

Prediction is futile

**But forecasting is fun, and
responding quickly matters**

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Representing students

- Representing students/winning for students/achieving change/promoting, defending & rights of students
- All involve strengths and weaknesses approach (manifesto, lobbying/campaigning/outcome – “hunting”)
- All can involve opportunities and threats approach (events, reviews, initiatives, bandwagons – “fishing”)
- Forecasting v Planning



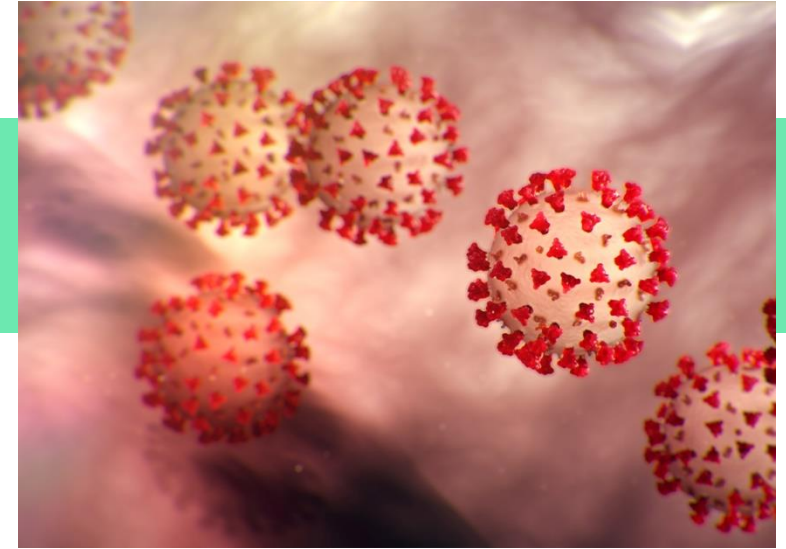
Change

- Change is in the air
- For the first time ever in this situation (some of) our parents (institutions) aren't ready.
- Students, Students' Unions and Education are all going through rapid change.
- We ought to be interested in change (but not for its own sake).



And now the problem is

- Nobody has done this before
- Higher education is highly “mimetic” and generally conservative
- Covid (and recovery from it) requires all sorts of skills and smarts that have not previously been necessary or even desirable
- Previous focus on incremental performance rather than innovation
- And everyone’s knackered



Change

- Private optimism, about our lives, families
- Public pessimism about the state of the world
- The two come together in organisations
- Organisations provide people with a sense of private identity
- But critical to how we cope with the world together

Responding to change

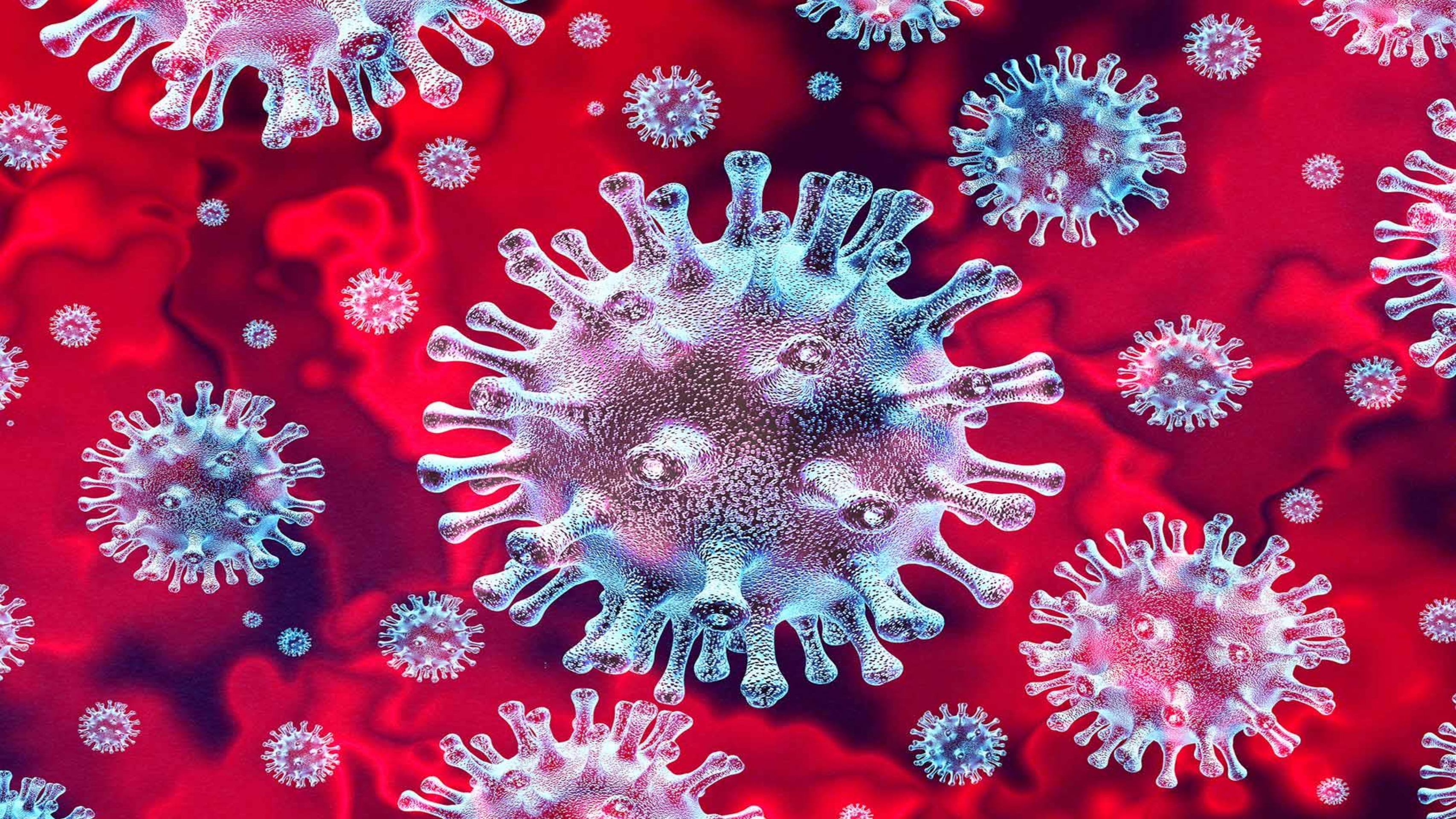
	Confrontation	Retreat
Radical	Anti Globalisation Students, ethnic minorities Left populism	New age Downshifting
Reactionary	Rural protests Right national populism: Europe	Melancholy Nostalgia

Responding to change

	Confrontation	Retreat
Radical	Adapt entrepreneurially Create new business models Very risky	As long as what I do doesn't change I don't mind what is going on around me
Reactionary	Get back to basics but with a vengeance, cut costs, streamline Very tough	Do you remember the old days when things were so much better?

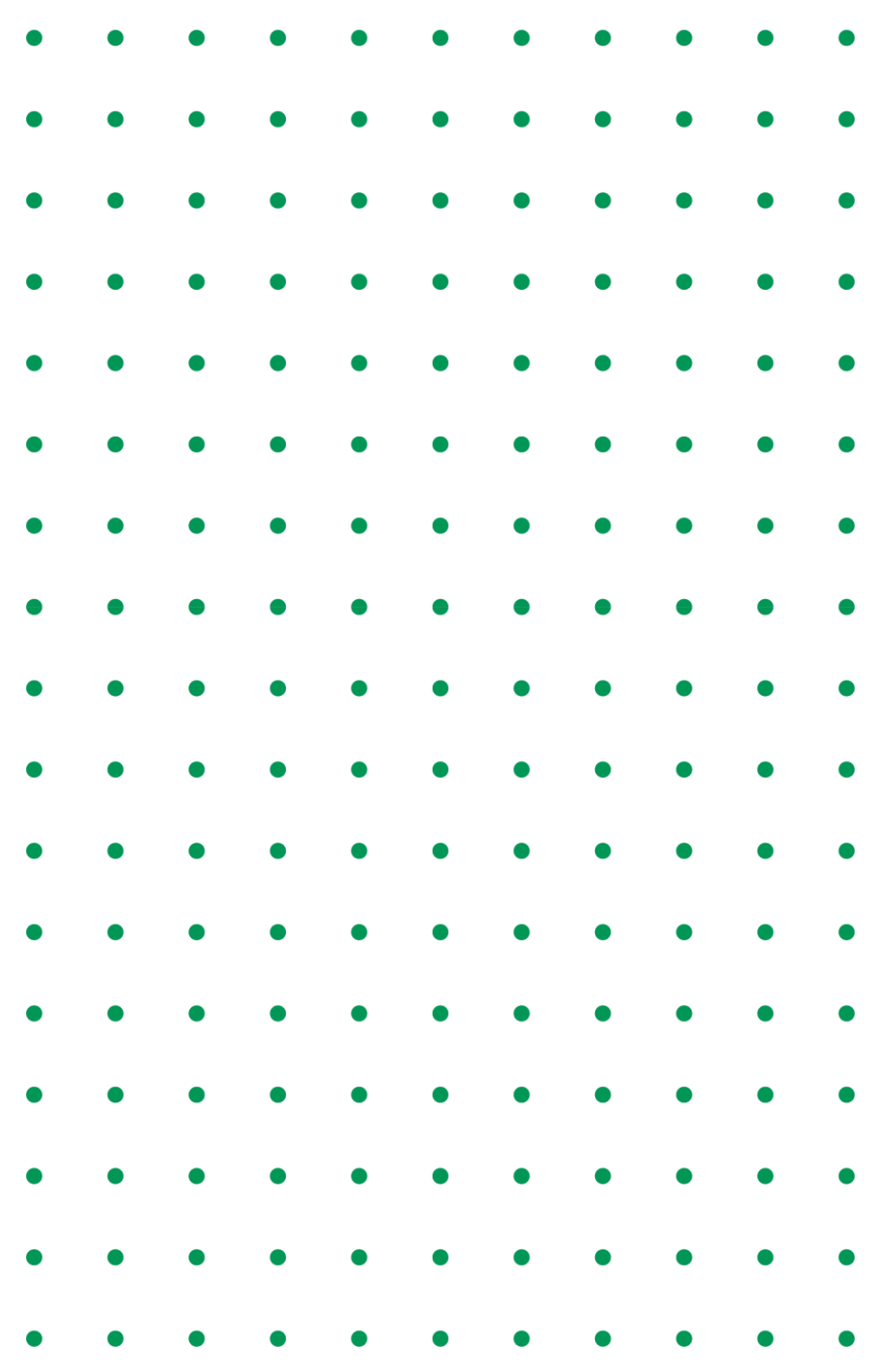
Organisations of change

- Adaptive, nimble, agile organisations able to learn fast about environment around them, sense opportunities and mobilise resources to exploit them
- But organisations that just do that would be in perpetual turmoil, constantly reinventing themselves
- So as well as being adaptive, nimble and agile organisations need to have a sense of stability, continuity and purpose
- But a sense of stability that does not inhibit ability to adapt
- What does that optimum mix of stability and flux come from?
- **It comes from challenging conventional wisdom**



Students

- Underpinning assumptions (Harry Potter and Nurses)
- Government capacity in HE part of DfE
- Responsibility dumping on universities
- Departmental dumping on DfE (DHSC? DWP?)
- Only deal with issue once a crisis, only advise once solved, only fund once money runs out
- Students not flagged as vulnerable
- Higher education already very expensive

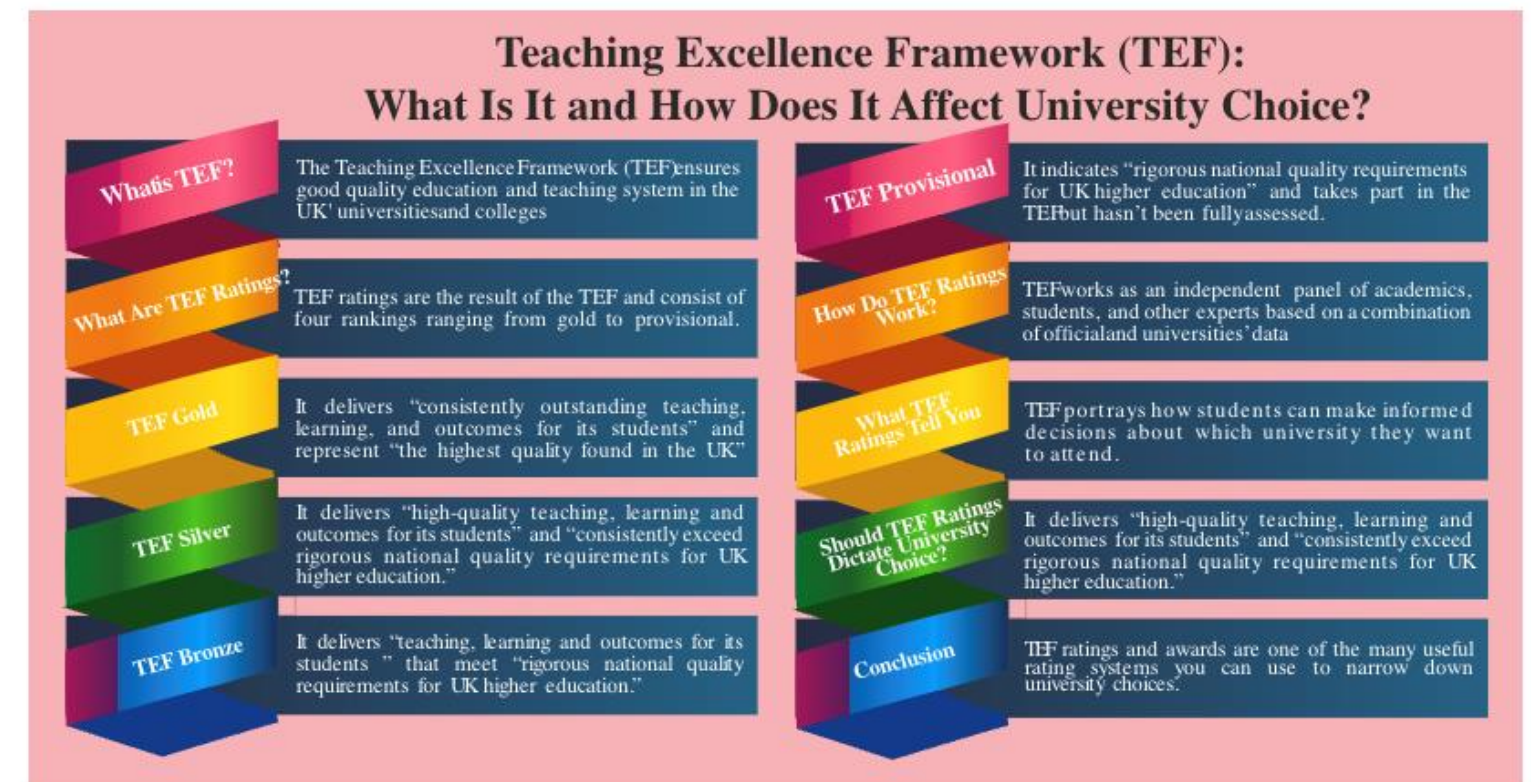


1. The TEF will happen

- Gold, silver, bronze
- Student written submission
- Pressure on SUs – pressure back?
- Embedding voice and leveraging

Are you ready to maximise opportunity for SU and for students?

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2. Money will get very tight

- Unit of resource frozen, plus inflation
- Prospect of SNCs for “low value subjects” and “low value students”
- Failure to match demand to supply over 3 years, and moves around the market
- Redundancy schemes
- Course closures
- Trigger’s broom and student protection

Are you across the university’s finances?

Are you confident that students will be protected?



3. Money will get very tight

- Bursaries and scholarships
- International students
- Home students – threshold and value
- The student experience buffer

Are you confident in the university's arrangements?

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4. There will be major housing reform

- Standards, pets and some other bits
- 6 or 12 month fixed term tenancies banned
- Cancel on 2 months notice
- Right to stay
- Signing early will be pointless
- International students might find difficulties
- Landlords may discriminate against students



5. Big issues around Disability and M/H

- Abrahart case – appeal or not?
- Process of “becoming” Disabled
- Assessment adjustments
- Challenges to the SU model

Do you know what the university is doing?

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6. Free speech bill

As a reminder...

- Toughening of existing duty – becomes something to promote and more than external speakers and room bookings
- New DoAFaFoS on the OfS appointed by SoS
- Will operate an ombuds scheme (relationship with OIAHE)
- Freedom of speech within the law BUT reasonably practicable wording and balancing with other duties
- Students' unions directly regulated UNLESS an SU of an Oxbridge College
- New legal tort if a person is impacted by a failure re the duty



6. Free speech bill

- Copy and paste emphatically rejected in the Senedd yesterday Report stage
- Foreign funding (free speech or security?)
- Security costs (will this work?)
- Academic freedom definition addressed (expertise...)
- NDA ban defeated (MD very strong on OfS regulation and what it will achieve)
- Harassment and a free speech defence amendment defeated (existing balance left intact, OfS will issue guidance)
- Labour amendments on political neutrality of the DoAFaFoS and a sunset clause both obviously defeated



6. Free speech bill

To the Lords!

- To what extent will definitional/interpretation issues be left to OfS?
- Interaction with other legislation (inc online harms bill and human rights proposals)
- Problems with direct SU regulation when SUs already regulated by university and charity commission
- Which SUs regulated and how?
- Interaction with the OIA
- OfS implementation – Quality and standards?!
- Bill of rights – Raab – free speech and public authority overreach



7. Harassment and sexual misconduct

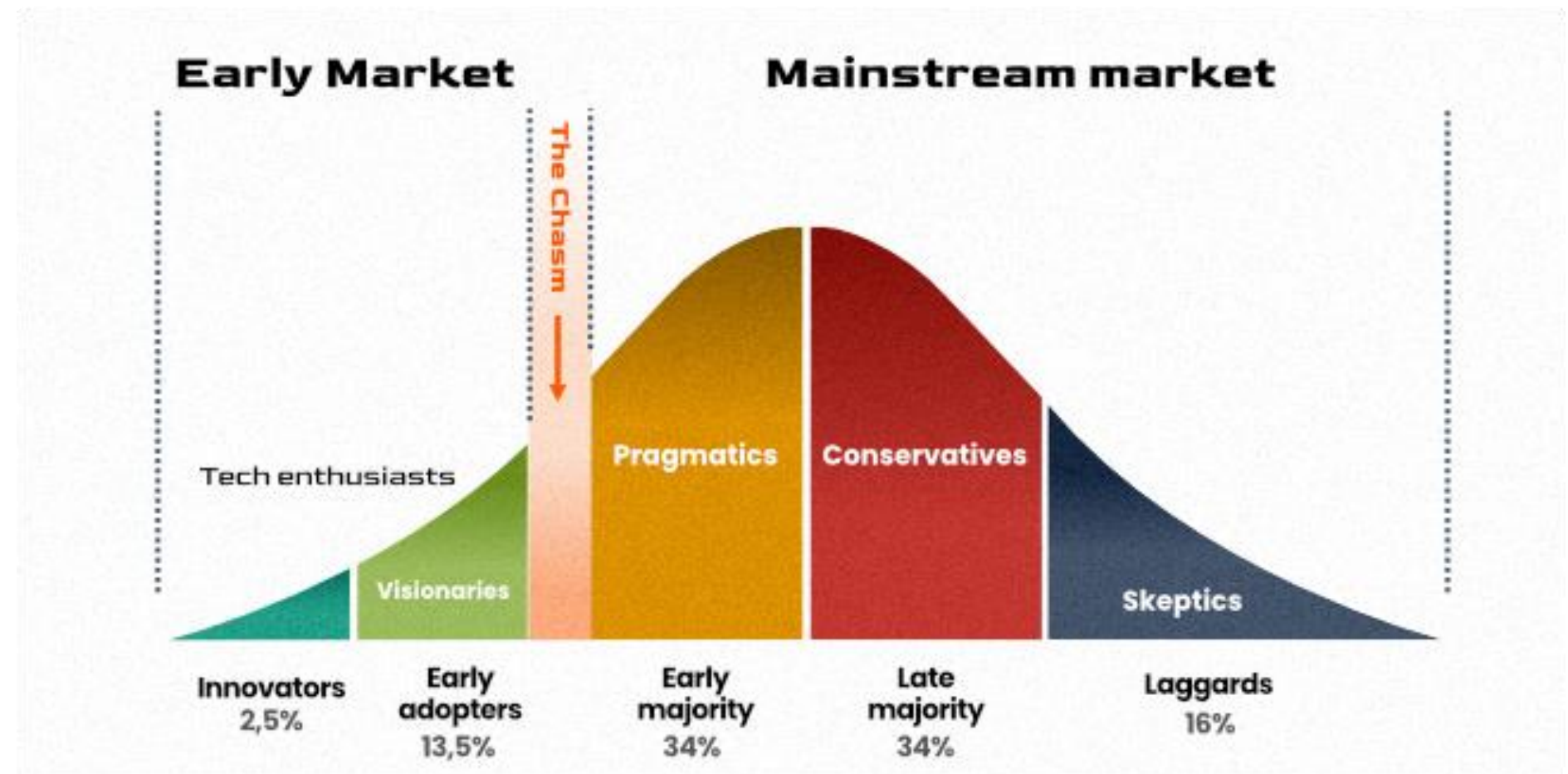
- New OfS statement
- High hopes from Michelle Donelan on NDAs
- Will it make a difference?
- Bartlett School of Architecture
- Acting in and acting out tensions...
- **Is the union ready when the SoE kicks in?**
- **NDA approach?**

8. Quality arrangements

- B Conditions
- B3 Bear and outcomes
- Other B Conditions
- Investigations...
- Changes to quality policies and arrangements
 - course reps etc
- **Are you ready to take advantage of (see off threats from) the changes?**

9. Decol will hit the buffers

- Ministerial opposition
- Change in “faces” and harassment handling?
- What about the laggards?



10. A new deal for PGRs

- Space
- Funding
- Supervision
- Staff?
- SU effectiveness at voicing or working on these?

Plus...

- Ongoing blended tensions
- A crisis in assessment
 - Essays and AI
 - Exams and proctoring
 - Authentic assessment – scale and discrimination
 - Academic integrity
- Labour and fees
- Universities will “fill up” again (what does full mean)
- Grade inflation panic will continue



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