

#FixIntFees

International student fixed-fee guarantees

Research and Campaign Pack

Fixed Fees Guarantees

“The majority of international students studying across the UK feel unwelcome due to the UK Government and a significant amount would not recommend the UK as a place to study.”

This is what our recent research found ahead of the new Immigration Bill. We could easily argue that the global brand of UK Higher Education has been badly tarnished by policies with lazily defined and damaging immigration targets and ever-increasing tuition fees.

The UK Higher Education policy environment is aggressive and unforgiving. A space with almost no protections for international students, the UK HE funding system forces institutions to pursue fee income wherever they can find it. In this space, unregulated tuition fees are low-hanging fruit for universities and colleges, who must do what they can to survive the current HE reforms.

Increases in International Student tuition fees are being used to prop up the UK's flawed HE funding policy. We believe that two wrongs do not make a right. The cost of this? Over 50% of all non-EU international students face having their tuition fees increase by unforeseen amounts, often by thousands of pounds, each year of their programme.

These kinds of increase make a huge difference to retention, as our own Pound in Your Pocket research shows: students who pay unexpected additional costs of £1000 or more are twice as likely to consider leaving their programme. This is unfair, it's exploitative and it damages not only the prospects of many of our students, it is an unscrupulous policy which undermines UK Higher Education.

What's worse is that this is an almost hidden issue. It should be of no surprise that institutions don't shout about this fact when they are recruiting. Scrutiny of fee setting is also meaningless and tokenistic: The majority of students' unions we surveyed do not have any meaningful engagement around fee setting policies, other than at institutional governor level. The problem at this stage is that decisions at this level are nothing but a rubber-stamping exercise. We believe in working in partnership for the futures of our members, and students are being given no real ability to influence fee making decisions.

Our fixed fees campaign has one simple goal: to abolish in-course fee increases.

We want a fixed fee guarantee for all international students.

Lack of regulation presents a challenge in this campaign – fee level decisions are made locally, so our action must necessarily be local. It is within your institution's power to decide whether or not to exploit international students, and it is within your power to make this change.

My challenge to you is to act now. Use the **#FixIntFees** web app, lobby your institution, get signatures for our petition, talk to your members, share their stories and get those fixed fee guarantees. Share your successes so we can pile on the pressure nationally to make this change.

This campaign pack gives you the tools and information to fight for fixed fees locally. Let's use it to put this unfair practice to rest once and for all.

Daniel Stevens,

NUS International Students Officer

What's it all about?

In this toolkit we want to familiarise you with the issues and the arguments which can be used as well as the principles behind them. We want to help you understand who has fixed fee guarantees, how this came about and get you planning your campaign to get fixed fee guarantees for your members.

Principles – what we're arguing for

No surprises

The cost of a programme must be clear to students from the outset. Not only should students understand in-course costs, but they should know the tuition fee levels for the entire award.

Fixed Fee Guarantee

The tuition fee that a student pays in the first year of their study should be fixed for the duration of the programme, without any increase, for contiguous years within awards.

Interest Rate Guarantee

If the fixed fee guarantee is not possible, as an absolute minimum, fee increases must be limited to the level of inflation. The institution will not reserve the right to increase fees beyond this level, from year to year during a student's programme.

Governing fee levels

Students' representatives should be involved in all decisions on fee setting within an institution. Any change in fee levels should be justified, evidenced and transparent.

Support and flexibility: the Acts of God and War principle

Sometimes the cost of paying fees increase for reasons beyond the institution's control, such as with currency crises which impact the exchange rate; additionally environmental emergencies and financial sanctions during times of international conflict can interrupt fee payments. In these circumstances, institutions should pledge to be flexible and supportive in their fee arrangements.

Key Findings and Actions – winning the arguments!

In our research we found that:

- Almost two thirds of institutions do not guarantee fixed fees for cohorts of students.
- There is no pattern in terms of this practice – this is an issue for all institution types in all nations in the UK.
- That levels of fee increases range from the hundred to the thousands of pounds per year.
- Institutions with a fixed fee policy increase their tuition fees approximately 1% higher, per year than those without.
- Despite this, institutions with a fixed fee policy consistently have had lower fees than those without a guarantee, with few exceptions. Fixed fee policies do not lead to higher tuition fees.
- Arguments about inflationary increases (i.e. those based on costs increasing each year) do not necessarily hold, as CPI inflation (Consumer Price Index) since 2006, when compared to fee increases, do not relate to each other.
- In reality, therefore many fee increases are based on market flexibility, and are designed to increase income (not mitigate costs)
- Students' unions are not engaged in decision making around international student tuition fees.

The actions that you can do:

National Actions

- Encourage students to sign the [Change.org petition](#)
- [Sign the open letter on facebook if you are an officer](#) (Appendix C)
- Encourage students to fill out the [#FixIntFees totaliser](#)

Local Actions

- Use the [#FixIntFees totaliser](#)
- Use social media (Appendix D)
- Write to your students (Appendix F)
- Write to your Vice Chancellor (Appendix G)
- Send a press release out (Appendix I)
- Talk to students, collect case studies and share them
- Produce a paper for your University Council, similar to that produced by Aberdeen Students' Association (Appendix J)

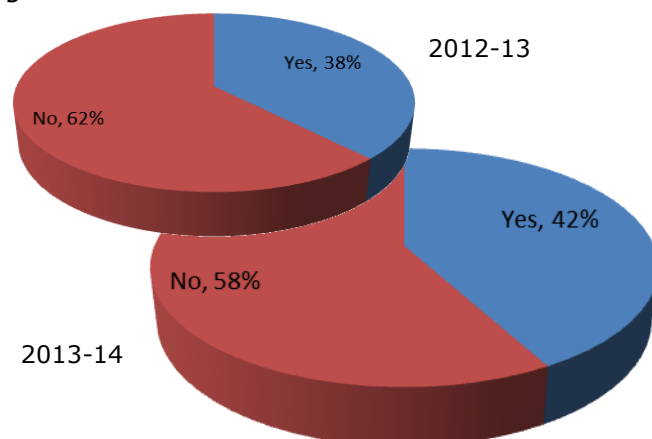


Research findings

Our findings cover prevalence of fixed fee policy, the impact of these policies and how fee decisions were made. We also drew on research from Universities UK¹ and the Reddin survey².

Fee level policies

Does your institution offer a fixed fee guarantee?



Universities UK conducts an annual survey of institutions, looking at a range of factors around international student fees. In the last two years, they have found that just over two-thirds of institutions do not offer a fixed fee guarantee.

The proportion of institutions offering a guarantee increased slightly, by 4% this year.

The 58% of institutions not offering a fee guarantee represent over 50% of all international students in the UK.

Our own survey of institutions matches these findings. On top of the overall proportion, we were able to pin-point which institutions guaranteed fees and which did not. We found that there is no pattern or group of institutions that tend to offer a guarantee, from pre-92 to post-92; small, specialist, research-intensive or large metropolitan; in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland – the list is completely mixed.

The findings of our survey reflect the market nature of international tuition fees. Fees are entirely unregulated and no government money goes into this part of the HE system.

Domestically, changes in HE funding have resulted in restricted teaching grant funding for home students, increased tuition fees and a liberalisation of student numbers. This has, in many cases, represented big losses to traditionally widening access institutions, and created aggressive competition amongst research intensive Russell Group institutions and particularly post-Robbins institutions such as Reading, Lancaster and Sussex.

Tuition fees have not covered the cut in teaching grants, and the result of stringent income regulation, domestically, coupled with zero regulation is an unfortunate drive for income from international and postgraduate students, who are also unregulated. In these areas, institutions are fully exposed to the market.

¹

<http://www.universitiesuk.ac.uk/highereducation/Pages/InternationalTuitionFeesSurvey2013-2014.aspx#.UwFakGes0uU>

² In 2002, following a distinguished academic career at LSE, Mike Reddin single-handedly published his first National Survey of UK Tuition Fees. <http://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/higher-education-staff/mike-reddin/>

Who guarantees fixed fees in the UK?

We surveyed students' unions and cross-checked institutional websites. Of the 86 institutions that got back to us, 34 guaranteed that international students' fees would not rise for the duration of their programme of study and they are listed below.

According to UUK's survey, there will be another 30 institutions, therefore, that have not been captured in our survey, but our findings were consistent, proportionately, with UUK's. We have chosen not to list those institutions that do not guarantee fixed fees.

We've listed institutions by their TRAC group³.

Group A Cardiff University University of Edinburgh King's College London University of Leeds University of Nottingham Queen Mary University of London Queen's University Belfast University of Southampton University of Liverpool	Group D Glasgow Caledonian University London Metropolitan University Manchester Metropolitan University University of Central Lancashire
Group B University of Aberdeen Aberystwyth University Bangor University Keele University University of Ulster	Group E Bournemouth University University of Chester Edge Hill University University of Huddersfield University of Bedfordshire University of the West of England
Group C University of Bradford University of Brighton De Montfort University Liverpool John Moores University	Group F Newman University University College Birmingham University of the Highlands and Islands
	Group G Arts University Bournemouth Falmouth University Leeds College of Music University for the Creative Arts

³ TRAC stands for Transparent Approach to Costing and is the standard methodology used by HE institutions in the UK for costing their main activities (such as teaching or research). Full list in Appendix A

The impact of a fixed fee policy

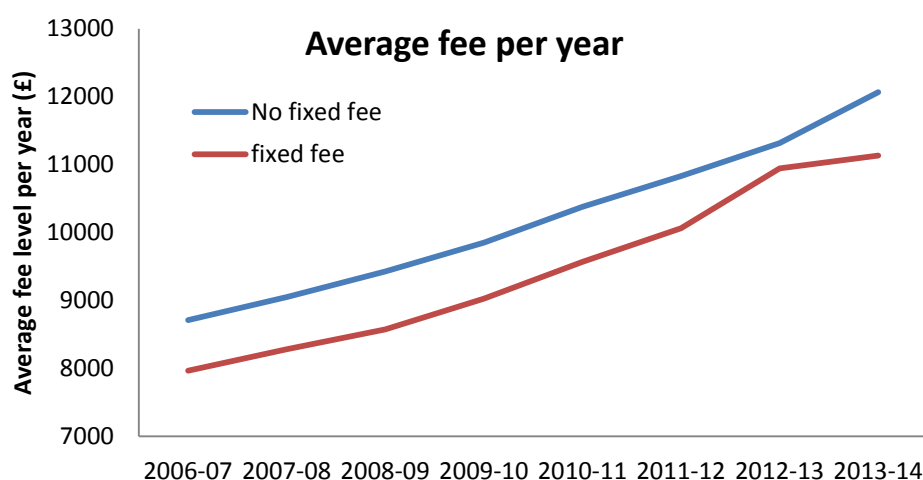
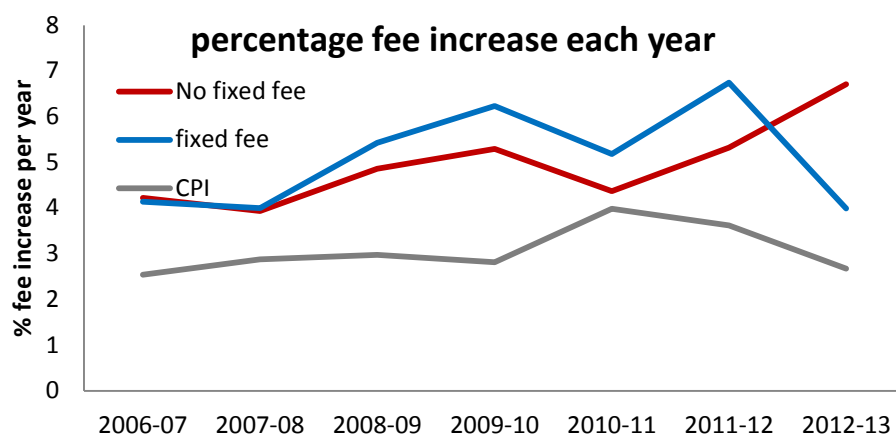
We looked at two areas where in-programme fee increases had impact – on student wellbeing and on fee levels themselves.

Using the Reddin survey and our own poll, we were able to compare fee increases and fee levels since 2006 between the 34 institutions that apply fee guarantees and the 52 that do not.

What we found was that institutions that offer a fixed fee guarantee have, until the last two years, increased fee levels by cohort by a higher proportion (approx. 1%) than those that increase fees for all of their students (including current ones) each year.

However, when we looked at overall fee levels, consistently, since 2006, institutions with fixed-fee guarantees have, on average, charged lower fees. The actual difference between the average fee levels is £1000.

We also found, when plotting CPI inflation against fee increases, that there is little relationship between fee increases and inflationary costs – indeed in 2010-11, when inflation peaked at 3.98%, average fee increases for all institutions actually dropped.

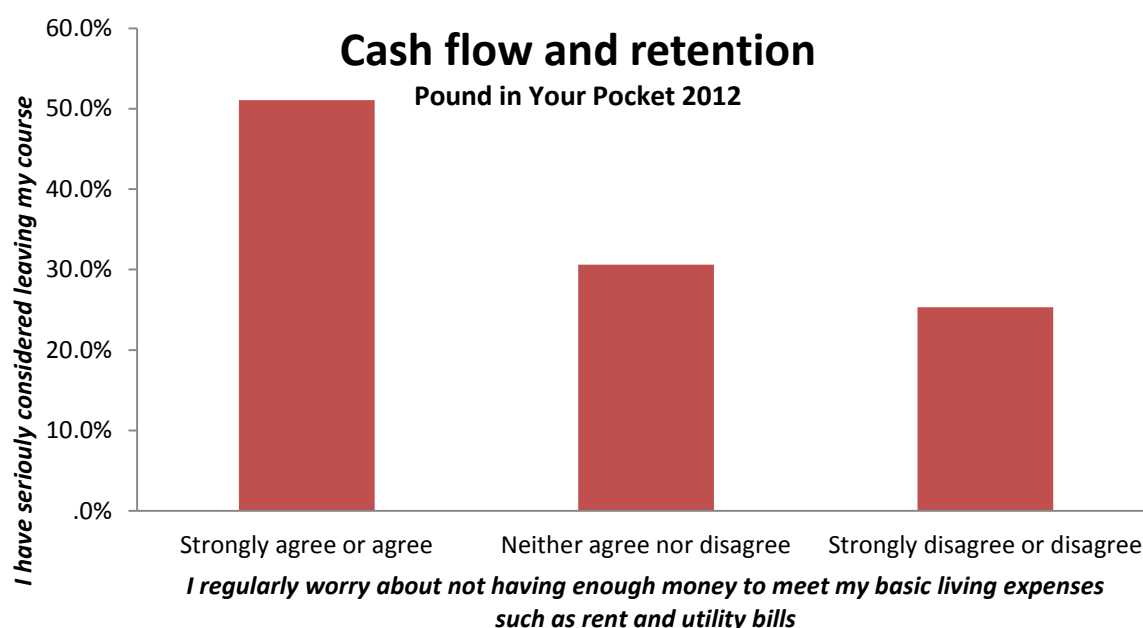
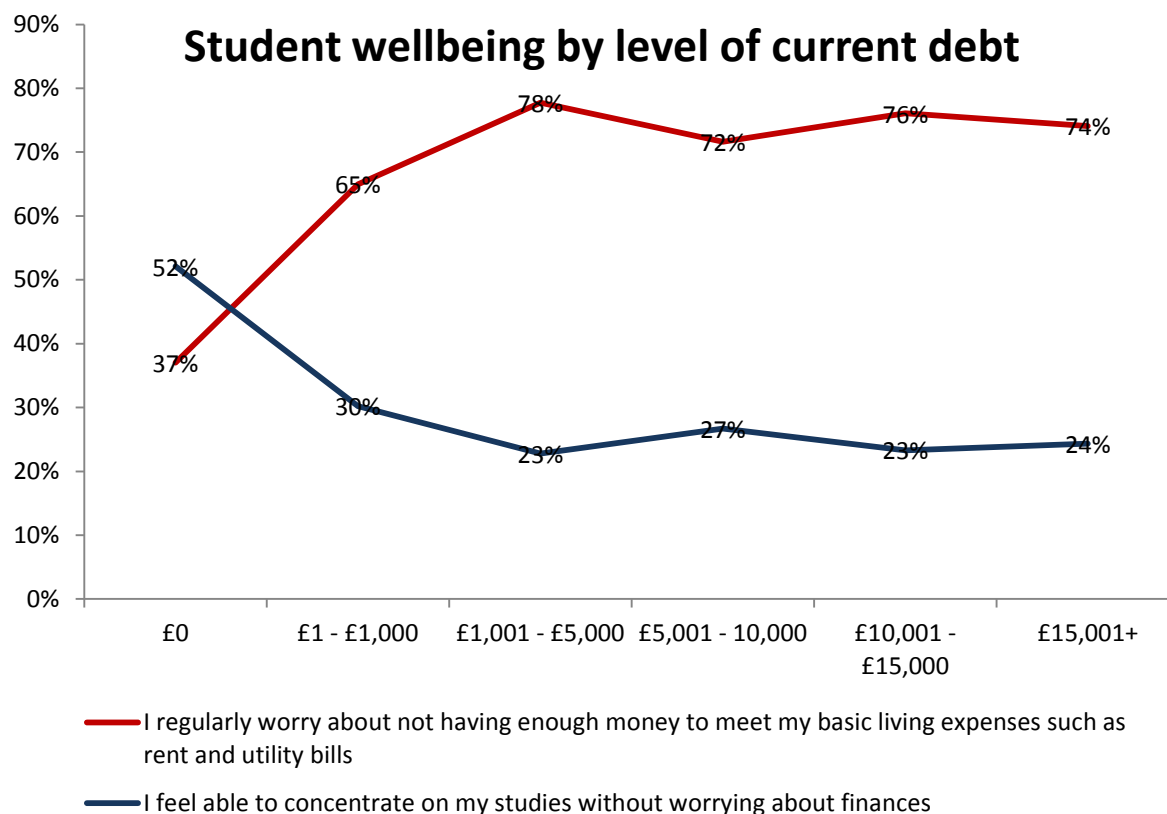


This difference in fee levels is consistent with all TRAC groups with one exception, in Group E, where fees increased in 2009/10 where three institutions we looked at had significantly higher fee increases (20-30%). A full list of TRAC Group fee comparisons is in Appendix B.

Student Wellbeing

NUS' Pound in Your Pocket research into student financial wellbeing in 2012 revealed that additional debts of around £1000 were enough to seriously threaten retention, because of the pressure on cash flow.

Cash flow issues also affected performance. Combined, these fee increases present an additional, unplanned increase in costs which seriously threaten retention.



Governance of fee levels

We also asked unions about their role in fee setting. Almost all unions answered that their only role in this area was at University Council or equivalent levels. It was fed back that this was not a practical way in which the union could have influence on fee setting. This lack of engagement means a lack of scrutiny on decisions and no opportunity to shape services as a result.

NUS submission to the Office for Fair Trading investigation into Higher Education

In December, NUS submitted the following to the OFT investigation into HE. As a part of our narrative on hidden and additional costs, we wanted to take the opportunity to bring in external views on this issue and explore the legal argument. The full text from this part of our submission can be found in Appendix E.

We believe that where institutions do not offer fixed fees to international students for their standard period of study, they are acting against guidance on price variation clauses, as expressed in the OFT's guidance for the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999. The OFT (2008: 57) state that '[a] clause allowing the supplier to increase the price – varying the most important of all the consumer's contractual obligations – has clear potential for unfairness'. Moreover, tuition fee rises are unlikely to relate directly to an increase in net costs to an institution; such variations should therefore be considered discretionary. In such cases the OFT (2008: 57) state '[a]ny purely discretionary right to set or vary a price after the consumer has become bound to pay is obviously objectionable'. In fact, even in non-discretionary cases, such variation clauses are 'open to abuse, because consumers can have no reasonable certainty that the increases imposed on them actually match net cost increases'.

Campaigning to change

In this section we want to give you the tools and advice to make use of the principles and issues involved so that you can win for your members. Remember that at the end of this report we have included resources and that more can be downloaded from NUS Connect.

NUS have produced some resources to help you campaign on this issue:

- [The totaliser can be put on your website](#). Students can enter the fee increase online and you can see how much your students have paid, unplanned, at the click of a button. You can take these results and present them in a letter to your Vice Chancellor or Principal.
- We have created a [Change.org petition](#) to ask the Department for Business Industry and Skills to investigate the issue.
- We have put up an open letter for Students' Unions to sign up to, to focus attention on the issue. (Appendix C)

These resources will help you get started but you can be as creative as you like. You could:

- Set up stalls with giant piggy banks for students to submit 'receipts' for their fee increases.
- Display a totaliser in your union.
- Show how students' money could be better spent e.g. '£600 fee increase could be two months' rent, or a flight home at Christmas.
- Collect case studies from your members to demonstrate the real impact of fee increases.
- Encourage your members to make use of the free text comments in the National Student Survey (NSS) where they have issues with fee increases.

This is a great opportunity to get students involved in a union campaign. Your students are your greatest asset and if you can inspire them to take action, they in turn will inspire others and not only will you stand a better chance getting a fixed-fee guarantee; you will be developing your membership as activists able to make change elsewhere in their lives.

Don't forget to let us know what you're doing so we can share your creative campaigning activity with other unions.

#FixIntFees

GRAND TOTAL OF ADDITIONAL
TUITION FEES PAID BY
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.

£29556.00

**** GRAND TOTAL ****

WE THINK IT'S UNFAIR TO
EXPECT INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS' TUITION FEES TO
INCREASE EACH YEAR DURING
THEIR COURSE. HOW MUCH
HAVE YOUR FEES INCREASED
SINCE LAST YEAR?

NAME:

EMAIL:

COURSE:

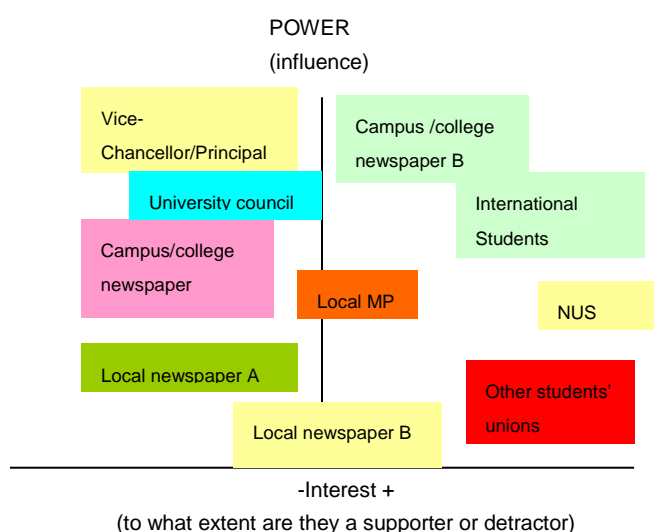
INSTITUTION:

COST:

SHARE: [GET EMBED CODE](#)

Power and Interest

Now you need to look at who to influence and how – map your potential allies and foes, as well as how to best use your resources.



Use this map to plot the level of influence every stakeholder has to help you achieve your campaign aim, relative to how positive and helpful their views are to your campaign.

Think about how you can work with allies to minimise effort and maximise impact. How do you need to talk to each of these groups? How do you increase power where needed?

Deliver and support

Consider using a range of tactics – a mixture of persuasion and pressure – depending on what is the best way to reach your influencers and achieve your aim.

- If you want to influence the Vice chancellor or Principal, letter writing by students and dialogue may be key. However, such actions may be more effective if bolstered by public support – so think about press, about real stories.
- Evidence can be collected: information from the **#FixIntFees** app and other activities could include visual stunts, public meetings, support from your local MP or sympathetic articles in local media.
- Involving students is critical – harness their expertise to help you – think about how to achieve maximum impact with minimal effort.

Take a snapshot – know where you are

An important factor in this campaign is to be able to demonstrate your impact.

Get to know who your international students are, which countries they are from, what a fee increases mean in real terms to your members' lives; get a snapshot of the statistics and some case studies from your advice service on how many students, from where are facing financial problems.

As you use the **#FixIntFees** app, you will be able to build a picture of the scale of the fee problem, with a list of students and their subject; you will gradually be able to describe how things are now.

Monitor and evaluate

Measure your impact and learn for the future – from the beginning of your campaign. Measure outcomes and impact not just outputs.

The following table can be used to help you in monitoring and evaluation. Choose what targets you need to reach for each output and outcome, what indicator you will use and then how to create the data.

Outputs	Indicator (if any)	Target	How to create the data
Campaign stickers	Number of stickers	3000	Record numbers given out
Letters to Vice-chancellor	Number of letters	300	Ask students to use online system
Outcomes	Indicator (if any)	Target	How to create the data
Fixed fee guaranteed	Written policy agreed	Senior management	Meeting attendance and reports
SU on fee setting committee	Formal role agreed	VC	Attendance
International students supported	Fund established	Student support committee	Policy passed

It's at this stage that you would re-evaluate – have you achieved all of your objectives? Do you need to re-plan and target your campaign? Look at your previous objectives and analyse the issue. Are there new areas to focus on, such as support, overall fee levels? This is how the campaigns cycle works.

While it is important to have a coherent strategy, events rarely follow rational stages.

Expect the unexpected – take advantage of opportunities as they emerge, but do so if they will help you achieve your aim.



Promoting Your Campaign

Lecture shouts

This is often the best way to reach out to students, because it is personal, and because they will be a captive audience! Make sure you arrange the talk beforehand with the relevant staff out of courtesy. Don't speak for any more than two minutes – many students will lose interest after this time, and it isn't really fair to take a big chunk out of someone's lecture. It's often useful to print basic campaign information, such as the website addresses, locations of campaign stalls, on acetate or to put on the OHP above your head while you do the talk, or bring a slide on a USB drive – students can then write down the details – obviously arrange this in advance!

Social Media

It's free and the vast majority of your members will use some form of social media. The biggest draws in the UK are still Facebook and Twitter, but you know your membership best, so you might be looking at Instagram or blog platforms like Wordpress depending on who your members are and what they study.

Remember the *social* bit of social media – put some personality in your messages. People respond to people more than organizations in most cases. Try to make use of the messaging above, make it relevant to your students – perhaps you have more postgraduates, part-time or mature students; perhaps you have a number of programmes with high tuition fees like medicine, engineering or architecture. Talk with your membership, not at them.

You can schedule an entire social media campaign by using platforms such as Hootsuite or Tweetdeck. This won't take long at all, but make sure that your campaign team and colleagues will retweet and share your messages, and don't ignore interactions with your fans and followers. Suggested posts are in Appendix D.

Engaging Student Media

This is an issue of core importance to your international students. You could invite student journalists to come and interview you, they could host one of the debates we listed above and perhaps they could also put a link to the **#FixIntFees** totaliser on their site.

If you are planning an activity as a part of the promotion of the survey, or if you are arranging a stunt with lots of students, you may wish to put out a press release, offering your media groups a photo opportunity.

Working with course reps, academics and societies

Your course reps will be able to advocate at a local level and you may be surprised how sympathetic academics will be to this issue. Place this as an agenda item on student liaison committees. How does the issue affect programmes?

Your societies are an amazing asset, if you have societies that celebrate culture or nationalities, explore what this issue means to them and how the campaign can be delivered through them and their members.

Appendices

- A – TRAC peer group institutions
- B – TRAC fee comparisons 2006-13
- C – Open letter
- D – Social Media
- E – NUS submission to the OFT
- F – Email to students
- G – Letter to Vice Chancellor/Principal
- H – Council Motion
- I – Press release
- J – Aberdeen Students' Association Policy Document

Appendix A – TRAC Peer Groups

Peer group A: Russell Group (all have medical schools) excluding LSE plus specialist medical schools

Peer group B: All other institutions with Research income of 22% or more of total income

Peer group C: Institutions with a Research income of 8%–21% of total income

Peer group D: Institutions with a Research income of between 5% and 8% of total income and those with a total income > £120m

Peer group E: Teaching institutions with a turnover of between £40m and £119m

Peer group F: Smaller teaching institutions

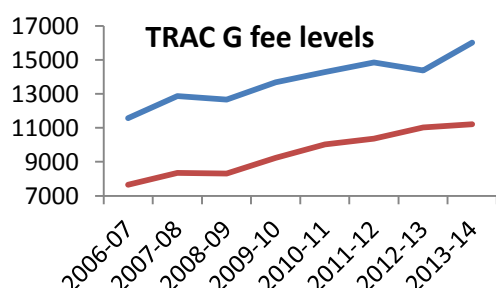
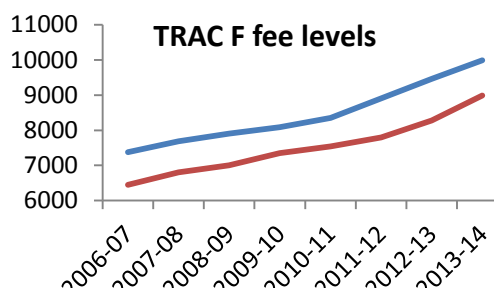
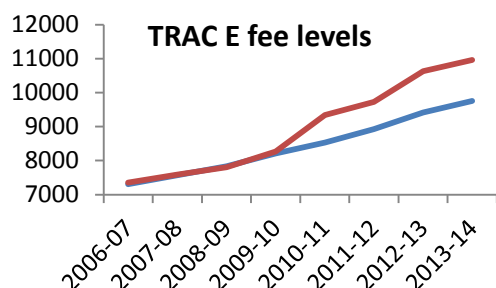
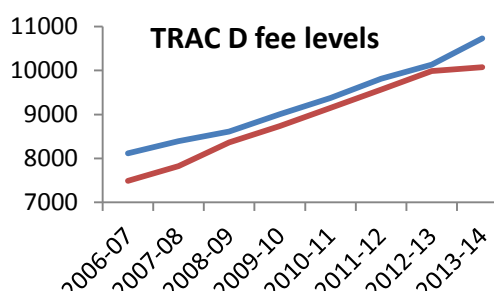
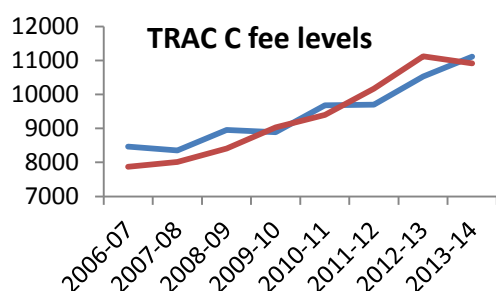
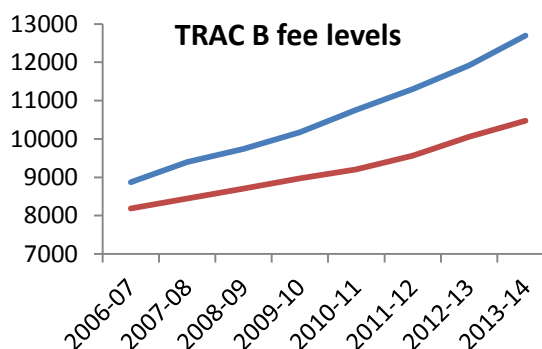
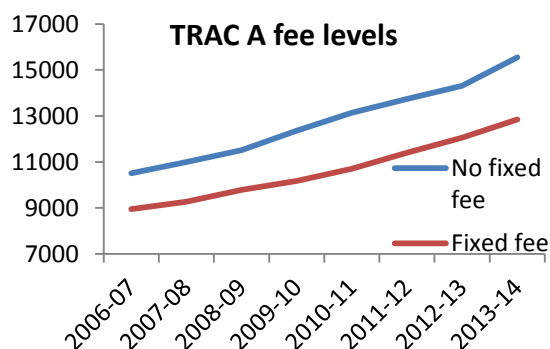
Peer group G: Specialist music/arts teaching institutions

Peer Group A	Peer Group B	Peer Group C
University of Birmingham University of Bristol University of Cambridge Institute of Cancer Research Imperial College London King's College London University of Leeds University of Leicester University of Liverpool London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine University of Manchester University of Newcastle upon Tyne University of Nottingham University of Oxford Queen Mary, University of London St George's Hospital Medical School University of Sheffield University of Southampton University College London University of Warwick University of Edinburgh University of Glasgow Queen's University Belfast Cardiff University	University of Bath Birkbeck College Cranfield University University of Durham University of East Anglia Institute of Education University of Essex University of Exeter Goldsmiths' College Keele University University of Kent Lancaster University Loughborough University School of Pharmacy University of Reading Royal Holloway, University of London University of Surrey University of Sussex University of York University of Aberdeen University of Dundee Heriot-Watt University University of St Andrews University of Strathclyde University of Ulster Aberystwyth University Bangor University Swansea University	Aston University University of Bradford University of Brighton Brunel University City University, London De Montfort University University of Hull Liverpool John Moores University London Business School London School of Economics and Political Science School of Oriental and African Studies University of Plymouth Royal Veterinary College University of Salford University of Abertay Dundee Queen Margaret University Edinburgh Scottish Agricultural College University of Stirling University of Wales Trinity Saint David

Peer Group D	Peer Group E	Peer Group F
Birmingham City University University of Central Lancashire University of Greenwich University of Hertfordshire Kingston University Leeds Metropolitan University University of London London Metropolitan University Manchester Metropolitan University Middlesex University University of Northumbria at Newcastle Nottingham Trent University Open University Oxford Brookes University University of Portsmouth Sheffield Hallam University University of the West of England, Bristol University of Westminster University of Wolverhampton Edinburgh Napier University Glasgow Caledonian University Robert Gordon University University of Glamorgan	Anglia Ruskin University University of Bedfordshire University of Bolton Bournemouth University Buckinghamshire New University Canterbury Christ Church University University of Chester Coventry University University of Cumbria University of Derby University of East London Edge Hill University University of Huddersfield University of Lincoln Liverpool Hope University London South Bank University University of Northampton Roehampton University Southampton Solent University Staffordshire University University of Sunderland Teesside University The University of West London University of the West of Scotland	Bath Spa University University College Birmingham Bishop Grosseteste University College, Lincoln University of Chichester University of Gloucestershire Harper Adams University College Leeds Trinity University College Newman University College University College Plymouth St Mark & St John Royal Agricultural College St Mary's University College University of Winchester University of Worcester Writtle College York St John University University of the Highlands and Islands Cardiff Metropolitan University University of Wales, Newport Swansea Metropolitan University
Peer Group G		
The Arts University College at Bournemouth Central School of Speech and Drama Courtauld Institute of Art University for the Creative Arts Conservatoire for Dance and Drama University College Falmouth Guildhall School of Music & Drama Heythrop College	Leeds College of Music Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts University of the Arts London Norwich University College of the Arts Ravensbourne Rose Bruford College Royal Academy of Music Royal College of Art	Royal College of Music Royal Northern College of Music Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance Edinburgh College of Art Glasgow School of Art Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Glyndwr University

Appendix B – TRAC Peer Group fee comparisons

This difference in fee levels is consistent with all TRAC groups with one exception, in Group E, where fees increased in 2009/10 where three institutions we looked at had significantly higher fee increases (20-30%). This could be due to the impact of the introduction of the points-based immigration system in 2009 which the report by the National Audit Office estimated “that implementing the latest rule changes could cost colleges £40 million annually.”⁴ The requirements of adhering to the PBS system for institutions without the necessary infrastructure will have caused problems in assessing risk in terms of fixing fee levels for students.



Appendix C – Open Letter

⁴ REPORT BY THE COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR GENERAL – National Audit Office

Home Office: UK Border Agency

Immigration: The Points Based System – Student Route; Ordered by the House of Commons

"Each year, NUS has found that up to 175,000 international students come to the UK in good faith only to find that the tuition fees for their course have increased without warning. Already paying high fees and budgeting meticulously, these rises threaten international students with hardship and worse: non-completion of their studies.

NUS research has found that at least 50% of Universities do not provide international students with a "fixed fee guarantee" and that their fees increase, during their programme, often by thousands of pounds. This could make a huge difference to international student retention, as NUS' Pound in Your Pocket research shows: students who pay unexpected additional costs of £1000 or more are three times more likely to leave their programme. Indeed, research from Universities UK suggests that the proportion of students impacted by fee changes could actually be much higher, with 62% of institutions, representing 58% of all international students without protection from rising fees during their course.

This is inexcusable, unjustifiable and extortionate.

NUS are calling on every institution to guarantee fixed international student fees. International students should not have the goal posts moved by institutions while they are here."

- Toni Pearce, NUS President
- Rachel Wenstone, NUS VP HE
- Daniel Stevens, NUS International Students Officer
- Stephanie Lloyd, NUS Wales President
- Beth Button, NUS Wales Deputy President
- Gordon Maloney, NUS Scotland President
- Robert Foster, NUS Scotland Vice President
- Rebecca Hall, NUS USI President
- Raechel Matthey, NUS VP Union Development
- Colum McGuire, NUS VP Welfare
- Joe Vinson, NUS VP FE
- Hannah Paterson, NUS Disabled Students Officer
- Kelley Temple, NUS Women's Officer
- Aaron Kiely, NUS Black Students' Officer
- Sarah Wright, NUS-USI Welfare Officer
- Aisling Gallagher, NUS-USI Women's Officer
- Emma Barnes, NUS NEC
- Rhiannon Durrans, NUS NEC
- Edmund Schluessel, NUS NEC
- Peter Smallwood, NUS NEC
- Malia Bouattia, NUS NEC
- Charles Barry, NUS NEC
- Tom Renhard, VP Community and Welfare, UWESU
- Megan Dunn, President Aberdeen University Students' Association
- Bright Amponsah, Welfare Officer Aberdeen University Students' Association
- Haviour Chen, President Northampton SU
- Martin Zarayinka, President Brunel SU
- Maggie Garabedian, Vice President Academic Affairs, Brighton SU
- Arianna Tasinarri, NUS ISC
- Aurora Adams, NUS ISC
- Shreya Padel, NUS ISC
- Shrouk El-Attar, NUS ISC
- Patrick Algholor, CUSU Activities Officer
- Melissa De Jager, International Students Officer, Winchester SU
- Shambhavi Bhat & Nihansu Aydemir, International Students Officers, Goldsmiths SU
- Cari Davies, President, Cardiff SU
- Areeb Ullah, Academic Affairs Officer, KCLSU
- Tom Rutland, President OUSU
- Amarbeer Singh Gill, President, Students' Union, Royal Holloway
- Sophia Doan, International Students' Officer, Newcastle University Students' Union
- Howard Littler, Campaigns Officer, Goldsmiths Students' Union
- Blane Abercrombie, President, Students' Association University of the West of Scotland (SAUWS)
- Richard Brooks, President, Hull University Union.
- Giulio Folino, President, City University London Students' Union
- James Perkins, Vice President Education, City University London Students' Union
- Ben Ramsdale, President, Liverpool Hope Students' Union
- Katarina Nordanger, Vp-Welfare, QMSU
- Gaby Dale Leal, VP-Education, QMSU
- Alex Kohnert, International Students Officer, Sheffield SU

- Matthew Smith, President, Ruskin Student Union
- Katie Kokkinoi, Welfare and International Officer, UCLU
- Tracy Herman, Medical Pharmacy Health Students' Officer, UCLU
- Hannah Webb, External Affairs and Campaigns Officer, UCLU
- Ben Towse, Postgraduate Students' Officer, UCLU
- Michael Rubin, Education Officer, University of Leicester SU
- Laura Jackson, Vice President Education, YJSU
- Michael Chessum, President, University of London Union
- Daniel Cooper, Vice President, University of London Union
- Sebastiaan Debrouwere, President, KCLSU
- Anthony Shaw VP Representation and Communication, KCLSU
- Ally Bird, VP Education, Keele SU
- Erin Davies, Education Officer, Warwick SU
- Cathryn Turhan, Welfare Officer Warwick SU
- James McCash, NUS NEC
- Miguel Costa Matos, UG Social Sciences Faculty Representative, WarwickSU
- Natalie-Dawn Hodgson, President, Northumbria Students' Union
- Sarah Price, Vice President Activities & Development, NorthumbriaStudents' Union
- Kallum Taylor, President, York SU
- Mariam Irshad, Vice President Health, Sport and Bioscience & Education, UEL SU
- Laura Theobald, Postgraduate Officer, University of NottinghamStudents' Union
- Sammi Wright, Vice President (Welfare & Education), Christ ChurchStudents' Union
- Joel Holmes, President, Oxford Brookes SU
- Jay Stoll, General Secretary, London School of Economics and PoliticalScience Students' Union
- James Potter, VP Education, Essex University Students' Union
- Lizzie Carse, VP Student Life, Kingston University Students' Union
- Jonathan Warner, Equality, Diversity and LGBT Officer-Harrow CollegeSU
- Sophie van der Ham, Welfare Officer, University of Sussex Students'Union
- Dmitry Christie - VP International - University of Essex Students'Union.
- Laurynas Potiomkinas, International Student Officer, Nottingham TrentUniversity
- Rhys Taylor, VP Education and Welfare, Bangor University Students'Union
- Tu An Ngo, International Students' Officer, University of East Anglia Students
- Kristin Simonova, International Students' Officer, Strathclyde University Students' Union
- Sarah-Mae Lieverse, International Officer, Kent Union
- Chelsea Moore, President, Kent Union
- Amy Gilchrist, VP - Activities, Kent Union
- Chris Bull, VP - Sports, Kent Union
- Megan Wells, VP- Welfare, Kent Union
- Adam Bland, Education Officer, UCLan Students' Union
- Dan McCarthy Stott, Vice President Welfare, Keele University Students' Union
- Emily Dibble, Sports Officers, Sheffield SU
- Johannes Butsche, President, University of Stirling Students' Union
- Ben Latham, President, UCLan SU
- Matt Withers, President, Central School of Speech and Drama SU
- Hattie Craig, Vice President Education, University of Birmingham Guild of Students
- Coco Toma, Vice President for Communications and Democracy, Huddersfield Students' Union
- Dharu Sooriyakumar, International Students Officer, Cardiff SU
- Hollie O'Connor, President, University of Derby Students' Union
- Kanwal Fatima, International Students Officer, Beds SU
- Khurshid Ahmad, International Students Officer, Beds SU
- Olu Akin, International Students Officer, City SU
- Caitlin Bloom, Deputy President Education, DSU
- Sally Williamson, Community Officer, Bath SU
- Nicole Pegg, Vice President Academic Affairs, Northumbria Students' Union
- Lani Bard, NUS Scotland LGBT Officer
- Daniel Sam, President, University of Lincoln Students' Union
- Ellie Hynes, President, Bath SU
- Alex Murray, Vice-President (Education), Kent Union
- Brittany Tomlinson, Vice President Welfare & Community, Hull University Union
- Adnan Pavel, Deputy President, London Met Students' Union
- Juliette Cule, Education Officer, University of Sussex Students' Union
- Hannah Graham, Education Officer, Teeside SU
- Mike Potter, Vice President Communications and Democracy, Northumbria Students' Union
- Clifford Fleming, Campaigns & Citizenship Officer, Manchester SU
- Katie Badman, President, Chester SU
- Frankie O'Byrne, Community Officer, Leeds University Union
- Bradley Escorcio, Union Affairs Officer, Leeds University Union
- Alice Smart, Education Officer, Leeds University Union
- Eve Berwin, Education Officer, NUSU
- Emily Waller, Welfare and Equality, NUSU

- Calum Mackenzie, President, NUSU
- Rich Parry, Campaigns Officer, NUSU
- Rosie Dammers, Education Officer, Manchester SU
- Kelly McBride, President, University of Sussex Students' Union
- Omar Aljuhani, Diversity Officer, Manchester SU
- Ritika Karnani, President, Royal college of Arts
- David Morris, President, Durham Students' Union
- Oli Coles, VP Student Communities, University of Southampton Students' Union
- Sam Rae, Education Officer, Sheffield SU
- Ieva Severinaite, International Students' Officer, Students' Union at Bournemouth University
- Tom Flynn, Vice President Education, University of Bristol Students' Union
- Hugh Murdoch, President, Edinburgh University Students' Association
- Ben Sundell, President, Warwick SU
- Ant Scott, Societies Officer, Warwick SU
- Lucy Gill, Postgraduate Officer, Warwick SU
- Tabz O'Brien-Butcher, Women's Officer, Manchester SU
- Alcorn Vice, President Welfare & Community, Lincoln SU
- Alex Louch, Vice President Academic Affairs, University of Exeter Students' Guild
- Iain MacKinnon, President, Dundee University Students' Association
- Jo Southwell-Sander, President, Nottingham Trent Students' Union
- Katie Jowett, Vice President Student Welfare,
- Zuchaela Smylie, Vice President of Communications and Campaigns, Dundee University Students Association
- Haviour Chen, President, University of Northampton Students' Union
- Xander McDade, NUS Scotland Priority Campaign Convener
- Hannah Richmond, Activities and Development Officer, London School of Economics and Political Science Students' Union
- Rosie Coleman, Education Officer, London School of Economics and Political Science Students' Union
- Zulfa Kaseruuzi, Vice President Education and Democracy, University of Portsmouth Students' Union
- Roza Salih, Vice President Diversity and Advocacy, Strathclyde Student's Association
- Shruti Iyer, International Students' Officer, KCLSU
- Monalisa Odibo, International Student Senator, Bangor University Students' Union
- Amy Dawson, President, Bath Spa Students' Union
- Stefan Tomov, Vice President of Engagement, Dundee University Students' Association
- David Gilani, President, University of Southampton Students' Union
- David Mendoza-Wolfson, VP Education, University of Southampton Students' Union
- Jawad Bhatti, International Officer, University of Southampton Students' Union
- Douglas Schreiber, Vice President of Student Activities, Dundee University Students' Association
- Tim Hustler, Honorary Secretary, Dundee University Students' Association
- Susuana Antubam, University of London Union Women's Officer
- Rochelle Owusu- Antwi, President, Staffordshire University Students' Union
- Zubair Idris, International Students' Officer, UCL Union
- Beckie Thomas, Vice President Welfare, University of Southampton Students' Union
- Wendy Smith, Student President, Fife College Students' Association
- Ankna Arockiam International Officer, RCS Glasgow
- Victoria C Taylor, President, Keele SU
- Lisa Marie Ironside, President, Keele Postgraduate Association
- Danny Walker, Vice President (Finance & Activities), Keele SU
- Hannah Roberts, Education Officer, Students' Union University of the Arts London
- Joel Pullan, President, Lancaster University Students' Union
- Grace Abel, Community Officer, Durham Students' Union
- MD Atiqur Rahman, International Students Officer, Liverpool Hope SU
- Iain Jennison, President - Royal Conservatoire of Scotland Students' Union
- Evan Whyte, Vice President Sports Development, University Of Southampton Students' Union
- Yajing Xu, International Students Officer, OUSU
- Rob Griffiths, President, University of Bristol Students' Union
- Vonnie Sandlan, NUS Scotland Community Campaign Convenor.
- Kirsty Haigh, Edinburgh University Students' Association Vice President Services
- Ellie Williams, VP Community, University of Bristol Students' Union
- Grace Burton, Education Officer, Aberystwyth University Students' Union
- Miki Vyse, President, Leeds Trinity Students' Union
- Ibrahim Ali, Vice-President Student Affairs, FOSIS
- Sayed Alkadiri, President, Middlesex University Students' Union
- Hamza Jawaid, International Students Officer, LSESU

Appendix D – Social media posts

Facebook

Each year up to 175,000 international students across the UK find their fees increase often without notice, reason or support. Help us stop this and ensure each international student has a fixed fee guarantee. Sign our petition here: <http://goo.gl/jmNQ1x>. If you're an international student, tell us how much your fees have increased here: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> and tweet your story using the #FixIntFees hashtag.

Twitter

#FixIntFees

Each year up to 175,000 international students find their fees increase without warning. Help us stop this here: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> #FixIntFees

What would you do if you had a £2000 bill without notice? Why is this fair for international students in the UK? <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> #FixIntFees

Every international student in the UK should have a fixed-fee guarantee, help make that possible here: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> #FixIntFees

Over 50% of all international students face having their tuition fees increase by unforeseen amounts: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> #FixIntFees

Tweets to your international students

International students, by how much have your tuition fees increased this year? Let us know here: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> **#FixIntFees**

International students, angry about tuition fee rises? Sign the petition to **#FixIntFees** here: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy>

Appendix E – NUS Submission to the Office for Fair Trading investigation into HE, December 2013

... We feel it worth highlighting, as part of the course costs section, an issue relating to international student fees. Tuition fees for international students are uncapped and can vary from year to year. While the fact that international fees are increasing year on year above inflation poses a significant financial issue for students from outside the European Union wishing to study in the UK, the issue we believe will most interest the Office of Fair Trading is the lack of protection and information offered to international students with regard to fees increasing during their course.

Universities UK highlighted in their annual survey of international student fees that 58 per cent of international students, and 62 per cent of institutions do not have fixed fees guaranteed for courses longer than a year. Therefore, the majority of international undergraduate students are liable to pay any increases in fees during their course.

Academic advisors in student advice centres receive many complaints from international students who find their fees have increased during the course of study. An advisor at one institution reported to us two cases in which international students complained about substantial increases in their tuition fees. In one case, a girl was given permission to intermit her study, but on her return was forced to pay a £2000 increase in tuition fees in order to continue her study.

In a second case, a student signed up to what was advertised as a four year programme, consisting of one foundation year followed by a three year undergraduate programme. When he finished his foundation year, he had found that the undergraduate fees had risen by £4500 from what had been advertised the previous year when he applied.

Both cases are the subject of ongoing official complaints. Since the complaints were made, the institution has introduced fixed fees (adjusted for inflation), however this doesn't apply retrospectively, which is why students from previous years are still incurring large fee increases.

A different academic advisor, from another institution, spoke to us about a case in which an international student was forced into severe financial hardship as a result of unexpected fee increases. The student was told that they would be moving on to a "top-up degree" which was HE accredited but administered in an FE college. The student had been given conflicting information on whether they would incur full international fees. When it turned out that they would be charged full international fees, they had a very difficult time finding the money to continue their study.

We believe that where institutions do not offer fixed fees to international students for their standard period of study, they are acting against guidance on price variation clauses, as expressed in the OFT's guidance for the Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations 1999. The OFT (2008: 57) state that '[a] clause allowing the supplier to increase the price – varying the most important of all the consumer's contractual obligations – has clear potential for unfairness'. Moreover, tuition fee rises are unlikely to relate directly to an increase in net costs to an institution; such variations should therefore be considered discretionary. In such cases the OFT (2008: 57) state '[a]ny purely discretionary right to set or vary a price after the consumer has become bound to pay is obviously objectionable'. In fact, even in non-discretionary cases, such variation clauses are 'open to abuse, because consumers can have no reasonable certainty that the increases imposed on them actually match net cost increases'.

Appendix F – Email to your students

Fix International Fees – Campaign Launch

Dear Students,

Our international students are part of the 175,000 students across the UK could see their fees increase often without notice, reason or support each year.

Today we launch the **[Students Union Name]** campaign for fixed international tuition fees, guaranteeing international students the same transparency afforded to most home students and saving them thousands of pounds in unexpected tuition fee costs.

Find out more here: **[LINK TO YOUR WEBSITE WITH COUNTER]**

Are you an international student? Add your additional costs to our overall total using the #FixIntFees widget: [LINK TO YOUR WEBSITE WITH COUNTER]

Our international students are part of the 58% across the UK who have no protection from rising tuition fees. At many institutions international students are able to make informed decisions about the cost of their course, as they have a guarantee of a fixed international tuition fee. [UNIVERSITY/COLLEGE] does not offer our students the same. International students have the right to a fair and transparent fee system like every other student.

Our fixed fees campaign has one simple goal: to abolish in-course fee increases. We want a fixed fee guarantee for all international students.

Research from other Students' Unions has showed that students are forced to take up additional part-time work, take out supplementary loans, put financial pressure on their families, and miss holidays at home in order to pay for additional fee rises.

Knowing just how much fees go up by each year we can also see the potential impact on retention, as NUS Pound in Your Pocket research shows: students who pay unexpected additional costs of £1000 or more are three times more likely to consider leaving their programme.

Get in touch with us - [UNION/ASSOCIATION/GUILD NAME] will be campaigning on a local level for a fixed international fee. We are looking for your support and stories.

Share your stories - What is the impact of sudden fee increases on your life? Some students have shared stories of not being able to travel home for the holidays, taking on part-time jobs, or high-interest loans. Tweet your stories using #FixIntFees.

Sign the NUS petition - NUS are calling on Vice Chancellors and Principals of UK institutions to agree to a fixed rate for international student fees, protecting students from unanticipated and unfair increases in their fees throughout their course. <https://www.change.org/en-GB/petitions/uk-vice-chancellors-and-principals-fix-international-student-fees>

Tweet your Support for the campaign using the #FixIntFees hashtag.

Each year international students at [COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY] find their fees increase without warning. Help us stop this here: <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> **#FixIntFees**

What would you do if you suddenly had a £2000 bill without notice? Why is this fair for instudents at [COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY]? <http://goo.gl/4yNWNy> **#FixIntFees**

For more information and to get involved contact [union contact] and visit [YOUR WEBSITE LINK]

Appendix G - Model letter to VC/Principal

[Your Address]

[Date]

Dear _____,

Every year, international students at [University/College] face an unknown increase in their tuition fees, for which they have been unable to plan for because there is no fixed fee guarantee for our international students.

These increases can have an incredibly detrimental impact on international students. Research from Students' Unions by NUS has showed that students are forced to take up additional part-time work, take out supplementary loans, put financial pressure on their families, and miss holidays at home in order to pay for additional fee rises.

In addition, these fee increases can have a detrimental impact on retention rates. NUS' Pound in Your Pocket research into student financial wellbeing in 2012 revealed that additional unknown costs of £1000 or more were enough to seriously threaten retention, as students were three times more likely to consider leaving their programme. Cash flow issues were also linked to decreased academic performance. NUS research shows that on average fixed do not mean higher fees for international students, just a more consistent level of fees throughout their programmes.

Students at [University/College], Student Officers across the country and the National Union of Students think this is unfair. We are asking [University/College] to join 64 other institutions across the country such as the University of Edinburgh, King's College London and the University of Southampton, who already guarantee international students a fixed fee for the duration of their programme. We ask you to commit to the following:

Guarantee fee levels to each cohort of students

Students should be told how much it will cost to complete their course before they apply for it. It's unfair to require students to be able to absorb unexpected tuition fee increases.

Fees should not increase in line with inflation either which can seriously confuse international students and be exceptionally large given the inflated level of international student tuition fee levels to begin with. We believe that the simplest solution is that the fee level paid in the first year of a student's course should be the same amount they pay through-out. Some of the biggest recruiters of international students in the UK and have now adopted this policy and we are confident [University/College], can too.

Support International Students

Sometimes international students fees increase for reasons beyond the institution's control, such as with currency crises which impact the exchange rate. Additionally environmental emergencies and financial sanctions during times of international conflict can interrupt fee payments. In these circumstances, we want our institution to pledge to be flexible and supportive in their fee arrangements for international students.

Give International Students a voice

Students have the right to be engaged in decisions around fee setting and what is done with our fees as well as the wider international student experience. Studies have shown where student representatives are involved in internationalisation working groups, they were more positive about

the motivations and internationalisation of their institutions. We believe and are confident that everyone can benefit if we have a more open and honest dialogue about international student fees.

On behalf of the students at **[University/College]**, I ask you to respond to these concerns and guarantee fixed fees for our international students.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

[Your Name]

Appendix H - Model council motion – Fixed Fee Guarantee

This council notes

1. International fees are unregulated
2. Our institution does not guarantee that fees will be fixed for the duration of a student's programme.
3. Over a third of institutions offer this guarantee for their international students.
4. According to NUS Pound in Your Pocket research, students facing unexpected costs of up to £1000 in a year are twice as likely to consider leaving their course.
5. The Students' Union is not engaged in tuition fee decision making.

This council believes

1. It is unacceptable that international students are being used to prop up a failing tuition fee system.
2. It is unfair to expect international students to pay extra money each year they progress, especially unwarned.
3. Students should be involved in decisions about fee setting as well as how fee income is spent. The Students' Union is the representative voice of its members and should be engaged in these decisions.

This council resolves

1. To deliver a campaign which will deliver fixed fee guarantees for our members.
2. To lobby for representation on fee setting bodies.
3. To lobby for better support and flexibility for international students, particularly at times of crisis.

Appendix I – Press release

NUS LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN URGING UNIVERSITIES TO FIX INTERNATIONAL STUDENT FEES**For immediate release: 17 February 2013**

The National Union of Students (NUS) has today launched [a campaign](#) calling on universities to fix their fees for international students.

Each year up to 175,000 international students in our campuses find their fees increase often without notice, reason or support.

NUS research has found that at least 50 per cent of universities do not provide international students with any guarantee of what their fee will be each year of their degree. Many fees increase often by thousands of pounds each year.

Some find themselves unable to continue due to the rising costs each year. Some international students are unable to travel home to see their families, or afford course resources, because their fees go up unexpectedly.

These increases make a huge difference to retention. [NUS Pound in Your Pocket research](#) shows that students who pay unexpected additional costs of £1000 or more are twice as likely to consider leaving their programme.

NUS is calling on vice chancellors and principals of UK institutions to agree to guarantee a fixed fee for international students, protecting them from unanticipated and unfair increases in their fees throughout their course.

Over 200 students' union officers have signed an open letter calling for fees to be fixed.

Daniel Stevens, NUS international students' officer, said:

"Our fixed fees campaign has one simple goal: to abolish in-course fee increases. We want a fixed fee guarantee for all international students.

"The unpredictable increase in fees is totally unfair and exploits this group of students. Worse still, they put the academic success of many international students at risk each year because students may enter financial difficulty and drop out.

"International students already pay astronomical fees for the privilege of studying here without all these hidden costs. They are also an important part of the social, cultural and academic make-up of university life and should not be treated simply as cash cows."

ENDS

Notes to Editors

1. For press enquiries, please contact the press office by calling 07866695010 or email pressoffice@nus.org.uk
2. National Union of Students is a voluntary membership organisation which makes a real difference to the lives of students and its member students' unions. We are a confederation of 600 students' unions, amounting to more than 95 per cent of all higher and further education unions in the UK. Through our member students' unions, we represent the interests of more than seven million students.

3. Our petition can be [found here](#).

Appendix J – Aberdeen University Students' Association

1. Overview

This paper details the Aberdeen University Student Associations' response to the current practice surrounding non-EU international student tuition fees.

AUSA wishes to propose a fairer model to ensure that international students are not priced out of a world class education.

2. Strategic Context

AUSA has chosen 'Access' as the priority campaign for the year with the aim of securing equality of opportunity for all before, during and after university. Events targeted at hard to reach students have been organised and intensive consultation of the student body has produced an increased number of responses from international students.

Non-EU international students have told AUSA that fee levels persistently increase above inflation throughout their degrees and as a result, they feel the advertisement prior to accepting a place is misleading. In light of this and the consequential problems created, AUSA has decided to propose this policy on behalf of those students.

A motion has been submitted to Holyrood which is currently being supported by several local MSPs.

Discussion

- 3.1 The first issue is the annual increase of tuition fees. In some cases, this has increased without warning by 10% of the initial cost each year.
- 3.2 University of Aberdeen students from outside the EU repeatedly report lower satisfaction rates than the sector wide average in all NSS categories excluding learning resources and overall satisfaction. However, overall satisfaction at Aberdeen is four percentage points higher for UK (89%) students and five points higher for EU (88%) in comparison to the national average. The figure for non-EU internationals is only two percentage points above the average (88%).
- 3.3 UK students ranked teaching quality 7% higher than international students from outside the EU on NSS.
- 3.4 The number of students satisfied with academic support is lowest amongst non-EU internationals than comparable groups and is also significantly lower than the sector-wide average.
- 3.5 The annual increase has been unjustly high, grossly above the rate of inflation during difficult economic times. The cost of delivering education has not increased at this rate over the same period and hence, should not be charged to the student.
- 3.6 The actual cost of a degree is obfuscated from the student body and thus, it is unclear where funds raised from the tuition fees of international students are spent and how they benefit.
- 3.7 AUSA have noticed an increase in international students experiencing hardship due to financial problems which might have an influence on the NSS scores.
- 3.8 Changeable tuition fees rates add to the uncertainty of exchange rates, on top of that, international students have to factor in the increase of living costs adding to the climate of financial instability.
- 3.9 A non-EU international student has to fund four years at a Scottish institution in comparison to three years at an English institution. This could render Aberdeen less appealing to prospective students.
- 3.10 Higher fees enforced over the past year have resulted in lower than expected international student numbers. This could suggest that students have been discouraged by price increases.

4. Resource Implications

A fairer funding system is put in place for non-EU international students.

5. Risk Management

Not applicable

6 Equality Impact Assessment

The university will treat non-EU international students (often BME) in a more favourable manner. Relieving the financial and mental strains attached to high degree costs and unexpected annual increases.

7 Environmental Impact

Not applicable

8 Recommended Action

The University commits to fixed tuition fees advertised in advance to applicants in the first instance and will investigate tuition fee rates for non-EU international students.

9 Further Information

Further Information may be obtained from Anne-Claire Deseilligny, Student President sapresident@abdn.ac.uk or 01224274250 or Sophia James, Academic Advice and Policy Co-ordinator s.a.james@abdn.ac.uk or 01224274592.

16th November 2012

Appendix 1

A table of institutional comparisons based on the Guardian League Tables

	Aberdeen	Queen Mary	Leeds	Royal Holloway	St Andrews
League Table Overall	38	36	37	39	4
Business & Mgt	52	53	17	41	5
Politics	32	29	36	40	2
Chemistry	34	29	28	-	4
Biosciences	19	60	52	66	16

Appendix 2

Total undergraduate course costs in pounds

	Aberdeen	Queen Mary	Leeds	Royal Holloway	St Andrews
Business	44,000	36,750	38,700	41,580	57,800
Politics	44,000	36,750	38,700	36,660	57,800
Chemistry	56,000	41,775	48,600	41,580	57,800
Biosciences	56,000	41,775	48,600	41,580	57,800

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