

# No fees 'making little difference'

## EDUCATION

There is little evidence that the SNP's abolition of tuition fees has encouraged poorer people to go to university or that the UK Government's £9,000-a-year fee increase has deterred them, according to researchers.

The Scottish Government's abolition of tuition

fees "has not been redistributive in its effect", researchers at Edinburgh University have found.

England has seen "a slight increase in the proportion of applications from students from poorer backgrounds" since the £9,000 a year tuition fees were introduced, the researchers found in a submission to the Economic and Social Research Coun-

cil's Future of the UK and Scotland independence referendum research project.

The Scottish Government says it offers "the best and simplest support package in the UK" but funding packages for poorer students "are considerably more generous elsewhere in the UK", the researchers said.

The centre's Widening Access to Higher Education

report states: "The increase in fees in England in 2010 increased the perception that university might be 'too expensive', and young people from less advantaged backgrounds were more likely to be put off from applying as a result.

"However, data suggests that there has been a slight increase in applications from students from poorer backgrounds."

