

International Relations

Plan of Work 2018-19

1. The purpose of the Plan of Work

This Plan of Work will outline the priorities for the international relations team over the coming year as well as outlining progress that has been made in implementing the “International Relations Long Term Strategy” agreed by the NUS Trustee Board in 2015. It will also be mindful of some of the long term aims expressed in the NUS 100 strategic framework as well as NUSUK’s priorities for 2018/19.

- The Black Attainment Gap linked to Brilliant Student Leadership
- A membership satisfaction rating of 80%
- Promoting the benefits of TOTUM to our membership
- Addressing the issue of culture within NUSUK
- Developing ideas for the future

The majority of our work will fall into the area of policy delivery, seeking to influence the Brexit debate and influencing the policies and approach of the Bologna Follow Up Groups (BFUG)¹, raising the issue of the Black Attainment Gap at an international level and keeping an eye on future developments as UKHE seeks to enhance its global reach.



NUSUK Delegation (Carmen Smith and Rob Henthorn) to Board Meeting 71, Gdansk

¹ The **Bologna Follow-Up Group** - BFUG - is the executive structure supporting the **Bologna** Process in-between the Ministerial Conferences. ... overseeing the **Bologna** Process between these; and taking forward matters that do not need to be decided by the Ministers or that have been delegated by the Ministers

2. Vision, Rationale and Values

Our vision is that by 2022 NUSUK will be working collaboratively with partners at a global level to influence international decision makers on education, social justice, sustainability and peace. Students, student officers and students' union staff will be engaged in activities that will achieve our objectives in these areas as well enhancing their own personal development and cultural understanding. Students and student organisations will be seen as part of the solution to global challenges and their commitment to positive change and collaboration will stay with them throughout their lives

To ensure the workload is realistic NUS has agreed to work in the following six project areas. A mission is expressed for each one that aims to help fulfil our expressed vision.

Project Area	Mission	Features
IRG1: Work with the European Students' Union	<i>NUSUK will be playing a stronger role within ESU learning from other national unions, contributing to European wide policy development and discussions whilst creating mutually beneficial partnership opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular input into policy development at a European level • Mutual exchange of expertise and support in campaigns • Collaboration on projects and commercial opportunities and partnerships • UK officers serving on ESU committees and working groups
IRG2: Work with the Commonwealth Students' Association	<i>NUSUK will have supported the creation and development of the CSA, and will be contributing to discussions and policy development as well as developing mutually beneficial partnership opportunities</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage in capacity development • Mutual exchange of expertise and support in campaigns • Collaboration on projects and commercial opportunities and partnerships • UK officers participating in CSA structures

IRG3: Work with the Association of College Unions International	<i>NUSUK will have strong links with ACUI and NUS members will be participating their events and programmes, exchanging good practice and promoting professional development.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange visits and shadowing • Attendance at ACUI events • Information exchange and support on human rights issues
IRG4: Develop and Maintain International Partnerships and Collaborations	<i>NUSUK will be continually seeking out new partnerships and opportunities with like-minded international organisations around capacity building and collaboration on peace, social justice, sustainability and education.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting initiatives to enhance student representation in other countries • Working with students' organisations across the globe on campaign areas of mutual interest • Collaboration on projects, commercial opportunities and partnerships (ISIC and EYC being one example)
IRG5: Solidarity and Human Rights	<i>NUSUK will continue to work collaboratively to challenge human rights abuses across the globe and will have developed opportunities for our members to express their solidarity and campaign for change</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student organisations will work to influence international decision makers • UK students will access information on human rights issues and be able to support campaigns.
IRG6: Administration and Infrastructure	<i>To enable all the above work to happen we will ensure an adequate organisational infrastructure and appropriate levels of resource</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer buy in and adequate staff support • Agreed budget allocation for internationalisation • A series of credible and successful funding bids • More staff support for international affairs

3. How we approach International Relations

NUSUK is a confederation of students' unions in the United Kingdom. We exist to act on behalf of those students' unions, carrying out the collective influencing and development work at an international level that it would be difficult for any single students' union to do on its own. NUSUK's mission is to:

- Promote, defend and extend the rights of students
- Develop and champion strong students' unions

The long term international relations plan was agreed to ensure that the student voice was heard at an international level. Higher Education is increasingly becoming globalised, despite the impact of Brexit almost all UK universities have, as part of their core mission, international reputation and standing as well as international partnerships. As these partnerships, whether that be through joint research programmes or trans national education develop, where and how the student voice should be heard changes and we need to ensure that we can effectively make the case for student representation to be an integral part of new educational initiatives. In a post-Brexit UK these initiatives could well be linked to trade negotiations as the UK seeks to forge a new relationship with countries beyond the EU.

International relations work has been prioritised by developing the six work streams and by having a clear rationale behind which organisations we are engaged with. Our most important partners are the European Students' Union, the Commonwealth Students' Association and the Association of College Unions International. Internally our key partner is the Sustainability Team who have been successful in developing international projects and other global partnerships that fully align with our values and objectives.

Overall responsibility for our international relations work lies with the President, with the Vice President Higher Education being responsible for our work with the European Students' Union which ultimately has an HE focus. The work round global solidarity tends to be led by the Vice President for Society and Citizenship. From July 2019 it is clear where, if at all, work on society and citizenship will sit.

We will keep our membership and other NUSUK colleagues informed of what we are doing through Workspace which is a "Facebook Style" online platform that allows us to

share useful information to keep you in touch with what we are doing on behalf of NUSUK and its members. Reports and other updates will be posted on NUS Connect.
<https://www.nusconnect.org.uk/learning-academy/equality-and-diversity/equality-and-diversity-resources-hub/equality-and-diversity-resources/international-students>.

4. Plan_of Work 2018 - 2019

Our work is focused around the key themes identified in the NUS100 “Manifesto for a Just and Sustainable Future”. It will also provide focus, where possible, to the priorities identified for 2018 – 2019.

Priority	Our Focus
The Black Attainment Gap	We will be raising this issue in all relevant policy forums, running workshops where we have the opportunity and making sure it is keenly discussed issue with our partners. We also have much we can learn from other education systems.
A membership Satisfaction Rating of 80% by 2020	Indirectly our work benefits the membership in the long term if we can secure policy changes at a European level. Study tours and cultural exchanges are also of value. Using our international contacts to develop learning exchange opportunities for our members.
Promoting the benefits of TOTUM to our membership	There is a limited amount we can other than share the idea with our international partners and signpost possible international partners to the TOTUM team.
Addressing issues with the culture of NUSUK	There is a great deal to learn from the respectful atmosphere of international meetings.
Future Thinking	International relations work has a strong focus on future possibilities. Our work to influence the Bologna Process will be of

	long term benefit to our members. Our wider international partnerships are looking towards a post Brexit UK to identify opportunities but also to ensure the student voice is heard in the new initiatives and partnerships of the future.
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5 Plan Links to NUS 100

NUS 100 is NUSUK's strategic plan that will take the organisation up to its centenary in 2022.

5.1: Shaping Education and Empowering Individuals

Through our international relations work we will contribute to the following NUS100 themes under the broad heading of shaping education and empowering individuals.

- Theme 1: Everyone can access and excel in Post 16 education by working with partners to eradicate attainment gaps.
- Theme 2: The learner voice creates change in education by demonstrating the value and impact of learner voice and student engagement across further and higher education.
- Theme 4: Students should be confident to engage in civic life by building civic engagement through political education.

We will engage in work streams that will seek to:

5.1.1: Influence Higher Education Policy at a European Level through co-operating through the European Students Union, in order to ensure that NUSUK policies form part of the policy portfolio of the European Students' Union who will seek to influence the EHEA on our behalf. Exchange good practices, ideas and learning. We will:

- Update the "ESU through NUS Eyes" guidance document (September 2018)
- Develop an up-to-date briefing on the Bologna Process following the Paris Ministerial in May 2018 (August 2018)

- Participate in Board Meeting 75 (November/December)
- Participate in Board Meeting 76 (April/May)
- Participate in European Students Convention 36 (October)
- Participate in European Students Convention 37 (March)
- Participate in Networking meetings that are preparing and developing our European policy approach
- Develop a transparent system for opening up ESC meetings and seminars to member students' unions
- Submit membership re-evaluation documents by October 2018

5.1.2: Investigate the possibility to host ESU Board Meeting 76 (May 2019) in partnership with VVS/FEF (Belgium). In order to provide a high-profile platform that expresses our commitment to European wide collaboration:

- Meet with VVS/FEF on a regular basis to plan the event
- Identify and secure sources of funding for the event and develop a compelling vision/pitch
- Liaise with and invite high profile speakers to parts of the event
- Liaise with the Events team over logistics for the event
- Hold regular planning meetings with VVS, FEF and ESU

Membership Satisfaction: More information about international learning opportunities and exchanges will be appreciated by member students' unions.

Future Thinking: Activities that strengthen the effectiveness and profile of the international student movement strengthen NUSUK. Developments in UK HE/FE over the next decade will require a strong internationalist reputation and our input on the role of the student voice.

5.2. Being an Outstanding Student Led Campaigns and Membership Organisation

Through our international relations work we will contribute to the following themes under the broad heading of being an outstanding student led campaigns and membership organisation.

- Theme 1: Supporting excellence in students' unions by developing a collaborative approach
- Theme 2: Developing a strong and influential collective voice
- Theme 4: Attracting and retaining outstanding people

5.2.1: To arrange for visits to conferences and study visits by international guests and provide support and guidance for students' unions and NUSUK colleagues attending international meetings. In order to provide opportunities for learning and exchange of good practice at an international level and to capture that learning.

- Arrange international speakers for conferences as requested
- Promote relevant NUSUK conferences to international partners as appropriate
- Agree an internal system for approving and reporting international engagement. (August 2018)
- Co-ordinate study visits and exchanges as required
- Maintain a database on international initiatives through the CRM
- Inform members about international opportunities through workspace
- Support delegates to ACUI Region VIII and ACUI National Conference (November 2018 and March 2019)
- Develop an application system for students' union officers to access meetings of the European Students' Convention (August 2018)
- Facilitate international input into the Membership Services Conference

5.2.2: To share information and take part in capacity building partnerships. In order to share our learning and experience with other national student organisations and provide colleagues with international engagement opportunities.

- Highlight international engagement opportunities
- Continue to support the development of USK Kosovo
- Continue to promote the "Building Student Representation" toolkit with the Commonwealth Students' Association
- Facilitate international input into liberation campaigns
- Identify externally funded opportunities to work in partnership with other national students' unions

6. Evaluation of our International Relations Work

Evaluation of our plan of work is necessary to ensuring that objectives can be met as effectively as possible. This evaluation is also crucial to learning which activities worked well and which need to be adapted so that lessons can be learned, and best practice can be brought forward for plans in future years. There are various ways in which the campaign will measure and evaluate the success of its work in relation to the priorities outlined within this plan of work:

- Event evaluation forms
 - Training evaluation forms
 - Internal surveys, like the communications survey
 - Policy wins or policy changes from government
- Media