
  
**NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

25–27 April 2017 | Brighton

## Policy Lapse

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## Key Information

### Purpose of this document

Policy passed at National Conference remains live for three years. Policy passed at National Conference 2014 is due to lapse this year unless it is resubmitted by a Union. If you wish to resubmit a piece of policy below this should be included in your 1400 word submission to National Conference.

### Contents

Key Information.....	2
Purpose of this document.....	2
Contents .....	2
Priority Zone Policy Passed at National Conference 2014 .....	4
NC_P_14101: A New Deal for the Next Generation .....	4
Further Education Policy Passed At National Conference 2014 .....	8
NC_FE_14201: Qualifications and Progression .....	8
NC_FE_14202: Challenge of the Learner Voice .....	8
Higher Education Policy Passed At National Conference 2014 .....	10
NC_HE_14201: Higher Education Qualifications .....	10
NC_HE_14202: Building Democratic Institutions .....	11
NC_HE_14203: If You Don't Like the Way the Table Is Set, Turn It Over.....	13
NC_HE_14204: A Clearer and More Transparent Employment Indicator from the DLHE.....	14
NC_HE_14205: Fitness for Practice, Not Fit For Purpose.....	14
NC_HE_14206: Their Jobs, Our Education: Supporting Staff For Fair Pay .....	15
NC_HE_14207: A New Deal for Education Funding .....	16
NC_HE_14208: Protecting Internationalisation in Our Education System, Fighting Visa Changes .....	19
NC_HE_14209: Postgraduate Funding .....	19
Society and Citizenship Policy Passed At National Conference 2014.....	22
NC_SC_14501 - Employ-My-Ability .....	22
NC_SC_14502 Local and Vocal: Students and the Ballot Box .....	23
NC_SC_14503 - Barclays Bank – The Tax Dodging and the Exploitation .....	24
NC_SC_14504 - Legal Aid .....	25
NC_SC_14505 - Get Out The Vote; Stop The Far Right .....	26
NC_SC_14506 - Public Ownership of the Banks.....	27
NC_SC_14507 - Fossil Free .....	27
NC_SC_14508 - Equality for Students .....	28
NC_SC_14509 - Opposing the Immigration Bill.....	28
NC_SC_14510 - Defend Our Right to Resist.....	29
NC_SC_14511 - Saving Polar Bears, One Plastic Bottle at A time .....	29
Union Development Policy passed at National Conference 2014.....	31
NC_UD_14401: Empowering Active Students .....	31
NC_UD_14402: Connecting Networks Of Student Communities.....	32
NC_UD_14403: Regional Partnerships .....	33
NC_UD_14404: Democratic Students' Unions .....	35
NC_UD_14405: From 1994 to 2034: The Next Generation of the Student Movement.....	35
NC_UD_14406: For A Living Wage in Our Institutions.....	36
NC_UD_14407: SU Autonomy And Building Pan-London Representation .....	36
NC_UD_14408: The Next Opportunity... ..	37
Welfare Policy Passed At National Conference 2014 .....	39
NC_W_14301: Homes Fit For Study .....	39
NC_W_14302: Local Public Services .....	42
NC_W_14303: Stand Up To Racism.....	44
NC_W_14304: Childcare For All And Not Just For One .....	45
NC_W_14305: Care Leavers In Education .....	46
NC_W_14306: Mental Health – Away From Awareness, Towards Action .....	46
NC_W_14307: Condemn "Student Rights" And Support Islamophobia Awareness .....	47
NC_W_14308: A New EMA .....	49
NC_W_14309: International Students.....	50
NC_W_14310: Access without Support Is Not Opportunity .....	50



NC\_W\_14311: Students and HIV/AIDS ..... 51




# Priority Zone Policy Passed at National Conference 2014


## NC\_P\_14101: A New Deal for the Next Generation


### Conference believes:

1. Continued attacks on the prospects of students both in education and in their communities represent a whole generation let down by those with power
2. A feeling of powerlessness and precariousness is increasingly common among the rising generation, squeezed by global recession and biting financial pressures, uncertain about its prospects and its future
3. We too often feel let down by politicians who fail to speak on our behalf in a world where the odds are already stacked against us
4. Young people and students' prospects continue to worsen due to rising unemployment and living costs
5. Evidence from Ipsos Mori public opinion polling shows more than two thirds of people believe the UK government does not adequately consider future generations in the decisions it makes today
6. The next UK general election is due to take place on Thursday 7 May 2015
7. The Browne Review into Higher Education funding was commissioned in 2009 and was not due to report until after the 2010 General Election
8. It was widely expected that the review would propose a rise in the cap of tuition fees in England
9. As a result NUS ran a high profile campaign with the aim of persuading any candidate running to be an MP in the UK to pledge to vote against any proposed rise in university tuition fees
10. Every Liberal Democrat MP that was elected signed the pledge with over 200 Labour Candidates and 13 Conservative candidates
11. Nick Clegg's main promise to voters in 2010 was that there 'would be no more broken promises' if voters backed the Liberal Democrats
12. After the election, the Lib Dems formed a coalition government with the Conservatives
13. On 9th December 2010 the government raised the tuition fee cap to £9k by only 21 votes
14. Every single Liberal Democrat MP that was elected to Parliament signed the pledge to vote against any rise in fees and 27 of those MPs broke their pledge, including Nick Clegg
15. We should be alarmed by the electoral rise of a "respectable" nationalist right, including UKIP.
16. Building the movement to stop the government selling off the student loan book to private companies is an urgent priority.
17. George Osborne confirmed during the Autumn Statement in 2013 that the government is going ahead with the plans to sell off student loans taken out between 1998-2012.
18. There is widespread concern that handing over our student debt to private companies will lead to an increase in the financial burdens placed on students and graduates, as the new owners of the debts hike up interest rates in order to make more profits. These concerns are well placed given the fact that:
19. A secret report for the government has revealed, in order to ensure the student loan book is profitable for private companies the cap on interest for repayments would need to be increased or removed all together. This proposal would cause student debt to soar and represents a retrospective hike in tuition fees.
20. The Minister for Universities, David Willetts, made clear to a parliamentary select committee last June that it is very easy for the rate of interest to be hiked up: "In the letter that every student gets there are some words to the effect that government reserve the right to change the terms of the loans."
21. Therefore, David Willetts' reassurances that the terms and conditions on student loans will not be changed following the privatization of the student loan book ring hollow. In the run up to the 2015 General Election we have a window of opportunity to put maximum pressure on MPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates to publicly oppose the sell off of student debt.
22. Education is a human right, and should not be in the hands of private financial companies.


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23. A similar loanbook sell-off in New Zealand in 2012, saw interest rates on repayment for existing borrowers raised from 10% to 12%.
  24. That the sell-off of student loans has the potential to adversely affect students' financial situations through higher debts.
  25. Toni Pearce, NUS President, has previously said the sell-off was 'extremely concerning' as it would see 'the public subsidising a private company making a profit from public debt'.
  26. In January, the NUS National Executive Council resolved, 'To support and promote the national week of action to stop the privatisation of student debt'.
  27. The NUS National Executive were right to support grassroots action against the sell-off, but more political pressure is needed to prevent the sell-off.
  28. NUS should campaign against this policy and build a movement against it until the government ceases the selling-off of student loans.
  29. NUS research has shown that when asked what their greatest fear about the future is, more than half of students cite pathways to work or employment
  30. Many students are also workers, and NUS' Pound in Your Pocket research showed more than two thirds are employed during term time or holidays
  31. Our work on employment must focus on ensuring good sustainable jobs for the next generation and pathways to work which are non-exploitative and fairly paid
  32. A New Deal for Work is an essential component of a New Deal for the Next Generation
  33. In December youth unemployment was 920,000, 20% of 16-24 year olds.
  34. Young people are at the sharp end of mass unemployment created by the capitalist crisis and a management offensive against workers in public and private sectors (2.5 million unemployed).
  35. Many new jobs will be "precarious": low-paid, casualised and with few rights.
  36. The campaigning partnership NUS has signed with the TUC affirms our movements' shared belief guaranteed employment and quality jobs; and where workers enjoy strong collective and individual rights at work
  37. The NUS-TUC partnerships sets out a path to greater collaboration between the student and trade union movements, developing activists and campaigning together rather than apart.


#### **Conference further believes:**

1. At the 2010 general election, just 44 per cent of those aged 18 to 24 voted, compared 76 per cent of the over 65s
  2. The introduction of individual voter registration (IER) threatens to further reduce the number of students and young people voting
  3. The gulf in voting levels between the generations leaves young people losing out in policy terms
  4. That NUS' approach to the general election needs to be both local and national, supporting students to win locally and on a national level.
  5. To achieve a new deal for the next generation we will need public support, and this is best achieved through working together with people in the communities we live in and finding common cause.
  6. That NUS analysis of the 2011 census data demonstrates that there are over 60 constituencies in the UK with over 10 per cent full time students, and that the strength of the student voice and the student vote should be reaffirmed at every opportunity.
  7. Young people are significantly less likely vote in either local or national elections than older voters meaning they are inadequately considered in party political dialogue.
  8. Changes made to electoral voter registration have complicated the process and effectively disenfranchise some groups more than others, such as international students.
  9. Much higher voter turnout of students in elections would be a significant demonstration of power.
  10. Liberal Democrat MPs were mainly elected off the back of that pledge and had huge support from students in constituencies with a high proportion of students where they cued for hours to be able to vote in 2010
  11. That Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats not only betrayed students that voted for them on the basis of that pledge but they also called into question the fundamental basis of our democracy by seemingly lying their way into power
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12. The Liberal Democrats had a chance to make tuition fees a deal breaker in the coalition agreement but chose to sell out students to get into number 10
  13. Since 2010 we have seen education in England be dismantled and ideological policies that prop up elitism and force a market pushed through parliament
  14. Nick Clegg's 'I'm Sorry' video will come as little comfort to those students who voted for the Liberal Democrats under the guise of a different type of politics
  15. Since coming to power the Liberal Democrats have backed plans to introduce individual voter registration, which would in effect remove 1000s of students of the electoral register
  16. NUS has a responsibility to restore student's faith in politics or else face alienating an entire generation from voting and we have to hold any MP that broke their pledge accountable
  17. We must fight the idea there is a problem with immigration. Strain on jobs and services is a result of the government and private sector cuts, seeking to boost profits and the rich's wealth at the expense of all workers.
  18. Withdrawal from the EU would not solve these problems but simply create a more independent neo-liberal UK in which nationalism runs riot.
  19. The general election provides an opportunity for an effective campaign on these issues.
  20. We should oppose all cuts to jobs and fight for expanded public services to create socially useful, secure, well-paid jobs.
  21. There is plenty of wealth in society: we should tax the rich to create jobs.
  22. We should oppose casualisation and job insecurity, including zero hours contracts (which should be banned) and unpaid internships.

#### **Conference resolves:**

1. To campaign for a new deal for the next generation across the themes of education, work and community
  2. To use the opportunity of the next General Election to win for students both locally and nationally
  3. To continue and develop the new campaigning partnership between NUS and the Trades Union Congress (TUC) to work together for a better deal for students and workers through a strong collective voice
  4. To work with external allies and partners to maximise voter registration and electoral participation among young people and students to ensure their voices are heard
  5. To launch a general election hub in 2014, and support every students' union to develop their own election strategy - supporting students to win both locally and nationally.
  6. To empower students and to connect student communities with wider society, including through continuing our community organising work and training students as community organisers on their campuses and in their communities.
  7. To campaign nationally for political parties to adopt NUS demands, taken from policies passed or ratified by National Conference, and chosen by NUS NEC.
  8. To focus on cross-generational community work and voter registration strategies.
  9. NUS to strongly focus on student voter registration in relation to the 2015 general election.
  10. NUS to provide a consistent model or framework on student voter registration, including influencing local authorities to simplify the process of voter registration.
  11. NUS should influence Citizenship in the national curriculum and provide guidance to colleges and universities on how to include citizenship education in their programmes.
  12. To explore the case for automatic voter registration.
  13. To stand up for those students betrayed by Nick Clegg and the Liberal Democrats
  14. To campaign against Nick Clegg and any MP that broke their pledge to students by publicly highlighting their broken promise
  15. Make opposition to UKIP and the nationalist right a central part of our campaigning in the run up to the general election.
  16. Call on the Labour Party to stop pandering to anti-migrant politics.
  17. Support freedom of movement and equal rights for all.
  18. Organise under the banner of opposing the privatization of student loans and defending education.
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19. Lobby MPs and Prospective Parliamentary Candidates to sign a pledge promising to oppose the privatization of student loans.
  20. Coordinate national weeks and days of action –support and Students’ Unions and campus societies to organize ‘debt ins’, creative stunts, mass petitioning, protests and public meetings.
  21. Campaign against youth and graduate unemployment and to “fund decent jobs for all”, developing a manifesto and working with trade union youth sections.
  22. Campaign for the Minimum Wage to be raised to the Living Wage, without exemptions.
  23. Campaign to unionise students who work.
  24. To support the NUS Commission on the Future of Work.
  25. To support the forging of a New Deal on the Future of Work.



# Further Education Policy Passed At National Conference 2014

## NC\_FE\_14201: Qualifications and Progression

### Conference Believes:

1. From 2015 new GCSEs and A levels will be taught in England.
2. Across both qualifications there will be a reduction in coursework, end of year exams will become the favoured assessment method and there will be fewer opportunities to re-sit. GCSE grades will also change to numerical grading, with 9 being the highest and 1 being the lowest.
3. The AS qualification will be 'de-coupled' from an A level making it a standalone qualification, which does not count towards a full A level grade.
4. Vocational qualifications will also be reformed as the 'Tech Bacc' has been created as a means to raise the status of vocational courses in schools and colleges.
5. Under these new qualifications it will become more difficult to mix academic and vocational courses. Students are likely to have to make choices about what they study earlier on and will not have the flexibility to move between the two.
6. NUS' research has shown that students are opposed to the changes due to be made to GCSE and A level qualifications. In a national survey 81 per cent replied that coursework should remain a part of assessment. When asked if exams should only take place once a year, in the summer, 72 per cent of all respondents disagreed. An overwhelming 90 per cent of those who replied said that re-sits should be available in all subjects and 81 per cent said that the existing grading structure in GCSEs should remain in place.
7. The reforms to GCSE and A level qualifications are also likely to have serious negative impacts on students with a variety of disabilities. The changes ignore different learning styles and fail to provide second opportunities for students who may have to deal with upheaval during their education.
8. Information Advice and Guidance (IAG) in schools and colleges is currently not adequate. As these reforms are introduced, and the participation age is raised, IAG must be easier to access and more robust.


### Conference Resolves:

1. To conduct research in to the state of vocational qualifications at level 2 and 3 in the UK and campaign against the marginalisation of this type of learning by the current Government.
2. To track the introduction of the new qualifications. Focusing on the impact of the reforms on participation, attainment, and progression to further study and work.
3. To look specifically at the removal/reduction of coursework and re-sits, and the impact on learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and oppose all fees associated with re-sits.
4. To work closely with employers to ensure that they have a full understanding of the new grading system and are able to distinguish the value of different qualifications during recruitment.
5. To lobby for clarity on what GCSEs and A levels are intended to be for. Are they a proxy for essential skills/knowledge, or are they a test of memory, resilience, mental stamina or something else? Employers criticise them, as do schools. But what do students think, and what are their stories about how they've been useful?
6. To research the impact of more limited subject choice on access to arts/humanities provision, and the impact on social/cultural capital of this.
7. To continue to campaign on the improvement of IAG in schools and colleges, setting up an IAG commission and ensuring the National Careers Service better meets the needs of students.
8. To conduct research in to functional skills and their value as both standalone qualifications and as a components in other qualification frameworks.


## NC\_FE\_14202: Challenge of the Learner Voice

### Conference Believes:



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1. Despite the increased profile of learner voice over the last 10 years, too often it is seen as a box-ticking exercise by providers, rather than an opportunity for students to influence colleges and the learning experience.
  2. The government's "New Challenges, New Chances" policy poses a further threat to effective learner voice by deregulating the sector.
  3. Learner voice is most effective when students' unions are empowered to build strong, effective partnerships with their institutions and provide opportunities for personal, social and citizenship education for students.
  4. Well-funded, adequately resourced and student-led unions remain the exception to the rule in FE.
  5. NUS must do more to support students' unions locally in winning the arguments with their institutions and setting clear development plans for better funding, resource and commitment for student-led learner voice.
  6. Learner voice should be a clear mark of organisational performance from national inspectorate bodies.
  7. Further Education students are increasingly diverse and more needs to be done to help develop innovative, localised models of representation for different learners, in particular apprentices and those based off campus
  8. Unions need greater access to college performance data to enable them to build evidence-based campaigns to improve student experience
  9. Since September 2013, colleges are able to directly recruit 14 and 15 year old students. However, these students are not entitled to membership of their students' union under the Education Act 1994.
  10. All students enrolled on a course at college should be members of their students' union, regardless of age.
  11. Government plans to shift funding for adult skills and apprenticeships to Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and employers represents a challenge for learner involvement in regional decisions on education provision.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To continue to support students' unions and colleges in building effective student-led, college-supported learner voice which empowers learners to improve the academic experience locally, regionally and nationally.
  2. Commit to deliver greater targeted support to unions locally to help make the case for increased funding, resource and commitment from their institutions.
  3. Be clear to the sector that college-funded, resourced and empowered students' unions should be commonplace across FE to ensure quality learner voice and student engagement.
  4. Develop a strategy to increase learner voice in teaching, learning and education quality across the sector.
  5. Working with the national inspectorate bodies across the UK, clearly define standards of learner voice within college inspection frameworks to put students at the heart of the college inspection process.
  6. Work with Ofsted to increase student engagement with Learner View as a quality improvement tool.
  7. Continue to consult with apprentices and students based off campus to develop strategies for effective learner voice for these learners.
  8. Consult with students' unions, LEPs and employers to develop a learner voice strategy for the regional commissioning of adult skills and apprenticeship funding
  9. Review the Education Act 1994 to ensure it is fit-for-purpose and that 14 and 15 year old students are legal members of their students' union.
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# Higher Education Policy Passed At National Conference 2014


## NC\_HE\_14201: Higher Education Qualifications


Study is the one thing all students have in common. For two years we have campaigned for the adoption of partnership approaches to making higher education better – and we have won. But partnership will only become a reality if we now focus our energies on using partnership approaches to make the experience of studying transformative for every student. Study that transforms lives comes from students and course reps working directly with their lecturers as well as from students' unions working with institutions to build inclusive educational communities, develop the capacity of students to shape their educational context and determine the future of higher education.

### Conference Believes:

1. Higher education has huge potential to transform and enrich the lives of those who undertake it. It extends their capabilities, enriches their understanding and builds their capacity to be a citizen who can effect change in the world.
2. Study and learning is what every student has in common, no matter their background, subject or level of study. Much learning happens in the classroom but much happens in the library, in the workplace, on the sports field, in an academic society or in the students' union.
3. Learning happens in an academic community; being engaged and feeling a sense of belonging to their community is what helps students learn and achieve.
4. Too many students in higher education struggle to engage and fail to reach their academic potential because of non-inclusive practices in the classroom and on campus by lecturers, staff and peers.
5. The rhetoric of employability and employability skills is inadequate to enable students to achieve their aspirations for their life.
6. Being an active citizen in the twenty first century requires individuals to understand concepts like environmental sustainability, social injustice, ethical use of knowledge and political activism. A higher education that serves the public good would seek to develop students with these attributes.
7. If higher education is to be transformative for students and help them achieve their aspirations then students will have to take on more of a role in creating their own learning outcomes, defining their own learning spaces and shaping their own curriculum.
8. Students' unions must be the cornerstone of student engagement.
9. There has been a dramatic decline in mature and part-time students at both undergraduate and postgraduate level.
10. Mature students face specific barriers to returning to study at postgraduate level, many of which are related to the lack of flexibility of study.
11. The work and family commitments that mature students make it difficult for them to travel outside of their community for education; they need a local HEI that meets their needs.
12. Existing provision aimed at adult and community learning by HEIs is under threat, with institutions closing evening and weekend community learning programmes.
13. Employers should be engaged in advising institutions on their needs and desires, but academic freedom and institutional autonomy over course content and structure must be maintained.
14. There is a growing problem in terms of unemployment and underemployment for older members of the labour force who cannot access the education and training they need to reskill and upskill.

### Conference Resolves:


1. To develop a plan of work for the HE Zone targeted at developing our understanding and that of our members of how to create inclusive, student-led learning communities in higher education institutions.
  2. To focus on reforming curriculum design, assessment and feedback practice to support complex learning outcomes and develop graduate attributes fit for twenty-first century active citizens.
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3. To work to better understand and rearticulate the employability agenda so that it is aligned to students' aspirations rather than employer-led skills demands and support students' unions to both influence their institution and deliver their own employability support in innovative and student-focused ways.
  4. To work with the Student Engagement Partnership to develop partnership approaches to engaging and supporting students to take the lead in determining their own higher education learning journeys.
  5. To research and disseminate good practice in embedding peer learning and peer mentoring practices in higher education.
  6. To work with institutions to find ways of increasing access to postgraduate study for individuals without undergraduate degrees by accrediting knowledge and skills from work, training and further education.
  7. Engage in research to look at the ways in which postgraduate study could be made more flexible.
  8. Engage with HEFCE about ways of incentivising institutions to create more flexible postgraduate provision and learning partnerships with employers and local communities.
  9. Campaign to defend and extend the provision of flexible learning for mature students.
  10. Lobby government to ensure employers are able and willing to provide flexibility for employees to undertake study while at work.
  11. Campaign on the availability of affordable and flexible childcare provision for postgraduate students with children.
  12. Work with institutional and local careers services to tailor advice and support for mature postgraduates, specifically the availability in small and specialist institutions.

## **NC\_HE\_14202: Building Democratic Institutions**


Women represented 44.5 per cent of academic staff in 2011-12, but only 27.5 per cent of senior managers in Higher Education Institutions (ECU 2013). In 2011-12, 12.6 per cent of academic staff were from BME backgrounds, but they only represent 4.3 per cent of senior managers (ECU 2013). NUS has produced guidance for students' unions on how to audit the governance structures of their institution and ways to challenge undemocratic decision-making.


### **Conference Believes:**

1. Higher Education Institutions have a duty to uphold the values of a democratic and pluralist society, and work to share those values with staff, students, and the wider community.
  2. Governments since the 1980s have encouraged universities to adopt more corporate forms of governance, with an emphasis on market competitiveness, efficiency, and concentration of power in governing bodies and in the office of the Vice Chancellor.
  3. There is a broad consensus in the student movement over the need to challenge corporate governance, particularly where it is related to marketisation and "value-for-money" assumptions and decisions.
  4. There is also strong criticism of the way power and decision-making has been concentrated in the hands of a small group of senior executives, with students and academics having little say over important policies.
  5. The role of students in governing bodies and committees is often nothing more than a 'rubber stamp' on university policies.
  6. The current underrepresentation of women and BME persons in senior roles at universities is a disgrace and represents a clear failure of universities to take seriously equality and diversity in the workplace.
  7. Gender equality is a crucial aspect of democratisation and it involves breaking down masculine and sexist cultures as much as it involves increasing the representation of women.
  8. The idea that students are 'window dressing' in governance structures must be dispelled, whether it is the result of student perceptions, or the result of institutional practice.
  9. Students' unions are well placed to challenge their institution on the fairness and suitability of its governance practices. Unions should, therefore, be at the vanguard of any campaign to democratise universities and build student partnerships.
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10. Students are heavily involved in their local communities in many positive ways, contributing economically, socially, culturally and politically in local activities. They can help encourage local communities to hold their institution to account and ensure it works to champion local causes.
  11. The work that NUS and students' unions have achieved on student partnership should be seen as a building block to encourage institutions to improve the representation and voice of students in institutional governance.
  12. Decision making at institutions should be conducted in a democratic manner, involving a diverse representation of the key stakeholders in education, namely students, academic and non-academic staff, and the local community.
  13. Transparency is necessary for democracy.
  14. Where outsourcing is used by institutions to cut costs and undermine workers' pay and conditions, this should not be allowed to silence these workers' voices in the democratic structures of the institution. Students' unions should campaign locally for outsourced staff to be incorporated into and given a democratic voice through institutions' governance structures alongside directly employed staff and students.
  15. The agenda of marketisation within Higher Education stands directly in opposition to the democratic claims of staff and students within their institutions. In order for any education system to be democratic, it must be accessible and run for the public good. We must take a clear stand against education as a commodity and for a free, publicly-funded education system.
  16. In the end, we want education to be entirely democratically governed by students, staff and the community, to ensure that it serves our needs. Senior managers represent nobody
  17. While we should strive to improve representation at the highest levels, any unelected hierarchical management will always help perpetuate the oppression of marginalised groups.
  18. Universities have been increasingly using the brute force of security staff and police to silence student protest, with some attempting to ban protest altogether.
  19. Students, elected officers and staff have been beaten and arrested for exercising their right to protest.
  20. That for an institution to be democratic it should be a place where critical thinking and active dissent is encouraged.
  21. The recent arrests, draconian injunctions and suspensions seen in response to campus protests is the reflex of managements who have lost the arguments with students and staff over marketisation, fees, outsourcing and pay.
  22. Educational institutions should be run by those who study and work in them, not overpaid and unaccountable managements.
  23. Repressing student protest is an affront to democracy, the right to resistance and free speech.
  24. Universities employing force negates their duty of care to students and staff.
  25. The police are institutionally violent and racist and are known for lying about student protest activity.
  26. In order to promote a safe space, we should demand police have no presence on our campuses unless authorised by an elected student representative.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. Support students' unions to articulate a strong narrative against forms of governance that put the interests of students at risk and work against the welfare of society as a whole.
  2. Provide evidence to unions to show the benefits of better student representation and more democratic governance to institutions and to the student body.
  3. Provide further evidence and resources to unions to help them challenge undemocratic and unrepresentative decision-making at their institutions and come up with positive and workable proposals for improvement.
  4. Campaign for better representation of women and BME in senior positions, and to remove masculine cultures by de-genderising the concept of leadership and "speaking out" against sexism.
  5. Stand up for values of democracy in higher education and ensure that education remains a tool for fighting injustice and building a fair and equitable society.
  6. Improve the involvement of students in decision making at all levels, making sure that they can fully represent the views of the student body on university committees and governing bodies.
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7. Ensure that students are adequately represented on the governing bodies of their institution, and that student governors have the right to speak as representatives of the student body and not merely as individuals.
  8. Provide the right training and support to union officers that sit on university committees and governing bodies.
  9. Empower course reps to champion the democratic voice of students in departmental decisions which affect them with the right training and support.
  10. Campaign for 'open books' – key information such as university finances must be shared fully with student and staff unions.
  11. Campaign for managements to pledge - and write into regulations - that they will not call police onto campus without permission from the SU.
  12. Create a legal fund to support students facing charges or legal costs as a result of repression.
  13. Develop policy for democratic control of institutions by staff and students, on the basis of restored public funding, linking it to the police question with the slogan "Reclaim your campus".

## **NC\_HE\_14203: If You Don't Like the Way the Table Is Set, Turn It Over**


### **Conference Believes:**


1. The opening up of a market in Higher Education is increasingly turning universities' attention to how to 'compete' rather than how to widen participation.
2. Where universities are externally accountable for widening participation targets (i.e. through fee plans, access agreements, outcome agreements, and in other ways) this does not prevent them from enacting other, regressive admissions policies which negate their other work.
3. Our universities are more and more focused on recruiting the perceived 'best' students with the highest grades in order to boost their standing in league tables.
4. The measures used by league tables as markers of quality do not account for educational disadvantage. They incentivise universities to recruit high numbers of students with the highest quantity of high grades [tariff points] and lots of social capital [employability], rather than making holistic assessments of students' potential.
5. League table compilers are accountable to no-one other than their publishers.
6. Universities are increasingly directing resources to attract these 'top' students, and are offering incentives such as guaranteed offers, free sports passes, better accommodation, bursaries or other financial incentives, or enhanced educational experiences for these applicants.
7. These resources are not being spent on supporting students who need it the most.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Universities should recruit students based on a holistic assessment of their achievements, background, and potential, rather than on grades alone.
2. Universities should focus their available resources on retaining and supporting students in most need.
3. Initiatives to widen access are only effective if universities' other admissions policies do not undermine them.
4. Students and elected officers should continue to hold individuals accountable for poor decisions.
5. Students and elected officers can achieve change by challenging and changing the framework within which our institutions are working

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To continue to campaign against the idea of Higher Education as a market, in all its manifestations.
  2. To continue to support students and elected officers to work with their universities on access measures like Access Agreements, Outcome agreements, and others.
  3. To provide specific support for students and elected officers to challenge all universities' admissions and recruitment decisions outside of these measures.
  4. To put together a compendium of 'worst practice', highlighting regressive and market-driven recruitment practices universities have put in place, as well as successful campaigns against these decisions by students' unions.
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5. To campaign for national governments to scrutinise and regulate all universities' admissions decisions, not just specific access measures.
  6. To hold league table compilers to account for their negative impact on widening participation, and demand they use measures that do not disincentivise or penalise universities who take progressive student recruitment decisions.

## **NC\_HE\_14204: A Clearer and More Transparent Employment Indicator from the DLHE**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. That the HESA DLHE survey, and its subsequent 'Employment Indicator', provide prospective HE students with an idea of their potential employment and career prospects following graduation from a given institution - based on the whereabouts of recent graduates from that institution 6 months after graduating.
2. That particular components of the DLHE survey result in a figure/statistic (i.e. the 'Employment Indicator') that can be both a misleading and untruthful reflection of respondents' actual employment statuses and career progression.
3. That the DLHE 'Employment Indicator' is different to an employment rate (which the indicator is sometimes marketed and/or perceived as) in that it does not represent the proportion of a given group of graduates who are employed within 6 months of leaving a given institution. It, instead, is based on a mixture of an employment rate and a number of other factors which then only partially reflects an employment rate and indicates the likelihood of current and future employability (and subsequent employment).

### **Conference Further Believes:**


1. That for the likes of 'voluntary or other unpaid work' and 'developing a professional portfolio/creative practice' to be classed as working full-time/employment is misleading and unethical.
2. That the manner in which the DLHE Employment Indicator is used by institutions is not always in the correct context or consistent, both internally and externally.
3. That the Employment Indicator has the tendency to give students a false sense of post graduation employment prospects - mainly due to the way in which the survey results are or aren't presented.
4. The employment indicator doesn't suggest whether graduates are in employment, work or activity that is of relevance to their studies, qualification and ambitions - i.e. whether their university has helped them into a job they wanted as appose to any job.


### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To lobby for the implementation of a framework for HEI's which governs how institutions use DLHE data/the Employment Indicator to market themselves.
2. Lobby for students' unions to have access to a breakdown of the DLHE results/the 'Employment Indicator' and be entitled to a clear and thorough explanation of what the 'Employment Indicator' actually is/means and how it is calculated.
3. Lobby for HESA to review the structure of the DLHE survey and the make-up of the Employment Indicator figure.

## **NC\_HE\_14205: Fitness for Practice, Not Fit For Purpose**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. Students who are on courses whereby there is a professional nature, whilst dealing with people (nurses, teachers, midwives) can go through Fitness For Practice (FFP) procedures if the University or Professional body/trust is concerned about the student's personal or professional suitability for the course or future profession.
  2. A FFP panel is made up by various professionals, including University representatives, and often, placement provider representatives
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3. If a student goes through the FFP procedure, and is found fit for practice by the board, placement providers can currently still refuse to take students back on placement.
  4. When denied the ability to go back to their original placement provider, it is then very difficult to find a student a placement with a different provider to complete their placement.
  5. If these students are lucky enough to get a placement with another provider, this can be anywhere in the country, which means students have to relocate causing stress and inconvenience.

**Conference Further Believes:**


1. The referral to fitness for practice is inconsistent within trusts.
2. Students can be referred to FFP for actions that might have been otherwise dealt with, if the same action was conducted by a member of NHS staff.
3. Given the potential to end a student's career, we think that there should be a review of how issues with students on placement is dealt with to make it consistent with how staff are treated.


**Conference Resolves:**

1. NUS will work with the NHS to ensure local trusts respect and recognise the decision of fellow Health Professionals in deciding that a student is Fit to Practice, and therefore provide them with another opportunity to complete their course.
2. NUS will lobby the NHS to ensure that when students feel it necessary to transfer to a different trust, whether it is due to FFP decisions being upheld, or due to logistical issues, the NHS Trust system will do more to accommodate these students.
3. NUS will complete a report in partnership with the NHS reviewing the circumstances of what a student can be brought to a Fitness for Practice disciplinary panel for. Thus ensuring all placement providers and universities understand what can be brought as an issue for FFPs, and what can be addressed separately through academic staff.

## **NC\_HE\_14206: Their Jobs, Our Education: Supporting Staff For Fair Pay**

**Conference Believes:**

1. Following 3 years of a pay freeze, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) has imposed a 1% pay offer for all HE staff in the UK on the national pay scale.
  2. As a result, all HE staff who are not off the pay scale (everybody who isn't a senior manager) have had a 13% real terms pay cut over the past 4 years
  3. This pay-cut has been labelled "one of the largest sustained wage cuts any profession has suffered since the Second World War."
  4. That the pension schemes for both academic and non-academic staff have recently been attacked.
  5. In 2011-2012 University senior management pay rose, on average, by five thousand pounds per year.
  6. That this academic year saw, for the first time ever, coordinated strike action between UCU, Unison, UNITE and EIS.
  7. That this strike action has included an exam marking boycott.
  8. That industrial action in the FE sector over terms, conditions and bullying looks increasingly likely.
  9. The cut to HE teaching grants of 45% since 2010/11 has had a drastic effect on staffing levels and conditions
  10. Students have been made to bridge the funding gap through an increase in tuition fees to on average £8,507 (for 2013/14)
  11. Already one of the highest in the western world, projected cuts to teaching budgets could lead to an increase in student/staff ratios to a level at which it is impossible to deliver a quality degree course
  12. The lifting of the cap on student numbers could lead to a squeeze on staff/student ratios within some institutions and faculties, particularly post 92 universities which already have broadly higher ratios
  13. In research carried out by UCU, a majority of academics report 'often' or 'always' neglecting tasks due to having too much to do
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14. On average, education professionals as a whole work 11.1 hours in unpaid overtime per week
  15. Median pay for academics has fallen in real terms by 2.26% since 2009 and 15% for support staff
  16. Universities have sought to cut corners, through a gradual replacement of permanent academics with postgraduates and visiting lecturers, use of hourly paid staff to deliver large components of courses in the space of a few days, 'team teaching' and lectures delivered by video relay, amongst other measures
  17. HE has one of the worst gender pay gaps of any sector, reported at 19.8% in 2013 by the UCEA.
  18. Widening pay inequality is part of the marketisation of HE.
  19. Workers and students should have democratic control over remuneration of management.
  20. A pay ratio of 1:5 would ensure a fairer scale of salaries between the highest and lowest paid.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Although industrial action is likely to affect students in the short term, in fighting for their terms and conditions staff trade unions are fighting for the long-term health of a set of professions of which students are the primary beneficiaries.
2. Universities and Colleges know that it is students who are harmed when staff are forced to take strike action. It is our members and our staff who are made to pay the price when senior management try to cut their wage bill.
3. That the more staff has the support of students in the early stages of industrial action, the less likely it is that they will be forced to escalate their industrial action and therefore avoid inconveniencing our members.
4. That the fates of the student movement and the staff trade unions are intimately entwined, together we are stronger.
5. Managements are responsible for seeking to make staff and students pay the price for anti-social and irresponsible policies.
6. That whenever staff are overworked, facing attacks on pay and pensions, casualised or insecure in their employment, students' education suffers
7. The financial burden on students, and attacks on staff are unfair and unnecessary in the context of an estimated £120bn tax evaded by big business and the wealthy annually, as well as the £22,000 average pay rise for vice chancellors in 2013.

#### **Conference Resolves:**


1. Reaffirm our support for our staff in the ongoing HE pay dispute.
2. To publicly call on UCEA to meet the demands of the unions' for a fair and equitable pay settlement as soon as possible.
3. To campaign for an end to use of zero hours contracts and for a Living Wage for all university and college workers.
4. To offer maximum practical and political support to staff unions in their struggle against low pay, redundancies, excessive workload, and other attacks which affect their ability to deliver a good quality education
5. To make the issue of 'teaching on the cheap' a key demand of local and national campaigning, with associated demands for a restoration of the teaching grant to pre-2010 levels, to be used to fund permanent, salaried, properly trained staff
6. To call on university managements to implement budgets on the basis of what is needed to provide a good quality education, and to support them in campaigns to fight for the necessary funds from central government should they do so
7. To link up this campaigning work with other public sector workers and service users to defeat the government's austerity agenda
8. Run a national campaign for a 5:1 pay ratio, including rolling protests against institutions that don't pay all staff a Living Wage, highlighting VCs' pay.
9. Campaign for democratic control over pay.
10. Baring a vote to the contrary at NEC which must be ratified at the following conference, to give our full support to our staff trade unions in any future industrial disputes.


#### **NC\_HE\_14207: A New Deal for Education Funding**





## Conference Believes:


1. The Coalition Government's 2010 higher education funding reforms sought to continue a trend of redefining direct public investment in education as private debt resting on the shoulders of individuals
  2. The Government pays more than £7 billion annually to fund higher education tuition fee loans alone; of this the most recent revised figures suggest that up to 40 per cent will be covered by public sources due to non-repayment.
  3. The extension of a funding system framed in terms of loans and debt to individual students has created a destructive narrative of 'waste' in place of one where the public investment in higher education can be properly recognised and celebrated as vital to a fair, sustainable and prosperous society
  4. The 2010 funding system has left students facing the prospect of paying twice for higher education: once in the form of loan repayments and subsequently through taxation to fill a putative economic black hole, which is neither fair nor sustainable.
  5. The narrative of waste has hastened the sell-off into private hands of a public asset in the form of student loan book, and with no legal protection for students' terms and conditions, putting repayment thresholds and rates at risk of amendment.
  6. The higher education tuition fee 'sticker price' drives a marketised system in which students are encouraged to make narrow choices on the grounds of costs that in reality they may not end up paying.
  7. While those who access higher education remain disproportionately those from higher socio-economic groups, a universal public subsidy will not win over public support.
  8. An alternative funding system that moved from loans and debt to individual entitlement and fair contributions from graduates in employment would build and maintain popular support for public investment to pass on the opportunity for the next generation to benefit from higher education
  9. Any alternative funding system must not maintain an artificial divide between further and higher education, and should move towards a model of funding that enables individuals to access the type of education they need at the point they need it.
  10. Any alternative funding system should ensure that all students in education have the financial support to succeed.
  11. The Student Opportunities Fund exists to provide institutions with pots of money to great better access to higher education for students from underprivileged backgrounds.
  12. The Student Opportunities Fund faced a £400m cut this year of which £350m was saved by the student movement.
  13. It is not acceptable to pit access and retention against each other in order of importance as both hold the key to a successful education system.
  14. In England & Wales, asylum seekers are categorised as International Students. In Scotland they are categorised as home students but are not entitled to student support packages.
  15. Education changes lives. OECD data indicates that life expectancy is strongly associated with education.
  16. The 1999 Asylum and Immigration Act is the legal framework by which asylum seekers and refugees are dispersed across the UK, with a high number historically being settled in Glasgow, which has the lowest life expectancy in the UK with an average life expectancy in some areas of just 59 years old for men.
  17. There is an alternative paying for university through tuition fees or a graduate tax – public investment for free education.
  18. The proposal to replace tuition fees with a 'graduate tax' is simply replacing one form of student debt with another. Under both systems the experience for the overwhelming majority of students would be the same: to pay tens of thousands of pounds for a university degree over the course of a number of decades after graduation, taking the form of automatic deductions from graduates' wages every month.
  19. Higher education is a public good and should be free for everyone to access.
  20. Free education would pay for itself. The government's own figures show that for every £1 invested in higher education the economy expands by £2.60.
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21. Investing in free education would not only offer opportunities for young people but would play a central role in reviving the economy now and in promoting longer-term prosperity and growth for the future.
  22. There is an austerity agenda that refuses to fund education properly, which produces a false choice between underfunded, fee-laden, debt-ridden education for the many or free, elite education for the privileged few.
  23. This is no choice at all.
  24. NUS believes in democracy – but political democracy is incomplete when the distribution of wealth is violently unequal and undemocratic.
  25. Vast wealth lies in the coffers of a handful of rich, powerful people and their private businesses, instead of being invested in socially useful purposes such as education.
  26. In 2008, the UK government spent £850 billion to bail out banks, but these banks have continued to operate much as before, instead of being required to spend that public money on the public good.
  27. If this wealth was instead under democratic control, our society could use it to build a comprehensive accessible free education system for all and pay every education worker decently, and still have plenty left over for free, world-class healthcare, good social housing, and decent public services and benefits for all.
  28. NUS should reaffirm the idea that education is a right not a privilege.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Access to education is a fundamental human right, enshrined in Protocol 1, Article 2 of the Human Rights Act (1998) which states that: “No person shall be denied a right to an education.”
2. Treating asylum seekers as international students effectively denies them access to education.
3. Treating asylum seekers as home students whilst preventing access to student support denies them access to education.
4. It is of economic benefit to have a highly skilled, highly trained population.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To forge a new deal for education funding to unify public investment in further and higher education and campaign for it ahead of the 2015 general election.
  2. To support sustained public investment in further and higher education and to promote its role in creating a fair and prosperous society
  3. To support moves away from increasing fees and debt, towards a model of entitlement for students and contributions from graduates in order to pay it forward and to ensure the next generation can also benefit from public education provision
  4. To support a system of contributions to higher education determined by the real earnings after graduation, not variable sticker prices, and which includes an employer contribution.
  5. To campaign against the sell off of the student loan book into private hands
  6. To campaign to ensure the terms and conditions of existing student loans are enshrined and protected in primary legislation.
  7. To campaign for substantial increases in the financial support available to those in study.
  8. To raise wider questions looking at how access and retention activity is funded, spent and assessed and what alternative models might look like to enable greater success.
  9. For NUS to call for an immediate end to and reversal of the Government's target of reducing immigration.
  10. To call for asylum seekers to be classed as home-students for the purposes of tuition fees and student support.
  11. For NUS to work with STAR to lobby on an institution-by-institution basis to create scholarships and dedicated support for asylum-seekers.
  12. For NUS to work with the Scottish Refugee Council and the Refugee Council on this issue.
  13. To reject the absurd idea that our society lacks the resources to provide decently for its citizens, and make campaigning for the democratisation of our society's wealth a priority running through NUS's work.
  14. To make the case for free education and demand that free, accessible, quality education, and decent wages, public services and benefits, are funded by:
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- a. Ending tax evasion and avoidance and cracking down on tax havens
  - b. Imposing serious taxes on the incomes, inheritance and capital gains of the rich
  - c. Taking the banks, and their wealth, under democratic control
15. To raise these demands in particular when putting forward positions on fees and education funding, and when organising protest actions.
  16. To oppose and campaign against all methods of charging students for education – including tuition fees and a 'graduate tax' which is nothing more than a euphemism for 'student debt'.
  17. Foundation courses should be free of fees for all students, regardless of age or nationality, with full access to a grant.

The following policies were passed at National Conference 2011; National Conference 2014 voted to renew them for three further years.

## **NC\_HE\_14208: Protecting Internationalisation in Our Education System, Fighting Visa Changes**

### **Conference Believes:**


1. That a flexible immigration policy is important to provide a global education experience for home, EU, international students and helps the UK maintain its international reputation.
2. Recent visa reforms are the tightest in many years. 94% of international students said the ability to have 2 years work experience with Post Study Work visa after graduation was important to their UK education experience and global employability
3. 75% international students would not have come to the UK without the option for Post- Study Work visa. Moving the language requirement to B2 (equivalent to a high A level grade) will unnecessarily rule out many prospective students


### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To campaign against any restriction on the numbers of international students being allowed to study in, government recognised, further and higher education institutions.
2. This includes campaigning against explicit restrictions, such as the introduction of a cap on numbers, or implicit restrictions, which could include limiting working rights or bringing dependents.
3. To campaign for a visa and immigration system that is based on the principles of recognising the value and importance on international students to the UK education system and enabling genuine students to be able to make the most of the world-class UK education system.
4. To campaign to allow international students to have work experience opportunities in the UK after finishing their studies.


## **NC\_HE\_14209: Postgraduate Funding**


### **Conference Believes:**

1. There is a high likelihood that Postgraduate Taught (PGT) fees will also increase nationally.
  2. That unlike undergraduate, there is currently no state-funded PGT funding system for students.
  3. Masters course fees are payable upfront and aren't capped or regulated for fairness/access considerations, and are therefore viewed by universities as a source of funding to plug budget gaps – including to cross-subsidise other activities;
  4. Part-time Masters courses can cost anything up to the cost of the full-time course;
  5. Browne said little about postgraduates;
  6. The HEFCE grant which the government is to cut 80% includes £110m for taught postgraduate courses.
  7. As well as being intrinsically worthwhile, postgraduate taught courses are vital gateways to academia and various careers;
  8. There is a serious risk of skyrocketing masters fees, which would make postgraduate education and the doors it opens the preserve of the rich;
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9. If university managements need more money, they should refuse to extract it from students and instead demand it from government;
  10. Education at every level is a social good and a right, and should be funded entirely by progressive taxation – in the short term, fees mustn't rise;
  11. If charged, fees must be transparent, injustices minimised, and support provided;
  12. Postgraduates should not have to pay fees upfront, or take on commercial loans, but should have access to similar loan systems as undergraduates allowing deferred payment dependent on income.
  13. That no student with the will and capacity to undertake postgraduate study should be held back by inability to pay;
  14. The NUS report Broke and Broken: Taught postgraduate students on funding and finance revealed that financial considerations are the key determinant of whether students are able to take up postgraduate study;
  15. That 66.9% of postgraduates surveyed are entirely self-funded and 62.9% report that their debt causes them concern to the extent that it affects their quality of life;
  16. The academic experience of postgraduates is threatened when they are struggling to make ends meet;
  17. The Browne Review's conclusion that "there is no evidence that changes to funding or student finance are needed to support student demand or access" is complacent and unreflective of the realities revealed in the Broke and Broken report;
  18. The fee setting process at universities should be transparent and involve negotiation with the students' union;
  19. Project Participation and the Higher Education Funding Campaign should be extended to include access to postgraduate education as a priority for NUS, universities and students' unions;
  20. The government should provide taught postgraduate students with access to low cost loans, similar to those provided for undergraduate tuition fees;

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To fight any increase in PGT fees, through lobbying government and providing support for SUs, amongst other methods.
  2. To investigate, and lobby for, appropriate funding options for PGT
  3. To mandate VPHE and President to establish a campaign on postgraduate funding directed both university managements and the government, to include organising and backing lobbying, demonstrations, and non-violent direct action such as occupations, in pursuit of the following:
    - a. Freeze fees for taught postgraduate courses for home and international students, as a minimum precursor to their abolition.
    - b. No cuts to the postgraduate teaching budget.
    - c. Don't pick on post-grads - Funding shortfalls in education must be made up for by state funding via progressive taxation – masters and international students fees should not be raised in order to plug budgets or cross subsidise other parts of universities' work. Instead of raising fees, universities must join students' call for state funding.
    - d. Transparency now – Students should be told where their fees have gone. Fair deal for part-time students – Part-time fees must be proportional to the equivalent full-time course and the course's hours – i.e. set on a pro-rata basis.
    - e. No surprises – Fees for the whole course must be clear at the point of application, students must never be asked to increase payments during a course.
    - f. Proper support, not upfront payment – Give postgraduates access to a similar loan system to undergraduates, and establish national postgraduate bursary and scholarship schemes to ensure able students can always access education.
    - g. No to the unregulated market – the government must regulate masters fees to guarantee accessibility and minimise injustice.
    - h. Training is no substitute for education – while the option of more vocational courses is welcome, the academic nature of other courses and the intrinsic value of education must be defended regardless of the source of funding.
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4. To include postgraduate funding issues more prominently in existing HE funding campaigns.
  5. To provide advice and information to CMs seeking to establish similar campaigns on campuses
  6. To lobby the government to provide all taught postgraduates with access to low-cost loans, in a similar manner to undergraduates;
  7. To lobby the government to introduce legislation to limit and control increases in postgraduate fees;
  8. To encourage and support students' unions in lobbying their institutions for more flexible fee payment options for postgraduates;
  9. To produce and distribute resources for students' unions to help them refocus their campaigns, activities and governance structures towards the needs and experience of postgraduates.

# Society and Citizenship Policy Passed At National Conference 2014

## NC\_SC\_14501 - Employ-My-Ability

### **NUS Conference Believes:**

1. Students and young people are facing a serious lack of jobs and opportunities.
2. Government and too many employers are failing to adequately tackle the youth employment crisis.
3. Education no longer offers immunity to struggling in the job market that it once did.
4. NUS has a responsibility to represent students on more than just matters relating directly to education.
5. Students and students' unions have great potential to influence the employment landscape both in their local communities and nationally.
6. The job market is geared towards the interests of employers and not employees, especially younger workers, and many jobs do not adequately develop young people's skills to help them succeed.
7. 80% of students undertake study because they believe it will help their employment prospects and our members consistently express anxiety about what happens next for them after they complete their studies.
8. The challenges of the current job market are a complex, interrelated set of issues that include, but are not isolated to youth unemployment.
9. Workers are facing an erosion of their rights at work and there has been a worrying rise in insecure employment, such as zero-hour contracts.
10. Low pay is becoming an increasing problem. The apprentice minimum wage is only £2.60 and Four out of five new jobs created since 2010 are paid at less than £8 an hour according to the TUC.
11. Youth unemployment has fluctuated around the 1 million mark since the onset of the recession.
12. Since 2008 there are also 1 million more people who are underemployed and 2013 HESA data indicated that a third of graduates are working below their skill level after graduating.
13. The job market is polarising, with a growth in lower paid and lower skilled jobs and less mid-level jobs that study-leavers would historically have taken up.
14. Young people are more likely to be affected by certain problematic employment issues and practices. Amongst the 16-24 year old age bracket, 1 in 5 have done an unpaid internship and 37% of all UK workers employed on Zero Hour contracts are within this range.
15. The job market is not a level playing field for all study-leavers. For example, those leaving FE are twice as likely to be unemployed as graduates; those with none or lower level qualifications facing greater barriers to decent employment; young black men are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as young white men, and those who have been involved in the criminal justice system can face very significant barriers.
16. Dealing with the current lack of jobs and opportunities requires decisive and meaningful action from government and employers and a strong NUS will only be able push for this action as a part of a broad-based alliance with Trade Unions and other civil society organisations.
17. That NUS's employment summit and its campaigning partnership agreement with the TUC provides a strong base for such collaborative campaigning.
18. Students' unions commonly support students in entering the workforce through employability programmes that develop their skills.
19. Employability programmes are an important and influential activity in supporting students, but will only ever change the fortunes of individuals, not a generation.
20. A focus only on employability risks placing the onus on students and their apparent lack of skills, rather than challenging the structural causes for a lack of quality opportunities to enter the workforce in the first place.
21. There is a growing problem in terms of unemployment and underemployment for older members of the labour force who cannot access the education and training they need to reskill and upskill.

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22. Many of the students who undertake study to increase their employment prospects are mature and part time students, who face unique barriers to employment.
  23. A recent review of part-time and mature higher education found that many employers and potential students are not sufficiently aware of the value of part-time higher education and do not always fully understand the options, including financial, open to them.
  24. Upskilling and reskilling are key reasons many part time students give for undertaking further study, yet across the sector, numbers of part time students are declining.
  25. Students often seek employment on campus as the most convenient means to support themselves through education. Institutions are frequently outsourcing campus jobs in a bid to cut costs and undermine workers' rights with the effect of limiting students' on-campus employment opportunities to private companies who make use of exploitative zero-hour contracts and fail to pay the Living Wage as well as providing less favourable employment conditions to many Higher Education Institutions.

#### **NUS Conference Resolves:**

1. To deliver a regional training programme for students and students' unions on how to organise on local employment issues.
2. To use the findings of NUS' Commission on Students and Work as the basis for policy and campaigning activity in the run up to the general election.
3. To conduct primary research on student experiences in the job market.
4. To provide guidance to students' unions on non-exploitative employment practices for their own workers.
5. To continue campaigning on specific employment issues, to include the Living Wage, unpaid internships, zero-contract hours, better pay for apprentices and apprenticeships or more consistent quality.
6. To continue building and strengthening our relationship with Trade Unions and other civil society organisations.
7. To work more closely with youth organisations, youth services and criminal justice based organisations on this shared issue.
8. To work with employers and employer confederations to improve the quality and quantity of opportunities for students and young people.
9. To work with university and college departments to encourage creation of links with potential employers and creation of opportunities.
10. To constructively engage NUS' own supply chain in improving the quality and quantity of opportunities for students and young people.
11. To work with employers to promote the benefits of study and further study to older members of the workforce, including addressing employer- focused part time provision.
12. To consider and include the needs of the significant number of mature and part time students in our work around employment issues, recognising that older members of the workforce face barriers to work.
13. To campaign for the Minimum Wage to be raised to the Living Wage and all age and other exemptions abolished.
14. To campaign against the outsourcing of jobs on campuses which only serves to make the working conditions of students and other workers more precarious.
15. To work with the TUC and its youth sections to campaign for the unionisation of student workers in order to bolster the protection of students' rights at work and to allow them to benefit from collective bargaining.
16. To urge all CMs to pay a living wage and end use of zero hours contracts.
17. Do new research on the kind of jobs NUS members do, as the basis for a campaign against low pay and precariousness, working with trade union youth sections.
18. Campaign for the Minimum Wage to be raised to the Living Wage and all age and other exemptions abolished.
19. Campaign to unionise students who work.

#### **NC\_SC\_14502 Local and Vocal: Students and the Ballot Box**





### **NUS Believes:**


1. Students are citizens who have a direct interest in matters beyond our campuses and have a vital role in shaping communities.
2. Students are too often negatively profiled and othered in their communities with a false divide between students and residents, leading to disengagement with local politics.
3. Fewer than 1 in 6 students feel they are able to influence the decisions of those in power and only 18% of students feel that they have trust in politicians.
4. Community organising offers us a genuine opportunity for students to be involved more deeply in the political and civic life of our towns and cities.
5. Community organising is about bringing people together and empowering them to achieve change through political action. By using this approach communities come together to compel public authorities and businesses to respond to the needs of ordinary people.
6. We are at our strongest as a movement when we act collectively and community organising enables us to build these networks across regions and campuses.
7. Community organising has made a real differences to communities and campuses across the UK, such as around the campaigns on Living Wage and against pay day loans.
8. Community organising is about building a vibrant and active civil society through building power and confidence amongst everyday people create the changes they want to see themselves.
9. Community organising focuses on power in a way that is truly grassroots and about empowering people to challenge the way decisions are made and to create change in their communities.
10. Community organising builds for lasting, impactful change rather than striving for instant, short-term results.
11. That community organising offers us a genuine opportunity to be involved more deeply in the political and civic life of our towns and cities.
12. Community organising enables us as a movement to build an activist base and we must continue to invest in this kind of support.
13. High levels of student volunteering suggests that many students feel strong levels of ownership to their community and are willing to invest.
14. That the principles of community organising mean that we must challenge the way we talk about power and leaderships styles within our movement.


### **NUS Resolves:**

1. To maintain and build upon the community organising work that has begun with NUS' community organising pilot projects.
2. To support and provide training to students' unions on how to use community organising principles to empower students within their communities, including how to develop young leaders.
3. To support students' unions to develop their expertise and strategy in community organising in their towns and cities to empower students and non-students within their communities.
4. To support students' unions build broad-based citizens' alliances with other organisations within their cities/towns/regions, such as with Trade Unions, youth services, schools and religious groups.
5. To develop and support a national network of student community organisers.
6. To support SUs to develop their own community organising priorities via a series of training sessions and briefings.
7. To provide guidance on how to engage with local authorities and other decision makers.
8. To work with national community organising organisations to enhance NUS' understanding of community organising principles.
9. To host a follow-up to last year's flagship 'We Are The Change' community organising event.

## **NC\_SC\_14503 - Barclays Bank – The Tax Dodging and the Exploitation**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. Corporate tax is an important source of revenue for governments around the world that helps build vital public services and reduce poverty and inequality
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2. 2013 has seen an unprecedented focus on tax-dodging by big business such as Google and Starbucks and was top of the agenda at the G8 Summit in Loch Erne.
  3. Tax-dodging harms public services in the UK and in developing countries where three times more is lost to tax-dodging than is received in aid.
  4. Tax-dodging by big business narrows access to education, particularly for women in developing countries.
  5. Big business has a role to play in development, but only if they act responsibly and in the interests of poor people.
  6. Big businesses use a sophisticated network of tax havens and legal loopholes to shift profits out of the countries where they were made without paying taxes on them.
  7. USD\$20 trillion is estimated to be stashed in tax havens. That's enough to send every child in Africa to school and to rebuild the continent's entire road network with plenty spare.
  8. Tax avoidance by multinational corporations is immoral, especially in developing countries where revenue can be used to build hospitals, schools, colleges, universities, roads, and other vital public services.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. Barclays bank has ambitions to be the biggest bank in Africa.
2. A recent report by anti-poverty charity ActionAid demonstrated that the bank actively promotes the use of tax havens by big businesses who want to make profits in Africa.
3. A division of the bank called Offshore Corporate exists, in its own words, to
4. "maximise the advantage offered by offshore jurisdictions"
5. The offshore jurisdictions promoted by Barclays are known tax havens that are set up to allow the secret flow of money out of countries where they would have been taxed at a higher level.
6. Barclays bank is supposed to be in a process of cleaning up after being hit by numerous scandals including the LIBOR fixing disgrace that resulted in the resignation of the bank's Chief Executive, Bob Diamond.
7. Barclays bank was forced into a humiliating withdrawal from South Africa in the 1980s after NUS launched a campaign against their support of the racist apartheid regime.
8. Barclays says it wants to be a "force for good" in Africa, but its heavy promotion of tax haven use suggests otherwise.
9. Barclays should learn the lessons of their past and close down their Offshore Corporate division while eliminating all its activities in tax havens

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To lend our voice to the campaign to stop tax-dodging by big business, especially in developing countries.
2. To support member unions to develop local campaigns that highlight the link between tax and public services at home and in developing countries.
3. To incorporate tax-dodging into our work in the run up to the General Election in 2015
4. To lend our voice to the campaign to demand that Barclays shuts down its Offshore Corporate division and eliminates all its activities in tax havens
5. To send a message of solidarity to student unions in developing countries that shows our commitment to stopping UK corporations from shifting money out of their countries


## **NC\_SC\_14504 - Legal Aid**

**Conference Believes:**

1. Legal Aid can be defined as "payment from public funds allowed, in cases of need, to help pay for legal advice or proceedings." <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/legal-aid>
2. The Ministry of Justice are proposing to reduce Legal Aid by £220 million annually by 2018 <http://www.theguardian.com/law/2013/sep/18/liberal-democrats-legal-aid-cuts>

**Conference Further Believes:**



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1. Access to Legal Aid is a fundamental need of an individual that cannot afford to hire a more costly lawyer.
  2. Freedom of choice of a lawyer is hugely important and the reduction in legal aid funding risk removing client choice.
  3. This will impact on our students looking to get representation from a lawyer with a specific skillset i.e. in the event of a student arrested at a protest wanting access to a lawyer with a strong record in this area.
  4. It could have a hugely detrimental impact on aspiring law students looking to go into this area of work.
  5. The Law Society is currently reviewing their tactics in tackling the proposed changes.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To release a statement in support of the defence of Legal Aid. The statement will affirm the importance of access to Legal Aid for some of the hardest hit in our local and student communities and affirm the right of legally-aided defendants to choose their lawyer.
2. To work with the National Law Society and student law societies to campaign against the cuts being made to Legal Aid and defend the right of those that can't afford a lawyer access to good legal advocacy with freedom of choice.
3. To lobby for the creation of a campaigns toolkit by NUS that can be used by Students' Unions to support the campaign in defence of Legal Aid.
4. To ask the NUS to lobby the government against its current position on Legal Aid.
5. To lobby for access to legal aid for all students at universities.

## **NC\_SC\_14505 - Get Out The Vote; Stop The Far Right**

#### **Conference Believes:**


1. That the Get Out the Vote work NUS did in advance of the previous European Parliament elections was invaluable in the effort to shut down the BNP.
2. That across Europe far right groups are taking advantage of the present crisis to swell their ranks.
3. NUS has traditionally played an important and leading role in society's response to the far right.
4. That UKIP is part of the group Europe for Freedom and Democracy, which includes representatives from the Danish People's Party, the True Finns Party, The Dutch SGP, and the Italian Lega Nord - all of them far right.
5. The UKIP party leader, Nigel Farage, is co-president of this group along-side Lega Nord's Francesco Speroni who once described Andres Breivik as a man whose "ideas are in defense of western civilisation".
6. That in May of this year the UKIP Group of Lincolnshire County Council refused to sign an Anti-Racism pledge upon election as it "pushes forward the chance of multiculturalism".
7. That the founder of UKIP, Alan Sked, has said it has become "extraordinarily right-wing" and is now devoted to "creating a fuss, via islam and immigrants".
8. UKIP sacked its Youth Chairman, Olly Neville, for supporting Equal Marriage.
9. The former UKIP MEP Nikki Sinclaire, who came out as a lesbian, won a discrimination case against UKIP after being ousted for refusing to sit with its homophobic allies in the European Parliament.
10. UKIP's only current female MEP threatened to leave the party, labelling Nigel Farage as "anti-women".
11. Nigel Farage endorsed the comment "no employer with a brain in the right place would employ a young, single, free woman" by UKIP MEP Godfrey Bloom.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. That UKIP is a racist, xenophobic, homophobic and sexist organisation.
2. That extremist far right parties thrive on low voter turnout.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To condemn UKIP publicly on the basis of the above.
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2. To reaffirm our commitment to smashing the far right.
  3. To incorporate an expose on UKIP's racist, xenophobic, homophobic and sexist politics in our Get Out The Vote work in advance of the next European Parliament election.

## **NC\_SC\_14506 - Public Ownership of the Banks**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. The 2008 bank bailout cost £850 billion.
2. Britain's 1,000 wealthiest individuals own £450 billion
3. The Coalition has cut billions from education, welfare and health spending, while lowering taxes for the rich.
4. According to the Office of National Statistics, UK workers' average real-term hourly earnings have fallen 8.5% since 2009.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. This is a government of the rich, acting in the interests of the rich - using the crisis to attack jobs, wages, benefits and public services.
2. NUS believes in democracy - but democracy is limited when wealth and power are in the hands of a few.
3. If the vast wealth of society was socially owned and democratically controlled, not in the hands of a few, society could fund top quality free education, services, jobs and benefits for all in place of grotesque inequality and irrational waste of resources.
4. We should aim for a government which serves the interests of the majority (workers, students, service-users), taxing the rich and expropriating the banks to rebuild public services and create jobs.

### **Conference Resolves:**


1. To campaign for the TUC policy of "full public ownership of the banking sector and the creation of a publicly owned banking service, democratically and accountably managed" and for taxing the rich, to reverse cuts and fund services, education and jobs.

## **NC\_SC\_14507 - Fossil Free**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. The fossil fuel industry is driving the climate crisis
2. A report based on research from People & Planet, Platform and 350.org estimates that UK universities invest £5.2 billion in fossil fuel companies
3. Institutions' investments in fossil fuel companies contradict NUS policy and fundamentally undermine universities and colleges' rightful place as a public service run for the good of society.
4. Following extensive flooding, Dame Julia Slingo, the Met Office's chief scientist, said that "all the evidence suggests there is a link to climate change."
5. The worst effects of climate change can be avoided - but only with much greater political will and urgent action to cut carbon emissions.
6. The International Energy Agency report that increased 'fracking' would lead to a 3.5°C temperature rise, well above the 1.5°C acknowledged as the tipping point for runaway climate change.
7. To stop disastrous climate change, four fifths of all existing fossil fuels must be left in the ground.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. That the Government has failed to take action to reduce climate-changing carbon emissions
  2. That instead of taking urgent action on decarbonisation of our energy supply, the government have instead chosen to focus on lining the pockets of their friends in the fossil fuel industry, with a new dash for gas through fracking.
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### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To mobilise students to press the Government to take tougher action on climate change
2. To work with SUs to support People and Planet's 'Fossil Free' campaign, stepping up efforts to green campuses and force universities and colleges to divest from the fossil fuel industry.
3. To condemn the Tory & Liberal Democrat Government's new dash for polluting, expensive gas, and push instead for investment in energy efficiency & renewable energy to end the scandal of winter deaths and ensure we play our part in preventing dangerous climate change.
4. To collaborate with People and Planet, publicly support the Fossil Free UK campaign and make resources available via NUS Connect
5. To campaign against 'greenwashing' of the fossil fuel industry (sponsorship, donations and support)
6. To divest any investments in the fossil fuel industry and establish an ethical investment policy, ratified annually by the NEC

## **NC\_SC\_14508 - Equality for Students**

### **Conference Believes:**


1. That to truly improve student and long term resident relations, stereotypes of students as perpetrators of anti-social behaviour, litter dropping and crime, amongst other issues, should be actively challenged in coordination nationally, using a variety of techniques.
2. That students should not be discriminated against in decisions made within local communities, based upon stereotypes which are unfounded, unjustified and lack proper backing such as those seen recently in Cambridge under the motor proctor scheme and in Newcastle with car parking spaces in Jesmond.
3. That if students are truly at fault for issues, they should be treated equally and face the same penalties as those who are longer-term resident, instead of being unfairly discriminated against whilst sometimes lacking effective and appropriate representation within local government, community bodies and/or services.
4. That the National Union of Students has a significant role to play in combating issues between students and wider communities, exercising the influence and power it has with local government, community bodies and local groups.


### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To mandate the Vice President of Society and Citizenship to coordinate a national campaign with the aim of improving student relations with wider communities.
2. To lobby councils to stop implementing policies which single out student communities, such as the parking bans in Newcastle and Cambridge.
3. For the National Union of Students to conduct a widescale review of the mistreatment and discrimination of students based on their identification within the catch-all student stereotype.
4. To actively challenge student stereotypes which are promoted in the media and by politicians or organisations which seek to demonise students for issues which are not necessarily the fault of the student population.
5. For the National Union of Students to actively facilitate meetings and cooperative action between Students' Unions, local authorities and community organisations with the aim of promoting excellent relations between students and the wider community.

## **NC\_SC\_14509 - Opposing the Immigration Bill**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. The immigration bill proposed by the Government will have a dramatic negative experience on the student's experience in UK.
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2. Many UK Universities have a large number of international students and it will affect students from all over the UK, as they would seek other places to study abroad which provides better educational experience.
  3. The bill threatens the welfare of international students in the UK.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. To investigate this issue and to lobby the Government to recognize the benefits of International Students.
2. To support Students' Union's in ensuring that they take a proactive approach to supporting International students.

## **NC\_SC\_14510 - Defend Our Right to Resist**

**Conference Believes:**

1. In response to the significant upturn in the student movement - with increasing numbers of students taking part in protests, occupations and campaigns against austerity and attacks on our education - there has been a huge crackdown.
2. Students have been suspended from their courses, violently attacked by the police, kettled in freezing weather for hours and even banned from protesting on central London campuses.
3. The goal of the crackdown is simple - to intimidate and deter a new generation of students from fighting back against the government's assault on our education and our future.
4. The crackdown on student protest is part of a wider assault on the right to resist in society - with increasing attacks on trade unions and the passing of the draconian 'gagging bill'.

**Conference Resolves To:**

1. To support all students facing unlawful and unfair victimisation as a result of the crackdown on the right to resist austerity, including with legal advice and by creating a legal fund to support students facing charges or legal costs as a result of repression.
2. Continue to campaign against the 'Gagging Bill' and demand that it is reversed.
3. Work with the People's Assembly Against Austerity in their 'Hands Off Our Unions' campaign and support the trade union movement against attacks on their right to organise.

## **NC\_SC\_14511 - Saving Polar Bears, One Plastic Bottle at A time**

**Conference Believes:**


1. Universities and Colleges have worked hard to improve the recycling facilities on campuses; however, they can go further in order to improve what they provide for students.
2. 1 recycled glass bottle would save enough energy to power a computer for 25 minutes.
3. Up to 60% of the rubbish that ends up in the dustbin could be recycled.
4. 9 out of 10 people would recycle more if it were made easier.
5. 12.5 million tons of paper and cardboard are used annually in the UK.
6. Each year, new students arrive on campus and need to be shown that their University or College is working hard to tackle a problem that affects their future.

**Conference Further Believes:**

1. More should be done to help students recycle.
2. It is important for students to be able to recycle and for it to become part of a daily routine, therefore by having recycling points on campuses, it will make it easier for students to do so and become familiar with recycling.
3. That NUS UK should be at the forefront of this issue promoting and growing awareness of the issue of recycling.

**Conference Resolves:**

1. Lobby Universities and Colleges to encourage students to be recycling as much as possible.
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2. Lobby Universities and Colleges to have energy saving and/or motion sensored lights in all buildings by 2016.
  3. Lobby Universities and Colleges to have recycling points on campuses, especially around Halls of Residences, enabling students to actively recycling and improve their surrounding areas.
  4. Lobby Councils to provide recycling collections at Halls of Residences, as frequently as the residential areas within their Council region.



# Union Development Policy passed at National Conference 2014


## NC\_UD\_14401: Empowering Active Students


### Preamble

This motion seeks to bring together the three arms of 'union development' defining how it will progress over the course of the next 18 months. Firstly, by empowering active students, we are working to give the knowledge and tools to individuals to create change. Secondly, empowered individuals need to work collectively to be effective; which is why we'll work to create and connect networks of student communities in and around the UK. Lastly, these communities of students will come together in students' unions; here, we must carry on with our work transforming these hubs of activity.

Traditionally, the majority of our work has been carried out in students' unions. As time progresses, we believe that this will begin to change and that more and more, students will focus their time in various communities within the union and that this is where NUS should shift its focus. Through supporting these communities and putting infrastructure in place to do this, we will be able to increase activism, enable greater levels of change and ultimately re-shape further and higher education for the future

### Conference Believes:

2. Working with and through students' unions, students have a valuable and vital impact on their education and wider society.
  3. Students are at their most powerful when we organise collectively.
  4. Organising collectively through an independent body is a fundamental right of all students in further and higher education.
  5. Thousands of students, especially in further education, work based learning, small and specialist institutions and some private providers are denied the right to organise collectively.
  6. All students should have power to make a difference, to get involved and organise to take action around the issues they are most passionate about.
  7. Democracy gives power to the people and by being at the vanguard of democratising students' unions, universities, colleges and wider society, we will secure more power for students to make a difference and have an impact on the world around them.
  8. That power gives the opportunity to cause and provoke change and politics is the way we decide what kinds of impacts we think are important. While many students don't necessarily think of themselves as being "political", we believe that all students have power. Being political is therefore necessary to make a difference as being political is simply a way for students to organise and take action around the most widely and deeply felt issues.
  9. Measuring and articulating what students' unions do – impact – allows us to both think critically about what our activities aim to achieve and also better understand the benefits of our work. From strategic benefits of thinking critically about activity aims, to democratic benefits of the increased transparency brought about through the regular measurement and publication of impact.
  10. For too long measuring and articulating impact has been limited to numbers and figures about volume – simply recording how many students are in societies rather than demonstrating the impact that those societies are having on their members, their institution and wider society.
  11. The UK government have cut between £20 billion from 2010 and 2015; this agenda is affecting all sectors of the economy and society - including the voluntary sector and its beneficiaries.
  12. NUS have a duty to support the strategic development of its membership
  13. NUS are a voluntary organisation who seek to empower, inspire and educate its membership
  14. Strategic plans are a tool used to help define the purpose and nature of organisations
  15. Strong unions should support student representatives via research engaged data which back student opinion
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16. Students' Unions are change agents who require the tools to enable activists to impact positively on society
  17. Transferable modes of best practice should be accessible to all unions
  18. Campaigners need to respond to, and understand, new policy initiatives and ways of working in a challenging and changing environment.
  19. VAT has been raised – considerably increasing the voluntary sector's cost base – and transitional relief on Gift Aid has been ended.


**Conference Resolves:**

1. To create an online hub of resources that demonstrates the power of the student movement as a force for good in society by using and analysing impact from across the student movement.
2. This evidence base should be used in multiple ways including campaigning nationally to articulate the value of students' unions and inspiring more students to take part in civil society.
3. To support students' unions to bring about social and political change in the formal curriculum of their institution alongside co- and extra-curricular activities.
4. To deliver a programme supporting students' unions to measure and articulate the impact of campaigning activity more effectively and develop a set of common metrics for measuring impact. This includes moving from quantitative to qualitative measurement tools.
5. To work with students' unions across the country to promote new and good practice models of democracy – and promote these principles further beyond their union. We will also ensure this work complements and supports our efforts to diversify elections in students' unions.
6. To create an organisational approach to empowering communities that exist in students' unions from clubs and societies to campaign groups. This should be reflected in our Quality Mark and strategic support to students' unions.
7. NUS to build modes of best practice from organisations in the sector for executive handovers into training modules for sabbaticals
8. NUS to consolidate resources into research and policy projects with the aim of lobbying and campaigning to influence the government's decision making
9. NUS to collaborate with voluntary organisations by building a resource hub that will outline how to create links with local organisations and what we can learn from them, for example community organising methods and communication tools.
10. Work in tandem with NCVO into making the voluntary sector a priority in public policy ahead of the General election 2015
11. NUS to localise strategic modelling NCVO have created to unions through bespoke training events

## **NC\_UD\_14402: Connecting Networks Of Student Communities**

**Conference Believes:**

1. Communities exist across all aspects of student life within the education system.
  2. That based on our initial research and mapping of student communities, there are a number of different communities;
    - a. Communities of Administration (e.g. Identifying with the university, union)
    - b. Communities of Location (e.g. where you live)
    - c. Communities of Values (e.g. your identity LGBT, women)
    - d. Communities of Interest (e.g. courses, clubs and societies)
  3. Students' Unions are trying to develop and involve a more diverse student population to engage and lead their unions but usually 'box' individuals and create structures that don't relate to where student communities are strong and active.
  4. Active communities with deep ties are found to be based around values and interests of students.
  5. The views of active and thriving communities should shape policy in students' unions. However, currently, unions put the majority of resources around administrative structures.
  6. Engaging and empowering communities that already exist to make a difference and create change is a priority.
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7. By working to engage existing groups of students, levels of engagement with groups of students typically seen as 'hard-to-reach' can be improved.
  8. Only by re-imagining what students' unions are and how they work, by thinking differently about the communities we work with, can we build lasting relationships and engage different groups, increasing participation with our unions.


#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To work with individuals, organisations and students' unions to fundamentally re-think how students' unions should achieve their ambitions with an aim to empower communities that already exist.
2. To research and create models of communities that students' unions can adapt that will allow unions to identify where communities lie and how they can empower them. We will draw on student development theory, so prevalent in the United States.
3. To deliver a programme of work with students' unions to re-think how their unions are structured, governed and how to disseminate power to communities of students. We will also work with students' union staff, through specialist groups, supporting what enabling these new models might look like.
4. To create a leadership development programme for student opportunity leaders on campus to ensure these community leaders have the capacity to build membership and grow activities in their unions.
5. To create an online training toolkit for clubs, societies, sports clubs and volunteering programmes to train students to build activists in readiness for the 2015 general election and beyond.
6. To create new programmes of about devolving power to student interest groups
7. To fund a series of pilot projects to embed new models of democratic participation, ensuring a diverse mix of students' unions are chosen to test our work.

### **NC\_UD\_14403: Regional Partnerships**

#### **Conference Believes:**


1. Further Education and Higher Education unions would benefit from working closely with each other in local regions.
  2. The development of the community organising agenda is exciting and must explore other ways unions can collaborate.
  3. Students' Unions nationally (including NUS) talk about a united student movement however, many unions fail to work with other local unions.
  4. In many Union's nationally, they strive to make sure all elections (local, European and General) are a win for students and by linking together local unions they can amplify the student voice.
  5. Not all student issues are down to the institution they study in, many exist because of the locality they live in. For example, housing, crime, employment and travel campaigns can be city wide or regional issues.
  6. There are lessons to be learnt from both HE and FE institutions and that city wide partnerships should be about mutual respect and development.
  7. Students' unions already work hard to explore what changes they can make locally, including influencing local politics and decision makers.
  8. There are already fantastic examples of students' unions working together across cities, such as; Glasgow Student Forum, NUS London Area, Birmingham Students' Unions. These groups all set their own agenda we must learn from them.
  9. Full Time Officers at the National Union of Students have effective representation with trade unions through "Union Representatives"
  10. While Students' Union Officers are entitled to join trade unions, there is low take up of this
  11. That different Universities organise themselves into 'groups' based on areas such as research excellence and teaching and learning.
  12. That a number of Universities do not sit within a mission group.
  13. That Student Unions do not have system that mirrors that of the University they sit alongside.
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14. That in response to several conference mandates in previous years, NUS has increased its work to support Small and Specialist Students' Unions
  15. Given the large proportion of the membership these Unions constitute, this work is to be celebrated and encouraged
  16. For the same reason, this work should now be expanded

**Conference further believes:**

1. In a time where collaboration is key and tertiary education is at the forefront of our minds, it is time that we embrace working together in city FE and HE students' unions where so many of our students experience the same issues.
2. Birmingham HE Students' Unions have created its own group of Executive Officers that meet throughout the year to discuss joint campaigns, concerns and developments to variable success. This group does not have any staff support or formal organization, consequently regular meetings are not as successful as hoped. Therefore, the results from these meetings are ineffective in its current form.
3. Trade Unions can have difficulties understanding the role of Students' Union Officers, which is a deterrent to some Officers joining
4. Better representation through trade unions, and more support in this, would enable Officers to receive better working conditions
5. That there are a number of benefits for institutions of being in a group.
6. That Student Unions could benefit from a similar set up to that of University mission groups through working collaboratively and sharing best practice with those institutions that they are similar to.
7. That Student Unions tend to work and associate with those Unions geographically close to them rather than Unions which are similar.
8. That we should develop a union mission group system.
9. That most Small and Specialist Unions have limited financial resources and thus are limited in the staff they can hire
10. That these Unions must often choose, when creating staff structures, whether to prioritise front-line services for students (such as advice workers, clubs and societies coordinators or campaign staff etc.) or back room operations (such as managers, finance staff etc.)
11. That this can leave these unions, and their members, without sufficient provision in either area
12. That by combining resources many of these unions could work together to provide support and training to current staff and possibly even some back room services
13. That even larger, more resource-rich unions may find sharing back room staffing more efficient

**Conference Resolves:**

1. NUS should work with Students' Unions to develop partnerships across FE and HE unions.
  2. NUS should hold more regional events and networking opportunities to encourage initial dialogue between unions around an area.
  3. Unaffiliated Students' Union should be invited to attend.
  4. NUS should identify ways that unions can share resources and capacity and pilot opening facilities where applicable to students from a number of institutions.
  5. Where current collaboration is working, NUS should highlight and share examples of how and why this works well.
  6. NUS should support local campaigns that develop from regional meetings with staff and resources.
  7. NUS should develop guides about breaking down local politics and decision makers, making campaigning for students locally more understandable.
  8. An elected NUS officer will be expected to attend at least one of these meetings each year.
  9. Every meeting will be attended by an elected NUS representative (NEC).
  10. An elected NUS Vice President/President will be expected to attend at least one of these meetings each year.
  11. To investigate the possibility of facilitating regional representation in trade unions for Students' Union Officers.
  12. To mandate the Vice President Union Development to undertake research into how Student Unions work collaboratively and share best practice.
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13. To mandate the Vice President Union Development to establish a mission group system for Student Unions based on the indicators that fall within the Quality Mark and undertake extensive consultation with Student Unions regarding what networks would help them.
  14. That NUS will investigate the possibility of either NUS providing back room services centrally or NUS facilitating unions (either by region or relative need) jointly purchasing back room services
  15. To support the creation of a Small and Specialist Staff Network
  16. To support (and, where possible, finance) this group to create training events which these unions could not otherwise finance on their own
  17. To support Small and Specialist Unions in reviewing their staff structures and help them identify hiring and training priorities

## **NC\_UD\_14404: Democratic Students' Unions**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. Clear, open, democratic structures are essential to develop the culture of involvement, mobilisation, activism and accountability we need.
2. The interests of student unions and management are fundamentally counterposed
3. In FE, unions frequently do not have access to basic resources, such as membership lists and means of communicating with members
4. Where unions are effective, they will come under pressure from management to stop their activities. This should be resisted.
5. University and College managers are increasingly seeking to interfere with union autonomy in relation to campus dissent and protest. At the University of Birmingham, a candidate was suspended by the University in relation to protest activity and almost prevented from running in elections.
6. Liberation is a key part of being a democratic union. Having structures that reflect Liberation is not a magic bullet, but it is good and we should urge CMs to introduce and improve them in line with NUS Liberation Campaigns' guidance.


### **Conference Resolves:**

1. NUS to issue democratic guidance to Union's which encourage;
  - a. Important decisions should be made by students and their elected representatives.
  - b. Autonomous Liberation campaigns in every Students' Union, and where possible full-time Liberation officers.
2. To campaign for Students' Union independence, including:
  - a. A basic and legally enforceable minimum standard for unions in FE and HE, including access to independent resources and space; means of communication with members; automatic annual elections; security of funding; and existence and representation within institutional structures.
  - b. Independent and accountable returning officers for union elections, who have no employment or trusteeship connection with the institution.
  - c. A drive to create full-time elected officers in small and specialist and FE unions.
3. NUS to issue guidance to Students' Unions that, where students are suspended from the University as a result of their participation in protest activity, they should continue to remain full members of their Students' Union.
4. To issue guidance, and include in the Summer Training programmes, on how officers and student reps can tackle and work around undue interference of university management and senior SU staff.

## **NC\_UD\_14405: From 1994 to 2034: The Next Generation of the Student Movement**

### **Conference Believes:**



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1. The 1994 Education Act and the 2006 Charities Act together establish the principle of independent, well-governed and representative students' unions.
  2. As the further and higher education sectors have evolved students' unions have as well; they are diverse in mission, scope and levels of resource.
  3. Students' unions are increasingly interwoven into the fabric of national education regulation: across the UK we have a presumption of student participation in governance, frameworks for learner and student voice, management of complaints and appeals and student engagement.
  4. Twenty years on from the Education Act it is timely to reaffirm the right of every student to organise and seek representation through an independent students' union, and to reflect on how students' unions might evolve in the next twenty years.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To consult widely within the student movement and with the further and higher education sectors on the development of a White Paper setting out proposals to ensure students' unions are recognised in law, continue to be well-governed and are sufficiently resourced to carry out their mission of amplifying the student voice, helping students be powerful and improving students' lives.
2. To consider the diverse purposes and activities of students' unions and how these might be more fully developed and supported in a complex and changing educational environment with multiple external pressures.
3. To explore the legal and regulatory frameworks for students' unions and lobby to strengthen these.
4. To use the current legal and regulatory frameworks available to us and any future legislation we may achieve to take steps to establish independent collective student representative bodies where they currently do not exist.

### **NC\_UD\_14406: For A Living Wage in Our Institutions**

#### **Conference Believes:**

1. The highest pay in the HE sector averages £248,292 per year.
2. Many workers in universities are paid the National Minimum Wage, and workers across the sector have had their pay cut by 13% since 2008.
3. Many Universities and Colleges still employ large numbers of staff for less than the Living Wage, and often on highly casualised contracts.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**


1. All workers should be paid at least the Living Wage

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To support SUs campaigning for the Living Wage, and publicise how workers at University of London and elsewhere have won it through industrial action.
2. To call for all students unions to lead by example in paying all workers, including student staff, the Living Wage.

### **NC\_UD\_14407: SU Autonomy And Building Pan-London Representation**

#### **Conference Believes:**

1. There are 800,000 students in London. These members face acute and specific issues, and if mobilised could make a massive impact. NEC recognised London as an Area in autumn.
  2. Following a review, the University of London has declared its intention to shut down its federal student union, ULU, from August 2014, which alongside college unions represents around a third of all HE students in London. No student sat on the Review Panel, and no student sat on any body which approved it.
  3. ULU and NUS London have adopted positions opposing the outcomes of the ULU Review and campaigning for ULU's building and services to remain in student hands.
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### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. An injury to one is an injury to all. Regardless of how unique ULU is, the shutting down of ULU presents a major attack on students' right to organise and on SU independence.
2. There has been a failure of leadership in NUS HQ around this issue and pan-London representation more generally, despite having policy to campaign on it and enthusiasm from CMs.
3. Other regions should have a better advertised opportunity to explore the possibility of Area organisations.

### **Conference Resolves:**


1. To condemn and campaign against the processes and outcomes of the ULU Review
2. To affirm the sovereignty of NUS London Area, and support NUS London and ULU in their campaigns to keep ULU's building and services in student hands.
3. To actively explore the feasibility and desirability of creating NUS Areas in other parts of the country, in consultation with unions.



## **NC\_UD\_14408: The Next Opportunity...**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. This is the first year NUS has taken Student opportunities (work on societies, sports, volunteering and media) seriously and welcomes the work in this area.
2. The work carried out has supported student activities officers and staff across the country create a national network and support each other to develop student groups.
3. NUS should continue to prioritise work in this area and recognise the important role student opportunities have within our students' unions.
4. The work supporting students' unions diversify their candidates in elections and breaking down barriers in our democracy is important and needs to be reflected in the democracy of our student groups.
5. There are many national organisations that support student groups we can create further partnerships with, especially within media and charities.
6. There has been a lack of work with Student Enterprise, something which would add value for student groups and student social enterprises.
7. There has been a worrying increase of institutions taking over this activity from students unions and we absolutely believe they should be run by students for students.
8. There are still too many places where timetabling is still a problem and there is no dedicated time for students to play sport, volunteer, work and run societies.
9. It is positive that a number of independent national associations exist to promote areas of student activity such as National Association of Student Television Association (NASTA) and National Student Fundraising Association (NaSFA).

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To hold a student opportunities conference during the summer, bringing staff and officers together and invite external organisations such as BUCS, Media groups, volunteering and charities to support this.
  2. To develop more resources and support for unions that have no to very few clubs, societies and media.
  3. Research the diversity of leadership in student groups, produce specific guidance and innovative structures to support the research that allows our student groups to be more reflective of their members.
  4. Run pilot projects connecting student groups across cities and regions, bringing together campaigning societies and clubs to tackle local issues.
  5. To create an external partner database and that brings together national organisations and charities that have student links, creating a 'way into students' union manual' to educate them on how to best work with students' unions.
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6. Develop a local version that supports students' unions create local ties with key partners that support student groups with common causes. Capture where strong community ties exist and share in other areas.
  7. Identify organisations that fund student enterprise and hold a students' union enterprise events and training, pulling in funding to unions and student groups for social enterprise.
  8. NUS should hold a national enquiry into timetabling and extra circular activity, this should include bringing BUCS, volunteer organisations and institution representation to have the debate nationally about the importance of dedicated timetabling space.
  9. To support and encourage the formation of a National Association of Student Societies and Activities (NASSA) and support the establishment of associated awards.
  10. To support the development of a national accreditation brand of 'Societies Stripes' awarded for individual recognition for outstanding contribution towards student Societies and Activities.'
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# Welfare Policy Passed At National Conference 2014



## NC\_W\_14301: Homes Fit For Study


### **NUS Conference Believes:**

1. Students live across a wide range of housing types including rented accommodation, halls, social housing and in their family home.
2. The private rented sector has recently come under increased scrutiny, following on from the revelation that the number of people living in the sector had doubled in the ten years to the 2011 Census.
3. Currently, anyone can set up as a letting agent, and as long as their fees are made clear, letting agents outside Scotland are allowed to charge whatever level of fees they like.
4. The NUS/Unipol Accommodation Costs Survey found that the proportion of purpose-built student accommodation under private ownership is now believed to be 42 percent. This has increased from just four percent ten years ago.
5. Private purpose built student accommodation is generally much more expensive than that owned by an institution, with the same research showing that on average it is 18 per cent more expensive per week (last year sitting at £140.07 per week compared to £118.49 for institutions).
6. In London, the average rent charged last year by a private provider was £220.97 equating to over £10,000 per year.
7. In addition to providing less affordable non-en suite or twin rooms than institutions, private providers are less likely to provide rooms for students with dependent children or accessible rooms for disabled students.
8. There are many students who live in the family home – either in the form of students who live with parents/carers or students who live with partners and/or dependents.
9. It is a legal requirement for money taken from tenants in the form of a deposit to be placed in a government approved tenancy deposit scheme that protects both tenants and landlords in how that money is returned or deducted.
10. There are three tenancy deposit schemes. In 2013 there was a fourth set up which ended up withdrawing putting students deposits at risk of being returned.
11. The Localism Act 2011 made changes to tenancy deposit protection, tightening up how landlords were required to have deposits protected and requirements to what tenants needed to be provided with in order to be informed about their deposit.
12. Fuel bills have risen over 37% since October 2010.
13. The provision of gas, electricity and other domestic fuels is a public good provided by liberalised markets.
14. Students belong to a broader category of consumers who are penalised because of issues with direct debits, landlords and a lack of general market knowledge.
15. Fuel poverty results from having to spend more than 10% of your income on energy and is at near record levels.
16. Students suffering from fuel poverty are at risk of academic failure and social stigma.
17. The government's unfair cut to welfare support for 18 year-olds in FE colleges means thousands of vulnerable students will be left without access to vital student welfare support.
18. Student housing rent increases year on year, whether students are living in university halls, privatised halls or private rented accommodation. In far too many cases student loans and grants barely cover the cost of accommodation.


### **NUS Conference Further Believes:**


1. All people have the right to a decent home in which they feel comfortable, safe and secure.
  2. Housing provides the basis from which students can thrive in their studies, jobs and personal development.
  3. The UK is in the midst of a serious housing crisis. This affects both students and non-students alike with the government failing to take any real action to generate affordable housing supply, and universities increasingly following a market-driven model for accommodation
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4. The variety in student housing is significant, with no such thing as an 'average student house'.
  5. Tenants are exploited by greedy landlords and letting agents and students are disproportionately affected by this, seen to be less worthy or more vulnerable tenants.
  6. The Homes Fit for Study research provides an opportunity to influence the agenda around the private rented sector, taking advantage of a strong evidence base.
  7. Article 4 Directions to limit increases in shared housing have now reduced the availability of shared housing for students in many places in England.
  8. In Wales, there are signs that there is some appetite to extend Article 4 powers across the border.
  9. True change in the private rented sector will only come with both tenants' better understanding their rights and legislation and enforcement being improved.
  10. NUS should therefore aim to take simultaneously both a bottom-up (tenant empowerment) and top-down (influencing decision-makers) approach.
  11. NUS should use its voice to condemn unfair practises in the private rented sector calling out those who wish to profit from tenant exploitation
  12. There is, in particular, an absence of information, advice and guidance on housing in FE, both for students during their current course, and for making the progression to HE.
  13. The student population using the private rented sector acts as an effective springboard for wider discussions about renting given many students will continue to rent after study.
  14. There should be an open and honest relationship between accommodation providers, students' unions and students.
  15. Students' unions should be actively and comprehensively engaged in the rent-setting, ongoing strategy and future development plans for purpose-built accommodation their members live in.
  16. Currently it is not clear how students' unions can engage in these processes, as relationships between institutions and private providers can be unclear, making it difficult to know who to approach.
  17. Students' unions are rarely invited to participate in conversations on rent-setting and strategy in purpose built accommodation.
  18. Most of NUS' work around housing consists of aiming to support students who live in rented accommodation.
  19. Students living in the family home can face huge barriers in feeling a part of both their academic and social community.
  20. Since changes from the Localism Act were brought in in 2012, we haven't seen enough improvement in the amount of student tenants both understanding how deposits work and enforcement of action against unfair charges.
  21. That anecdotally we have seen landlords and agents move away from taking deposits and instead charging non-refundable admin fees to cover costs of damage which is unfair to students.
  22. That where a fee is being taken it is in students best interests for it to be a deposit that is protected in a tenancy deposit scheme, giving tenants protection when it comes to getting their money back.
  23. With three different deposit schemes in place it can be difficult for students to find out if their deposit is protected.
  24. Rising energy bills are a barrier to all students homes being fit for study.
  25. Firms entering the market and explicitly targeting students with bill-splitting schemes represent a serious risk of mis-selling to students.
  26. New rules from Ofgem (the energy regulator) forcing energy companies to use standing charges will hit students who only live in a property for part of the year or try to cut down on their consumption generally.
  27. Many landlords insist on controlling students' energy supplier via their AST, despite this being an unenforceable contractual term.
  28. The ever-increasing cost of energy threatens to make living away from home less of an option for many students.
  29. Some new and unusual energy companies may reflect students' needs and lifestyle.
  30. The crisis in student housing is related to both the corporatisation of universities and a broader housing crisis.
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31. The Financial Times reports average student rents of £190 a week in London, £124 in Leeds, £119 in Manchester, £115 in Birmingham and £114 in Nottingham. The Telegraph reports £90 a week in Norwich, Exeter, and Cambridge.
  32. Out-of-control prices and issues like quality of accommodation and facilities are often linked to privatisation or outsourcing of halls.
  33. Private accommodation brings similar issues, as well as distinctive ones about contracts, bad landlords, maintenance, etc.
  34. The crisis in student housing is related to both the corporatisation of universities and a broader housing crisis: lack of affordable housing, decline of council housing, soaring private rents, cowboy landlords.
  35. A lack of well-paid part-time work, rising energy, rent costs and increasing travel costs means that many students are forced into taking multiple jobs or working excessive hours, hitting the welfare of students hard.


#### **NUS Conference Resolves:**


1. To lobby strongly for regulation of letting agents, including a banning of fees, and an amendment to the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Bill to ensure that tenants are awarded the same protection already awarded to homebuyers.
  2. To call for compulsory smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors in all rented housing.
  3. To work with students' unions and other sector partners to assess the impact on access to affordable housing caused by Article 4 Directions.
  4. To create, in collaboration with others in the sector, modules of Tenant Activist Training which could be rolled out to students' unions across the UK.
  5. To ensure that the content of the above training is applicable to further education encouraging city-wide project collaboration across students' unions.
  6. Support the creation of tenants' unions and the engagement of students' unions with tenants' unions in the community.
  7. To support students' unions in the creation of letting agents and accreditation schemes locally, as well as to tackle the issues around rent guarantors.
  8. To work with the sector to produce guidelines for how accommodation providers should engage respectively with students and students' unions
  9. To continue to support students' unions to make the case for affordable and appropriate accommodation locally.
  10. To use the Homes Fit For Study research to identify numbers and patterns of students living in the family home.
  11. To provide guidance to students' unions on how to work effectively with students living in the family home.
  12. To ensure students living in the family home are considered in all aspects of NUS' work, including how pastoral support services work for them.
  13. To make the case that despite changes to tenancy deposit protection, many students are still unaware of their rights around protection and need to be empowered to take action where necessary to have their money rightfully returned.
  14. To call for better enforcement of action being taken against landlords who fail to place deposits in tenancy deposit schemes.
  15. To call for deposit protection to be logged on a national database that makes it easier for students to find out if their deposit is protected.
  16. For any national databases to be separated and set up in the nations where required.
  17. To develop relationships with tenancy deposit schemes to ensure that their information and services are student friendly and easy to use.
  18. For Tenant Activist Training to include information about how tenants can be empowered to use the tenancy deposit scheme to get their money back.
  19. To work with tenants unions to ensure that local housing markets respond to examples where landlords do not protect deposits and empower tenants to take action.
  20. To lobby against Ofgem rules on standing charges alongside the broad consumer movement.
  21. To investigate new companies offering bill-splitting services and assess what real service they provide.
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22. To run an empowerment campaign to enable students to better use direct debit (the cheapest way of paying for energy) and challenge landlords' behaviour in this area.
  23. To work with companies like Ebico (not for profit) and Co-operative Energy in marketing specific services for student households.
  24. Encourage the creation of housing campaign groups as a step towards tenants' unions on every campus.
  25. Develop a charter of demands also including universities acting as guarantors for international students; the abolition of letting agents fees; permanent tenancies; taxing empty and multiple homes; rent controls; a council house-building program.
  26. To produce materials on how to organise rent strikes.
  27. Encourage the creation of housing campaign groups as a step towards tenants' unions on every campus.
  28. Develop a charter of demands also including universities acting as guarantors for international students; the abolition of letting agents fees; the introduction of permanent tenancies; taxing empty and multiple homes; rent controls; a council house-building program.
  29. To produce materials on how to organise rent strikes.
  30. To work with trade unions to launch a major campaign to tackle the student cost of living crisis - for reduction in energy bills and travel costs by renationalising these monopolies; for job creation and a living wage; for rent controls to take on rip-off landlords.
  31. To organise major campaigns to reduce spiralling university accommodation costs and promote student tenant rights.
  32. To fight all cuts facing student welfare services, including the proposed 17.5% cut facing colleges

## **NC\_W\_14302: Local Public Services**

### **NUS Conference Believes:**


1. There have been significant cuts to local authority budgets in recent years
  2. The restructuring of the NHS in England has shifted decision-making power to new bodies and individuals.
  3. In NUS polling, just 14 per cent of students felt that they could influence local public services in their area, compared to 69 per cent who felt that they should be able to.
  4. Services are operating under increasingly tight financial imperatives.
  5. Students don't always believe that they fit into the categories that services are designed to provide for, limiting their access to services.
  6. The strength of local public services rely on those in power in Local Authorities to make good decisions, reject cuts and prioritise putting money into areas that help the most vulnerable.
  7. Many councillors elected in the last set of local elections stood on platform full of anti-student rhetoric promising to 'save local areas from 'studentification'
  8. Since then students have been villainised and blamed solely for issues relating to litter, anti-social behaviour, crime and poor upkeep of local neighbourhoods.
  9. The fight to defend the NHS continues, including important victories like Save Lewisham Hospital and innovative campaigns like the 4:1 Campaign for guaranteed patient-staff ratios.
  10. Personal Extenuating Circumstances (PEC) procedures at HE and FE institutions require the student claiming to provide extensive evidence, applications can be stressful and distressing, often worsening the impact of the illness or other condition causing PEC.
  11. Many GPs and other Healthcare providers impose charges for evidence, particularly sick notes for less than seven days and doctor's letters, charging for evidence may put further stress and strain on students, both mentally and financially.
  12. Students may require evidence of illness early in their course, sometimes even before they have had the opportunity to register or meet with a GP in the area.
  13. Charges within the NHS should be minimal and only where justified because services are outside the basic NHS package of care and/or to act as a deterrent to frivolous services, neither of which are applicable to charges for evidence.
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14. Institutions and healthcare providers should attempt to minimise the impact of PEC applications on students, including where possible moving towards a system where students report PECs through online systems and establishing better links between healthcare providers and institutions.

#### **NUS Conference Further Believes:**

1. Students are a part of their local communities and should be engaged in the design and delivery of local services.
2. Decision-making processes are often opaque and not accessible to students or students' unions, and students are too often ignored by those making the decisions.
3. Many local authorities have sought to cut costs on things which affect students, including a number who are turning off streetlights for large proportions of the night.
4. As decision-making and service providers become more fragmented, services could become detrimentally inadequate for students, particularly disabled students who have complex health needs.
5. The measures for a health levy for migrants contained within the Immigration Bill would represent a substantial cost for international students coming to the UK which is both immoral and economically imbalanced.
6. 15 years on from the Macpherson Report, there remains a problem with both the perception and reality of institutional racism within the police force. Students' unions should be able to determine whether and how they wish to engage with their local force in relation to the safety of their students.
7. Public transport is becoming increasingly expensive, and there are often no subsidies available to students.
8. Students on placement who receive support for this are often required to pay for transport costs upfront and there can be a long delay in them being reimbursed.
9. In addition, there is inadequate access to transport in many locations, especially rural areas, and services are often not accessible for disabled students.
10. NUS should create active partnerships with other organisations and bodies to campaign in this area for impact that goes beyond students.
11. Local services should be designed to meet the needs of people who live there. Local authorities should make decisions about students' and local people's access to services based not on their mode, place or level of study but on their need and means to pay.
12. All students should have access to services provided by local authorities, but current provision does not always reflect the needs of mature and part time students.
13. Students are being made a scapegoat for poor decisions and actions in Local Authorities.
14. If students were mobilised to vote they could be a huge swing in local elections, particularly in campus cities.
15. Local democracy outside of elections can also have a huge impact on matters of student welfare through consultations, authority plans and council recommendations.


#### **NUS Conference Resolves:**


1. To reiterate its opposition to the restructure and the backdoor privatisation of the NHS in England and work with key partners to secure a better NHS across the UK in future.
  2. To work with those expert organisations already leading on saving the NHS and lend our support to it.
  3. To create a manifesto for partnership for students and public services.
  4. To produce guidance for students' unions on how to engage with a range of different decision-makers and service providers on the full range of local service issues including health, transport, crime and policing and waste and recycling.
  5. To support efforts to campaign against the switching off of streetlights.
  6. To campaign against proposals for a health levy placed on migrants to the UK.
  7. To call for automatic GP registration on enrolment.
  8. To examine the 'joins' between community and mental health services provided by universities and colleges, to consider how these could work together more effectively.
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9. To acknowledge the nuanced views amongst students and students' unions regarding the police and whether they should be welcome on campuses and work with the Society and Citizenship zone to support students' unions who wish to implement 'Cops off Campus' policies.
  10. To unite in fighting against racism present in all public services.
  11. To support students' unions in trying to get representation on local decision-making bodies which relate to key public services.
  12. To lobby for a national transport subsidy to ensure that students can access discounted fares on buses and trains, prioritising groups with more acute needs in relation to transport such as FE and placement students.
  13. To support students' unions in lobbying for their institution to offer loans for placement students who have a delay before receiving reimbursements, as well as transport bursaries for students who receive no support for the placement element of their course.
  14. To ensure that work on local public services is inclusive of the Nations.
  15. To call for inclusive provision of all local authority services, including sexual health and transport, ensuring all public services are delivered and funded in way that allows all those who need it to avail themselves of it.
  16. To support students' unions in their efforts to have an impact on local elections in both 2014 and 2015.
  17. To mobilise students to vote in local elections and condemn candidates standing on factually incorrect anti-student rhetoric.
  18. To help make the case for the importance of sufficient health services, good transport links, rigorous and effective housing regulation and adequate waste management services in local areas and the impact this can have on students.
  19. To provide support for students' unions on understanding cycles of local democracy and how to have an impact, such as through taking part in consultations, lobbying councillors, getting speaking rights at council meetings etc.
  20. Organise a national activist event on defending the NHS and the issues implications for student welfare, working with welfare officers, the 4:1 Campaign, the Students for the NHS network and local campaign groups.
  21. In the run to the election, campaign with trade unions for Labour to make clear commitments to reverse cuts, privatisation and outsourcing and rebuild the NHS as a comprehensive public service.
  22. To lobby appropriate bodies, including national and regional NHS representatives, to first cap, then work to eliminate, charges for evidence.
  23. To support students' unions in campaigning against charges by local practitioners.
  24. To consult and seek the support of institutions, Healthwatch, The Kings Fund, and other bodies with regards to these objectives.

## **NC\_W\_14303: Stand Up To Racism**

### **NUS Conference Believes:**

1. NUS must actively campaign against racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism as these are dangers which threaten the welfare of millions of students.
  2. As the cuts bite politicians are increasingly calling for draconian 'anti-immigration' policies and whipping up hostility to migrant workers and Black communities in a bid to distract people from the real cause of falling living standards: the government's austerity agenda.
  3. Our campuses are not immune from this racist climate. The Home Office has attempted to deport over 2,500 international students from London Met and the authorities at a Birmingham college attempted to ban Muslim women from their right to choose to wear religious dress. Both of these attacks were only stopped by big campaigns from NUS.
  4. The student movement must never give a platform to fascists because fascism seeks to eliminate free, speech, democracy and annihilate its opponents and minorities.
  5. The lesson of the 1930s was that the Nazis used violence to gain power and carry out a Holocaust. They slaughtered millions – in the gas chambers and concentration camps – of Jewish people, Eastern Europeans, communists, trade unionists, Romani, LGBT and disabled people.
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6. Giving fascists a platform in the student movement destroys the safe spaces our campuses must be for the diverse student population.
  7. While the far right is in disarray, there is no room for complacency.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. The conditions which have fed the far rights' growth are still there:
  - a. Widespread hostility to migrants, encouraged by a government and press promoting the idea that immigration is a problem;
  - b. Widespread anti-Muslim racism;
  - c. Huge cuts and perceptions of a struggle for scarce resources;
  - d. A Labour Party which has failed to challenge the Tory narrative on immigration and cuts;
2. While Unite Against Fascism is widely discredited for its lack of democracy, its manoeuvring with regard to local campaigns, recent sexual assault scandals and its wider politics, there is a need for a national anti-fascist network.
3. We need an anti-fascist network which;
  - a. is genuinely democratic, allowing activists to debate the way forward;
  - b. combines mass mobilisation with willingness to confront the far right;
  - c. fights for demands to the social demagoguery of the far right: black and white, all religions and none, British-born and migrant - unite for jobs, homes and services for all.

#### **NUS Conference Resolves:**


1. To actively challenge racism, Islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism.
2. To reaffirm NUS' No Platform for Fascists policy and continue to campaign for its full implementation within NUS and all Students' Unions.
3. Reaffirm our support for NUS organising an annual Anti-Racism/Anti-Fascism Conference and providing adequate resources for this work.
4. Work with trade unions and anti-racist organisations to mark UN Anti-Racism Day with 'Stand Up To Racism' events.
5. Mobilise for anti-fascists protests and campaigning.
6. Produce dedicated NUS anti-fascist materials including this perspective.
7. Not affiliate to UAF or any national anti-fascist campaign, but as appropriate work with a variety of local and national campaigns.

### **NC\_W\_14304: Childcare For All And Not Just For One**

#### **Conference Believes:**

1. Students with children are lacking support in childcare.
2. Eligibility for part-time students to receive childcare funding or grants are not available.
3. Funding is only provided to those that have registered child-minders or nursery providers.
4. Student parents are made to pay initial deposits for nursery out of their own pockets.
5. Student parents are unable to attend lessons consistently because of childcare issues.
6. The outcome of having to withdraw from a course due to the lack of childcare provisions could impact on the mental state of the Student parent which could cause implications to their welfare.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. Further access to funding made available for part-time student parents to contribute to childcare.
  2. More funding made available for students parents to contribute to childcare.
  3. Allowances to be made for unregistered child-minders (family and friends) to receive payment as incentives for looking after children whilst parents are studying or work placements.
  4. Work placements and course learning hours to be combined together to make up the overall course hours as there is also a childcare cost in completing work placements.
  5. More support provided to student parents in terms of childcare issues.
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## NC\_W\_14305: Care Leavers In Education

### Conference Believes:

1. Children and Young People who have been looked after ("in care") are more likely to see the inside of a prison than the inside of a university.
2. The Scottish Government recently passed the Children & Young People Bill which includes for the first time a "Right of Return" for looked after young people to return to their care placement to the age of 21, providing parity with their non-looked after peers.
3. As of 24th broken down as follows: England – 73, Scotland – 9, NI – 1 and all 8 of the Universities in Wales. Many colleges have recently achieved or are working towards the Buttle Quality mark for colleges which was introduced in 2012.
4. The Who Cares? Trust has produced an HE handbook for care leavers, a guide which sets out exactly what universities and colleges across England and Scotland offer care-experienced students. As an example of best practice, Glasgow Caledonian University offers free 52 week accommodation to students coming from a looked-after background.
5. The care leavers grant provided by the Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS) has been claimed 7 times in the last 8 years.
6. Buttle UK has been working closely with the Scottish Funding Council to embed the principles of the Buttle Quality mark into Outcome agreements.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. Looked after children face serious disruption in their education due to frequent moves.
2. Staff at our institutions are passionate about supporting care-experienced students but lack clear guidance on how best to do this.
3. If Glasgow Caledonian University can offer free 52 week accommodation to care-experienced students then so can Oxford University.
4. Education changes lives. OECD data indicates that life expectancy is strongly associated with education.
5. The Buttle Quality Mark provides a framework to improve and accredit support for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. This kind of support must become the statutory responsibility of our Universities and Colleges.
6. It is vital that NUS develops understanding of where people with care experience sit within our liberation campaigns.

### Conference Resolves:


1. For the Vice-President HE and Vice-President Welfare to work with The Who Cares? Trust and ensure that all HE institutions in the UK are represented in future editions of the HE handbook.
2. NUS to collaborate with Buttle UK on promoting the Buttle Quality mark to all UK colleges and universities.
3. NUS to lobby all relevant funding bodies to embed statutory support for care leavers.
4. NUS to research and work to better the lives of care leavers across the UK. February 2014 there are 91 Universities in the UK with the Buttle Quality Mark


## NC\_W\_14306: Mental Health – Away From Awareness, Towards Action

### Conference Believes:

1. This year the Mental Health Summit brought together for the first time students' union officers and staff, external mental health and health practitioners, institutional academic and support staff to discuss mental health and how we can improve it for students.

### Conference Further Believes:

1. NUS should be striving to create positive change around mental health
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2. The Time to Change campaign has been a huge success in changing the rhetoric around mental health and supporting campaigning to move from awareness to action with over 60 students' unions and institutions signing up in the last year
  3. That discussions from the summit provided some exciting suggestions for creating this change

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To develop ways that mental health support and understanding can be embedded into the structures of students unions by supporting unions to:
  - a. Lobby for relevant and appropriate training for all staff
  - b. Ensuring that academic policies do not cause undue additional mental distress for students experiencing mental health issues
  - c. Ensuring support services and institutional policies are clearly advertised at recruitment and pre-arrival stage and that disclosure of current or previous mental health problems is actively encouraged at application stage
  - d. Integrate mental health into the widening participation agenda, both nationally and locally by providing outreach to people who may not have continued in education as a result of their mental health problems and including mental health in OFFA agreements
2. Help students unions to win on achieving well-supported, appropriate services for students, which are responsive to the feedback of students and service users and flexible to students needs both in terms of the type of service (i.e. not a one size fits all, counselling for everyone approach), but also the nature of the service (i.e. number of sessions available, services available in the evenings where possible)
3. Support students unions to develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services

### **NC\_W\_14307: Condemn "Student Rights" And Support Islamophobia Awareness**

#### **Conference Believes:**

1. That Student Rights is an organisation claiming to support 'freedom from extremism' [1]\* on UK university campuses and mostly criticises speakers it sees as 'extremists' who have been invited by Islamic and Palestinian societies [2, 23], but has in the past expressed opposition to student union 'no-platform' policy for the BNP [3] though it has since stated that its policy has changed and it now supports no platform for fascists.
  2. That Student Rights was established in 2009 as a reaction to what it calls 'increasing political extremism' [1] on campus – which director Raheem Kassam is reported to have said is a reference to a wave of peaceful occupations that took place on UK campuses to protest Israel's bombing of Gaza in Operation Cast Lead [2].
  3. That Student Rights' Director Raheem Kassam was also the Executive Director of the right-wing website, The Commentator, until recently [4] – known for publishing articles such as this [5]. He is the founder of Trending Central [6], another right-wing "news" website, and has held various positions in the controversial neoconservative think tank The Henry Jackson Society [7]. Press reports that he was setting up a UK arm of the Tea Party have so far failed to materialise [8].
  4. That Student Rights has only recently confirmed that it is a project of The Henry Jackson Society – a neoconservative think tank whose associate director, Douglas Murray, has argued that "conditions for Muslims in Europe must be made harder across the board" and "all immigration into Europe from Muslim countries must stop" [9] – but is not transparent about its origins or funding on its website or materials.
  5. That Student Rights' most recent report on gender segregation [10], focusing on Islamic society events, has been described as deeply flawed in its methodology [11], and failed in almost every case to determine whether segregation was enforced or if people were voluntarily choosing to sit where they want to, and presented the phenomenon as 'part of a wider, discriminatory trend' on campuses [10, p. 17] which resulted in headlines in the mainstream media associating gender segregation with 'extremism' [12].
  6. That the Institute of Race Relations has noted with concern [13] that Student Rights' work and reporting has been used by far-right groups to target a Muslim student event [14] which led to
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reported threats of violence and the event subsequently having to be cancelled by the university [15].

7. That LSE, Goldsmith's, Birkbeck, Kingston and UCL Student Unions have voted in favour of condemning Student Rights for its overwhelming focus on Muslim students, the way its approach tends to bypass students themselves and its lack of transparency about its links to The Henry Jackson Society (16, 17, 18, 19).
8. That NUS President 2011-13, Liam Burns said that we need to "challenge the right wing bile that is spouted by groups like Student Rights and people like Douglas Murray"; and that NUS VP Welfare 2012-13, Pete Mercer, condemned Student Rights' approach as a "witch-hunt" [20].
9. That the grassroots student campaign 'Real Student Rights' which aims to expose and oppose Student Rights is supported by NUS Black Students Officer (2013-14) Aaron Kiely; ULU Black Students Officer (2013-14) Maham Hashmi-Khan; NUS VP Welfare Officers for 2012-13 and 2013-14 Pete Mercer and Colum McGuire; and ULU President (2012-14) Michael Chessum among others [21].
10. That due to the activities of groups like Student Rights, some Muslim students are often left feeling that university staff and even fellow students are insufficiently supportive of their rights on campus which is detrimental to their university experience as individuals and to universities as a whole in terms of equal political participation, good campus relations and cohesion in the student body.

#### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. That the claims Student Rights makes to the press have often been sensationalist and misleading, designed to grab alarmist headlines about so-called 'extremism' on campus, regardless of the impact on students; and Student Rights' director Raheem Kassam – who called students who voted for the 'Real Student Rights' motion in SUs voicing concerns about his organisation 'fools' – continues to show disdain for students [22].
2. That whether intentional or not, it is deeply damaging that Student Rights' approach – which tends to bypass students themselves – should lead to a situation in which far-right groups come onto a campus, creating a climate in which students feel persecuted and threatened and potentially endangering students' welfare.
3. That Student Rights' activities fuel Islamophobia, by disproportionately and unfairly targeting Muslim students, contributing to their marginalisation and ostracisation, damaging campus cohesion and feeding into a growing trend of Islamophobic discourse in wider society which should always be challenged.
4. That sexism, racism and homophobia are problems not confined to certain sectors of society and should, like all forms of discrimination, be challenged and opposed without contributing to the marginalisation of particular groups.
5. That Student Rights legitimacy is wholly questionable given its limited or non-existent links to actual students, inconsistency on the issue of no-platform policies, creation in reaction to peaceful pro-Palestinian activism, and in particular its lack of transparency about its origins, funding, and links to The Henry Jackson Society – a think tank which has been widely criticised for comments made by its staff perceived to be Islamophobic [9].
6. That it is not the place of any external organisation – particularly one as non-transparent and dubiously connected as Student Rights – to undermine Student Unions' autonomy or interfere with co-operation between the union and university in their work to ensure that pre-existing guidelines regarding external speakers are followed.

#### **Conference Resolves:**

1. The NUS Officer to release a public statement/open letter addressed to Student Rights criticising their lack of transparency, sensationalism, divisive and counter-productive activities and disproportionate preoccupation with Muslim students and calling on them to drastically change their approach and mentality. The statement should also outline NUS' commitment to challenging Islamophobia along with all other forms of prejudice and discrimination.
2. The NUS Officer to write to the university Student Unions, making explicit students' concerns about the effect Student Rights' activities have on students' welfare, campus cohesion and freedom of

speech on campus, as well as re-iterating the union's desire to maintain its autonomy in determining guidelines on external speakers in co-operation with relevant stakeholders such as the university, without undue outside interference.

3. The NUS Officer to maintain ongoing communication and to report back to the NUS on any developments including asking the Student Union's to inform NUS of any attempts by Student Rights to lobby them regarding any student groups' activities.
4. To circulate the 'Real Student Rights' petition via email / social media.
5. To write to the UUK and AOC, making explicit our concerns about the group Student Rights, and the effect that its activities have on students welfare, campus cohesion and on freedom of speech on campus as well as re-iterating the NUS policy of opposing and disallowing any form of hate speech on campus and its desire to maintain its autonomy in determining the boundaries of this remit without outside interference.
6. To encourage students unions, university management and university press offices to both resist unfair targeting of Muslim students, their events and political campaigns and encourage them to publicly condemn Islamophobia, Student Rights and any similar groups to the press when individuals students or their Muslim student population as a whole is unfairly singled out or targeted

\* Where there is a number in brackets e.g. [1] there is a footnote which has not been outlined here but the version with the footnotes is available on request

## NC\_W\_14308: A New EMA


### Conference Believes:

1. That the EMA in England was abolished by the Coalition Government in the 2010 spending review, despite widespread opposition and clear evidence of its impact on participation, retention, and attainment
2. That the decision was based on a flawed reading of one research report, and which the author said was the wrong conclusion to take from his work
3. That the EMA in England was replaced by the discretionary 16-19 Bursary Fund, with a total budget of £180m, only a third the size of the EMA budget
4. That duty on local authorities to ensure adequate transport in order for those aged 16-19 to access FE is routinely ignored
5. That research by Barnardo's has found that the 16-19 Bursary Fund is inadequate to meet the needs of learners and has created a 'postcode lottery' of support around the country
6. That the EMA has been retained in the three devolved nations, though with each making different policy changes over time
7. That the participation age will rise to 18 by 2015 – which will mean a need for more support, not less

### Conference Further Believes:

1. That an entitlement-based scheme for learners in FE is the fairest means of distributing resources
2. That the EMA system previously in place was imperfect and did not adequately take into account the needs of learners with larger families, or changing circumstances
3. That the £30 maximum rate of EMA was never increased over its lifetime and as it lost value it blunted the effectiveness of EMA
4. That simply restoring EMA without reform would be to miss an important opportunity to address its flaws
5. That any new scheme should retain a small discretionary fund for hardship and unexpected costs, as was the case prior to 2010
6. With the general election just one year away, it is vital that NUS builds a movement to press politicians to commit to bring back a weekly grant for students in Further Education.

### Conference Resolves:

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1. To campaign for an EMA replacement that restores an entitlement to learners but addresses the flaws in the original scheme and to make it a major priority to press MPs and political parties to commit to ahead of the General Election.
  2. To ensure that any proposed scheme remains as simple as possible to understand and administer
  3. To make the case through our campaign that a new EMA is not simply an incentive scheme but a necessary means of support for learners in FE
  4. To empower FE unions to make the case on a local level
  5. To consider how the scope of a new EMA can be extended to learners older than 19
  6. To continue to defend EMA in the nations and build a campaign for improvements in levels of financial support to students.

## **NC\_W\_14309: International Students**

### **Conference Believes:**


1. That education is a right to everyone, regardless of nationality.
2. That this government is using international students as a scapegoat to meet racist immigration targets.
3. That this government, as well as many of our institutions, treat international students as cash cows.
4. That international students have the right to work in the UK.
5. That international students should be treated with respect, and all monitoring should be low-impact.

### **Conferences Resolves:**

1. That University fees for international students should be fixed.
2. That international students should not be charged for using the NHS.
3. NUS should run a campaign highlighting the non-economic benefits of having international students on our campuses bring.
4. For now, Universities should minimise the impact of UKBA by putting in place non-invasive monitoring, integrated with ordinary attendance procedures to comply with regulations.
5. NUS should campaign for UKBA to cease systematic monitoring of overseas students at all Universities and focus on institutions where there has been evidence of incompetence.
6. The government should abandon the plans of monitoring students through landlords.
7. The NUS should campaign to bring back post-study Visas for international students.

## **NC\_W\_14310: Access without Support Is Not Opportunity**

### **Conference Believes:**

1. Our discourse around Higher Education funding and student debt is focused on tuition fees, not on student financial support.
  2. NUS's 2012 Priority campaign was the 'Pound in your Pocket' survey.
  3. Similar surveys are being conducted this year in Wales and Northern Ireland.
  4. None of the 2012 priority campaign activity has yet translated into a sustained nationwide campaign on student financial support.
  5. This year, the Scottish Government committed to above-inflation rises in student financial support. Other nations have yet to see the same.
  6. Universities are increasingly exploring removing some institutional financial support to invest in outreach activity, and OFFA (the Office for Fair Access) appears to be encouraging them to do so.
  7. Universities with strong records on access cannot possibly afford to offer all of their students the amount of support they really need.
  8. The Access to Learning Fund is an emergency and discretionary hardship fund to provide local support to those students in the direst financial need and from the most vulnerable groups.
  9. The Access to Learning Fund stood at £37m this year and faces uncertainty over its existence for next year and in the future in its current form.
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### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. Student financial support is a key priority for our Higher Education campaign if we are serious about wanting students to stay in education, succeed, and thrive.
2. Student financial support is equally as important as how university tuition is funded.
3. No condemnation of the current system of Higher Education funding is complete without critiquing the shoddy state of student financial support.
4. No discussion of student debt is complete without acknowledging the burden of maintenance loans.
5. It is the responsibility of national governments, not just our institutions, to ensure that students in Higher Education have the necessary financial support to succeed.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To make fairer, better funded student financial support a key 'ask' in the 2015 General Election campaign, alongside similar calls for students in Further Education.
2. To conduct further national research on the impact of financial hardship on students' attainment, extra-curricular participation, and prospects after graduation.
3. To continue to fight for student bursaries, but to acknowledge that in properly-funded governments system of student financial support, universities could focus on more targeted support and outreach.
4. To extend this call for fairer and better funded financial support to students in postgraduate study, not just those students who currently receive support.
5. To campaign for reinstatement of any cuts to both Students Opportunities Fund and Access to Learning Fund.
6. To lobby for ring-fenced funding of hardship funds.

## **NC\_W\_14311: Students and HIV/AIDS**


### **Conference Believes:**

1. That HIV/AIDS exists, almost 100,000 people are HIV+ in the UK, and people of all gender identities and sexual orientations are affected.
2. For too long HIV/AIDS has been seen as a Gay mans issue, and that recently, even within this community; campaigning, awareness and action against the spread of the virus has decreased.
3. That stigma around HIV+ people is rife.
4. That testing for HIV is just a part of a full sexual health screening.
5. That HIV denialist exist, and that conspiracy films such as "House of Numbers" have no place on our campuses.

### **Conference Further Believes:**

1. According to the National AIDS Trust (2012) 48% of people living with HIV were probably exposed via Heterosexual Contact, while 43% were men who have sex with men.
2. 33% of HIV+ people in the UK are Women.
3. Black African, Caribbean and Asian people make up 48% of people living with HIV, yet are less than 10% of the UK population.

### **Conference Resolves:**

1. To champion HIV testing, research and campaigning outside of the LGBT community
  2. For the Welfare Zone and others to create relevant resources for events such as World AIDS Day which will be promoted to all SUs and not just the LGBT Societies.
  3. To denounce HIV denialist propaganda and conspiracy theories which spread stigma and mistruths about HIV+ people.
  4. To actively work with NUS USI on their campaign to lift the blanket life time blood donation ban on MSM.
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