



British Philosophical Association

British Philosophical Association

admin@bpa.ac.uk
www.bpa.ac.uk

15 April 2009

The Right Honourable Ed Balls MP
Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London SW1P 3BT

Dear Mr Balls,

The British Philosophical Association (BPA) is the subject association for Philosophy as an academic discipline within Britain. The BPA's purpose is to promote the study of Philosophy (particularly within higher and secondary education but also in the wider community), to assist professional philosophers in carrying out their teaching, scholarship and research in Philosophy, and to express the views of the community of professional philosophers in Britain to relevant bodies, both within higher education and beyond. In this last capacity, I need to raise an issue with you.

The number of students taking A-level philosophy in the UK more than doubled between 2002 and 2007, to over 3500. In addition, philosophy is a very popular subject at university. This is not surprising, given philosophy's commitment to confronting the deepest questions about reality and knowledge and its role in addressing the most urgent moral issues.

In the 1980's, the Thatcher government chose to abolish the PGCE in Philosophy. That was a mistake. Especially now when the number of students taking A-level philosophy in the UK is increasing sharply, there are very good reasons for reversing that decision of the Thatcher government's by reintroducing the PGCE in Philosophy. Please consider doing this.

If you would be willing for some of us from the British Philosophical Association to come discuss the matter with you, we would be very glad to do so.

Sincerely,

President:
Prof. Brad Hooker
Department of Philosophy
University of Reading
Reading
RG6 6AA
b.w.hooker@reading.ac.uk

Director:
Prof. Helen Beebee
Department of Philosophy
University of Birmingham
Birmingham
B15 2TT
h.beebee@bham.ac.uk

Membership queries:
James Holden
Dept. of Philosophy
University of Birmingham
Birmingham
B15 2TT
admin@bpa.ac.uk