the condition of higher education (perhaps because it was not chaired by an academic, not was its membership dominated by academics). And Dearing was, of course, much more focused on a single issue of political concern; that is, what to do about student funding. (Tight, 2009, p.86)

When the Dearing Inquiry was announced Ministerial expectation was that it would build on the work of the Robbins Inquiry. The Robbins Committee was set a high-level terms of reference to look at full-time higher education in Great Britain with no timescale set for its recommendations and no set deadline for its report. In contrast, Dearing was set a broad terms of reference which highlighted specific areas for investigation and recommendation which would shape all UK higher education over a 20-year time horizon. It was set a 14-month deadline to deliver its report.

At its first meeting (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12 and 13) the Committee received a background paper drafted by the secretariat which outlined the work of the

Robbins Inquiry and key facts on how the Robbins Committee undertook its work. This included the number and length of meetings held, the scale of the research programme it initiated, how its research was reflected in the final report and how it conducted its overseas visits. The National Committee sought the same quality as Robbins in its work but also wished to set new goals for higher education. While, the Robbins vision was considered, the Committee felt that this was no longer valid and chose to develop its own view situated in its contemporary context of mass higher education.

A direct link with the work of the Robbins Inquiry was made through Professor Claus Moser. Professor Moser met the Committee early in the Inquiry process. He provided a detailed overview of how Robbins had conducted its work and proposed new areas of work for Dearing including teacher training which led to a separate review. The Robbins Committee's endorsement of the idea of a general first degree and specialisation at PGT also led to discussion of a qualifications framework which would broaden 6th form and consideration of specialisation at PGT and accelerated study. Although this was not later pursued by the Committee, it can be seen to have informed the development of a qualifications framework for the higher education system.

Dearing was also linked to Robbins by the written responses to the National Consultation exercise. Many of the evidence submissions took Robbins as their starting point. The Committee chose not to do so because it felt that the changes in the wider context for higher education had rendered much of Robbins as irrelevant in the current context:

> Robbins had laid the base for expansion of higher education against the values of industry at the time – a job for life, pension, training. These values were no longer relevant for many areas of employment and the Committee would have to debate training for employability. Lifelong learning should now become a reality. The structures within higher education had not recognised the need to change and respond to the different modes of learning. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12)

> there had been major changes since the Robbins Committee reported and that their descriptions of the purposes need to be reviewed in the context of these changes. Higher education was now being examined in an environment of wider participation and of greater flux and change. Changing career patterns meant that today's graduates needed to be able to adjust to change, and that institutional course provision was affected, e.g. short course provision and new subject areas. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/15)

The Committee used the Robbins Inquiry process as a foundation for the development of its own workplan and attempted to learn from its mistakes. The Committee's critique of the work of Robbins led it to emphasise a need for external consultation where Robbins was deemed to have been lacking, "…the Robbins Report was somewhat inward-looking and relatively few external groups had been contacted to understand what they wanted from higher education. Members

commented that this was in marked contrast to contemporary expectations" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16). The National Committee also noted that Robbins had a minority report on teacher training and agreed not to take public positions beyond the Committee's statements to avoid the need for minority reports which could have undermined its wider credibility.

The National Committee attempted to emerge from the shadow of Robbins by drawing on its strengths and avoiding its weakness as a national inquiry. The Committee used Robbins as a guide to the inquiry process, as a census point for comparison and as an example of a high-quality inquiry process but sought to develop its own vision for higher education rather than building on the Robbins Report. The Committee felt that its approach to adapting higher education to meet the changing needs of students and stakeholders in society was markedly different from how Robbins conducted its work, "…the model of a university prevalent in the Robbins' Report had been radically altered" (*Dearing Committee* ED266/16) and "In discussing the changes since Robbins it was agreed that the expansion of higher education placed it squarely at the heart of the country's economic future" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/18). This point was later echoed by Barnett (1999):

> On the matter of voice, in Robbins, the dominant voice is that of the academic community, albeit one that considers itself to be of value to the host society. It is a voice from within. In Dearing, the dominant voice is that of the economic interests. (p.297)

The Committee attempted to reflect Robbins in the quality of its approach, process and report but also sought independence from the past and sought to find its own voice in developing a new contemporary vision of the Learning Society.

10.4 What goals did it set itself?

The National Committee set itself the goal of understanding the changing context for UK higher education and how participation might extend and be enhanced. It established broad areas for consideration which the Working Groups were asked to explore in more detail as well as specific areas which were considered by the National Committee.

The Committee returned to four high-level goals during the course of its work: i) identifying effective ways of further closing the gap between the attributes employers expected from graduates and the general ability of higher education to meet them; ii) addressing the growing divergence in student expectations which was a function of the increasing diversity of the student body; iii) developing a vision for higher education, working out how much the operation of the vision would cost, and providing a number of options for how this could be funded; and iv) understanding cost comparisons with international higher education, considering the role of higher education institutions in relation to the State and understanding the opportunities presented by greater collaboration (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17).

The scale and scope of the terms of reference seem to have drawn the Committee to structure and restructure its work in an attempt to be efficient and selective. The effect of this is that its goals beyond responding to the terms of reference are unclear and the Committee was influenced by different agendas during different phases of its work, either as a result of its own discussion or because of ongoing discussions with external stakeholders. New areas of work such as consideration of the admissions process were added in response to stakeholder discussions rather than there being a clear set of goals established at the start of the inquiry process.

10.5 To what extent did the Inquiry achieve its goals?

The scale and scope of the Dearing Report suggests that the Committee was successful in meeting its goal of understanding the higher education system in broad terms. However, the Committee's working practices feature a selective approach which created a degree of variation in the extent of the Committee's discussion and some recommendations were more carefully considered than others. Much of the thinking on recommendations was delegated to the Working Groups and discussion of their interim and final reports informed the National Committee. The Committee also changed and added recommendations late in the Inquiry based on opinion rather than new data in order to meet its reporting deadline.

The wider commentary criticised the Dearing Report for failing to be radical and questioned the basis for the development of lifelong learning. The Committee's discussion highlighted that the Report should be clear on key and secondary recommendations. It was keen to emphasise the notion of the "compact" which identified the stakeholders for its work and report and to confirm that the report "…rigorously analysed the funding, quality assurance and governance needs for a system which is world class" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/30).

Discussion of recommendations began early in the inquiry process and often before evidence had been collected to either confirm or refute the National Committee's opinions. The Committee later became concerned that there was a degree of bias in the Government data used to inform its discussion, "Members questioned the origin of the paper and its annexes, stating that the main paper had some very strong views giving undue emphasis to particular pieces of work. It was explained that the cover paper was from the Government and the supporting annexes from professional staff in the Department for Education and Employment" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/22).

There was also significant variation in the quality and depth of work undertaken to inform different parts of the report and annexes. Much of the work to investigate issues and develop options was delegated to the Working Groups. Some specific research was also delegated to the Secretariat, for example, work on Higher Education in Europe which was undertaken by the Secretariat and based on a small sample survey undertaken at short notice. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/23). The

variation in the data and discussion used to develop recommendations also highlights the Committee's selective approach to undertaking detailed work and there is variation in the amount of evidence which underpinned the recommendations. Figure 10.1, below, provides an interpretation of the amount of evidence and discussion of recommendations based on the agenda items considered and discussed by the National Committee, Scottish Committee and Working Groups:

Figure 10.1: use of evidence and discussion to inform recommendations in the Dearing Report

More evidence and discussion

Student funding and student support

Quality and standards

Qualifications framework

Students and social security benefits

Employability and rates of return for graduates

Post-qualifications admissions system

Demand at sub-degree level and for part-time and postgraduate levels

Pay and resources

Regional role of higher education

Widening participation, progression and access

Collaboration

Less evidence and discussion

The recommendation on expanding sub-degree provision was developed based on a paper from Sir William Stubbs which was later reported to the Structure and Governance Working Group (SGWG). However, the data source and provenance for this paper is unclear as it was not drafted by the SGWG. The paper informed the recommendation on sub-degree provision as the Committee agreed that there was scope for further expansion of higher education and that much of this should properly be delivered in further education colleges. (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/19).

The Committee considered data on future student demand for both undergraduate and postgraduate provision but its discussion highlighted the limitations of the data. It felt that "…the IES projections did not consider future continuing professional development needs, nor what would happen if there was greater participation from lower socio-economic groups" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/18). Its later discussion of the size and shape of the system was also limited by DfEE projections which covered Great Britain only and excluded lifelong learning and part-time provision. "…this did not chime well with the emerging vision of the Committee for lifelong learning and the need for different exit points at different times" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/22). The data on part-time and postgraduate taught demand was also weak, "The projections prepared by the DfEE were noted. It was agreed that

they were of limited use because they did not take into account anticipated growth in postgraduate continuing professional development" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/27).

The Committee noted that the evidence provided by the written evidence submissions was weakest on pay and the issues relating to use of resources (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/21/2). It also struggled to obtain reliable staffing estimates and in the end relied on a single commissioned report which provided staffing estimates not available by other means (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/24/1). Similarly, the Committee's thinking on the regional role of HE (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/26) and on widening participation and access to higher education were not considered as separate themes during the Inquiry and the research to inform these recommendations was informed by separate commissioned reports. Notably, the National Committee was asked to discuss the chapter on participation in detail. This was noted as an exception as the Secretariat did not ask the Committee to read and discuss other chapters (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/26).

The final minuted discussion of last minute changes to the Dearing Report included significant amendments which were based on opinion rather than data and reinstated recommendations which had previously been merged into the text. The final amendments made some major changes to the report. On teaching and learning, the language of students as customers was dropped; the cap on sub-degree provision was to be immediately lifted in response to demand; and a recommendation for funding for pilot projects to widen participation from deprived areas was added along with recommendations on role of higher education in supporting and encouraging entrepreneurs. The Report was strengthened to make clear that the economic gains outlined in the report were dependent on resumption of growth, making good the shortfall in capital investment and investment in staff and that staff should benefit from resumed growth in increased earnings. The recommendation that there should be a subsequent strategic review after 5 years and every 10 years thereafter was also added (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/31).

In order to respond across the breadth of its terms of reference the National Committee was selective in its approach and delegated work to the Working Groups and Secretariat. It also used commissioned research to address themes which were not covered by the Working Groups. This often meant that the Inquiry operated efficiently and effectively but also led to a level of variation in the work and evidence which informed the recommendations in the Dearing Report.

10.6 What were the specific claims made in the commentaries and how justified are they?

Chapter 6 considered the wider commentary and critique of Dearing and considered where there are gaps and silences. While an agenda of 'hot' politics drove the initiation of the inquiry, the commentary suggests a greater interest in specific

aspects of the Committees work and there is little consideration of Dearing as a policy inquiry process. Compared with the issues which the Committee was asked to address, the quality and comprehensiveness of the exercise is not scrutinised to the same degree. Policy inquiry processes are operational in nature and as a result are less often seen as exciting topics for consideration.

Several of the claims made in the commentaries suggest a limited understanding of how the work of the Dearing Inquiry was conducted and the choices made by the National Committee in undertaking its work. Others accurately identify areas of tension between the terms of reference and the Committee's interpretation of its work. The disconnect between the commentators and the Committee suggests that the external commentators were removed from the work of the Inquiry and their understanding was limited by a lack of transparency. This contradicts the expectation that committees of inquiry should be consultative in their work but may also suggest that the Committee sought selective engagement with those outside the inquiry process. This section considers four of these criticisms in more detailed before revisiting what is missing from the critique of Dearing.

10.6.1 Dearing validated a policy agenda which had already been set for it

> Dearing emerges on key issues as better intentioned than might have been feared from its provenance, that is, of a committee largely appointed to follow policy presumptions already set for it. The terms of reference did not offer a clean slate, and inserted assumptions which partly permeate the report and may explain the Committee's incapacity to get to grips with higher education's deeper problems. (Kogan, 1998, p.48)

> Other reasons for Dearing's "failure" arise from the sea-change in British politics that was marked by New Labour's victory in the 1997 general election (although Old Labour cynics had already begun to wonder how great that sea-change had already been before Mr Blair had been in 10 Downing Street for more than six months). The Dearing committee had been established with bi-partisan support but only nominally and grudgingly. The truth is that Labour in opposition prevailed on a rather reluctant Gillian Shepherd to accept some of its nominees as members of the committee (which, in practice, did little for its cohesiveness as a team). But in no sense was Dearing ever above politics. Its agenda was set by the outgoing Conservative Government. Only in their desire to prevent higher education funding becoming an election issue were the Conservatives and Labour united. This meant that the Dearing process could not but be radically destabilised by the change of Government on May 1, even if some of this destabilisation was internally generated by the committee's own lack of cohesion. (Scott, 1998, p.45)

It was observed in Chapter 6 that national inquiries are often expected to follow a specific policy direction. This builds on the wider point made in Chapter 4 that policy development tends to be incremental rather than radical. In the case of Dearing this assessment is justified in part. Several of the findings of the Dearing Inquiry showed a close alignment with the outcomes of the 1994 DfEE review of higher education. But the Inquiry had a wider scope than the earlier review and went

beyond its terms of reference to consider issues of institutional autonomy, governance and standardisation. Dearing's validation of a previous policy direction arguably should not be considered as the only outcome of an inquiry which looked at a broad and complex policy question and made recommendations across higher education. In validating the current model, Dearing provided the basis for future development of higher education policy and the foundation for the post-binary system.

Dearing endorsed two key policy areas. First, it enabled Government to make the breakthrough on fees. The Dearing Report legitimised a new fees-based funding model for higher education and established the principle that graduates should contribute to the costs of their education. This ended sporadic Government consideration of whether fees offered a new source of funding for higher education which could increase funding-levels without increasing the cost to Government.

Dearing later commented (in Watson and Amoah, 2007) that the Committee could have done more to consider differential fees. This statement is rather misleading. The National Committee considered a cohort approach to pricing courses and concluded that price differentiation could lead to social divisiveness. The National Committee choose not to recommend this type of student funding model on the grounds of complexity. This could suggest that the Chair's view ran counter to the Committee's consensus, or that establishing the principle of student fees and implementing differential fees at the same time would have been too radical a change for the higher education system.

Second, the Committee validated the establishment of the QAA by setting an agenda for its work. It achieved this by negotiating consensus with the Scottish Committee which was not initially in favour of a national quality assurance scheme and did not agree that Scottish institutions would fall under the remit of the new single quality assurance agency.

The Committee went beyond its terms of reference in considering whether the principle of institutional autonomy was still relevant in a mass higher education system. In considering the implications of variable governance structures between pre- and post-1992 universities and different styles of institutional management, the Inquiry explored issues which related to institutional autonomy and reconsidered how universities had operated in the past compared with how they could operate in the future. Managerialism and the associated performance management of staff was an unwelcome development in institutions where staff had previously enjoyed high levels of freedom. By choosing to review governance and staff management, the Inquiry began to explore the changing relationship between institutions and Government. By recommending greater standardisation of university management and governance arrangements the Inquiry was addressing issues which were outstanding from the creation of a unitary higher education system in 1992. It could be posed that in creating more standardised, regulated and accountable universities,

the Inquiry sought to change their relationship with the State and the way universities operated within the wider system.

10.6.2 Dearing lacked a coherent research plan and relied too much on consultancy and management reports.

In more detailed respects the "failure" of Dearing is also explicable in terms of the contrast between the 1960s and 1990s. The Robbins Inquiry, of course, benefitted from being established at the high-tide of post-war social science research. As a result, it was able to rely on a strong underpinning of high quality (but expensive) empirical research. The Dearing Inquiry, in contrast, was forced to rely on the shoddy paraphernalia of management consultancy, policy reviews, "expert" seminars so popular in the 1990s. The deficiency shows. Some of Dearing's conclusions are wrong-headed because the arguments and evidence to support them are insubstantial and shallow. (Scott, 1997a, p.46)

Dearing may have 'delivered' on the major funding question, the issue of students themselves making financial contributions, and may have had the courage to challenge Treasury assumptions on funding levels generally, which will make uncomfortable reading in Whitehall, but overall the Report lacks the kind of fundamental analysis which its broad conclusions require. Too often it has been forced to rely on a pot pourri of existing nostra and prejudices backed up by research produced by other bodies who may or may not have had their own reasons for producing it. Most of such work reflects current concerns rather than longer term research perspectives. (Shattock 1998, p.35)

The list of references at the end is an inaccurate hotch-potch, overweighted by official documents, included some undated Quango bureaucratic utterances, and apparently limited to the knowledge scope of the team.

The Committee commissioned literature surveys and research and there were seminars at which experts – who? – informed about the latest thinking. The research was not placed with those with international reputations in this field, and was mainly consultancies put out to answer particular questions. Some of Appendices contain useful collations of opinion about key issues. For the most part they do not refer to previous work in the field. Thus a competent survey of academics' experiences and expectations in higher education does not refer to the work of A. H. Halsey. Those engaged in serious higher education research in the UK might just as well drop dead as far as this committee is concerned. The depth and complexity of the institutions, the world of learning, the faculty structures which are the proper subject of the enquiry are not part of the research frame and thus not part of the committee's thinking. (Kogan 1998, p.50)

Some of the harshest criticism of Dearing was aimed at its use of existing reports and Government data rather than developing its own data sources. The criticism is not entirely justified as the Committee chose to use existing reports supplemented by commissioned research so there was a balance of new and existing sources. The expectation from commentators and critics appears to have been that Dearing should take a lead from Robbins and develop its own data and reports. While the Scottish Committee took the opportunity to develop a new dataset for Scottish institutions,

much of the work of the National Committee and Working Groups was informed by existing data provided by the DfEE.

The commentary criticises the Inquiry's use of research and highlights the National Committee's lack of a coherent research plan, suggesting that the exercise lacked academic rigour. The Committee's reliance on consultancy and management reports meant that the Inquiry was not seen as wholly independent of Government. The Committee was criticised for taking short-cuts in other areas of its research by relying on readily available sources of data and using personal connections between the Secretariat and Government departments to request that new work be undertaken quickly.

However, the commentators appear unaware that the Committee developed a research plan in the early stages of it work with assistance from HEFCE and the CVCP. The plan was later shared with those organisations, the funding councils and the DfEE to avoid duplication. Committee members were also encouraged to add to the plan where they had ideas for additional research. The Committee agreed that its research programme should be wide ranging with new research commissioned to fill gaps in the Committee's knowledge. In other cases, pre-existing work should be drawn upon and examples are given of surveys of recent graduates which would be launched by the Secretariat and a review of the appropriateness of the GNVQ as preparation for University study which was being launched following Dearing's review of 16-19 qualifications.

The use of existing data and research was arguably less a short-cut than a pragmatic response to the scale of the task in hand. The Inquiry was established with a short timescale to complete its work and Secretariat worked hard in the early stages to establish the Committees and Working Groups and to respond to requests for new data and analysis. The speed of the work necessitated a reliance on Government reports and data which was available and of a reliable quality. In the latter stages of the Inquiry there are several instances where the limited timescale led to discussion of new issues being informed by Government reports rather than the Committee initiating new and independent research and the Committee raised concerns regarding the scope and quality of data which informed some of its recommendations as discussed in section 10.4.

10.6.3 Dearing reflected the limitations of a national inquiry process and was unable to take a strategic view which would create a dynamic vision for the future of higher education.

> Nor are inquiries always the next rational step in a policy process. If they were, higher education would have had its 'Dearing' at least a decade before the real event. It would have been better to have taken stock in higher education before the 1987 White Paper to ensure Government understood that expanded participation needed to be matched by appropriate policies on funding, quality and sectoral character. In the event, the only strategic view available to the Dearing inquiry was through the rear-view mirror, and the final report reflects this. (Robertson, 1999, p. 119-120)

The major achievement of the Dearing Committee's proposals on funding is to facilitate the political breakthrough on the acceptance of a student contribution to the funding of higher education. Whether the credit for that goes to those who established the Committee, the Committee itself or Mr Blunkett is an open question. The Committee deserves praise for the rigour and depth of its investigation of the complex impacts of different private funding proposals. As an intellectual exercise, it is first class. Not for the first time in the history of public policy making, that intellectual rigour is now largely irrelevant.

The Committee's obsession with solving the problem of funding fulltime students in higher education created an implicit model in which other forms of higher education were treated as part of the supporting cast. This not only affected the funding chapters but many other aspects of the report. If it had adopted a genuine lifelong learning model of higher education, it might have come up with more relevant and more readily accepted proposals. (Wagner, 1998, p.76)

Despite its several virtues the Dearing Report is unlikely to have a long shelf life. Like, I imagine, most other readers I turned first to Chapters 17 to 21 on funding issues and the pages of densely argued text literally came apart in my hands – quicker even than their contents in David Blunkett's mind. Most of the other chapters did withstand a first reading, but looked distinctly tattered after a second. This is a pity because the Report will be of most use in the long term to PhD students who will use it as a primary source on the state of British Higher Education, and modish debates about it, in the final years of the twentieth century (Williams, 1998, p.1)

The three quotes highlight different aspects of a thread in the wider critique which suggests that the Inquiry demonstrated the limitations associated with inquiry processes and as a result failed to develop a new vision for UK higher education. Robertson suggests that the timing was the problem. Dearing was initiated too late and would have been more effective if it had been contemporary with the Leverhulme Project discussed in Chapter 2. Wagner highlights the breakthrough on fees and the quality of the Committee's 'intellectual exercise' but suggests that a wider definition would have been more relevant to the wider context of lifelong learning. Finally, Williams criticises the quality of the recommendations and suggests that they are flimsy and the Report will only have an impact in the short-term.

Arguably, the evidence of the Dearing Inquiry suggests that these provide a short-sighted and overly critical assessment given the scale and timeframe of the inquiry. Dearing was a product of its time and responded to its contemporary context. The discussion of national inquiries in Chapter 4 describes how they respond and adapt to their circumstances: a decade earlier and Dearing would have been a different inquiry. Wagner and Williams present conflicting viewpoints on the perceived quality of the work undertaken by Dearing. To an extent they may both be right. Wagner highlights the quality of the work to develop recommendations on a new funding regime. This was a critical part of the Committee's work in the wider political context for the Inquiry. If Dearing had failed to make an informed recommendation on fees then the purpose and the validity of the inquiry process

would have been called to account. Williams also questions the fees recommendations but does not give the Committee the credit due for the quality and extent of its wider work.

The main point from these critiques is the view that national inquiry processes are limited and as a result their work is not of the expected substance and quality. It is also not seen as strategic which suggests an over-emphasis on specific detail rather than a high-level view.

A different interpretation of the limitations based on the account of the Inquiry is that the National Committee was mindful of the scale of its work, selected the main issues for consideration and undertook detailed work in these areas. It attempted to develop a strategic view through the concept of the learning society and the Dearing compact which it then supported by more detailed work on specific areas of the higher education system which would enable the vision to be achieved over the next 20 years.

Much of the Committee's work aligned with the views and concerns expressed in the wider commentary and critique, leading to recommendations in those areas. The recommendations had a broad coverage which responded to the critical issues in the wider higher education context. While the National Committee considered some issues in more depth, its strategic view can be viewed more accurately as selective rather than limited.

The selective approach is evident in different areas of the inquiry. First, the work of the Committee was shaped by the Chair and Secretary, the interests of members and by Government. It was informed by the wider context and possibly the previous DfEE review which was also led by the Secretary. Second, there was variation in the depth of work in different areas. The key policy recommendations on the funding regime, the development of a qualifications framework and on the development of the quality assurance regime were given extensive consideration by relevant working groups and the National Committee.

The development of the funding model used to cost the recommendation demonstrates how the Committee used small groups to look at specific areas in a greater amount of detail. The model was developed by London Economics who worked with a small Technical Working Group established by the Funding Working Group (FWG) which reported to the National Committee. There is no evidence in the archive of how the Technical Working Group undertook its work. The FWG considered the outputs from reasonably well-developed models and did not consider or request methodological changes. The National Committee was a further step removed. It considered the development of the funding model and selected its preferred model from four options. It did not spend more time on this than other issues such as the development of a qualifications framework, for example.

Similarly, the wider commentary includes lobbying for work on how research would be funded. Dearing considered and recommended the establishment of the AHRC. It endorsed the dual funding mechanism and recommended that full economic costs should be met as well as establishing a revolving loan fund for research. However, while the Committee recommended higher levels of funding for research it assumed that these would be allocated using the existing mechanisms and effectively left deliberations on funding models and methodology for research to the research councils rather than develop new proposals in this area. The Committee's consideration of research suggests that it chose how far it would take the issue and what it would deem to be beyond its remit.

10.6.4 The Secretariat was not of sufficient competence and lacked suitable prior experience:

> Nor was the Committee furnished with staff of high competence. None of its policy advisers had a significant track record in either policy analysis or research in higher education and science policy. They were mainly junior people from higher education quangos. This contrast with the Robbins team led by Claus Moser and Richard Layard illustrates the level of commitment of the DfEE and the Committee itself to the application of disciplined enquiry to policy issues. (Kogan, 1998 p.50)

Kogan's critique highlights two points. First, he makes an unhelpful comparison with Robbins. The Robbins comparison implies that research was being undertaken by policy advisers and assumes that it was necessary to complete a similar process of data collection to the one conducted under Robbins. While the Robbins Inquiry was forced to develop its data from scratch, Dearing could draw on a wider range of data sourced from Government through the Higher Education Statistics Agency which had been established in 1993. There was not the same need to undertake a data collection exercise and this comparison fails to recognise the different contexts in which Robbins and Dearing were working.

Second, Kogan questions the quality of staff, namely the policy advisers, who supported the Dearing Inquiry. The wider literature discussed in Chapter 4 notes that the effectiveness of a national inquiry depends on the role taken by participating actors. The National Committee relied on two small groups of individuals to provide direction and momentum, one was drawn from the membership of the Committee and the other from the wider Secretariat.

The account of the Inquiry highlights that there was a core group of the National Committee who were more heavily involved in shaping its work. The report of a separate dinner in November 1996 (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/19) is particularly interesting as it indicates that there was a smaller group closer to the Chair who met to discuss the work of the Inquiry in more detail. The wider work of the Committee indicates that Sir Ron Dearing was at the centre of the Inquiry, but Professor David Watson played a particularly significant role in its work because his contribution was broad in scope and he contributed to the thinking on many topics considered by the Committees and Working Groups. While there was variation in the levels of

involvement from different Committee members, as highlighted in section 8.3, the evidence for Watson's greater level of involvement is in the range of activities and areas which he shaped through papers and discussion.

Kogan's criticism is aimed at the Secretariat and more specifically the policy advisers. The Secretariat supported the Dearing Inquiry throughout the inquiry process. They were present at every meeting, took notes, responded to requests, co-ordinated between the Committees and Working Groups and organised the work of the Inquiry. The output from their general administrative work (predominantly agendas, minutes and papers) is consistent and high quality across the Inquiry's Committees and Working Groups. Most of the Secretariat were invisible and appear as nothing more than a name listed in the Dearing Report. However, the smaller group which acted as Secretary to each of the Committees and Working Groups had a higher profile and made a significant contribution to the work of the Inquiry. For example, Ms Clare Matterson was credited with completing most of the work to develop the qualifications framework, Mr Nigel Brown supported the development of the funding model working with the Funding Working Group and London Economics and Mr Chris Kirk completed work on a range of surveys which were used to inform recommendations in the Dearing Report. The level of involvement and quality of work from the members of the Secretariat suggests a level of trust and delegation from the Chairs of the Committees and Working Groups which would not have been afforded to staff without a high degree of competence.

10.7 What was missing or underplayed in the commentaries?

The commentaries and critiques consider many aspects of the work of the Inquiry but other areas received little or less attention. The commentary is generally focussed on specific thematic issues and does not consider the Inquiry processes, the range of work undertaken or the system-level view taken by the National Committee in developing its recommendations. The work and importance of the Scottish Committee is not adequately considered outside Scotland and the Inquiry is not subject to critique through wider comparison with other inquiries beyond Robbins.

10.7.1 An appreciation and discussion of the totality of inquiry activity

Early in the Inquiry, Flint (1996) made a direct plea:

> Dear Ron, I'm sure you must be amused occasionally by some of the descriptions given to you - 'the nearest British Education has to the Almighty'; 'a more cost-effective alternative to the DfEE'; 'Mr Fixit'. You wear the implied responsibilities lightly, but take them very seriously. And we need a fixer, because the system is, surely, broke. (Pun intended). (p.9)

Flint's pun is consistent with much of the commentary and critique of Dearing. Although there is later consideration of the inquiry process, effectively the request to 'fix' the system, the immediate commentary failed to appreciate or discuss the totality of the work of the inquiry. Much of the commentary is concerned with re-

telling the inquiry's progress or the story of Dearing. The academic critique concentrates on a small range of issues which were relevant to academic commentators and enabled them to argue specific points of interest.

The commentary has less of an appreciation of the fact that the National Committee's policy work operated at two levels: system and institution. As noted earlier in this chapter, consideration of issues at an institutional level took the National Committee beyond its terms of reference. The concept of the Dearing Compact was developed late in the process to draw together the work at institutional and a system level and provide a framework for a cohesive set of recommendations. The Compact envisaged a new partnership between higher education and Government which formed the foundation of the 'Learning Society'. The Inquiry's work was informed by the macro level concept of the Learning Society. Defining the contribution of higher education to the development of the Learning Society became a longer-term ambition of the Inquiry which was encouraged by the Chair. Its recommendations sought to put the higher education system on a new footing and to set this direction.

10.7.2 Consideration or critique of Higher Education as a system

The National Committee's work to consider the aims and purpose of the Higher Education is not reflected in the wider commentary and was seen as a gap by commentators, most critically by Blake, Smith and Standish (1998).

The minutes of the National Committee include significant and ongoing discussion of the aims and purposes of the higher education system. The Committee considered the nature and purpose of higher education in relation to the development of a vision for higher education which reflected the Learning Society and Dearing Compact as well as highlighting the pursuit of world class education; maximising opportunities for all who could benefit from higher education; ensuring quality and integrity of the system; and benchmarking against the world.

The critique of the Dearing Report suggests that the Committee failed to consider higher education in its broadest terms. Specific criticism was that the Report had a focus on undergraduate students studying for three-year degrees and was silent on postgraduate students (both taught and research), mature students and students studying on a part-time basis including continuing professional development (CPD). It also failed to address the question of funding for employer-based training. The evidence from the Dearing Inquiry supports the assertion that it had a greater focus on traditional undergraduate students. However, the commentary does not consider whether this was an explicit choice by the National Committee. The National Committee agreed early in the inquiry process that its remit covered higher rather than tertiary education. By adopting a higher education definition, the National Committee excluded students studying at further education institutions which would include mature students, more part-time provision and short courses including CPD. The exclusion of this broader student population may have contributed to the focus

on traditional undergraduate students which was noted by the Committee and wider commentators.

The potential for market regulation of the higher education system was also an area where the National Committee was judged to have failed to be radical or innovative in its thinking and recommendations. The National Committee considered the risks associated with a market system and concluded that it was more important to have strong mechanisms in place to allow Government intervention to prevent universities from failing. The National Committee chose to recommend stronger regulation delivered through quangos rather than allow student demand to dictate the size and shape of the system and the market mechanism to determine price. Quality assurance is a further area where the Committee needed to align with the policy direction set for it. The Joint Planning Group which had been established to consider the quality and assurance arrangements for the higher education system reported after the Dearing Inquiry had been initiated and recommended the establishment of the Quality Assurance Agency. The National Committee had little choice than to endorse the new body and to make recommendations to shape its future work.

10.7.3 The role of the Scottish Committee and its recommendations outside Scotland

The role and work of the Scottish Committee was not generally considered outside Scotland. The Robbins Inquiry, which was asked to look at Great Britain, reflected the distinctiveness of the Scottish model by reporting its findings on Scotland systematically and separately from those on England and Wales. Parry (2014) notes that, "The pattern of higher education in Great Britain at the beginning of the 1960s was described by Robbins as a system of three sectors, with features distinctive to Scotland that required their separate description alongside that for England and Wales" (p.194). Dearing treated Scotland differently through a separate and significant committee.

The establishment of a Scottish Committee under the chairmanship of Sir Ron Garrick was announced to the National Committee at its first meeting (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12-13). The Scottish Committee was announced as a decision rather than as an item for discussion and there is no explanation of the rationale or impetus for a separate Scottish Committee. In contrast, Wales and Northern Ireland were covered by the National Committee. The Chair notes rather weakly that this is because separate committees for Northern Ireland and Wales had not been suggested (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12). During the inquiry process it is notable that higher education in Wales and Northern Ireland was not considered in detail. The additional benefit of higher education in Wales was reduced to being "… highly instrumental in ensuring the transmission of the Welsh language and culture" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/16). Northern Ireland was considered through papers on the regions (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/17) which included data from the Department for Education Northern Ireland (DENI) but was not discussed separately.

The importance of the Scottish Committee was not initially recognised by the National Committee and its importance became evident during the inquiry process. The Committee initially noted that it was important for Scottish issues to be covered in the main report "…with an annex on Scottish issues as appropriate" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/12). Later in the inquiry process the National Committee agreed that the report should be written in the Scotland Committee's voice and would form a freestanding document to be published with the Main Report (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/27). This decision suggests a greater level of importance and independence in the work of the Scottish Committee with its report later published as a separate report.

Unlike the Working Groups, the Scottish Committee challenged the National Committee and during the Inquiry there were areas of dissent from the National Committee view by the Scottish Committee. While these were later resolved they covered some of the more significant areas of the Committee's work. The Scottish Committee initially opposed the creation of the AHRC and the development of a national quality assurance framework preferring the arrangements already in place in Scotland. The first report from the Scottish Committee to the National Committee identified divergence on governance issues and the Scottish Committee was asked to rethink its views on payment of institutional governors. The Scottish Committee later dissented on the research funding but this too was resolved prior to the publication of the Dearing Report.

However, the Scottish Committee's dissent also led the National Committee to develop its thinking in a new direction. The Scottish Committee initially advocated a revival in ordinary/general degrees whereby students could move in and out of study and "…did not see a need for a uniform UK-wide system" (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/21/2). While this view could have been problematic for the National Committee's development of a qualifications framework, instead it led to a change in the framework. The Scottish Committee proposed that a qualifications framework should operate as a 'climbing frame' rather than a 'ladder'. This approach was followed by the National Committee in developing a framework which was sufficiently flexible to accommodate Scottish and European qualifications rather than being restricted to qualifications offered in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

10.7.4 Dearing as a type of committee of inquiry:

> An ability to manage political expediency and command intellectual authority has become an essential requirement of present-day inquiries. Their success or otherwise in combining these elements was evident in the different approaches and contrasting experiences of the South African, Dearing, West and Spellings inquiries. Whether politicians continue to turn to these policy devices will probably depend less on their capacity to deal with complexity and rather more on practical politics. In short, it will depend on the appeal and special ability of national committees to neutralise a subject, defer a decision, legitimise an action, make a breakthrough and, if required, conjure a vision. (Parry in Watson and Amoah, 2007, p.80)

> In essence, the Robbins Report is characteristic of a time when higher education in the UK was a kind of village, and pretty rural at that, whereas the Dearing Report is characteristic of a time when higher education has become part of the emerging urban village of the global economy. (Barnett, 1999, p.294)

The Inquiry and its Report were both deeply situated within their wider contemporary context. Adams and Smith (in Watson and Amoah, 2007, p.81) echo Barnett in describing the Dearing Report as a product of its time and the same can be said of the Inquiry. It adapted many of the core features of committees of inquiry in response to its terms of reference and context and in ways which were unique to Dearing. Other inquiries follow the same basic processes and activities but the balance between them, the role of members and the interaction with stakeholders is different in each situation. The Inquiry was also the last of its kind. Later policy-making exercises have not used the inquiry process although inquiries are often proposed in response to complex and political issues being identified in many policy areas including higher education. This may reflect a shift in preference away from longer, considered inquiry processes to shorter and sharper taskforce-style exercises.

The nature of policy processes considered in Chapter 3 and the literature considered in Chapter 4 identified core features of national inquiries which can be summarised as: comprehensive; authoritative; evidence-informed; consultative; and deliberative. This section considers the extent to which the Dearing Inquiry demonstrated or adapted each of these core features and the implications for its credibility as an inquiry process.

Comprehensive

Dearing was comprehensive in three ways: the terms of reference covered the scope of higher education; its investigation and understanding of issues operated across its remit; and in developing its planned consultation activities the Committee sought engagement with the full range of stakeholders,

The discussion earlier in this chapter highlighted the breadth of the terms of reference for the Inquiry and the Committee's use of Working Groups to broaden its work. It also suggested that the depth of consideration by the Committee was variable. This was influenced by the importance of the topic more generally but also by members interests', most significantly the Chair and Secretary who managed the business of the Inquiry, and external encouragement from Government. Barnett (1999) suggests that there were limits on the degree to which Dearing's scope was comprehensive:

> Dearing, on the other hand, was pointed in definite directions, albeit a large number of directions, in tackling the task and given certain parameters in which to work. Key amongst those directions and parameters were those of economic growth, international competitiveness, new technology, standards and value-for-money. (p.295)

While Barnett's interpretation identifies different themes than have been considered in this thesis, his observation of the limits on comprehensiveness in Dearing is

useful. Dearing was given breadth in its remit but also specific terms of reference which were refined by an annex to the terms of reference. This set out a further seventeen pieces of additional context. The Inquiry was comprehensive in taking a view across higher education but it also selected key themes from its contemporary context and to the context set for it by Government to explore in greater depth.

It was suggested earlier in this chapter that the Committee took a selective approach to its work in order to ensure coverage across its terms of reference. This meant that it often had to choose between depth and breadth in its work but the minutes suggests that this was a tension which the Committee considered and revisited as it conducted its work. The Committee's engagement with stakeholders was similarly broad but selective. The Committee was criticised for excluding the academic community from its discussion but academics were invited to participate in seminars and workshops as well as contributing to the national consultation exercise. It also actively sought views from employers and used several different approaches to elicit views from this group.

This chapter has suggested that the Inquiry was comprehensive but it was also selective and, arguably, it was this approach and working method which enabled the Committee to operate effectively across its terms of reference.

Authoritative

The commentary and critique suggests that the Dearing Report was not as authoritative as Robbins. It was seen as watered-down government rhetoric written by a career Civil Servant in a report which hid behind its written style, "The easy rhetoric of the Report successfully evades difficult problems" (Trow, 1998, p.107). The Report was criticised as not offering a bold, new or radical vision for UK higher education. The commentary suggests that the Dearing Report was weak and that this implied a lack of authority from the Committee.

However, when the effect of the political context for the Inquiry is considered this suggests a different interpretation. Dearing appears to have operated in a more active political context than Robbins. As noted above, it was a creature of its time but the background to the Inquiry meant that, compared with Robbins, it lacked support from the higher education community. Dearing was asked to address expansion which had already happened and to find a palatable solution to a financial crisis.

The National Committee was expected to make a grand statement on the future of UK higher education over the next 20-years. It was aware that it needed to be credible in conducting its work but also that it's report would be received by an academic community which was working in a highly politicised environment. The Committee considered developing radical options for the future of higher education but held back from presenting these in its Report. The authoritative statement from Dearing was to propose a fees-based funding regime. Elsewhere its report was more measured. The Committee's work gave it the foundation for a politically well-judged report. Given the sensitivities in the environment a bold new vision could have been

less appropriate than a measured report which set a new direction in a quieter and more strategic way. How the Committee achieved this and why it took this approach is considered in the next chapter.

Evidence-informed

Table 2.1 of the Dearing Report (1997), recreated below, highlights the volume of evidence considered by the Committee.

The Committee's work: some statistics

Number of meetings of Committees and Working Groups	90
Number of papers considered by Committees and Working Groups	445
Number of documents prepared by the Secretariat	13,000+
Number of visits to UK higher education institutions	33
Number of overseas visits	8
Number of meetings between Chairman and interested parties	150
Number of individuals and organisations submitting written evidence	840
Number of pages of written evidence	6,000

The inclusion of this table at the start of the Report suggests that the Committee was keen to draw attention to the volume of evidence it had considered during the Inquiry process. While the Committee was keen to ensure that its work was informed by suitable evidence, the commentary tends to focus on the limitations of the evidence used. The Committee was criticised by commentators for its use of quantitative evidence which was not considered sufficiently independent or academic in nature. Its qualitative evidence, which included academic opinion, was not perceived to be influential in shaping the Committee's thinking. The wider commentary was critical of the quality and range of data used, as discussed in this chapter, but by presenting a clear statement on the volume and nature of the evidence considered, the Committee attempted to demonstrate the evidence-informed nature of its work and the volume of activity undertaken.

The commentator's comments regarding the Committee's use of evidence could be seen as similar to the response to other areas of Inquiry's work. The commentary often under-represented the scale and quality of the Committee's work and in several areas, including the overall policy process and the use of evidence, did not fully recognise the work of the National Committee. The volume and range of data considered suggests that the Dearing Inquiry was a data-driven and evidence-informed process. While there were limitations to the data used, the Committee was aware of those limitations, and the use of data to inform the Committee's deliberations was intended to ensure that its recommendations were, as far as possible, based in evidence from a range of sources.

Consultative

> The discourse of Dearing is one in which its relationships and, indeed, its functioning in relation to the wider society is intended to be understood by the sector itself; Dearing

213

was intent, after all, in securing changes within higher education.…Arguably, Dearing's primary audience is higher education itself, although there are other audiences as well, as Dearing strives for a 'compact' between the main stakeholders. (Barnett, 1999, p.297)

Chapter 4 notes that national inquiries are intended to be consultative and to engage with the major stakeholders. The earliest examples of Royal Commissions discussed in Chapter 2 were a mechanism for the monarch to consult with stakeholders and collect evidence. The Dearing Inquiry conformed to this model but the levels of consultation were more extensive than many other committees and this degree of consultation is unusual within the national inquiry form. Chapman (1973) and Bulmer (1980) provide case studies of other inquiry exercises which all include an element of consultation but none as extensive as Dearing. The Committee consulted widely. It engaged with and sought to be independent from the academic community and from Government. But the Committee could also be seen to have consulted on its own terms and pursued a wider view than that presented by the academic community. The choices made by the National Committee in devising its consultation activities suggests that it often sought to find a compromise between the expectations of the academic community and the requirements of Government. The Committee also attempted to respond to the wider theme of employability and lifelong learning by proactively seeking to consult employers and to understand what they required of the graduates they employed. This suggests that the Committee's consultation was not only comprehensive but recognised the value of a wider stakeholder view which reflected the wider economic role of higher education.

Deliberative

Deliberative here means the extent to which the National Committee was able to undertake a continuous dialogue informed by evidence within the cyclical process of the inquiry which enabled it to develop its collective view and resulting recommendations. Section 10.2 considered the effect of the short timescale set for the Inquiry to complete its work and notes the role of the Secretariat in planning and managing the work of the Committee to enable it to meet its deadline. However, the timescale also had a direct impact on the ability of the Committee to be deliberative and to develop its thinking in depth.

There are two areas of the inquiry process where there could have been greater deliberation by the Committee. First, the Inquiry took a cyclical approach to its work rather than following a linear process. While policymaking exercises tend to be cyclical, as discussed in Chapter 4, this meant that the Committee often considered and reconsidered issues rather than considering issues once and agreeing recommendations as they emerged from research and discussion. This was possibly a result of the need to establish the Inquiry quickly. Although the Secretariat completed a significant amount of work before the Working Groups were established, there was a need to revisit their findings as their work developed. The Committee commented on interim and final reports from the Working Groups with some being asked to complete additional work or to revise their findings. This meant

that some recommendations were agreed late in the process and led to a disparity in the amount of discussion on different topics by the National Committee.

Second, the Secretariat began to write sections of the Dearing Report almost as soon as the Inquiry was established. There was a continual process of drafting and re-drafting chapters which were written out of order. Combined with the cyclical discussion of the findings of the Working Groups this led to the Dearing Report being continually re-written and only drawn together as a final document at the very end of the process. The commentary compared the Dearing Report unfavourably with Robbins and suggested that it was not radical or authoritative. The cyclical nature of the inquiry and the drafting process may have contributed to this lack of credibility. The Committee worked quickly to complete its work and agree a structure, key messages and leitmotifs for its Report. However, while the Committee achieved its deadline, this was arguably at the cost of the depth of deliberation which is generally expected from this type of inquiry processes and from the academic community in particular.

Chapter 11. Conclusions and an argument for system-building and codification

11.1 Introduction

In researching and reviewing the conduct of the Dearing Inquiry as a policy inquiry process, three broad conclusions can be drawn. First, the scale and scope of the policy work, not previously examined in the literature, was substantial and significant especially since, unlike the Robbins Inquiry, it was confronted with a large existing evidence base (statistical, empirical and conceptual) as a foundation for its investigations. Second, the various commentators on the Dearing Report have generally misunderstood the nature, depth and complexity of the policy work undertaken and how these processes and activities informed the deliberations and recommendations of the Committee. Third, there remain important areas where the work of the Dearing Inquiry did not feature in the commentaries.

This final chapter develops the overall argument of the thesis that while the commentary on the Inquiry focused on its treatment of specific issues, the larger purpose of the Inquiry determined by the National Committee was to equip higher education with the architecture for a post-binary mass phase of development.

This is a new reading of the work undertaken by the Inquiry. The Inquiry completed an extensive but time constrained exercise in response to its broad terms of reference. The scale of the terms of reference meant that the work was larger than could be accommodated through a departmental committee but was also politically constrained, with the result that the Inquiry could not develop a new and radical vision for higher education. A radical new vision could have misjudged the fine balance required between Ministerial expectation and the concerns of stakeholders.

The concept of the Dearing Compact was developed towards the end of the Inquiry to establish a structure for the higher education system. If the work of the Inquiry, as articulated in the Dearing Report, is considered as a comprehensive post-binary tidy-up then the unconscious logic of the work begins to emerge. Instead of a bold new vision for UK higher education, the Inquiry sought to develop the policy foundation for a post-binary mass higher education system operating within the Learning Society.

11.2 Reflection on research directions considered but not pursued during the study and suggestions for future work in this area

This chapter sets out the main argument of the thesis which is a new reading of the policy work of the Dearing Inquiry. During the research process, several potential new research directions emerged which build on the work undertaken here but which were not pursued as they would have been beyond the scope of the thesis.

The reading of the Inquiry developed in this chapter highlights the advantages of historical policy research as an approach which recognises the cyclical nature of policy-making over time and enables new insights into policy processes. The focus of the research upon the Dearing Inquiry as a policy process and the use of a close investigation of the day-to-day work of the Inquiry over its lifetime highlights the tension between the essentially reactive nature of the initiation of Dearing in response to a specific funding crisis and the task given in its terms of reference to develop a long-term vision for HE in the UK. This tension was not recognised in the wider commentary which had a focus on specific, short term issues and comparatively limited consideration of the depth and complexity of policy-making undertaken.

This observation suggests potential directions for future research which build on the methods and findings presented in this thesis. First, a longer-term view may have potential for researchers and policymakers to move away from the dominant short-term approach to policy formation and analysis. In the case of Dearing, there would be scope for a study looking at the longer-term impact at the point of the twenty-year horizon established by the terms of reference. Second, while the use of interviews was rejected for this project, there is work which could be undertaken to compare and contrast recollections of the Inquiry with the documentary evidence it generated. This could include interviews with members of the Committee, such as Professor Diana Laurillard and Professor John Arbuthnott, and with Government policy-makers who operated around the Inquiry but were not directly involved. Senior members of Government, such as Oliver Letwin, appear to have had a long-term interest in higher education but have never been explicitly involved in the development of policy in this area and could provide an interesting counterpoint to interviews with members of the Committee. The demographic make-up of the Committee may also provide a new area for further research. It would be interesting to compare the gender, social and ethnic background of the National Committee with other National Inquiries. Finally, a small number of contemporary comparisons were made between the Dearing Inquiry and the West Inquiry in Australia. There is potential to conduct a longitudinal study of how the two systems developed following these two significant Inquiries and to explore whether the high degree of commonality often perceived between the UK and Australian higher education systems is borne out in a longer-term comparison.

11.3 How was the Dearing Inquiry influenced by its contemporary context?

In Chapter 3 the concepts of Audit Culture, codification and accountability were explored as providing the conceptual underpinning for the Inquiry. The Government's annex to the terms of reference aligned with these concepts. It provided a more detailed steer to the National Committee to focus on the role of higher education in improving economic performance and the need for performance measurement to ensure that higher education made a suitable contribution to economic growth.

These concepts are evident throughout the work of the Dearing Inquiry. The Committee's relationship with stakeholders suggests that it was mindful of the need for accountability balanced with independence. In responding to the emergence of Audit Culture and the need for regulatory mechanisms, the Inquiry went further than merely endorsing the QAA and set an agenda for the new quangos which positioned them to develop regulatory mechanisms for auditing, monitoring and evaluating the performance of the higher education system.

11.4 Why was Dearing a National Inquiry and not a Departmental Committee?

Much of the commentary endorses the view that the Inquiry was established in response to a specific set of circumstances, the most pressing of which was to find a solution to the funding crisis. However, this traditional interpretation of the rationale for the Dearing Inquiry leaves some significant questions unaddressed. It assumes that a national inquiry was initiated simply as a delaying tactic to address a single specific issue and fails to consider the wider evidence to the contrary. A solution to the funding crisis could have been addressed through a single-issue review initiated as a Government taskforce asked to report after the General Election. This approach would have been consistent with previous single-issue Government reports which had picked away at issues around higher education without addressing the root cause of increasing student numbers and a decline in the Unit of Resource. While a departmental committee or taskforce could have built on the work undertaken in November 1994 to review higher education and been used as a delaying tactic, it would not have been a palatable solution for the higher education community. A taskforce could have reviewed and made recommendations on a single discrete issue, it could not have coped with the scale and complexity of the issues facing higher education. A taskforce would have been less likely to ensure the levels of deliberation and authority associated with national inquiries and the close Government links with this type of policy-making tool could have exacerbated the political sensitivities around higher education funding. The wider context also made the other available policy-making tools described in Chapter 4 inappropriate in this context.

In contrast, a National Inquiry was a high profile and independent policy-making tool which brought with it the associated kudos and implied quality from previous exercises. A national inquiry into higher education would inevitably be compared with the Robbins Review which was considered a 'blue ribbon' example of a national inquiry. An independent inquiry could draw on the history of national inquiries, provide clear evidence that the Government was actively addressing the wider issues associated with higher education and would conveniently defer decisions on how to address the funding crisis after the General Election.

The terms of reference asked the National Committee to develop a vision for higher education for the next twenty years which signalled that its work was wider than simply addressing the financial crisis. The Inquiry reviewed a higher education

system which had moved from elite to mass education in a short space of time and where there had been substantial erosion of student funding. The academic community was highly stressed and morale was low. There was a pay dispute and the threat of institutions solving the funding crisis through the imposition of top-up fees. The most prestigious institutions were rumoured to be considering breaking away to become private providers of higher education.

At the same time, the emergence of an audit culture promoted values of standardisation and regulation to ensure efficiency, value for money and accountability. In line with this, a more managerial approach was being taken in Universities which ran counter to the culture of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. This more corporate approach required universities to adopt the formality of strategic plans, mission statements and corporate planning offices to provide assurance of their accountability to Government and the wider public.

The Inquiry was criticised as being led by Government rather than the academic community. A different interpretation is that the National Committee sought to be independent. Although the timescale for the Inquiry meant that it relied on Government reports, the Committee attempted to take a balanced view and to operate above the turmoil of the wider political context.

11.5 Did the Dearing Inquiry go beyond its terms of reference in developing its vision for higher education?

The commentary and critique of the Inquiry indicates that some commentators interpreted the work of the Inquiry to be more significant than its terms of reference suggested. The commentary includes the suggestion that the Inquiry was established to complete the nationalisation of higher education which was begun under the Conservative Government of the 1980s. It is also suggested that the Dearing Report amounted to codification and developed a regulatory system based on quangos which was distanced from the State machinery. The Dearing Report was described by several authors as a blueprint for the development of the post-binary system.

The previous chapter made three observations which suggest the possibility of a different interpretation of the work of the Inquiry. The Inquiry undertook policy work at both system and institutional levels within a macro level concept of the Learning Society. The National Committee's vision included development of frameworks including a qualifications framework which would promote consistent quality and standardisation and a framework for providers which would define a higher education system which operated under a new compact between institutions, students, governments and employers. The National Committee tempered its recommendations due to tacit concern that the higher education system would not be able to cope with radical change.

These observations suggest that the work of the Inquiry went beyond its terms of reference in several thematic areas. The Inquiry may also have addressed an implicit

agenda of codification which sought to standardise the higher education system through the creation of consistent structures and regulatory tools. This work may also have pursued an agenda of system-building which created a consistent baseline for the development of the post-binary system and addressed unfinished policy work from the creation of the unitary system in 1992.

11.6 Did the Dearing Inquiry establish a new direction or was it merely a vehicle for the legitimation of Government policy and decisions?

Neave (1998) argued that the Dearing Report used the language of the Nation to warrant the implementation of a regime which imposed control by the State through independent agencies:

> Britain is busily engaged in putting in place an architecture of 'public' control over higher education, grounded not in the State, but the Nation and overseen not by State administration but by a collection of agencies the purpose of which is not to impose uniformity, but to standardise product and process in the name of national competitivity and individual responsibility. (p.133)

He describes the effect of the recommendations as codification of the higher education system but concedes that regulation, of the kind proposed by the Dearing Report, did not seek to be enshrined in legislation. Neave suggests that the Inquiry did not intend for the institutional diversity, noted in Chapter 10, to be lost in the standardisation which was likely to follow codification and regulation and implies that the Dearing Report was an acceptable way of implementing recommendations which would lead to significant change over time.

The Inquiry served to legitimate Government policy in some areas, but it acted independently in others. It established the principle that graduates should contribute to the costs incurred during their studies. The creation of quangos tasked with regulation of the higher education system is consistent with Neave's observation. Also, the National Committee was concerned to protect institutional diversity in the new higher education system. However, the breadth of its work meant that the Inquiry arguably pursued a wider agenda which went beyond existing Government policy.

11.7 Final conclusions: Building a post-binary architecture for higher education

The work and legacy of the Dearing Inquiry is often discounted in the literature as a politically expedient means by which Government could avoid addressing a funding crisis in higher education. Dearing is the report that introduced the principle of fees and changed the funding landscape of UK higher education. This is a reasonable, if limited, view of the work which was undertaken and the longer-term legacy of Dearing. If the work of the Inquiry, as articulated in the Dearing Report, is considered as a comprehensive post-binary tidy-up then the logic and extent of its work becomes clearer. Instead of a bold new vision for UK higher education, the Inquiry sought to develop the policy foundation for a post-binary mass higher

education system operating within the Learning Society. It did this in two ways. First, by taking a broad view of the higher education system in 1997, the Dearing Report attempted to describe the UK higher education system in detail. This established a baseline, a picture of the system as at July 1997 which could be used as the basis for future development, comparison and measurement. Effectively, it codified the higher education system. Second, the Committee and its Working Groups developed structures and frameworks which would promote consistency and quality as the system developed in line with its recommendations. This included the proposed qualifications framework and the endorsement of a new agenda for the Quality Assurance Agency which would implement the standards regime sought by the Committee. It undertook system-building activity and system-level policy work which would shape the post-binary system, develop a genuinely unitary system and address the inconsistencies which remained as a legacy of the binary policy.

The National Committee could have addressed its terms of reference by creating a credible response to the short-term funding crisis and completing a small amount of additional work to cover the main thematic areas. It could have revisited the work completed by the DfEE, led by Mrs Shirley Trundle, in 1994 and endorsed its findings. It chose not to do so. Instead, the Committee responded to its terms of reference by conducting an extensive and considered programme of research from which emerged a new architecture for the post-binary higher education system.

This reading of the work of the Inquiry and the Dearing Report suggests that Neave's analysis may not sufficiently explain why the Inquiry took this approach. Moran (2003) provides a different viewpoint on the socio-political context for the Inquiry which goes some way to explaining why the tacit legacy of the Report had more impact than its initial publication and reception by contemporary commentators may have suggested:

> the emergent British regulatory state amounts to an incomplete reconciliation with the conditions of modernity. In other words, with governing arrangements where codified knowledge matters more than tacit knowledge; where codified rules matter more than understandings; where instrumental achievement matters more than traditionally occupied position; and where measurable accountability matters more than elite solidarity. (p.179)

Dearing operated in a context of regulation and codification where systematised structures were replacing ad-hoc, organic development and where performance was measured and scrutinised to ensure efficiency and accountability. The work of the Inquiry led to a Report which was not radical but was politically well-judged. The headline recommendation established the principle that students should pay fees. The other 92 recommendations emerged from the National Committee's comprehensive review of the higher education system. They established the foundations for the post-binary mass higher education system which would emerge over time rather than recommending immediate or radical change in a system which was already in turmoil.

The Inquiry sought to do more than simply understand the higher education system. It undertook a comprehensive research exercise supported by wide consultation and responded to the remit defined by its terms of reference. Despite the restrictive time constraints imposed on the work, the Inquiry can be argued to have completed significant system-level policy work. It created a new language and grammar of UK higher education which reflected new structures and ambitions for a system which enabled greater participation. In line with the ethos of standardisation and regulation, the Dearing Report used the evidence gathered to create a framework which allowed the higher education system to be regulated, measured and managed by Government. The Dearing Report endorsed the creation of a new quality assurance regime by Government and proposed a model for future development. The development of the Dearing Compact drew the Committee's work together and redefined the relationship between universities and Government.

This interpretation suggests that Williams (1998) was rather short-sighted in his evaluation of the longer-term impact and implications of the Inquiry. In completing system level policy work, the Inquiry responded to its remit by creating an architecture for the further development of a new and extended post-binary, mass higher education system. While the immediate impact of the Dearing Report was relatively short-lived and focussed on fees, the implications of the Committee's work ensured a tacit legacy which guided and shaped the development of the unitary higher education system over the next twenty years.

Appendix

Appendix 1: Dearing Inquiry Timeline

Appendix 2: Actors in the Dearing Inquiry

Table 2.1: Committees and Working Groups

Table 2.2: Attendance at meetings of the Dearing Inquiry

Table 2.3: Attendees at seminars

Appendix 1: Dearing Inquiry Timeline

Date	21/05/16	29/05/96	27/06/96	08/07/96	15/07/96	19/07/96	20/07/96	24/07/96	02/09/96	11/09/96	12/09/96	13/09/96	16/09/96	23/09/96	23/09/96	03/10/96
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/12	ED 266/13	ED 266/14	ED 266/43	ED 266/32	ED 266/15	ED 266/58	ED 266/71	ED 266/65	ED 266/50	ED 266/59	ED 266/44	ED 266/33	ED 266/16	ED 266/72	ED 266/66
Committees, Working and Sub groups:																
National Committee	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3			Meeting 4								Meeting 5		
Research Group				Meeting 1								Meeting 2				
Scotland Committee					Meeting 1								Meeting 2			
Information Technology							Meeting 1				Meeting 2					
Economic Role of Higher Education								Meeting 1							Meeting 2	
Teaching Quality and Standards										Meeting 1						Meeting 2
Staff and Cost Effectiveness												Meeting 1				
Funding Working Group																
Structure and Governance																
Governance Sub Group																
Structure Sub Group																

Date	11/10/96	11/10/96	18/10/96	21/10/96	23/10/96	28/10/96	30/10/96	30/10/96	13/11/96	15/11/96	15/11/96	19/11/96	20/11/96	20/11/96	26/11/96	26/11/96
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/17	ED 266/60	ED 266/45	ED 266/73	ED 266/51	ED 266/67	ED 266/34	ED 266/90	ED 266/61	ED 266/77	ED 266/91	ED 266/52	ED 266/18	ED 266/74	ED 266/46	ED 266/68
Committees, Working and Sub groups:																
National Committee	Meeting 6												Meeting 7			
Research Group			Meeting 3												Meeting 4	
Scotland Committee						Meeting 3										
Information Technology		Meeting 3						Meeting 4								
Economic Role of Higher Education				Meeting 3									Meeting 4			
Teaching Quality and Standards					Meeting 3											Meeting 4
Staff and Cost Effectiveness				Meeting 2								Meeting 3				
Funding Working Group									Meeting 1		Meeting 2					
Structure and Governance										Meeting 1						
Governance Sub Group																
Structure Sub Group																

Date	27/11/96	09/12/96	12/12/96	13/12/96	17/12/96	18/12/96	19/12/96	19/12/96	09/01/97	09/01/97	23/01/97	23/01/97	27/01/97	30/01/97	05/02/97	06/02/97
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/35	ED 266/62	ED 266/47	ED 266/78	ED 266/19	ED 266/53	ED 266/36	ED 266/92	ED 266/79	ED 266/86	ED 266/54	ED 266/93	ED 266/37	ED 266/20	ED 266/83	ED 266/94
Committees, Working and Sub groups:																
National Committee					Meeting 8									Meeting 9		
Research Group			Meeting 5													
Scotland Committee	Meeting 4						Meeting 5						Meeting 6			
Information Technology		Meeting 5														
Economic Role of Higher Education																
Teaching Quality and Standards																
Staff and Cost Effectiveness						Meeting 4					Meeting 5					
Funding Working Group									Meeting 3			Meeting 4				Meeting 5
Structure and Governance				Meeting 2					Meeting 3							
Governance Sub Group															Meeting 1	
Structure Sub Group										Meeting 1						

Date	10/02/97	12/02/97	13/02/97	13/02/97	14/02/97	17/02/97	18/02/97	21/02/97	25/02/97	26/02/97	26/02/97	03/03/97	03/03/97	03/03/97	05/03/97	05/03/97
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/63	ED 266/75	ED 266/48	ED 266/69	ED 266/80	ED 266/38	ED 266/55	ED 266/21	ED 266/56	ED 266/84	ED 266/95	ED 266/70	ED 266/81	ED 266/85	ED 266/64	ED266/4
Committees, Working and Sub groups:																
National Committee								Meeting 10								
Research Group			Meeting 6													
Scotland Committee						Meeting 7										
Information Technology	Meeting 6														Meeting 7	
Economic Role of Higher Education		Meeting 5														
Teaching Quality and Standards				Meeting 5									Meeting 6			
Staff and Cost Effectiveness							Meeting 6		Meeting 7							
Funding Working Group											Meeting 6					
Structure and Governance				Meeting 4									Meeting 5			
Governance Sub Group										Meeting 2				Meeting 3		
Structure Sub Group																
Seminars:																
NCIHE The Learning Seminar																Seminar

Date	10/03/97	11/03/97	13/03/97	17/03/97	20/03/97		02/04/97	03/04/97	15/04/97	16/04/97	17/04/97	18/04/97	24/04/97	29/04/97	29/04/97	30/04/97
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/49	ED 266/87	ED 266/22	ED 266/39	ED 266/96	ED 266/97	ED 266/98	ED 266/23	ED 266/82	ED 266/99	ED266/8	ED 266/24	ED 266/40	ED 266/10	No file	ED 266/100
Committees, Working and Sub groups:																
National Committee			Meeting 11					Meeting 12				Meeting 13				
Research Group	Meeting 7															
Scotland Committee				Meeting 8									Meeting 9			
Information Technology																
Economic Role of Higher Education																
Teaching Quality and Standards																
Staff and Cost Effectiveness																
Funding Working Group					Meeting 7	Meeting 8: not held	Meeting 9			Meeting 10						Meeting 11
Structure and Governance									Meeting 6							
Governance Sub Group																
Structure Sub Group		Meeting 2														
Seminars:																
Higher Education and Regions: a seminar for the Dearing Committee											Seminar					
NCIHE Expert Seminar on Admissions														Seminar		
London Economics John Kay Seminar															Seminar	

Date	02/05/97	09/05/97	09/05/97	15/05/97	22/05/97	28/05/97	04/06/97	04/06/97	06/06/97	12/06/97	26/06/97
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/25	ED 266/41	ED 266/101	ED 266/26	ED 266/27	ED 266/28	ED 266/42	ED 266/102	ED 266/29	ED 266/30	ED 266/31
Committees, Working and Sub groups:											
National Committee	Meeting 14			Meeting 15	Meeting 16	Meeting 17			Meeting 18	Meeting 19	Meeting 20
Research Group											
Scotland Committee		Meeting 10					Meeting 11				
Information Technology											
Economic Role of Higher Education											
Teaching Quality and Standards											
Staff and Cost Effectiveness											
Funding Working Group			Meeting 12					Meeting 13			
Structure and Governance											
Governance Sub Group											
Structure Sub Group											

Appendix 2: Actors in the Dearing Inquiry

Table 2.1: Committees and Working Groups

Membership of the National Committee	
Professor John Arbuthnott	Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Strathclyde
Baroness Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde	President of the Society of Graphical and Allied Trades (SOGAT) (1983), SOGAT General Secretary (1985-1991), created a Life Peer (1993) (Honeyball, undated)
Sir Ron Dearing	Civil Service (1949-1983), chairman of the Post Office (1981-87), chairman of the Council for National Academic Awards (1987-88), chairman of Camelot (1993-1995) (Hattersley, 2009) (Chairman)
Ms Judith Evans	Departmental Director of Personnel Policy, Sainsbury's
Sir Ron Garrick	Managing Director and Chief Executive of Weir Group
Sir Geoffrey Holland	Vice-Chancellor of the University of Exeter
Professor Diana Laurillard	Pro Vice-Chancellor (Technology Development) of the Open University
Mrs Pamela Morris	Headteacher, The Blue School, Wells
Sir Ronald Oxburgh	Rector of Imperial College of Science, Technology and Medicine
Dr David Potter	Chairman of Psion plc
Sir George Quigley	Chairman of Ulster Bank
Sir William Stubbs	Rector of the London Institute
Sir Richard Sykes	Chairman and Chief Executive of Glaxo Wellcome plc
Professor David Watson	Director of the University of Brighton. Vice-Chancellor of the University of Brighton, member of the Council for National Academic Awards (1977-1993), the Polytechnics and Colleges Funding Council (1988-92) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (1992-96). Chair of the Universities Association for Continuing Education between 1994 and 1998. (Parr, 2015)
Professor Sir David Weatherall	Regius Professor of Medicine at the University of Oxford
Professor Adrian Webb	Vice-Chancellor of the University of Glamorgan
Mr Simon Wright	Education and Welfare Officer, Students Union, the University of Wales College of Cardiff

Secretary to the Committee	
Shirley Trundle	Department for Education and Employment
Membership of the Scottish Committee	
Sir Ron Garrick (Chairman)*	Managing Director/Chief Executive, Weir Group plc
Professor John Arbuthnott*	Principal & Vice Chancellor, University of Strathclyde
Professor Sir James Armour Emeritus	Professor, former Vice Principal and Former Professor in Veterinary Parasitology, University of Glasgow
Sir Ron Dearing*	Chairman, National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education
Ms Zoe Heathcote	Former President of Edinburgh University Students Association (1995/1996); Administrative Officer (College Liaison and Quality Assurance), The Academic Registrars Department, University of Southampton
Ms Ann Kettle	Senior Lecturer, Department of Medieval History, University of St Andrews
Ms Janet Lowe	Principal, Lauder College
Professor John McClelland CBE	Vice President, Worldwide Manufacturing, Digital Ltd
Mr Finbarr Moynihan	Principal, Holyrood Secondary School
Mr David Pigott	Chief Executive, Edinburgh Healthcare NHS Trust
Sir William Stewart	Special Adviser to the Principal, University of Edinburgh
Dr Joan Stringer	Principal and Vice Patron, Queen Margaret College
Sir Ron Dearing's alternate: Sir William Stubbs*	Rector, the London Institute
Members of the Secretariat to the Scottish Committee	
Ms Jane W Denholm	Secretary
Mr Conrad Benefield	Assistant Secretary
Ms Andrea Kupferman-Hall	Policy Adviser
Ms Kareena Sanderson	Support Assistant

Membership of Working Groups and Sub Groups	
Economic Role of Higher Education Working Group	
Professor John Arbuthnott*	
Professor Mark Blaug	Visiting Professor of Economics, University of Exeter
Dr John Bridge	Chief Executive, Northern Development Company
Professor Martin Cave	Vice-Principal and Professor of Economics, Brunel University
Ms Judith Evans*	
Sir Geoffrey Holland*	
Dr David Potter*	*Chair*
Jill Wilson	Managing Director, Manor Properties
Elizabeth Maddison	Secretary
Teaching, Quality and Standards Working Group	
Dr Madeleine Atkins	Dean, University of Newcastle
Ann Bailey	Head of Education and Training Affairs, Engineering Employers Federation
John Bolton	Principal, Blackburn College
Mrs Pamela Morris*	
Sir Ronald Oxburgh*	
Sir George Quigley*	*Chair*
Professor David Watson*	
Professor Adrian Webb*	
Dr John Rea	Principal, College of St Mark and St John, Plymouth
Simon Wright*	
Clare Matterson	Secretary
Information Technology Working Group	
Professor John Arbuthnott*	*Chair*
Sophie Ansell	President, University of Sheffield Union of Students
Professor Diana Laurillard*	
Sir Ronald Oxburgh*	
Dr David Potter*	
Sir William Stubbs*	
Jane Denholm	Secretary
Research Working Group	
Mr Ewan Gillon	Postgraduate Research Student, Department of Management and Social Sciences, Queen Margaret College, Edinburgh
Professor John Laver	Vice-Principal (Research), University of Edinburgh
Dr Anthony Ledwith	Director of Group Research, Pilkington plc
Professor Howard Newby	Vice-Chancellor, University of Southampton

Sir Ronald Oxburgh*	
Sir Richard Sykes *	*Chair*
Professor Sir David Weatherall*	
Professor David Watson*	
Professor Adrian Webb*	
Clare Matterson	Secretary
Staff and Use of Resources Working Group	
Baroness Brenda Dean*	*Chair*
Professor David Chiddick	Pro Vice-Chancellor, De Montfort University
Sir Geoffrey Holland*	
David Holmes	Registrar, University of Birmingham
Professor Diana Laurillard*	
Hon. Mrs Sara Morrison	Director, General Electric Company
Dr Robert Smith	Vice-Chancellor and Chief Executive, Kingston University
Simon Wright*	
Michael Yuille	Director of Finance, University of Aberdeen
Eve Jagusiewicz	Secretary
Funding of Higher Education and Student Support Working Group	
Professor Sir Eric Ash	Department of Physics, University College London
Sir John Cassels	Chairman of UK Skills (Worldskills UK, 2016)
Baroness Brenda Dean*	
Fred Goodwin	Chief Executive, Clydesdale Bank plc
Sir Geoffrey Holland*	*Chair*
Eddie Newcomb	Registrar and Secretary, University of Manchester
Sir Ronald Oxburgh*	
Andrew Pople	Managing Director of Retail Division Abbey National plc
Sir William Stubbs*	
Professor Adrian Webb*	
Simon Wright*	
Nigel Brown	Funding Consultant
Eve Jagusiewicz	Secretary
The Structure and Governance of Higher Education Working Group	
Professor Ewan Brown, CBE	Director, Noble Gossart Limited
Richard Coldwell	Head of Government and Overseas Relations, National Grid
Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll DBE	Vice-Chancellor, University of East Anglia
Ms Judith Evans*	Chair, Governance sub-group
Julian Gizzi	Partner, Beachcroft Stanleys Solicitors
Professor Martin Harris CBE	Vice-Chancellor, University of Manchester
Caroline Neville	Principal, City College – Norwich

Sir William Stubbs*	*Chair*
Professor Peter Townsend	Pro-Vice Chancellor of Administration, University of Wales – Swansea
Professor David Watson*	
Structure sub-group	
Barbary Cook	President, Oxford University Students Union
Governance sub-group	
Simon Caffrey	President, Leeds Metropolitan University Students Union
Michael Shattock, OBE	Registrar, University of Warwick
Elizabeth Maddison	Secretary
*Members of the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education	

Secretariat and Support for the Inquiry

Secretary to the Committee	
Shirley Trundle	Department for Education and Employment
Policy Advisers:	
Chris Boys	National Council for Vocational Qualifications
Jane Denholm	Scottish Higher Education Funding Council
Angus Gray,	Private Secretary to the Chairman (Department for Education and Employment)
Eve Jagusiewicz	Anglia Polytechnic University
Andrea Kupferman-Hall	Higher Education Quality Council
Clare Matterson	Coopers & Lybrand
Elizabeth Maddison	Further Education Funding Council
Jacquie Spatcher	Department for Education and Employment, also listed as representing the Student Loans Company (*Dearing Committee*, ED266/9)
Assistant Policy Advisers	
Conrad Benefield	Department for Education and Employment
Richard Hill	
Chris Kirk	Department for Education and Employment
Bridget Tighe	
Support Manager	
Steven Suckling	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Support team:	
Joyce Ajumobi, Support Assistant (Department for Education and Employment) Cheryl Buckingham, Support Assistant Anna Caseldine, Personal Assistant Sharon Cooper, Personal Assistant to the Secretary of the Committee (Department for Education and Employment) Judith Dutton, Support Assistant Gaylene Eichstead, Support Assistant Bianca Harrison, Personal Assistant Shaila Hussein, Senior Personal Assistant to the Chairman (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority) Lisa Misraoui, Personal Assistant Jan Peters, Personal Assistant James Pettigrew, Support Assistant Kareena Sanderson, Personal Assistant	
Media Adviser	
Tony Millns	School Curriculum and Assessment Authority

Table 2.2: Attendance at meetings of the Dearing Inquiry

National Committee	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Meeting 7	Meeting 8	Meeting 9	Meeting 10 (Residential)	Meeting 11
Date of meeting:	21/05/96	29/05/96	27/06/96	19/07/96	23/09/96	11/10/96	20/11/96	17/12/96	30/01/97	21/02/97	13/03/97
Location:	White's Hotel, London	White's Hotel, London	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London	Dolphin Square, Chichester Street, London	West Park Suite, London Embassy Hotel	West Park Suite, London Embassy Hotel	London Embassy Hotel	Stakis St. Ermin's Hotel	Stakis St. Ermin's Hotel	Dolphin Square, Chichester Street, London	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/12	ED 266/13	ED 266/14	ED 266/15	ED 266/16	ED 266/17	ED 266/18	ED 266/19	ED 266/20	ED 266/21	ED 266/22
Sir Ron Dearing (Chair)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Professor John Arbuthnott		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present
Baroness Brenda Dean	Present		Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Ms Judith Evans	Present		Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Sir Ron Garrick	Present		Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Sir Geoffrey Holland	Present		Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies
Professor Diana Laurillard	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Mrs Pamela Morris	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Sir Ronald Oxburgh	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Dr David Potter		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present
Sir George Quigley	Present		Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Sir William Stubbs	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Sir Richard Sykes					Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present	Apologies
Professor David Watson	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Sir David Weatherall	Present		Apologies	Present	Present	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Apologies
Professor Adrian Webb		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Mr Simon Wright		Present	Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Secretariat:											
Mrs Shirley Trundle (Secretary)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Mr Conrad Benefield	Present	Present	Present								
Mr Chris Boys				Present	Present	Present				Present	
Mr Nigel Brown							Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Ms Jane Denholm			Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present
Mr Angus Gray											
Mr Richard Hall											Present
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz		Present	Present	Present	Present			Present	Present	Present	Present
Mr Chris Kirk											
Ms Andrea Kupferman-Hall							Present			Present	Present
Ms Elizabeth Maddison				Present	Present	Present	Present	Present			Present
Ms Clare Matterson	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present
Mr Tony Millns					Present						
In attendance:											
Ms Janet Lowe, Scottish Committee										Present	
Mr Finbarr Moynihan, Scottish Committee										Present	
Dr Joan Stringer, Scottish Committee										Present	
Professor Ronald Barnett, Institute of Education						Present				Present	
Professor Claire Callendar, Institute of Education										Present	

National Committee	Meeting 12	Meeting 13	Meeting 14	Meeting 15	Meeting 16	Meeting 17	Meeting 18	Meeting 19	Meeting 20	Count of meetings attended
Date of meeting:	03/04/97	18/04/97	02/05/97	15/05/97	22/05/97	28/05/97	06/06/97	12/06/97	26/06/97	
Location:	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London	Dolphin Square, Chichester Street, London	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London	Park Consul Hotel	Newcombe House, 45 Notting Hill Gate, London		
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/23	ED 266/24	ED 266/25	ED 266/26	ED 266/27	ED 266/28	ED 266/29	ED 266/30	ED 266/31	
Sir Ron Dearing (Chair)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	19
Professor John Arbuthnott	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		17
Baroness Brenda Dean	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present		12
Ms Judith Evans	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present		16
Sir Ron Garrick	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present		14
Sir Geoffrey Holland	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present		12
Professor Diana Laurillard	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		18
Mrs Pamela Morris	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		18
Sir Ronald Oxburgh	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		18
Dr David Potter	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		17
Sir George Quigley	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present		15
Sir William Stubbs	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present		16
Sir Richard Sykes	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		7
Professor David Watson	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		18
Sir David Weatherall	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**	Present		9
Professor Adrian Webb	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		18
Mr Simon Wright	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		17
Secretariat:										
Mrs Shirley Trundle (Secretary)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		19
Mr Conrad Benefield				Present						4
Mr Chris Boys		Present								5
Mr Nigel Brown	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		13
Ms Jane Denholm	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present		15
Mr Angus Gray			Present		Present			Present		3
Mr Richard Hall										1
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		16
Mr Chris Kirk		Present	Present	Present						3
Ms Andrea Kupferman-Hall		Present	Present	Present		Present		Present		8
Ms Elizabeth Maddison	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		14
Ms Clare Matterson	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present		17
Mr Tony Millns										1
In attendance:										
Ms Janet Lowe, Scottish Committee				Present						2
Mr Finbarr Moynihan, Scottish Committee										1
Dr Joan Stringer, Scottish Committee				Present						2
Professor Ronald Barnett, Institute of Education										3
Professor Claire Callendar, Institute of Education										1
Miss Jacqui Spatcher, Student Loans Company		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present			6
Professor David Robertson, Liverpool John Moore's University		Present								1
Professor Frank Coffield, University of Newcastle		Present								1
Professor Sir Stuart Sutherland, Principal, University of Edinburgh		Present								1
Professor Gareth Roberts, CVCP		Present								1
Professor Brian Robson, University of Manchester			Present							1
Ms Ann Kettle, Scottish Committee				Present						1
Dr Bill Robinson, London Economics					Present					1
Mr Robert Laslett, London Economics					Present					1

Scottish Committee	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Meeting 7	Meeting 8	Extraordinary meeting	Meeting 9	Meeting 10	Meeting 11	Count of meetings attended
Date of meeting:	15/07/96	16/09/96	30/10/96	27/11/96	19/12/96	27/01/97	17/02/97	17/03/97	08/04/97	24/04/97	09/05/97	04/06/97	
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/32	ED 266/33	ED 266/34	ED 266/35	ED 266/36	ED 266/37	ED 266/38	ED 266/39	ED 266/41/2	ED 266/40	ED 266/41/1	ED 266/42	
Sir Ron Garrick (Chair)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Meeting recorded as an action note which does not include a record of attendance.	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	9
Professor John Arbuthnott	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			8
Professor Sir James Armour	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			9
Sir Ron Dearing	Present	Apologies	Apologies	Present	Apologies	Present				Apologies			3
Ms Zoe Heathcote	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			9
Ms Ann Kettle	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			9
Ms Janet Lowe	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			9
Professor John McClelland	Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present		Present		Apologies			8
Mr Finbarr Moynihan	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Apologies			9
Mr David Pigott	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			6
Sir William Stewart	Present	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Apologies		Apologies			3
Sir William Stubbs		Apologies	Apologies	Present	Apologies			Present		Apologies			2
Dr Joan Stringer	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			9
Secretariat:													
Ms Jane Denholm	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			9
Mr Conrad Benefield	Present	Present	Apologies	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			8
Mrs Shirley Trundle	Present									Present			2
Ms Andrea Kupferman-Hall			Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present			7
Mr Steve Suckling			Present										1
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz						Present							1
Ms Kareena Sanderson							Present						1
In attendance:													
Professor Alistair MacFarlane, Principal, Heriot-Watt University		Present		Present									2
Mr David Wann, Director of Funding, SHEFC		Present				Present							2
Professor John Sizer, SHEFC			Present			Present							1
Mr Steve Cannon, SHEFC			Present										1
Professor Ron Barnett, IoE			Present										1
Mr Colin MacLean, SOEID			Present										1
Professor Gillian Raab, Napier University				Present									1
Ms Veronique Johnston, Napier University				Present									1
Mr Ed Weeple, Scottish Office Education and Industry Department (SOEID)				Present									1
Mr Graeme Dickson, Head of HE Division, SOEID				Present									1
Mr John Henderson, Head of FE Division, SOEID				Present									1
Professor Peter Bush, Chair of the Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access and Vice Principal, Glasgow Caledonian University					Present								1
Dr Margery Burdon, Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access and Director of Product Development and Marketing SCOTVEC					Present								1
Mr Norman Sharp, Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access and Head HEQC Scottish Office					Present	Present							2
Professor Jim MacCallum, Scottish Advisory Committee on Credit and Access and Vice Principal, University of St Andrews					Present								1
Mr Cliff Lockyear, Senior Lecturer, Fraser of Allander Institute for Research, University of Strathclyde					Present								1
Dr Roger Brown, Chief Executive, HEQC						Present							1
Dr Paul Clark, Director of Teaching and Learning, SHEFC						Present							1
Mr Tom McCool, Chief Executive, SCOTVEC							Present						1

Research Group	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Meeting 7	Count of
Date of meeting:	08/07/96	13/09/96	18/10/96	26/11/96	12/12/96	13/02/97	10/03/97	**meetings**
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/43	ED 266/44	ED 266/45	ED 266/46	ED 266/47	ED 266/48	ED 266/49	**attended**
Sir Richard Sykes (Chair)	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Present	3
Sir Ron Dearing	Present				Present		**Apologies**	2
Mr Ewan Gillon	Not listed				Present		Not listed	1
Professor John Laver	Present				Present		Present	3
Dr Anthony Ledwith	Present				Present		Present	3
Professor Howard Newby	**Apologies**				Present		Present	2
Sir Ron Oxburgh	Present				Present		Present	3
Professor Adrian Webb	**Apologies**				Present		Present	2
Professor David Weatherall	**Apologies**				**Apologies**		**Apologies**	0
Professor David Watson	Not listed				Present		**Apologies**	1
Secretariat:								
Ms Claire Matterson (Secretary)	Present				Present		Present	3
Mr Chris Kirk	Present				Present		Present	3

Information Technology	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Meeting 7	Count of
Date of meeting:	20/07/96	12/09/96	11/10/96	13/11/96	09/12/96	10/02/97	05/03/97	meetings
National Archives Catalogue Reference	ED 266/58	ED 266/59	ED 266/60	ED 266/61	ED 266/62	ED 266/63	ED 266/64	attended
Professor John Arbuthnott (Chair)	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	5
Ms Sophie Ansell		Present	Present	Not listed	Present	Present		5
Sir Ron Dearing		**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Not listed	Not listed	**Apologies**		0
Professor Diana Laurillard		**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	Present		4
Sir Ron Oxburgh		**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present	**Apologies**		1
Dr David Potter		Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Not listed		3
Sir William Stubbs		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		5
Secretariat:								
Ms Jane Denholm		Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		5
Ms Clare Matterson		Present						1
Mr Steven Suckling		Present						1
Mr Conrad Benefield			Present	Present	Present	Present		4
In attendance:								
Professor Alistair MacFarlane, Principal, Heriot-Watt University		Present						1
Ms Lynne Brindley, Head of Information Systems, LSE			Present					1
Mr Tony Hughes, formerly of the EPSRC			Present					1
Mr Bill Wrigglesworth, Director Reedheath Ltd and former Deputy Director General of Telecommunications				Present				1
Professor Niki Davis, ITATL Project Director, University of Exeter					Present			1
Ms Penni Tearle, ITATL Project Manager, University of Exeter					Present			1
Dr Adrian Boucher, Director, Natwest Financial Literacy Centre, University of Warwick					Present			1
Mr Phil Hobbs, Director, Institute for Learning and Research Technology, University of Bristol					Present			1
Dr Patrick Dillon, Department of Science and Technology Education					Present			1
Mr Cliff Allan, Head of Teaching and Learning Policy, HEFCE					Present			1
Dr Malcolm Read, Secretary, Joint Information Systems Committee						Present		1
Mr Charles Davies, Joint Information Systems Committee (?)						**Apologies**		0

Economic Role of Higher Education	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Working papers	Working papers	
Date of meeting:	24/07/96	23/09/96	21/10/96	20/11/96	12/02/97		Files missing at transfer to National Archives	Count of meetings attended
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/71	ED 266/72	ED 266/73	ED 266/74	ED 266/75	ED 266/7	ED 266/76	
Dr David Potter (Chair)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive			4
Professor John Arbuthnott	Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**				2
Professor Mark Blaug	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present				3
Dr John Bridge	Present	Present	Present	Present				4
Professor Martin Cave	Present	Present	Present	Present				4
Sir Ron Dearing	Chair	Present	**Apologies**	Present				3
Ms Judith Evans	Present	Present	Present	Present				4
Sir Geoffrey Holland	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**				1
Professor Adrian Webb	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present				3
Ms Jill Wilson	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**				3
Secretariat:								
Ms Elizabeth Maddison (Secretary)	Present	Present	Present	Present				4
Mr Chris Kirk	Present	Present	Present	Present				4
In attendance:								
Mr David Thompson, Higher Education Branch, DfEE		Present	Present					2
Mr James Steel, DfEE		Present	Present					2

Teaching Quality and Standards	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Count of meetings attended
Date of meeting:	02/09/96	03/10/96	28/10/96	26/11/96	13/02/97	03/03/97	
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/65	ED 266/66	ED 266/67	ED 266/68	ED 266/69	ED 266/70	
Sir George Quigley (Chair)	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	3
Dr Madeleine Atkins	Present	Present	Present	Present			4
Mrs Ann Bailey	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present			3
Mr John Bolton	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Present			3
Sir Ron Dearing	Chair	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**			2
Ms Pam Morris	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present			3
Sir Ronald Oxburgh	Not listed	Not listed	Present	**Apologies**			1
Professor John Rea	Present	Present	Present	Present			4
Professor David Watson	Present	Present	Present	Present			4
Professor Adrian Webb	Not listed	Not listed	Present	Present			2
Mr Simon Wright	Not listed	Not listed	Present	Present			2
Secretariat:							
Ms Clare Matterson	Present	Present	Present	Present			4
Mr Chris Kirk	Present	Present	Present				3
Ms Bridget Tighe				Present			1
In attendance:							
Dr Roger Brown, Chief Executive, HEQC		Present					1
Dr Robin Middlehurst, Director of Quality Enhancement, HEQC		Present					1
Mr Robin Jackson, Assistant Director, HEQC		Present					1
Mr Peter Wright, Assistant Director, HEQC		Present					1
Mr John Randall, NCVQ and Law Society					Invited		0

Staff and Cost Effectiveness	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Meeting 7	Oral evidence and working papers	Meeting 8 (undated papers)	
Date of meeting:	11/09/96	23/10/96	19/11/96	18/12/96	23/01/97	18/02/97	25/02/97			Count of meetings attended
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/50	ED 266/51	ED 266/52	ED 266/53	ED 266/54	ED 266/55	ED 266/56	ED 266/6	ED 266/57	
Baroness Brenda Dean (Chair)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive		Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	6
Professor David Chiddick	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present				6
Sir Ron Dearing	Chair	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present	Not listed				4
Mr David Holmes	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present				6
Sir Geoffrey Holland	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Not listed				4
Professor Diana Laurillard	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present				5
Hon Mrs Sara Morrison	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**				5
Dr Robert Smith	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present				6
Mr Simon Wright	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present				5
Mr Michael Yuille	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present				5
Secretariat:										
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz (Secretary)	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present				6
Mr Conrad Benefield		Present	Present	Present	Present	Not listed				4
Mr Chris Kirk	Present									1
Mr Angus Gray					Present	Present				2
Mrs Shirley Trundle					Present	Present				2

Funding Working Group	Working papers	Agenda and working papers	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4	Meeting 5	Meeting 6	Meeting 7	Meeting 8	Meeting 9	Meeting 10	Meeting 11	Meeting 12	Meeting 13	Count of meetings attended
Date of meeting:	01/01/97	06/02/97	30/10/96	15/11/96	19/12/96	23/01/97	06/02/97	26/02/97	20/03/97		02/04/97	16/04/97	30/04/97	09/05/97	04/06/97	
Notes:						Minutes in file ED266/94. No documents held in file ED266/93										
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/88	ED 266/89	ED 266/90	ED 266/91	ED 266/92	ED 266/93	ED 266/94	ED 266/95	ED 266/96	ED 266/97	ED 266/98	ED 266/99	ED 266/100	ED 266/101	ED 266/102	
Sir Geoffrey Holland (Chair)	Files missing at transfer to National Archive	Files missing at transfer to National Archive	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Meeting not held	Present	Present	Present	Present	Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	10
Sir Eric Ash				Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present		7
Sir John Cassels				Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present		10
Baroness Dean				**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		0
Sir Ron Dearing				Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**		Present	Present	Present	Present		9
Mr Fred Goodwin				**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		2
Mr Eddie Newcombe				Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	**Apologies**	Present	Present		9
Sir Ron Oxburgh				Present	Present	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present		8
Mr Andrew Pople				**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**		Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present		5
Sir William Stubbs				Present	Present	**Apologies**	**Apologies**	**Present**	**Apologies**		**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present		5
Professor Adrian Webb				**Apologies**	**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	Present		**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present		7
Mr Simon Wright				**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present		9
Secretariat:																
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz (secretary)				Present	Present	Present	Present	Present	Present		Present	Present	Present	Present		10
Mr Nigel Brown				Present	Present	Present	Present		Present		Present	Present	Present	Present		9
Mrs Shirley Trundle								Present								1
In attendance:																
Mr Quentin Thompson, London Economics				Present	Present	Present		Present			**Apologies**	Present	Present	Present		7
Mr Robert Laslett, London Economics					Present			Present	Present			Present	Present	Present		6
Professor Bill Robinson, London Economics					Present								Present	Present		3
Professor Alan Wilson, CVCP					Present											1
Professor Frank Gound, CVCP					Present											1
Professor John Tarrant, CVCP					Present											1
Mr Norman Taylor, SCOP					Present											1

Structure and Governance	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3			Meeting 4		Meeting 5			Meeting 6	
Governance Sub Group					Meeting 1		Meeting 2		Meeting 3			
Structure Sub Group				Meeting 1						Meeting 2		
Date of meeting:	15/11/96	13/12/96	09/01/97	09/01/97	05/02/97	14/02/97	26/02/97	03/03/97	03/03/97	11/03/97	15/04/97	Count of meetings attended
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/77	ED 266/78	ED 266/79	ED 266/86	ED 266/83	ED 266/80	ED 266/84	ED 266/81	ED 266/85	ED 266/87	ED 266/82	
Sir William Stubbs (Chair)	Present	Present	Present			Present		Present			Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive	5
Professor Ewan Brown	**Apologies**	Present	Present			Present		Present				4
Mr Richard Coldwell	Present	Present	Present			Present		Present				5
Sir Ron Dearing	Present	**Apologies**	Present			Present		**Apologies**				3
Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll	Present	Present	Present			Present		**Apologies**				4
Ms Judith Evans	Present	Present	Present			Present		Present				5
Mr Julian Gizzi	Present	Present	Present			**Apologies**		Present				4
Professor Martin Harris	**Apologies**	Present	Present			Present		Present				4
Ms Caroline Neville	Present	Present	Present			**Apologies**		Present				4
Professor Peter Townsend	Present	**Apologies**	Present			Present		**Apologies**				3
Professor David Watson	Present	Present	Present			Present		**Apologies**				4
Secretariat:												
Ms Elizabeth Maddison	Present	Present	Present			Present		Present				5
Ms Bridget Tighe	Present	Present	Present			Present		Present				5
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz						Present						1
Mr Nigel Brown	Present	Present	Present			Present		Present				5
In attendance:												
Professor Brian Fender, Chief Exec, HEFCE			Present									1
Mr Michael Shattock, Registrar, University of Warwick			Present									1
Professor John Sizer, Chief Exec, SHEFC			Present									1
Mr John Ashcroft, National Audit Office						Present						1
Ms Gillian Body, National Audit Office						Present						1
Mr Lew Hughes, National Audit Office						Present						1

Structure and Governance	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3			Meeting 4		Meeting 5			Meeting 6	Count of meetings attended
Governance Sub Group					Meeting 1		Meeting 2		Meeting 3			
Structure Sub Group				Meeting 1						Meeting 2		
Date of meeting:	15/11/96	13/12/96	09/01/97	09/01/97	05/02/97	14/02/97	26/02/97	03/03/97	03/03/97	11/03/97	15/04/97	
National Archives Catalogue Reference:	ED 266/77	ED 266/78	ED 266/79	ED 266/86	ED 266/83	ED 266/80	ED 266/84	ED 266/81	ED 266/85	ED 266/87	ED 266/82	
Governance Sub Group												
Ms Judith Evans (Chair)					Present		Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive					1
Professor Ewan Brown					Present							1
Mr Richard Coldwell					Present							1
Sir Ron Dearing					**Apologies**							0
Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll					**Apologies**							0
Mr Simon Caffrey, President, Leeds Metropolitan University Students Union					Present							1
Mr Julian Gizzi					Present							1
Mr Michael Shattock, Registrar, University of Warwick					Present							1
Sir William Stubbs					Present							1
Secretariat:												
Ms Elizabeth Maddison					Present							1
Ms Bridget Tighe					Present							1
Structure Sub Group												
Sir William Stubbs (Chair)				Present						Minutes not held in the Dearing Archive		1
Mr Richard Coldwell				Present								1
Ms Barbary Cook				Present								1
Sir Ron Dearing				Present								1
Dame Elizabeth Esteve-Coll				Present								1
Professor Martin Harris				Present								1
Ms Caroline Neville				Present								1
Professor Peter Townsend				Present								1
Professor David Watson				Present								1
Secretariat:												
Ms Elizabeth Maddison				Present								1
Ms Bridget Tighe				Present								1

Table 2.3: Attendees at seminars

Meeting to discuss student loans and related issues, 28 February 1997
National Archives Catalogue Reference: ED266/9

Mr John Atkins, Coopers & Lybrand
Dr Nicholas Barr, LSE
Dr Tony Bruce, CVCP
Sir John Cassels, Director, National Commission on Education
Mr Iain Crawford
Mr Jeremy Green, Quentin Capital Ltd
Mr Robert Laslett, London Economics
Mr Jeremy Moore, DfEE
Mr Eddie Newcombe, Registrar, University of Manchester **(sent apologies)**
Mr Andrew Pople, Managing Director, Retail Division, Abbey National Plc
Mr Jack Queen, General Manager, Special Duties, Clydesdale Bank
Professor David Robertson, Liverpool John Moore's University
Professor Bill Robinson, London Economics
Ms Margaret Schwarz, Head of Lending, Abbey National plc
Miss Jacqui Spatcher, Student Loans Company
Mr Quentin Thompson, London Economics **(sent apologies)**
Mr David Thompson, Higher Education Branch, DfEE
Mr Colin Ward, Chief Executive, Student Loans Company
Mr James Vaux, NN Rothschild and Sons Ltd
Professor Adrian Webb, Vice Chancellor, University of Glamorgan*
Mr Conrad Benefield
Mr Nigel Brown
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz
Mr Chris Kirk

The Learning Seminar, 5 March 1997
National Archives Catalogue Reference: ED266/4

Professor Diana Laurillard*
Sir George Quigley*
Dr Madelaine Atkins, Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group
Mr Simon Wright*
Mrs Pamela Morris*
Dr John Rea, Teaching Quality and Standards Working Group
Ms Ann Bailey, Scottish Committee
Professor David Watson*
Ms Clare Matterson
Ms Eve Jagusiewicz
Mr Chris Kirk
Ms Elizabeth Madison
Professor David Hawkridge, The Open University
Dr Andrew Northedge, The Open University

Professor Noel Entwistle, University of Edinburgh
Graham Gibbs, The Open University
Professor Lewis Elton, University College London
Dr Elizabeth Beatty, University of Brighton
Professor Roger Saljo, Linkopings Universitet

Higher Education and Regions, a seminar for the Dearing Committee, 17 April 1997
National Archives Catalogue Reference: ED266/8

Mr David Anderson-Evans, CVCP
Professor John Arbuthnott*
Ms Gillian Ashmore, Regional Director, Government Office South East
Ms Alecks Bacon, Director of Curriculum, Clarendon College
Professor Robert Boucher, Principal and Vice Chancellor, UMIST
Mr Richard Brown, Director, CIHE
Mr Tony Bruce, CVCP
Mrs Alexandra Burselm, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Manchester Metropolitan University
Professor Sir Colin Campbell, Vice Chancellor, University of Nottingham
Mr John Crater, Chief Executive, Edge Hill College of Higher Education
Professor Bob Cormack, Pro Vice Chancellor, Queen's University of Belfast
Mr Stephen Court, Researcher, Association of University Teachers
Mr Iain Deas, CUPS, University of Manchester
Mr Keith Drake, CUPS, University of Manchester
Mr Keith Dugdale, Director of Careers, University of Manchester
Mr Richard Evans, Director, CONTACT
Mr Anthony Gill, North West TEC Regional Co-ordinator
Mr B. Glickman, Director of Skills and Enterprise, Government Office for London
Professor John Goddard, CURDS, University of Newcastle
Mr Angus Gray, NICHE Secretariat
Mr Rodney Green, Leicester City Council
Ms Rachel Hatchett, Regional Administrator, East Midlands TECs
Mr Stephen Hill, Director, WERU, Cardiff Business School
Mrs Fran Hulbert, Education Adviser, GO-NW
Mr Rob Hull, Secretary, HEFCE
Professor Tom Husband, Vice Chancellor, University of Salford
Mr Paul Keen, Director of Skills and Enterprises, GO-NW
Ms Ursula Kelly, Personal Assistant, University of Strathclyde
Professor R.P. King, Vice Chancellor, University of Humberside
Ms Elizabeth Maddison, NICHE Secretariat
Mr Ian Malcolm, Scottish Enterprise
Mr Keith McMaster, DfEE
Mr Stephen McNar, NIACE
Mr Jim Morning, North London TECS
Mr Rhodri Phillips, Deputy Vice Chancellor and Registrar, South Bank University
Mr G. Piper, Chief Executive, North West Business Leadership Team

Mr Mike Pitt, Chief Executive, Cheshire County Council
Mr Malcolm Rhodes, Warrington Collegiate Institute
Professor William Ritchie, Vice Chancellor, University of Lancaster
Professor Brian Robson, CUPS, University of Manchester
Mr Alan Sherry, Assistant Principal, John Wheatley College
Professor R. Sibson, Vice Chancellor, The University of Kent at Canterbury
Ms Ruth Silver, Principal, Lewisham College
Professor Trevor Smith, Vice Chancellor, University of Ulster
Professor Sir Stuart Sutherland, Principal, University of Edinburgh
Mr Laurie Taylor, Government Office for London
Mr Meirion Thomas, Welsh Development Agency
Mr Gordon Waine, East Midlands Development Company
Professor D.J. Wallace, Vice Chancellor, Loughborough University of Technology
Professor R. Waterhouse, Vice Chancellor, University of Derby
Professor Adrian Webb*
Mr Mike West, Head of Higher Education Policy, Scottish Office
Ms Jac Wilkinson, Educational and Training Officer, East Midlands Arts Board
Professor Gareth Williams, Centre for Higher Education Studies, University of London Institute of Education
Mr Ray Wolfenden, Director, Enterprise Central Office, University of Manchester
Professor Michael Wright, Vice Principal, Napier University
Mr Simon Wright*

NCIHE Expert Seminar on Admissions, 29 April 1997
National Archives Catalogue Reference: ED 266/10

Professor David Watson (Chair)*
Ms Patricia Ambrose, Policy Advisor, CVCP
Mr Simon Caffrey, Governance Working Group
Mr Peter Clare, Head of Oxford Office, University of Cambridge Local Examinations Syndicate
Mrs Diane Francombe, Administrative Officer, University of West of England
Mr Anthony Higgins, Chief Executive, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service
Professor Stephen Holt, Rector, Roehampton Institute
Mr R. Livingston, Senior Assistant Registrar, University of Strathclyde
Mrs Pamela Morris*
Mr David Richardson, Academic Secretary, The University of Manchester
Professor Reg Ruel, Director, Academic Services, Southampton Institute of HE
Professor Brian Smith, Vice-Chancellor, Cardiff University of Wales
Mr John Treadwell, Principal, Worcester 6th Form College
Dr Michael Watts, Oxford and Cambridge Examinations and Assessment Council
Mr Stirling Wisener, Admissions
Ms Andrea Kupferman-Hall, NCIHE Secretariat
Mr Steven Suckling, NCIHE Secretariat
* Members of the Main Committee

Bibliography

(1996) *1996 was the year of waiting for Dearing. While politicians had a breather, campuses heaved with rows over cash, cows and hackers,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1260, Pg.12, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Adonis, A. (1997) *From each according to their means,* The Observer, 27 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Ainley, P. (1998) "The End of Expansion and the Consolidation of Differentiation in English Higher Education", *Teaching in Higher Education,* 3 (2), pp. 143-156, DOI: 10.1080/1356215980030202 (Accessed: 30 July 2013).

Ainley, P. (2014) "Robbins remembered and dismembered, contextualising the anniversary", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 68 (2), pp. 225-240, DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12038 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Akker, J. (1996) *Union mergers make sense for all staff; Home View; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1221, Pg.14, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Alba, C. (1997) *Parents face $1000 bill for tuition,* The Herald (Glasgow), 19 November [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Alba, C. and Mcbain, B. (1997) *Is this an anomaly too far?,* The Herald (Glasgow), 31 October [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Alderman, G. (1996) *What a disappointment, comparatively speaking; Sir Ron Dearing has not addressed the issue of standards across all institutions,* The Independent, 29 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Alfange, D. (1969) "Jeremy Bentham and the Codification of Law", *Cornell Law Review,* 55 (1), pp.58-77, http://scholarship.law.cornell.edu/clr/vol55/iss1/3 (Accessed: 18 April 2016).

Allen, C.K. (1931) "Legal Duties", *The Yale Law Journal,* 40 (3), pp.331-380, http://www.jstor.org/stable/790175 (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Anderson, R. (2006) "Chapter 11: State or Market" in Anderson, R. *British Universities Past and Present*, London: Hambledon Contiuum

Anderson, R. (2011) *British Universities past, present and future: convergence and divergence* in Coiffait, L (ed.) *Blue Skies: new thinking about the future of higher education,* London: Pearson Centre for Policy and Learning.

Badley, G. (1999) "Improving teaching in British higher education", *Quality Assurance in Education,* 7 (1), pp. 35-40, DOI: 10.1108/09684889910252522 (Accessed: 7 May 2015).

Bailey, T. (2012) "Contemporary English higher education policy and the Robbins Report: continuity or change?", *Retrospectives,* 1 (1), pp. 6-21, *http:www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/history/students/retrospectives/issues/.../3.pdf* (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

Baker, M. (2009) *Education's 'great conciliator',* BBC News, 27 February [Online]. Available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7913615.stm (Accessed: 1 October 2014).

Ball, S.J. (1990) *Politics and Policy Making in Education,* London; New York: Routledge.

Ball, S.J. (1993) "What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes", *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 13 (2), pp.10-17, DOI: 10.1080/0159630930130203 (Accessed: 28 May 2017)

Ball, S.J. (2009) "Privatising education, privatising education policy, privatising educational research: network governance and the 'competition state'", *Journal of Education Policy,* 24 (1), pp.83-99, DOI: 10.1080/02680930802419474 (Accessed: 27 May 2017)

Barberis, P. (1998) "The New Public Management and a New Accountability", *Public Administration,* 76 (Autumn), pp.451-470, DOI: 10.1111/1467-9299.00111 (Accessed: 26 September 2013).

Barnes, J. (1999) "Chapter 9, Funding and University Autonomy"*, in Henkel, M. and Little, B. (eds.) *Changing Relationships Between Higher Education and the State*, London: Jessica Kingsley.

Barnett, R. (1988) "Does Higher Education have aims?", *Journal of Philosophy of Education,* 22 (2), pp. 239-250, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9752.1988.tb00197.x (Accessed: 31 July 2013).

Barnett, R. (1998) "In' or 'For' The Learning Society?", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 7-21, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00079 (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

Barnett, R. (1999) "The Coming of the Global Village: A Tale of Two Inquiries", *Oxford Review of Education,* 25 (3), pp. 293-306, DOI: 10.1080/030549899103991 (Accessed: 7 May 2015).

Barnett, R. (2011) "The coming of the ecological university", *Oxford Review of Education,* 37 (4), pp. 439-455, DOI: 10.1080/03054985.2011.595550 (Accessed: 7 May 2015).

Barr, N. and Crawford, I. (1998) "The Dearing Report and the government's response : a critique", *The Political Quarterly,* 69 (1), pp. 72-84, DOI: 10.1111/1467-923X.00138 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Baty, P. (1997a) *Is it time for the many not the few?,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 14 November 1997, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Baty, P. (1997b) *Corporate units threaten MBAs,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1272, Pg.2, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Baty, P. and Patel, K. (1996) *CIHE okays fees, CBI says no; Budget; Dearing Lobby,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1257, Pg.2, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Baty, P., Thomson, A. and Swain, H. (1997) *Dearing snubbed by policy drafters,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1291, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Beer A. and Cutler, C. (1998) "An Australian Perspective on Dearing", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 86-92, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886074 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Beloff, M. (1990) "Universities and the Public Purse: an update", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 44 (1), pp. 3-20, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.1990.tb01522.x (Accessed: 8 February 2013).

Beloff, M (1996) *Elite and proud of it; Dear Ron letters; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1240, Pg.13, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Benson, L. and Rothschild, L. (1982) "Royal Commissions: A Memorial", *Public Administration,* 60 (Autumn), pp.339-348, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9299.1982.tb00484.x (Accessed: 14 September 2014).

Bentham, J. (1820) "Hume Tracts: Bentham's Radical Reform Bill, 1819" JSTOR Hume Tracts [Online]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/60209333 (Accessed: 18 April 2016).

Bentham, J. (1822) "Hume Tracts: Codification Proposal" JSTOR Hume Tracts [Online]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/60210431 (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Bentham, J. (1835) "Hume Tracts: Truth versus Ashurst, or, Law as it is, contrasted with what it is said to be" JSTOR Hume Tracts [Online]. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/60206417 (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Berdahl, R. (1959) *British Universities and the State,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Bessant, B. (1986) "Privatisation and Academic Freedom", *Australian Universities Review,* 2, pp. 11-15. Available at http://files.eric.ed..gov/fulltext/EJ347539.pdf (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

Bird, R. (1994) "Reflections on the British Government and Higher Education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 48 (2), pp. 73-85, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.1994.tb01643.x (Accessed:8 May 2013).

Blackmore, J. (2004) "A critical evaluation of academic internal audit", *Quality Assurance in Education,* 12 (3), pp. 128-135, DOI: 10.1108/09684880410548753 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Blackstone, T (1997) *Ability to pay tops the bill; The government: The Higher Education Bill sets the framework of student funding for a generation,* The Guardian, 02 December [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Blackstone, T. (2001) "Why Learn? Higher Education in a Learning Society", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 55 (2), pp.175-184, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00181 (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Blake, N. Smith, R. and Standish P. (1998) *The Universities we need,* London: Kogan Page.

Blaxter, L. Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (2002) *How to Research,* 2nd edition, Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

(1996) *Bluff and nonsense; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1227, Pg.9, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Blunkett, D. (1996) *Labour's learners; Shadow education secretary David Blunkett explains his party's policy switch from classic student maintenance grants to long-term loans repayable once income levels permit,* The Guardian, 21 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Blunkett, D. (1997) *The tough truths of Dearing,* The Times, 24 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Bolton, P. (2010) *Sources of UK historical statistics (SN/SG/4635),* London: UK Parliament House of Commons Library, [Online]. Available at http://researchbrifings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN04635/SN04635.pdf (Accessed: 23 June 2015).

Bolton, P. (2012) *Education: historical statistics: November 2012 (SN/SG/4252),* London: UK Parliament House of Commons Library, [Online]. Available at www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/sn04252.pdf (Accessed: 23 June 2015).

Bourdieu, P. (1988) *Homo Academicus, translated by Peter Collier,* reprinted 2001, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bowker, G. and Starr, S. (1999) *Sorting Things Out. Classification and its Consequences,* Cambridge; London: The MIT Press.

Brady, P. and Thorpe, G. (1996) *Marketplace muddle; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1220, Pg.16, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Brennan, J. and Shah, T. (eds.) (2011) *Higher Education and Society in Changing Times: looking back and looking forward,* London: The Center for Higher Education Research and Information (CHERI). Available at https://www.open.ac.uk/cheri/documents/Lookingbackandlookingforward.pdf (Accessed: 14 October 2013).

Broadbent, J. and Laughlin, R. (1997) "Evaluating the 'New Public Management' reforms in the UK: a constitutional possibility?", *Public Administration,* 75 (Autumn), pp.487-507, DOI: 10.1111/1467-9299.00071 (Accessed: 26 September 2013).

Broadfoot, P. (1998) "Quality standards and control in higher education: What price life-long learning?", *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 8 (2), pp.155-180, DOI: 10.1080/0962021980020022 (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Brocklehurst, A. (2008) *House of Lords Library Note (LLN 2008/016) Debate on 26 June: Higher Education,* London: UK Parliament House of Lords Library, [Online]. Available at http://researchbrifings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/LLN-2008-016 (Accessed: 23 June 2015).

Brown, R. (1998) *The Post-Dearing Agenda for Quality and Standards in Higher Education,* Institute of Education, University of London.

Brown, R. (ed.) (2011) *Higher Education and the Market,* Routledge: New York and Abingdon.

Bruce, T. (1996) *Exploding the myth of a PFI panacea; Personal View; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1223, Pg.9, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Bruner, J (1991) "The Narrative Construction of Reality", *Critical Inquiry,* 18 (1), pp.1-21. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343711 (Accessed: 11 August 2016).

Bryman, A. (1984) "The Debate about Quantitative and Qualitative Research: A Question of Method or Epistemology?", *The British Journal of Sociology,* 35 (1), pp.75-92. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/590553 (Accessed: 24 October 2016).

Bulmer, M. (1974) *Sociological research methods: an introduction,* 2nd edition, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Bulmer, M. (1980) *Social research and Royal Commissions,* London: Allen & Unwin.

Bulmer, M. (1983) "Increasing the effectiveness of Royal Commissions: a comment", *Public Administration,* 61 (Winter), pp.436-443, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9299.1983.tb00538.x (Accessed: 14 September 2014).

Burke, K. (1945) *A Grammar of Motives,* New York: Prentice-Hall.

Butlin, R. (1998) "The Dearing Report: the regional dimension", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 81-86, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886065 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Campbell, G. (1965) *The Civil in Britain,* Revised edition, London: Gerald Duckworth and Co.

Campbell, P. (1996) *Basic instinct; Contributions to the THES Dearing debate; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1240, Pg.12, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Canavan, D. (1999) *Respond positively to the Cubie challenge,* The Herald (Glasgow), 22 December [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Carswell, J. (1985) *Government and the Universities in Britain: Programme and Performance 1960-1980,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Cartwright, N. and Hardie, J. (2012) *Evidence-based Policy A Practical Guide to Doing It Better,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cartwright, T. (1975) *Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees in Britain. A Case Study in Institutional Adaptiveness and Public Participation in Government,* London: Hodder and Stoughton.

Carvel, J. (1996) *Faulty Towers; As half the country's universities face budget deficits, John Carvel assesses the enormity of the task facing Sir Ron Dearing and his colleagues on the rescue committee,* The Guardian, 8 October [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Carvel, J. (1997a) *Higher Education: Man with a Mission; Sir Gareth Roberts, the inspirer of the Dearing Inquiry,* The Guardian, 29 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Carvel, J. (1997b) *The Dearing Debate: a deal that depends on the detail,* The Observer, 31 August [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Carvel, J. (1998) *Call for City to help fund university expansion; Government response to Dearing Inquiry - £150 credits for training courses,* The Guardian, 26 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Castle, S. (1997) *Student grants and free tuition to end next year,* The Independent, 20 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Chalkley, B. (1998a) "An introduction to the Dearing Report", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 55-60, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886029 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Chalkley, B. (1998b) "Setting a post-Dearing agenda for geography", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 92-98, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886083 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Chalkley, B. (1998c) "A response to the Dearing report from the Royal Geographical Society with the Institute of British Geographers (RGS-IBG)", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 98-101, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886092 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Chapman, R. (ed.) (1973) *The Role of Commissions in Policy-making,* London: George Allen and Unwin.

Chatterton, P. and Goddard, J. (2000) "The Response of Higher Education Institutions to Regional Needs", *European Journal of Education,* 35 (4), pp. 475-496, DOI: 10.1111/1467-3435.0004 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Clark, B. (1983) *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective,* Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Clokie, H. and Robinson, J. (1969) *Royal Commissions of Inquiry The Significance of Investigations in British Politics,* New York: Octagon.

Clough, P. (2002) *Narratives and fictions in educational research,* Buckingham; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Coate, K. Barnett, R. and Williams, G. (2001) "Relationships between Teaching and Research in Higher Education in England", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 55 (2), pp. 158-174, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00180 (Accessed: 17 March 2013).

Coldstream, P. (1996) *Looking back from the future; Opinion; Dear Ron; Part Five,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1243, Pg.9, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Collier, D. and Levitsky, S. (1997) "Democracy with Adjectives: Conceptual Innovation in Comparative Research", *World Politics,* 49 (3), pp.430-451. Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/25054009 . (Accessed: 22 January 2014).

CVCP (Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals) (1997) *A new partnership: universities, students, business and the nation,* London:CVCP

Committee on Higher Education (1963) *Report,* London: HMSO, Cmnd 2154.

Court, S. (1996) *Checking links of quality and funding; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1236, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Court, S. (1997) *Opinion: Playing catch with jellied eels; Getting to grips with standards might prove a slippery issue for the new quality assurance agency launched today,* The Guardian, 01 April [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Court, S. (2004) "Government Getting Closer: Higher Education and Devolution in the UK", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 58 (2/3), pp. 151-175, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2004.00266.x (Accessed: 5 August 2013).

Couyoumdjian, J.P. (2008) "An Expert at Work: Revisiting Jeremy Bentham's Proposals on Codification", *Kyklos,* 61 (4), pp.503-519, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-6435.2008.00414.x (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Cowell, R. (1997) *On with the revolution,* The Times, 04 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Crace, J. and Shepherd, J. (2007) *Education: The right prescription?: The Dearing report broke a taboo by asking students to pay for their university education. But 10 years on, fees remain highly controversial.,* The Guardian, 24 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(1999) *Cubie's solutions The only way to go is forward,* The Herald (Glasgow), 22 December [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Dale, R. (1989) *The State and Education Policy,* Milton Keynes; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Daniel, J. (1996) *Just a push at an open door; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1220, Pg.16, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Darwen, J. (1996a) *Partnership is the way forward; Dear Ron letters; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1244, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Darwen, J. (1996b) *Troubled tax for graduates; Letter,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1245, Pg.15, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Davies, B. (1996) *Welcome from the shadows; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1216, pg. 13, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(1996) *Dear Ron letters; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1238, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

(1997) *Dearing thanks his little helper,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 4 August 1997, THE archive [Online]. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/.../dearing-thanks-his-little-helper/103294.article (Accessed: 22 September 2014).

Dearlove, J. (2002) "A Continuing Role for Academics: the Governance of UK Universities in the Post-Dearing Era", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 56(3), pp. 257-275, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00217 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

(1996) *Debt-driven education; We must devise schemes to help the poor,* The Guardian, 17 September [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Deem, R. (1998) "'New managerialism' and higher education: The management of performances and cultures in universities in the United Kingdom", *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 8 (1), pp.47-70, DOI: 10.1080/0962021980020014 (Accessed: 3 April 2016).

Deem, R. and Brehony, K. (2005) "Management as Ideology: The Case of 'New Managerialism' in Higher Education", *Oxford Review of Education,* 31 (2), pp. 217-235, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4618615 (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1996) *Purposes of Higher Education,* Unpublished report.

Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) (1998) *Higher Education for the 21st Century Response to the Dearing Report,* London: Department for Education and Employment.

Department for Education and Skills (DfES) (2003) *The Future of Higher Education. White Paper, CMND 5735,* Norwich: The Stationery Office.

Di Maggio, P. and Powell, W. (1983) "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields" (A*merican Sociological Review,* 48 (2), pp.147-160, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2095101 (Accessed: 2 August 2013).

Dill, D. (1997a) "Markets and higher education: an introduction", *Higher Education Policy,* 10 (3/4), pp.163-166, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(97)81764-3 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Dill, D. (1997b) "Higher education markets and public policy", *Higher Education Policy,* 10 (3/4), pp.167-185, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(97)00011-1 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Dill, D. (1999) "Academic Accountability and University Adaptation: The Architecture of an Academic Learning Organization", *Higher Education,* 38 (2), pp.127-154, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3447930 (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Dror, Y. (1968) *Public policy-making Rexamined,* San Fransisco: Chandler.

Dror, Y. (1986) *Policy-making Under Adversity,* New Brunswick; Oxford: Transaction Books.

Durham, T. (1996a) *IT cannot replace eye-to-eye; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1257, Pg.14, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Durham, T. (1996b) *The next 20 years,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 13 December 1996, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Eggins, H (ed.) (2003) *Globalization and Reform in Higher Education,* Milton Keynes; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Elliott Major, L. (1996a) *Ivy League threat that set sabres rattling; Lee Elliot Major finds last week's review of postgraduate education has heightened debate about a growing elitism among UK universities,* The Guardian, 21 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Elliott Major, L. (1996b) *Cash for the campus cliques; Lee Elliot Major reports on the dangers of creating a super league of universities which would be awarded the bulk of research funding,* The Guardian, 13 August [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Elliott Major, L. (1996c) *Higher Education: more masters for jobs; There is a growing number of vocational postgraduate degrees, but do they really boost employment prospects?,* The Guardian, 5 November [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Elliott Major, L. (1997a) *Tapping into the cash flow; As debate over the allocation of research funds rages in Whitehall, Lee Elliot Major reports on the vice-chancellors' bid to keep a firm grip on the purse strings,* The Guardian, 18 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Elliott Major, L. (1997b) *It takes more than just brains; The shortfall between university research and the funding level it requires is getting wider every year. Lee Elliot Major reports on an imbalance that is just as shocking for industry as it is for academia,* The Guardian, 3 March [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Elliott Major, L. (1997c) *Missing links; Forward thinking: new ideas on research and regionalism,* The Guardian, 8 April [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Elton, L. (1998) "Are UK degree standards going up, down or sideways?", *Studies in Higher Education,* 23 (1), pp. 35-42, DOI: 10.1080/03075079812331380472 (Accessed: 5 May 2013).

Eustace, R. (1994) "University Autonomy: The '80s and After", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 48 (2), pp.86-117, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.1994.tb01644.x (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

Fearn, H. (2009) *Degrees of freedom,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 13 August 2009, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Fielden, J. (2008) *Global Trends in University Governance, Education Working Paper Series 9,* World Bank [Online]. Available at: http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EDUCATION/Resources/278200-1099079877269/547664-

1099079956815/Global_Trends_University_Governance_webversion.pdf (Accessed: 13 July 2013).

Filippakou, O. and Tapper, T. (2008) "Quality assurance and quality enhancement in higher education: contested territories?", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 62(1/2), pp. 84-100, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00379.x (Accessed: 18 September 2013).

Filippakou, O., Tapper, T. and Salter, B. (2012) "Higher Education as a System: The English Experience", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 66 (1), pp.106-122, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2011.00506.x (Accessed: 18 September 2013).

Finer, H. (1927) *The British Civil Service An Introductory Essay,* London: The Fabian Society.

Fitzgerald, M. (1996a) *Dearing questions are often historic ones; Home view; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1242, Pg.12, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Fitzgerald, M. (1996b) *Traditions lost in the market-place; Home View; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1255, Pg.14, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Flint, C. (1996) *Knights of a not-so-rounded table; Dear Ron; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1242, Pg.9, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Foster, D. (1996) *A learning bank for all,* The Times, 23 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Furth, D (1973) "Issues in Short Cycle Higher Education", *Higher Education,* 2 (1), pp. 95-102 Available at http://www.jstor.org/stable/3445763 (Accessed: 5 June 2013).

Garner, R. (2005) *'We blundered' Minister admits that Labour made mistakes on tuition fees,* The Independent, 03 October [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Garrett, J. (1972) *The Management of Government,* Harmondsworth: Penguin.

(1999) *Get educated now, pay later,* Scotland on Sunday, 19 December [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Gibbons, M., Lomoges, C., Nowotny, H., Schwartsman, S., Scott, P., Trow, M. (1994) *The New Production of Knowledge,* reprinted 1995, 1996, 1997, London, California, New Delhi: Sage Publications.

Gibbs, P. (2001) "Higher Education as a Market: A problem or solution?", *Studies in Higher Education,* 26 (1), pp.85-94, DOI: 10.1080/03075070020030733 (Accessed: 21 July 2013).

Gibney, E. (2013), *Robbins 50 Years Later,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 24 October 2013, THE archive [Online]. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/robbins-50-years-later/2008287.article (Accessed: 12 March 2017).

Gilbert, A. (1997) *Diversity challenge,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1294, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Gill, J. (2009) *Lord Dearing Dies,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 20 February 2009, THE archive [Online]. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/lord-dearing-dies/405457.article (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

Gillon, E. (1997) *Sir Ron's forgotten legion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 5 September 1997, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Gleeson, D. and Keep, E. (2004) "Voice without accountability: the changing relationship between employers, the state and education in England", *Oxford Review of Education,* 30 (1), pp.37-63, DOI: 10.1080/0305498042000190050 (Accessed: 21 July 2013).

Glennerster, H. (1991) "Quasi-Markets for Education?", *The Economic Journal,* 101 (408), pp.1268-1276, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2234442 (Accessed: 21 July 2013).

Glennerster, H. (2001) " United Kingdom Education 1997-2001", CASE Paper 50, Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics. Available at *eprints.lse.ac.uk/3983/1/United_Kingdom_education_1997-2001.pdf* (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

Godwin, C.D. (1998) "The origin of the binary system", *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society,* 27 (2), pp.171-191, DOI: 10.1080/0046760980270205 (Accessed: 18 September 2013).

Goertz, G. (2006) *Social Science Concepts: a users guide,* Princeton; Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Gould, F. (1996) *A mine of solutions for Solomon; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1217, Pg.17, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(1997) *Govt responds to Dearing Report on Higher Education,* Local Government Chronicle, 24 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Great Britain. Home Office (1909) *Report of Departmental Committee on the Procedure of Royal Commissions,* London: The Stationery Office (Cd. 5235)

Great Britain. Treasury (1961) *Memorandum to the Cabinet on the Robbins Report,* (C (63) 173) [Online]. Available at http://filestore.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pdfs/small/cab-129-114-c-173.pdf (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

Greenaway, D. and Haynes, M. (2003) "Funding Higher Education in the UK: The Role of Fees and Loans." *The Economic Journal*, 113: F150–F166. DOI:10.1111/1468-0297.00102 (Accessed: 27 May 2017)

Greenbank, P. (2006) "The evolution of government policy on widening participation", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 60 (2), pp. 141-166, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00314.x (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Greenhalgh, T. (1996) *The team-built prototype; Multimedia; Interview; Diana Laurillard,* THESis: The Times Higher Education Supplement- Multimedia Features., 12 July 1996, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Haddon, C. (2012) *Reforming the Civil Service The Efficiency Unit in the early 1980s and the 1987 Next Steps Report,* London: Institute for Government.

Hague, D. (1996) *Design for the computer age; More advice for the Dearing review of higher education; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1242, Pg.10, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Hallsworth, M. Parker, S. and Rutter, J. (2011) *Policy-making in the Real World,* London: Institute for Government.

Halsey, A.H. (1995) *Decline of Donnish Dominion: The British Academic Professions in the Twentieth Century,* Oxford: Clarendon.

Hammersley, M. (1992) "Reflections on the Liberal University: truth, citizenship and the role of the academic", *International Studies in Sociology of Education,* 2 (2), pp.165-183, DOI: 10.1080/0962021920020204 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Hannan, A. English, S. and Silver, H. (1999) "Why innovate? Some preliminary findings from a research project on innovations in teaching and learning in higher education", *Studies in Higher Education,* 24 (3), pp. 279-289, DOI: 10.1080/03075079912331379895 (Accessed: 30 April 2013).

Harvey, L. (2000) "New Realities: the relationship between Higher Education and Employment", *Tertiary Education and Management,* 6, pp. 3–17, DOI: 10.1023/A:1009685205201 (Accessed: 7 May 2013)

Hattersley, R. (2009) *Lord Dearing Civil servant whose report recommended that students should pay for their university education,* The Guardian, 23 February [Online]. Available at https://www.theguardian.com/education/2009/feb/23/obituary-lord-dearing-tuition-fees (Accessed: 10 January 2014).

HC Deb (1994) *vol. 250 cc97-8W,* Hansard (House of Commons), 22 November 1994 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1994/nov/22/higher-education-review (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 263 cc165-6W,* Hansard (House of Commons), 4 July 1995 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1995/jul/04/higher-education (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 253 cc130-1130,* Hansard (House of Commons), 24 January 1995 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1995/jan/24/higher-education-students#column_130 (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 258 c482W,* Hansard (House of Commons), 25 April 1995 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1995/apr/25/higher-education-review#column_482w (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1996) *vol. 219 c21,* Hansard (House of Commons), 19 February 1996 [Online]. Available at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm199596/cmhansrd/vo960219/debtext/60219-06.htm (Accessed: 15 May 2015).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 260 c536,* Hansard (House of Commons), 23 May 1995 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1995/may/23/higher-education-review#column_536w (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 265 c840W,* Hansard (House of Commons), 7 November 1995 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1995/nov/07/higher-education-review#column_840w (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 267 c103W,* Hansard (House of Commons), 21 November 1995 [Online]. Available at

http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1995/nov/21/higher-education#column_103w (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1996) *vol. 275 cc138-40W138W,* Hansard (House of Commons), 2 April 1996 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1996/apr/02/higher-education#column_138w (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1995) *vol. 567 c22WA,* Hansard (House of Commons), 27 November 1995 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1995/nov/27/higher-education-review#column_22wa (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HC Deb (1997) *vol. 298 cc953-66,* Hansard (House of Commons), 23 July 1997 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/commons/1997/jul/23/higher-education (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

Henkel, M. and Little, B. (eds.) (1999) *Changing Relationships Between Higher Education and the State,* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Hennessy, P. (1986) *The Great and the Good An Inquiry into the British Establishment,* London: Policy Studies Institute.

Herbert, A. (1961) *Anything But Action? A Study of the Uses and Abuses of Committees of Inquiry in Harris, R. (ed..) Radical Reaction Essays in Competition and Affluence,* London: Hutchinson for the Institute of Economic Affairs.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (1996) *Submission by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to the National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education,* Bristol: HEFCE.

Higher Education Funding Council for England (1997) *Response to the Dearing Report. The Response by the Higher Education Funding Council for England to the Report of the National Inquiry into Higher Education.,* Bristol: HEFCE.

(1998) *Higher education More doom and gloom predicted,* The Herald (Glasgow), 20 March [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(2009) *Higher education's toothless guard dog,* The Guardian, 11 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Hill, M. (2009) *The Public Policy Process,* 5th edition, Harlow: Pearson Education.

Hillman, N. (2013) "From Grants for All to Loans for All: Undergraduate Finance from the Implementation of the Anderson Report (1962) to the Implementation of

the Browne Report (2012)" *Contemporary British History,* 27 (3) pp.249-270, DOI: 10.1080/13619462.2013.783418 (Accessed: 27 May 2017)

Hills, G. (1997) *Time to pay the full price for a degree,* The Scotsman, 09 April [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Hinde, J. (1997) *Colleges could lose their medics,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1283, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Hinde, J. and Tysome, T. (1998) *£400m research ransom,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1326, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

HL Deb (1994) *col. WA7,* Hansard (House of Lords), 23 November 1994 [Online]. Available at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199495/ldhansrd/vo941123/text/41123w 01.htm (Accessed: 18 May 2015).

HL Deb (1995) *col. WA22,* Hansard (House of Lords), 27 November 1995 [Online]. Available at http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld199596/ldhansrd/vo951127/text/51127w 01.htm#51127w01_sbhd9 (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HL Deb (1996) *vol. 572 cc32-4,* Hansard (House of Lords), 13 May 1996 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/written_answers/1996/may/13/higher- education-national-committee-of#column_32wa (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

HL Deb (1996) *vol. 572 cc1489-91,* Hansard (House of Lords), 10 June 1996 [Online]. Available at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1996/jun/10/the- dearing-committee-selection-criteria#column_1489 (Accessed: 24 August 2016).

Hodges, L. (1997a) *Degrees: compare and contrast; Do we get value for money? Sir Ron Dearing is evaluating the cost of higher education worldwide,* The Independent, 06 March [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Hodges, L. (1997b) *Education: Are the vice chancellors punching their weight?,* The Independent, 23 October [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Hodgson, A. and Spours, K. (2000) "Expanding Higher Education in the UK: From 'System Slowdown' to 'System Acceleration'", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 54 (4), pp.295-322, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.0016 (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Honeyball, M (Undated) *Baroness Brenda Dean of Thornton-le-Fylde,* The Honeyball Buzz: the blog of Mary Honeyball, Labour MEP for London, [Online]. https://thehoneyballbuzz.com/women-in-power-2/house-of-lords/labour-peers/a-e/baroness-brenda-dean-of-thornton-le-fylde/ (Accessed: 1 October 2016).

Hood, C. (1991) "A Public Management for All Seasons?", *Public Administration,* 69 (Spring), pp.3-19, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x (Accessed: 3 April 2016).

Howlett, M. (2011) *Designing Public Policies,* Abingdon: Routledge.

Hughes, C. (1993) *Uneducated, but no empty head: As Sir Ron Dearing steps into the national curriculum firing line, he tells Colin Hughes how he will handle the conflicting demands,* The Independent, 27 February [Online]. Available at http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/uneducated-but-no-empty-head-as-sir-ron-dearing-steps-into-the-national-curriculum-firing-line-he-1456703.html (Accessed: 8 January 2016).

Hughes, C. and Tight, M. (1995) "The Myth of the Learning Society", *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 43 (3), pp.290-304, http://www.jstor.org/stable/3121985 (Accessed: 23 September 2013).

Huisman, J. and Currie, J. (2004) "Accountability in higher education: Bridge over troubled water?", *Higher Education,* 48 (4), pp. 529-551, DOI: 10.1023/B:HIGH.0000046725.16936.4c (Accessed: 23 September 2013).

Husband, T. (1996) *Take a deep breath; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1241, Pg.14, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Hutchinson, C. (1996) *Snares in the charmed circle; Multimedia; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 12 April 1996, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Jackson, N. (1998) "Understanding standards-based quality assurance part II: nuts and bolts of the "Dearing" policy", *Quality Assurance in Education,* 6 (4), pp. 220-231, DOI: 10.1108/09684889810242227 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Jackson, N. (2000) "The concept of programme specification and its application in the new quality assurnace framework", *Quality Assurance in Education,* 8 (4), pp. 164-172, DOI: 10.1108/09684880010356057 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Jackson, N. Parks, G. Harrison, M and Stebbings, C. (2000) "Making the benchmarks explicit through programme specification", *Quality Assurance in Education,* 8 (4), pp. 190-202, DOI: 10.1108/09684880010356174 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Jary, D. and Parker, M. (eds.) (1998) *The New Higher Education: Issues and Directions for the Post-Dearing University,* Stoke on Trent: Staffordshire University Press.

Jenkins, R. (1992) *Pierre Bourdieu,* London: Routledge.

Johnson, G. (1996) *Dearing's power of distraction; Personal View; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1217, Pg.15, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Johnston, R. (1998) "Dearing and research: To be continued in our next…", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 72-81, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886056 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Jones, S. and Little, B. (1999) *Chapter 7, Higher Education Curricula in the UK: The Pushme-Pullyou Effects,* in Henkel, M. and Little, B. (eds.) Changing Relationships Between Higher Education and the State, London: Jessica Kingsley.

Jongbloed, B. (2003) "Marketisation in Higher Education, Clark's Triangle and the Essential Ingredients of Markets", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 57 (2), pp.110-135, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00238 (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Judd, J. (1997) *Prepare to pay for university education,* The Independent, 28 June [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Kharian, G. (1996) *Partnership is the way forward; Dear Ron letters; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1244, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Knight, M. (2002) "Governance in higher education corporations: a consideration of the constitution created by the 1992 Act", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 56 (3), pp. 276-286, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00218 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Kogan, M. (1971) *The Politics of Education. Edward Boyle and Anthony Crossland in conversation with Maurice Kogan.,* Harmondsworth; Victoria: Penguin.

Kogan, M. (1998) "The Treatment of Research", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 48-63, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00082 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Kogan, M. and Atkin, J.M. (1982) *Legitimating Education Policy: the use of special committees in formulating policies in the USA and UK*, Available at http://www.academia.edu/22284941/Legitimating_Education_Policy_The_Use_of_S pecial_Committees_in_Formulating_Policies_in_the_USA_and_the_UK (Accessed: 24 February 2017)

Kogan, M. and Hanney, S. (2000) *Reforming Higher Education,* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Lauriat, B. (2010) "The Examination of Everything: Royal Commissions in British Legal History", *Statute Law Review,* 31(1), pp. 24-46, DOI: 10.1093/slr/hmq001 (Accessed: 15 August 2017).

Little, B. (1998) *Refined skills or shop flawed?; Work Wise; Getting ready for work,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 20 March 1998, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(1997) *Lib-Dems rethink policies,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1301, Pg.3, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Lodge, M. and Hood, C. (2010) "Regulation Inside Government: Retro Theory Vindicated or Outdated", in Baldwin, R. Cave, M. and Lodge, M. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Regulation* [Online]*.* Available at DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199560219.003.0024 (Accessed: 1 March 2014).

Lodge, M. and Stirton, L. (2010) "Accountability in the Regulatory State", in Baldwin, R. Cave, M. and Lodge, M. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Regulation* [Online]. Available at DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199560219.003.0015 (Accessed: 1 March 2014).

Lomas, L. (2005) *Organisational Change and the Shifting of the Locus of Power,* paper presented at the European Conference on Educational Research, University College Dublin, 7-10 September 2005. Available at http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/documents/143998.doc (Accessed: 22 September 2013).

Long, N.E. (1949) "Power and Administration", A*dministration Review,* 9 (4), pp.257-264, http://www.jstor.org/stable/972337 (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

(2009) *Lord Dearing,* The Telegraph, 24 February [Online]. Available at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/4800229/Lord-Dearing.html (Accessed: 1/10/2014).

Macdonell, H. (1999) *Tuition fees climbdown; Lib-Dems poised to retreat in parliament power deal talks,* Daily Mail, 12 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Macfarlane, A. (1998) "Information, Knowledge and Learning", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 77-92, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00084 (Accessed: 23 July 2013).

Macleod, D. (1997a) *Higher Education: room for more; Researchers are giving short shrift to "misleading" government fears of a graduate glut saturating the jobs market,* The Guardian, 11 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Macleod, D. (1997b) *Beating a path; The Dearing Inquiry is considering a radical overhaul of student funding that would see the responsibility for lending switch to the private sector,* The Guardian, 03 March [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Macleod, D. (1997c) *Treasury talks hold prospect of big boost to schools spending,* The Guardian, 04 March [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Macleod, D. (1997d) *Split among education ministers may delay reform of a level exams,* The Guardian, 27 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Macleod, D. (1998) *Higher: Waiting game; With everything still hanging on this summer's spending review, Donald MacLeod looks back on a year of bold reforms and unresolved funding problems while below, spokespeople from across the education sector deliver their end-of-year,* The Guardian, 28 April [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Macleod, F. (1997) *Fresh call for two-tier system rekindles old academic debate,* Scotland on Sunday, 18 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Mahoney, J. and Rueschemeyer, D. (2003) *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Majone, G. (1997) "From the Positive to the Regulatory State: Causes and Consequences of Changes in the Mode of Governance", *Journal of Public Policy,* 17 (2), pp.139-167, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4007608 (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Mayhew, K. Deer, C. Dua, M. (2004) "The move to mass higher education in the UK: many questions and some answers", *Oxford Review of Education,* 30 (1), pp. 65-82, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4127152 (Accessed: 20 March 2016).

Mcbain, B. (1996a) *Chance to claim Higher ground,* The Herald (Glasgow), 28 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Mcbain, B. (1996b) *Shorter course advocated for honours degree,* The Herald (Glasgow), 04 November [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Mcbain, B. (1997) *Nightmares haunt the dreaming spires,* The Herald (Glasgow), 22 October [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Mcbain, B. (1998) *Read small print or pay price,* The Herald (Glasgow), 22 September [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Mcbain, B. (1999) *Making his mark on the future,* The Herald (Glasgow), 11 August [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

McCulloch, G. (2004) *Documentary Research in Education, History and the Social Sciences,* London ; New York : Routledge Falmer.

McCulloch, G. and Richardson, W. (2000) *Historical Reseach in Educational Settings,* Milton Keynes; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

McNeill, P. and Chapman, S. (2005) *Research Methods,* 3rd edition, London ; New York : Routledge.

Meek, V. (2000) "Diversity and marketisation of higher education: incompatible concepts?", *Higher Education Policy,* 13, pp. 23-39, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(99)00030-6 (Accessed: 9 April 2013).

Meikle, J. (1997) *That sinking feeling; He is at last back on the political agenda. Can Sir Ron Dearing and Labour pull the sector out of trouble?,* The Guardian, 07 July [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Meretoja, H. (2016) "Exploring the Possible: Philosophical Reflection, Historical Imagination, and Narrative Agency", *Narrative Works: Issues, Investigations, &* Interventions, 6 (1), pp. 108-125, https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/25447 (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

Meyer, J.W. and Rowan, B. (1977) "Institutionalized Organizations: Formal Structure as Myth and Ceremony" (A*merican Journal of Sociology,* 83 (2), pp.340-363, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2778293 (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Middleton, C. (2000) "Models of State and Market in the 'Modernisation' of Higher Education", *British Journal of Sociology of Education,* 21 (4), pp. 537-554, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1393381 (Accessed: 17 April 2013).

Midgely, S. (1996) *Flexing their muscle; The Dearing Inquiry into Higher Education,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1254, Pg.6, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Miles, T. (1996) *Funding Council backs warnings on University cash cuts,* PA News, 29 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Moodie, G. and Eustace, R. (1974) *Power and Authority in British Universities,* London: Allen and Unwin.

Moran, M. (2001) "The Rise of the Regulatory State in Britain", *Parliamentary Affairs,* 54, pp.19-34, DOI: 10.1093/pa/54.1.19 (Accessed: 3 April 2016).

Moran, M. (2003) *The British Regulatory State High Modernism and Hyper-Innovation,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morgan, W.J. (1996) "Educational Policy Making in Britain: an interview with Sir Ron Dearing", *International Journal of Lifelong Education,* 15 (5), pp.311-324, DOI: 10.1080/0260137960150501 (Accessed: 22 November 2015).

Morgan-Fleming, B., Riegle, S. and Fryer, W. (2007) "Chapter 3, Narrative Inquiry in Archival Work*",* in Clandinin, D.J. (ed.) *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping and Methodology.* Available at DOI: 10.4135/9781452226552 (Accessed: 11 August 2016).

Moser, C. (1988) "The Robbins Report 25 Years After and the future of the universities", *Oxford Review of Education,* 14 (1), pp 5-20, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1050360 (Accessed: 14 April 2013).

Mouwen, K. (2000) "Strategy, structure and culture of the hybrid university: Towards the university of the 21st century", *Tertiary Education and Management,* 6 (1), pp. 47-56, DOI: 10.1023/A:1009645607018 (Accessed: 27 April 2013).

Munslow, A. (2016) "Narrative Works in History (Invited)", *Narrative Works: Issues, Investigations, &* Interventions, 6 (1), pp. 108-125, https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/NW/article/view/25448 (Accessed: 24 February 2017).

National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1995-1997), *Dearing Committee, Records, ED266/1 - ED266/102,* National Archives, Kew, Catalogue available at http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/details/r/C7065 (Accessed: 26 September 2016)

National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (1997) *Evidence session of the Higher Education Funding Council for England,* London: NCIHE.

National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) (The Dearing Report) (1997) *Higher Education in the Learning Society: Summary Report,* London: HMSO.

National Committee of Inquiry into Higher Education (NCIHE) (The Dearing Report) (1997) *Higher Education in the Learning Society: Report of the National Committee,* London: HMSO.

Neave, G. (1998) "Growing Pains: The Dearing Report from a European Perspective", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 118-136, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00086 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Neave, G. (1996) "Editorial Academic Freedon and University Autonomy: An Abiding Concern", *Higher Education Policy,* 9 (4), pp.263-266, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(99)80002-6 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Neave, G. (2000) "Diversity, differentiation and the market: the debate we never had but which we ought to have done", *Higher Education Policy,* 13, pp.7-21, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(99)00031-8 (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

(1997) *New government prefers to control; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1312, Pg.7, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

North, P. (1997) *North Commission of Inquiry Report*, Available at https://www.admin.ox.ac.uk/coi/commissionofinquiryreport/ (Accessed: 9 July 2017)

(1961), *Notes and News*, Education + Training, 3(3) pp. 46 – 47, http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/eb014952 (Accessed: 12 March 2016)

Nybom, T. (2003) "The Humboldt Legacy: Reflections on the Past, Present (And Future) of the European University", *Higher Education Policy,* 16, pp. 141–159, DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300013 (Accessed: 21 April 2013).

OECD (2003) "Chapter 3, Changing Patterns of Governance in Higher Education*",* in *OECD Education Policy Analysis, 2003,* Paris: OECD**.** Available at http://www.oecd.org/edu/school/educationpolicyanalysis-2003edition.htm (Accessed: 6 May 2013).

Onega, S. and Garcia Landa, J.A. (eds.) (1996) *Narratology: An Introduction,* London; New York: Longman.

O'Reilly, J. and Syal, R. (1997) *Universities face common degree plan,* The Sunday Times, 23 February [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Osborne, D. and Gaebler, T. (1993) *Reinventing Government How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector,* New York: Plume.

Packham, D. (1996) *Light reading for a heavy task; Dear Ron letters; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1239, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online].

Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

Palfreyman, D. and Tapper, T. (2014) *Reshaping the University The Rise of the Regulated Market in Higher Education,* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Parker, M. and Jary, D. (1995) "The McUniversity: Organization, Management and Academic Subjectivity", *Organization,* 2 (2), pp.319-338, DOI: 10.1177/135050849522013 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Parr, C (2015) *Sir David Watson dies aged 65 Tributes made to eminent professor of higher education, former Brighton v-c and head of Oxford college,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 9 February 2015, THE archive [Online]. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/sir-david-watson-dies-aged-65/2018425.article (Accessed: 1 October 2016).

Parry, G. (1997) "Patterns of Participation in Higher Education in England: A Statistical Summary and Commentary", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 51 (1), pp 6–2, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00024 (Accessed: 21 April 2013).

Parry, G. (1998) "Size, Shape and Structure: Dimensions of Access and Equity in Proposals for the Future Development of British Higher Education", *Journal of Institutional Research in Australasia,* 7 (1), pp 74-89, http://www.aair.org.au/articles/volume-7-no-1/7-1-size-shape-and-structure-dimensions-of-access-and-equity-in-proposals-for-the-future-development (Accessed: 7 February 2013).

Parry, G. (1999a) "Education research and policy making in higher education: the case of Dearing", *Journal of Education Policy,* 14 (3), pp. 225-241, DOI: 10.1080/026809399286314 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Parry, G. (1999b) "Editorial", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 53 (2), pp. 113-115, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00029-i4 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Parry, G. (2001) "Academic snakes and vocational ladders", *Fourth Philip Jones Memorial Lecture,* Leicester: NIACE.

Parry, G. (2003) "Mass Higher Education and the English: Wherein the Colleges?", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 57 (4) pp 308–337, DOI: 10.1111/j.0951-5224.2003.00250.x (Accessed: 21 April 2013).

Parry, G. (2006) "Policy-participation trajectories in English higher education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 60 (4), pp. 392-412, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00330.x (Accessed: 21 April 2013).

Parry, G. (2014) "Robbins and Advanced Further Education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 68 (2), pp. 187-209, DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12041 (Accessed: 24 June 2017).

Patel, K. (1997) *Wellcome sidesteps lab report,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1281, Pg.3, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Pearce, D.W., Edwards, L., Beuret, G. (1979) *Decision-making for energy futures: a case study of the Windscale Inquiry,* London: Macmillan for the Social Science Research Council

Peters, M. (1992) "Performance and accountability in 'post-industrial society': The crisis of British universities", *Studies in Higher Education,* 17 (2), pp.123-139, DOI: 10.1080/03075079212331382617 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Philip, L.J. (1998) "Combining Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches to Social Research in Human Geography—An Impossible Mixture?", *Environment and Planning A,* 30 (2), pp.261-276, DOI: 10.1068/a300261 (Accessed: 24 October 2016).

Power, M. (1997) *The Audit Society: Rituals of Verification,* Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press.

Pratt, J. (1997) *The Polytechnic Experiment, 1965-1992,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Pratt, J. (1999) "Policy and policy-making in the unification of higher education", *Journal of Education Policy,* 14 (3), pp.257-269, DOI: 10.1080/026809399286332 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Pratt, J. and Silverman, S. (1988) *Responding to Constraint Policy and Management in Higher Education,* Milton Keynes; Philadelphia: SRHE and Open University Press.

Prichard, C. and Willmott, H. (1997) "Just How Managed is the McUniversity?", *Organization Studies,* 18 (2), pp.287-316, DOI: 10.1177/017084069701800205 (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Quality Support Centre (1997) *The Dearing Report: Commentaries and Highlights (Digest supplement),* Open University

Quigley, G. (1998) "Dearing's proposals on learning, teaching and standards", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 60-67, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886038 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Ranson, S. (1985) "Contradictions in the Government of Educational Change", *Political Studies,* 33, pp.56-72, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9248.1985.tb01561.x (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Ranson, S. (2003) "Public accountability in the age of neo liberal governance", *Journal of Education Policy,* 18 (5), pp. 459-480, DOI: 10.1080/0268093032000124848 (Accessed: 29 January 2014).

(1999) *Report backs pay storm academics,* Birmingham Evening Mail, 24 June [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(1998) *Research funding future in doubt,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1339, Pg.6, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Rhodes, M. (1999) *Structural reform in higher education: the changing role and status of the university college sector,* Unpublished PhD thesis. Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online: http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/4545 (Accessed: 28 May 2015)

Rhodes, R. A. W. (1994) "The Hollowing out of the State: the Changing Nature of the Public Service in Britain.", *The Political Quarterly,* 65: 138–151, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-923X.1994.tb00441.x (Accessed: 3 April 2016).

Richards, H. (1996a) *Dearing Dream Team,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 25 March 1996, THE Archive [Online]. Available at http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/news/dearing-team-dream/93058.article (Accessed: 10 January 2014).

Richards, H. (1996b) *Budget gloom raises spectre of study levy,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1230, Pg.6, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Richards, H. (1997) *New-style degrees get convert,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1273, Pg.3, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Richards, H. (1997a) *Roberts departs as Dearing delivers; Interview; Sir Gareth Roberts,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1289, Pg.6, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Richards, H. (1997b) *Is there a dissenter in the House?,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1302, Pg.10, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Richards, H. (1997c) *The Answers; Election; General,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1272, Pg.7, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Richards, H. (1997d) *Lucky election winners face cash hangover; The problem; Election; General,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1272, Pg.6, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Riddell, P. (1997) *Inquiries and reviews are no substitute for decisions,* The Times, 05 December [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Riessman, C.K. (1993) *Narrative Analysis (Qualitative Research Methods Series, 30),* London, California, New Delhi: Sage University Papers.

Robertson, D. (1999) "The Dearing Inquiry as Process - Delegated Thinking and the Limits of Expert Advice", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 53 (2), pp. 116-140, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00119 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Ross, P. (1996) *Funding faces the changes,* The Herald (Glasgow), 16 April [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Rowe, M. and McAllister, L. (2006) "The Roles of Commissions of Inquiry in the Policy Process", *Public Policy and Administration,* pp. 21-99, DOI: 10.1177/095207670602100408 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Rustin, M. (1998) "Chapter 19, The Perverse Modernisation of British Universities"*,* in Jary, D. and Parker, M. (eds.) *The New Higher Education: Issues and Directions for the Post-Dearing University*, Stoke on Trent: Staffordshire University Press.

Ryan, A. (2005) "New Labour and higher education", *Oxford Review of Education,* 31 (1), pp. 87-100, DOI: 10.1080/0305498042000337200 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Saldana, J. (2009) *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers,* reprinted 2010 (twice), 2011,2012, London, California, New Delhi, Singapore: Sage Publications.

Salmi, J. (2007) "Autonomy from the State vs Responsiveness to Markets", *Higher Education Policy,* 20, pp.223-242, DOI: 10.1057/palgrave.hep.8300154 (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

Salter, B. and Tapper, T. (1994) *The State and Higher Education,* London: Woburn Press.

Sandelowski, M. (1991) "Telling Stories: Narrative Approaches in Qualitative Research", *Journal of Nursing Scholarship,* 23 (3), pp.161-166, DOI: 10.1111/j.1547-5069.1991.tb00662.x (Accessed: 11 August 2016).

Scott, C. (2000) "Accountability in the Regulatory State", *Journal of Law and Society,* 27 (1), pp.38-60, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1410728 (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Scott, D. (2000) *Reading Educational Research and Policy. Key Issues in Teaching and Learning,* London; New York : Routledge Falmer.

Scott, J. (1990) *A Matter of Record. Documentary sources in social research,* Cambridge: Polity Press in association with Basil Blackwell.

Scott, M. (1996) *Getting to grips with inflation; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1220, Pg.17, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Scott, P. (1984) *The Crisis of the University,* London: Croom Helm.

Scott, P. (1988) "Blueprint or Blue Remembered Hills? The Relevance of the Robbins Report to the present Reforms of Higher Education", *Oxford Review of Education,* 14 (1), pp.33-48, DOI: 10.1080/0305498880140104 (Accessed: 21 July 2013).

Scott, P. (1993) "The Idea of the University in the 21st Century: A British Perspective", *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 41 (1), pp. 4-25, DOI: 10.2307/3122430 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Scott, P. (1995) *The Meanings of Mass Higher Education,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

Scott, P. (1997a) "After Dearing", *Scottish Journal of Adult Continuing Education,* 4 (2), pp. 45-55.

Scott, P. (1997b) *Education: View from here,* The Independent, 24 September [Online]. Available at http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/education-view-from-here-peter-scott-1240994.html (Accessed: 1 September 2016).

Scott, P. (2009) "On the margins or moving into the mainstream? Higher education in further education in England", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 62 (4), pp. 402-418, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2009.00442.x (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Scott, P. (2014) "Robbins, the Binary Policy and Mass Higher Education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 68 (2), pp.147-163, DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12040 (Accessed: 25 August 2014).

Seely Brown, J. and Duguid, P. (1996) *Space for the chattering classes; Multimedia; Dearing Inquiry,* THESis: The Times Higher Education Supplement- Multimedia Features., 10 May 1996; pp. iv-vi, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Shattock, M. (1998) "Dearing on Governance - the Wrong Prescription", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 35-47, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00081 (Accessed: 3 August 2013).

Shattock, M. (2001) "Chapter 7 The Impact of the Dearing Report on UK Higher Education" in Aspin, D., Chapman, J., Hatton, M., and Sawano, Y., *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning,* Springer: Netherlands, pp. 561-568

Shattock, M. (2002) "Re-balancing Modern Concepts of University Governance", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 56 (3),pp.235-244, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00215 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Shattock, M. (2006) "Policy drivers in UK Higher Education in Historical Perspective: 'Inside out', 'Outside in' and the contribution of research", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 60 (2), pp.130-140, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00313.xV (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Shattock, M. (2008) "The Change from Private and Public Governance of British Higher Education: its consequences for Higher Education Policy Making 1980-2006", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 62 (3), pp. 181-203, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2008.00392.x (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Shattock, M. (2012) *Making Policy in British Higher Education 1945-2011,* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Shattock, M. (2013) "University Governance, Leadership and Management in a decade of Diversification and Uncertainty", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 67 (3), pp. 217-233, DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12017 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Shattock, M. (2015) *The Society for Research into Higher Education and the Changing World of British Higher Education: A Study of SRHE over its first 25 years,* London: Society for Research into Higher Education.

Shepherd, G (1996) *Rationale for Dearing,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 26 February 1996, THE archive [Online]. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/rationale-for-dearing/92562.article (Accessed: 1 October 2014).

Shephard, G. Blunkett, D. Foster, D. Welsh, A. Datis, C. (1997) *If we win on 1 May...' Discuss,* The Independent, 27 March [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Shinn, C. (1986) *Paying the piper: the development of the University Grants Committee 1919-46,* London : Falmer.

(1997) *Shirley not?,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 28 July 1997, THE archive [Online]. https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/shirley-not/103460.article (Accessed: 22 September 2014).

Shore, C and Wright, S. (2000) "Coercive accountability"*,* in Strathern, M. (ed.) *Audit Cultures Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy*, London; New York: Routledge.

Silver, H. (1990) *Education, Change and the Policy Process,* London: Falmer.

Silver, H. (2006) "'Things change but names remain the same': Higher Education Historiography 1975–2000", *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society,* 35 (1) pp 121-140, DOI: 10.1080/00467600500419950 (Accessed: 9 April 2013).

(2016) *Sir John Cassels,* Worldskills UK website [Online], https://www.worldskillsuk.org/news-and-events/our-news/worldskills-uk-news/sir-john-cassels (Accessed: 1 October 2016).

Sizer, J. and Howells, L. (2000) "The changing relationship between institutional governance and management in the United Kingdom: a Scottish Higher Education Funding Council perspective", *Tertiary Education and Management,* 6 (3), pp.159-176, DOI: 10.1080/13583883.2000.9967021 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Skidelsky, R. (1996) *Resign and let the market reign; Dear Ron; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1240, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Smith, D. et al (1999) *Chapter 15, Vice-Chancellors and Executive Leadership in UK Universities: New Roles and Relationships?,* in Henkel, M. and Little, B. (eds.) Changing Relationships Between Higher Education and the State, London: Jessica Kingsley.

Squires, G. (1996) *The professionals take the stage; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1220, Pg.17, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Starrs, C. (1999) *Blunkett on horns of a new education dilemma; Salary report lends weight to academic claims,* The Herald (Glasgow), 24 June [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Stensaker, B. and Norgard, J. (2001) "Innovation and Isomorphism: A Case-Study of University Identity Struggle 1969-1999", *Higher Education,* 42 (4), pp. 473-492, DOI: 10.1023/A:1012212026597 (Accessed: 27 April 2013).

Stephenson, J. and Challis, T. (1998) "Chapter 23, Postscript: The Dearing Report", in Stephenson, J. and Challis, T. (eds.) *Key Skills in Higher Education Conference Proceedings*, Unpublished Available via the Higher Education Academy (HEA) website at Available at http://www. heacademy.ac.uk/assets/documents/resources/heca/heca_ks23.pdf (Accessed: 29 January 2013)

Stevenson, D. (2012) "Costs of Codification", *University of Illinois Law Review, Forthcoming,* DOI: 10.2139/ssrn.2122741 (Accessed: 13 March 2016)

Stone, D. (2012) *Policy Paradox: The Art of Political Decision Making,* New York; London: W.W. Norton and Co.

Strathern, M. (ed.) (2000) *Audit Cultures Anthropological Studies in Accountability, Ethics and the Academy,* London; New York: Routledge.

(1997) *Still on a learning curve: Education policy leaves much to be desired,* The Herald (Glasgow), 19 November [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Stuart, M. (1996) *Skills make real world go round; Dearing Inquiry; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1220, Pg.16, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

(1997) *Students oppose Scots angle on tuition,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1299, Pg.10, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Svennson, G. and Wood, G. (2007) "Are university students really customers? When illusion may lead to delusion for all!", *International Journal of Educational Management,* 21 (1), pp. 17-28, DOI: 10.1108/09513540710716795 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Swain, H. (1997a) *The over-60s flock to learn,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1285, Pg.5, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Swain, H. (1997b) *V-Cs promise deal on standards (Access, etc,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1299, Pg.10, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Swain, H. (1998) *A generation clocks on; Work Wise; Getting ready for work,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, 20 March 1998, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Sword, H. (2012) *Stylish Academic Writing,* Cambridge, Massachusetts and London, England: Harvard University Press.

Tambling, J. (1991) *Narrative and Ideology,* Milton Keynes; Philadelphia: Open University Press.

Tapper, T. and Salter, B. (1997) "Who will speak for the universities? The Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals in the age of mass higher education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 51 (2), pp. 113-133, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00030 (Accessed: 23 September 2013).

Tapper, T. and Salter, B. (1998) "The Dearing Report and the Maintenance of Academic Standards: Towards a New Academic Corporatism", *Higher Education*

Quarterly, 52 (1), pp. 22-34, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00080 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Targett, S. (1996) *Bosses to call the shots,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1250, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Tasker, M. and Packham, D. (1994) "Changing Cultures? Government Intervention in Higher Education 1987-93", *British Journal of Educational Studies,* 42 (2), pp. 150-162, DOI: 10.2307/3122334 (Accessed: 5 May 2013).

Tate, N. (1997) *Cardinal rule for Dearing to consider; Personal View; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1273, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Taylor, J. (2003) "Institutional Diversity in UK Higher Education: Policy and Outcomes since the end of the Binary Divide", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 57 (3), pp. 266-293, DOI: 10.1111/j.0951-5224.2003.00247.x (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Taylor, P. (1998) "Institutional change in uncertain times: Lone ranging is not enough", *Studies in Higher Education,* 23 (3), pp. 269-279, DOI: 10.1080/03075079812331380246 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Teichler, U. (1996) "The changing nature of higher education in Western Europe", *Higher Education Policy,* 9 (2), pp.89-111, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(96)00002-5 (Accessed: 7 May 2016).

Temple, P. (2006) "Intervention in a Higher Education Market: a Case Study", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 60 (3), pp.257-269, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00320.x (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Thomson, A. (1997) *Kennedy 'nobbled', FE claims,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1289, Pg.2, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Thomson, A. (2003) *Blair Passes Milestone On Rocky Road,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1600; Pg.8, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Tight, M. (1990) *Higher Education: a part-time perspective,* Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Tight, M. (ed.) (2004) *The RoutledgeFalmer Reader in Higher Education,* RoutledgeFalmer: London and New York.

Tight, M. (2006) "Changing Understandings of 'Public' and 'Private' in Higher Education: the United Kingdom Case", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 60 (3), pp. 242-256, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2006.00321.x (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Tight, M. (2009) *The Development of Higher Education in the United Kingdom since 1945,* Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Tight, M. (2012) *Researching Higher Education,* 2nd edition, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Tight, M. and Bell, R. (1993) *Open Universities: A British Tradition?,* Buckingham: Open University Press.

(1996) *Too tired to turn new ideas to profit; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1254, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/, (Accessed: 6 February 2017).

(1867) *Topics of the Day,* The Spectator, 5 October [Online]. Available at http://archive.spectator.co.uk/article/5th-october-1867/4/topics-of-the-day (Accessed: 10 May 2015).

Tosh, J. (2015) *The Pursuit of History Aims Methods and New Directions,* 6th edition, London; New York: Routledge.

Toyne, P. (1998) "Dearing's impact on students", *Journal of Geography in Higher Education,* 22 (1), pp. 67-72, DOI: 10.1080/03098269886047 (Accessed: 5 July 2015).

Trow, M. (1994) "Managerialism and the Academic Profession: The Case of England", *Higher Education Policy,* 7 (2), pp.11-18 Available at http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4m6590m6 (Accessed: 17 April 2016).

Trow, M. (1996) "Trust, markets and accountability in higher education: a comparative perspective", *Higher Education Policy,* 9 (4), pp.309-324, https://escholarship.org/uc/item/6q21h265 (Accessed: 2 June 2013).

Trow, M. (1998) "The Dearing Report: A Transatlantic View", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 93-117, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00085 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Trowler, P. (1997) "Beyond the Robbins trap: Reconceptualising academic responses to change in higher education (or … quiet flows the don?)", *Studies in Higher Education,* 22 (3), pp.301-318, DOI: 10.1080/03075079712331380916 (Accessed: 23 July 2015).

Tysome, T. (1996) *Degree system for scrapheap,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1236, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Tysome, T. (1997a) *Oversupply of graduates disputed,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1267, Pg.3, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Tysome, T. (1997b) *Foster faces tactical legacy; Election; General,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1277, Pg.5, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Tysome, T. (1997c) *Dearing backs tax breaks for students,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1281, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Tysome, T. (1997d) *Hands off our dual support; THES Dearing Exclusives,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1288, Pg.1, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Universities Association for Continuing Education (1997) *Reading the Dearing Report,* UACE Occasional Paper Number 22, UACE: Leeds

Universities UK (2015) *About Us* [Online]. Available at http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/aboutus/OurOrganisation/Pages/History.aspx (Accessed: 26 April 2015).

(1999) *University fees: Horse trading not the answer,* The Herald (Glasgow), 11 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Utley, A. (1998) *To lecture,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1320, Pg.56, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Van Vught, F. (2008) "Mission Diversity and Reputation in Higher Education", *Higher Education Policy,* 21, pp. 151–174, DOI: 10.1057/hep.2008.5 (Accessed: 21 August 2013).

Vernon, K. (2001) "Calling the tune: British universities and the state, 1880-1914", *History of Education: Journal of the History of Education Society,* 30 (3), pp.251-271, DOI: 10.1080/00467600010029294 (Accessed: 24 September 2013).

Wagner, L. (1998) "Dearing is Dead – Blunkett is Born? The Future Funding of Higher Education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp. 64-76, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00083 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Wagner, L. (2001) *Vacillating V-s,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1479; Pg.17, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Waine, J.L. (1993) *Crown Office statement,* The Edinburgh Gazette, 15 October [Online]. https://www.thegazette.co.uk/Edinburgh/issue/23461/page/3189 (Accessed: 29 September 2016).

Wallace, J.N. (2008) *A decade after the Dearing Report, is e-learning delivering the widening participation agenda? A case study investigating the experiences of e-learning innovators within a widening participation university,* Unpublished EdD Thesis. University of Nottingham.

Watson, D. (2000) "Managing in Higher Education: The 'Wicked Issues'", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 54 (1), pp.5-21, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00142 (Accessed: 16 February 2013)

Watson, D. (2002) "Can We All Do It All? Tensions in the Mission and Structure of UK Higher Education", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 56 (2), pp.143-155, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00208 (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Watson, D. (2007a) *Whatever happened to the Dearing Report? UK higher education 1997-2007,* Institute of Education, University of London.

Watson, D. (2007b) "Does Higher Education Need a Hippocratic Oath?", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 61 (3), pp.362-374, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.2007.00359.x (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Watson, D. (2014) "Robbins and his children: the Theory and Practice of Higher Education Inquiries, 1963-2013", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 68 (2), pp. 125-146, DOI: 10.1111/hequ.12045 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Watson, D. and Amoah, M. (eds.) (2007) *The Dearing Report Ten years on,* Bedford Way Papers, Institute of Education, University of London.

Watson, D. and Bowden, R. (1999) "Why did they do it?: The Conservatives and mass higher education, 1979–97", *Journal of Education Policy,* 14 (3), pp. 243-256, DOI: 10.1080/026809399286323 (Accessed: 16 February 2013).

Watson, D. and Bowden, R. (2000) *After Dearing: a mid-term report,* Education Research Centre, University of Brighton.

Watson, D. and Taylor, R. (1998) *Lifelong Learning and the University. A Post-Dearing Agenda,* London: Falmer.

Webb, E. Campbell, D. Schwartz, R. Sechrest, L. Grove, J. (1981) *Non-reactive measures in the Social Sciences,* 2nd edition, Boston: Houghton Miffling.

Webb, J.M.M. (2003) *Dearing and Derrida, a strange double guard: on Higher Education in the learning society,* Unpublished PhD Thesis. University of Bristol. Available at EThOS: http://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do?uin=uk.bl.ethos.404297 (Accessed: 17 February 2013)

Wells, M. (1997) *Two Ronnies prepare for overhaul of the system,* The Scotsman, 18 May [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Wheare, K. (1955) *Government by Committee: an Essay on the British Constitution,* Oxford: Clarendon.

Whitty, G. (2002) *Making Sense of Education Policy,* London: Paul Chapman.

Willetts, D. (2013) *Robbins Revisited Bigger and Better Higher Education,* London: The Social Market Foundation

Williams, G. (1996) *All are equal in the face of loans,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1232, Pg.11, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Williams, G. (1997) "The market route to mass higher education: British experience 1979-1996", *Higher Education Policy,* 10 (3/4), pp.275-289, DOI: 10.1016/S0952-8733(97)00018-4 (Accessed: 18 July 2013).

Williams, G. (1998) "Editorial", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 52 (1), pp.1-6, DOI: 10.1111/1468-2273.00078 (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Willmott, H. (1995) "Managing the academics: Commodification and Control in the Development of University Education in the UK", *Human Relations,* 48 (9), pp. 993-1027, DOI: 10.1177/001872679504800902 (Accessed: 19 November 2012).

Wilson, J.Q. and Rachal, P. (1977) "Can the Government Regulate Itself?", *The Public Interest,* Winter pp.3-14, http://search.proquest.com/docview/1298105804?accountid=13828 (Accessed: 24 April 2016).

Wilson, W. (1997) *Student grants, loans and tuition fees, Research Paper No 97/119,* London: UK Parliament House of Commons Library, 13 November 1997 [Online]. Available at http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/RP97-119.pdf (Accessed: 23 June 2015).

Withers, K. (ed.) (2009) *First Class? Challenges and opportunities for the UK's university sector,* London: IPPR.

Wojtas, O. (1997a) *A strategy void adds to troubles,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1279, Pg.8, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Wojtas, O. (1997b) *Snapshot out of focus,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1299, Pg.10, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Wojtas, O. (1997c) *Scots set for battle over fees,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1304, Pg.48, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Wood, T. (1996) *Level heads and playing fields; Dear Ron; Opinion,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1241, Pg.13, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Worsely, K. (1996) *Privates on parade,* The Times Higher Educational Supplement, Issue 1228, Pg.5, Nexis database [Online]. Available at http://www.nexis.com.eresources.shef.ac.uk/ (Accessed: 19 July 2015).

Wright, P. (1996) "Editorial", *Higher Education Quarterly,* 50 (4), pp. 235, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2273.1996.tb01704.x (Accessed: 15 July 2015).

Yeung, K. (2010) "The Regulatory State"*,* in Baldwin, R. Cave, M. and Lodge, M. (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Regulation* [Online]. Available at DOI: 10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199560219.003.0004 (Accessed: 2 March 2014)