# Tory Plans to Shut Down 'Rip-Off' Degrees Draw Criticism for Funding Apprenticeships



**Tory Plans to Shut Down “Rip-Off” Degrees to Fund Apprenticeships Draws Criticism**

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has pledged to create 100,000 additional apprenticeships annually by cutting some underperforming university degrees. This initiative, aimed at curtailing so-called "rip-off" degrees, comes as part of the Conservative Party’s bid to stay in power after the upcoming General Election.

Sunak stated that the focus will be on university courses with poor progression, high drop-out rates, and low future earnings potential. However, this move has been met with criticism from higher education leaders who believe that it could undermine the sector. Vivienne Stern, Chief Executive of Universities UK (UUK), expressed her frustration on social media, arguing that universities are integral to the UK’s pride and should not be devalued.

Rachel Hewitt, Chief Executive of the MillionPlus group of universities, pointed out that modern universities already offer valuable degree apprenticeships combining industry experience with academic study.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) raised concerns about the feasibility of funding the apprenticeships through this plan, estimating the cost at about £900 million annually. Jo Grady, General Secretary of the University and College Union (UCU), emphasized the importance of higher education in providing opportunities for working-class communities and criticized the Conservative Party for allegedly politicizing the education sector.

Despite repeated inquiries about specific underperforming degrees, Sunak did not provide examples.