




nus **NATIONAL** **CONFERENCE** **2015**

21–23 April 2015 | Liverpool

Final Resolutions **CD13**

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Purpose of this document

Following document includes all the policy passed at National Conference 2015.

The Zones have been ordered in the following way:

- New Membership
- Priority Zone
- Education Zone
- Welfare Zone
- Union Development Zone
- Society and Citizenship Zone
- Challenges to the Estimates
- Annual General Meeting

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New membership

Motion 001: New Members

Conference Resolves:

To accept the following new members into membership of NUS:


- Regent's University London Student Union
- Royal Agricultural University Student Union
- Itchen Students' Union
- The City Academy, Hackney
- The Bassetlaw Training Academy Ltd.
- Hartpury Students' Union
- Aston University Students' Union
- Budmouth College Sixth Form Student Union
- Esher College Student Council
- Student Learning Portal Club
- Pearson College Student Association
- West Somerset College Students' Union
- Tropics Global College Union
- North Lindsey College Students Association
- Asset Learner Forum

100 Priority Zone

Motion 101: A New Politics for the Next Generation

Conference Believes:

1. There are just 16 days left until a verdict on the current coalition government will be given at the general election on Thursday 7th May 2015.
2. The current government which took office in May 2010 was formed in back room deals with a limited mandate has shown contempt for democracy, failed to act on its own commitments for political reform and has used cynical acts including the 'Lobbying Act' and rushed changes in voter registration system to avoid accountability.
3. It has since presided over growing inequality and intolerance: where low income and public sector workers, women, immigrants and the most vulnerable in society have been unfairly targeted by this government's damaging programme – and this brings shame on the United Kingdom.
4. It has also presided over increasing dysfunction in our education system through disruption caused by free schools, funding cuts across further and higher education, and the trebling of university fees backed by student loans that will bind a generation and still create unsustainable levels of debt.
5. This failure of leadership has reinforced a disillusionment with the political system, turned people against each other and allowed the far right to flourish in a United Kingdom that has never been less united.
6. That distrust and cynicism of politics runs much deeper than a single government and that politicians from all sides are implicated in the way politics shuts out ordinary people and reinforces establishment elites, leaving us poorly prepared to face the challenges of the future.
7. One reason so few young people vote in elections is that huge numbers also feel uninspired by the available choice.
8. The Labour Party has made this situation worse by accepting much of the Tories' agenda – on cuts, migrants' rights
9. Many NUS campaigns, including for the general election, have been dominated by rhetoric about intergenerational injustice and the voice of young people.
10. Millions of our members are mature students and we advocate life-long learning.
11. Access to undergraduate for mature students was hardest hit by the tripling of fees.
12. Our broken political system only offers a choice between different degrees of austerity – Tory or Labour.
13. These cuts mean further attacks on students, workers, and the most oppressed groups in society.
14. NUS conference 2014 voted "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." We said then, and now, that cuts to education, services, jobs and pay are unnecessary, and should be stopped by taxing the rich and putting the banks under democratic control. There is immense wealth in society – the Sunday Times Rich List has been enriching itself at our expense through austerity – we just need to put it to better use.
15. Unfortunately, the stance we voted for was not reflected by NUS's campaigning.
16. We can't win just by voting. Whoever wins this election, we'll have to fight the new government to fulfil our aims, with a strategy of protest and direct action from the outset. In the case of pressuring Labour, we should work with trade unions and the party's left.
17. NUS leaders have a history of refusing to stand up for students and confront the government when Labour is in power.
18. Labour leaders' talk of 6k undergrad fees and graduate taxes isn't good enough and doesn't help FE, but shows they are feeling pressure from students. We should capitalise and push for more.
19. Our broken political system won't represent our needs unless we force it to. Whoever wins the election, we must give that government no choice but to meet our demands, through a determined protest and direct action campaign. Lobbying is important – but powerless on its own.
20. Defence of migrants' rights will be one of the key issues in the General Election.
21. We should be alarmed by the rise of UKIP; but the main problem is with other parties going along with the anti-migrant agenda, which feeds UKIP


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22. That this government has presided over an economically illiterate austerity agenda and justified sweeping public sector funding cuts which have impacted especially on oppressed groups.

Conference Further Believes:

1. We need a New Deal for students.
2. That without significant reform our political system cannot deliver a New Deal - and a 'politics as usual' approach will fail to tackle the huge challenges we face.
3. The first step in winning a New Deal must be to ensure the new Parliament delivers a politics fit for students - acting now through the ballot box and in Westminster after the election.
4. That those who have broken their promises since the last general election do not deserve a place in this new Parliament and should be held to account for their actions.
5. If the Tories remain, we will need clear and inspiring policies to fight them effectively; if Labour wins the election, we should demand they implement clear and inspiring policies.
6. These policies should include:
 - Decent, secure jobs for everyone with a Living Wage and rights at work.
 - Stopping and reversing cuts, rebuilding decent public services for everyone, and tackling inequality by taxing the rich and taking public ownership and control over the banks.
 - An end to scapegoating migrants: freedom of movement and equal rights
 - Strong action for equality for black people, LGBT people, women, disabled and other oppressed groups.
 - Strong and fast action on climate change.
7. We should aim for a government which serves the majority of society currently excluded from wealth and power
8. Some issues do disproportionately affect people by age, but most intergenerational injustice rhetoric neglects how overwhelmingly, the big injustices of our society (and of austerity) hinge on socioeconomic class and on the oppression of Women, LGBTQ, Disabled and Black people.
9. The Tories even used intergenerational justice to defend austerity.
10. We can't win just by voting. Whoever wins this election, we'll have to fight the new government to fulfil our aims, with a strategy of protest and direct action from the outset. In the case of pressuring Labour, we should work with trade unions and the party's left.
11. That division, despondency and inequality are the symptoms of something bigger; that these social ills are the consequence of the austerity agenda and public sector funding cuts.

Conference Resolves:

1. To condemn the record of this government and take steps to ensure the public remembers those who have broken their promises.
2. In the new Parliament, work with those who commit to and deliver significant political reform – including a right of recall, online voting and extensive devolution to the nations and within England.
3. To ensure all students and young people are eligible and registered to vote for every future election; delivering Votes at 16, citizenship education and integrated voter registration.
4. Within six months of the election of the new Parliament, hold a national lobby of politicians at all levels, taking our demands for political reform to the very centre of power.
5. To work with other progressive organisations wherever possible in this mission.
6. To issue a statement in the run up to the general election on this basis.
7. To work with trade unions and other organisations on developing these demands around which NUS will campaign.
8. To stop pretending that issues that are really to do with class and liberation, are about generations, and stop distracting from the real explanations and ignoring many NUS members.
9. To stand up for students, the working class and oppressed groups.
10. To make clear that the issues we face are really to do with class and liberation, rather than generations, and to include the voice of mature students in our messaging on the general election.
11. To support and encourage SUs to campaign against local services cuts.
12. To remain committed to an economy that democratises our society's vast wealth.

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13. To plan a strategy of protest and direct action to demand reversal of all cuts and expansion of public services and decent jobs, funded by properly enforcing increased taxes on the rich and taking democratic control over the banks.
 14. To campaign for a proportionally representative Parliament and a preferential voting system, based on Single-Transferable Vote as recommended by the Electoral Reform Society and used by most of the student movement.
 15. To plan a post-election strategy, using protest and direct action to force the government to fulfil our demands.
 16. To continue to prioritise opposition to UKIP but also publicly and loudly criticise mainstream parties going along with the anti-migrant agenda, particularly Labour.
 17. To work with MPs and other progressive organisations aimed at the cessation of austerity and reversal of public sector funding cuts, and to make this demand a central tenet of the lobby outlined above.

200 Education Zone


Motion 201: Vocational Education

Conference believes:

1. Vocational education prepares people for specific trades, crafts and careers. It is taught in a practical way and learning happens through deconstruction and reconstruction of practices, methods and ideas until the skill is mastered.
2. Vocational education exists in both further and higher education. Practical learning can be found on a plumbing course or as part of medical or legal training.
3. Higher technical and vocational education is less well established and resourced in the UK in comparison to other countries.
4. The UK is suffering from a skills shortage as the labour market struggles to meet employer demand.
5. Apprenticeships are currently dominating the dialogue around vocational study and training.
6. The political sphere is obsessed with 'the other 50 per cent' and how we can get more young people trained and ready for the workplace.
7. As we near the General Election in May there is consensus across the main parties that apprenticeships should be supported politically and backed financially.
8. The Conservative party recently pledged to use cuts to the welfare budget to fund three million new apprenticeships. At the same time the Labour party has announced its intentions to match the number of apprentices to those going to University by 2025, making apprenticeships one of its 'national goals'.
9. Since the last election the apprenticeship budget has risen from £1 072 million in 2009/10 to £1 487 million in 2013/14.
10. Employers are also being incentivised to take on apprentices. In last year's Autumn Statement the chancellor George Osborne announced that the Government would abolish National Insurance contributions for apprentices aged under 25. This means from April 2016 almost half a million employers will be exempt from making the contributions.
11. Apprenticeships are often framed as a chance to 'earn whilst you learn'. They supposedly offer a chance to gain a skill and a qualification whilst working in a 'real' job with a wage. Yet for many apprentices their low wages quickly disappear on travel, rent and food.
12. That apprentices need a better system of support in place in order for them to properly afford to complete their course. Without this apprentices are being forced to take on extra work, borrow money or drop out altogether.
13. The expansion of apprenticeships in this country is meaningless if the experience of those learners is poor.

Conference further believes:

1. The narrative around vocational education should stop being about the 'the other 50 per cent'. For too long society has framed vocational courses as done by those who have failed their GCSEs or aren't 'academic enough' for A levels or a degree. We need a new narrative which affirms the need and value of vocational education.
2. Poor information, advice and guidance directs students away from vocational options as traditional or academic routes are often favoured.
3. Lifelong learning is a crucial part of a dynamic economy. People should be able to access education at any point in their career to re-skill or up-skill.
4. Colleges, universities and employers should work together in a social partnership, to develop vocational routes and deliver higher technical and vocational qualifications.
5. Vocational learning should match the skills needs of the local economy, through Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs), and collaboration, to ensure it is responsive to local demand.
6. Students should be protected from businesses becoming a too powerful partner in the skills agenda, ensuring that their input puts the interests of the learner first.
7. Apprenticeships have support across the political spectrum, with universal commitments to increasing spending in this area. Yet, the minimum wage for apprentices remains pitifully low and many apprentices are spending most of their wages on travel. Apprentices remain at a considerable disadvantage to their full time

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- student counterparts, as they don't have access to the same tax breaks and funds. If the Government plans to expand apprenticeships in the future then they need to commit to providing better financial support.
8. The space in which vocational learning takes place is critical. A vocational setting must encourage skills such as craftsmanship, employability and professionalism.
 9. Gender stereotypes are embedded in vocational education, leading to technical and professional jobs becoming inaccessible and restrictive.
 10. The Government needs to install stability in to the education system in order to allow teachers, students and employers to experience some continuity. The Government's plans for reforms should be part of a long-term strategy, developed through consultation with key stakeholders and not based on quick fixes or the electoral cycle.
 11. The Government should scrap the apprentice minimum wage, and apprentices should be entitled to at least the national minimum wage (NMW) for their age.
 12. Employers should ensure that information on the national minimum wage enforcement hotline is made available to apprentices.
 13. In the short term the Local Government Association should issue national guidance for local transport services to extend discount fares to apprentices.
 14. In the long term we would like to see free bus travel extended to all 16-19 year olds, enabling young people to access further study, training or work without a financial barrier.
 15. Statutory Sick Pay should reflect hours worked, rather than the amount earned and should therefore be available to everyone who works for 30 hours or more a week. This would prevent apprentices from being absent from work without pay.
 16. The loss of child benefit for parents who have a child completing an apprenticeship is unacceptable and inconsistent with other areas of Government policy. The Government to include apprenticeships in their 'approved' education or training category.
 17. The Government should extend Care to Learn to apprentices. Access to this fund would make a huge difference for young adults on apprenticeships, helping them to afford their childcare costs.
 18. The Government should extend access to the bursaries available for FE students to apprentices. This would ease the financial pressure on apprentices, helping with living and travel costs.
 19. Banks should be encouraged to provide products, similar to those made available to undergraduates and college students, for those on apprenticeships.

Conference resolves:

1. To campaign against the Government's requirement for all vocational courses to be assessed by exam and to support the development of assessment which is appropriate for practical settings as well as academic.
2. To support flexibility in the 14- 19 curriculum, encouraging the development of an education system which recognises and values both vocational and academic learning.
3. To encourage partnership between students, education and training providers and employers in vocational learning. Ensuring that provision remains flexible and responsive to local labour markets.
4. To work on developing a university application system where skills and work experience are recognised in applications, as well as qualifications. This will aid applicants who have skills which have been acquired in the workplace, rather than through formal education
5. To continue to support the diversification of vocational courses, combatting gender. stereotypes and challenging how vocational courses are presented. This should extend to apprenticeships, where the gender pay gap is significant.
6. To campaign for apprentices to be better financially supported, with access to the same funds and support packages as full time employees or students.
7. To continue the campaign for a universal careers service, including impartial face-to-face guidance for all students.
8. To launch a campaign, working with the National Society of Apprentices, calling for the end of the financial support divide between academic and vocational courses

Motion 202: Changing FE

Submitted by: NUS Further Education Zone Committee

Speech for: NUS Further Education Zone Committee



Speech against: Free

Summation: Proposer of the last successful amendment

Conference believes:

1. New freedoms for colleges from 2011 have led to a range of different governance models and partnerships within further education.
2. Freedoms, twinned with huge cuts to further education by the government mean providers are increasingly accountable to business and employers, with less focus on understanding the voice of learners.
3. Inspection and regulation of colleges works best when providers and learners are able to present clear information on the educational experience of learners, rather than a snapshot observation of teaching.
4. Pressure caused by observations of learning, such as those from Ofsted, adversely affects the welfare of staff and students leading to poorer quality educational experiences.
5. New measures on provider performance, such as positive learner destinations can help learners move on to employment and further study and encourage improved advice and guidance for students.

Conference further believes:

1. Students should be seen as the key stakeholder for providers and should seek to build collaboration and partnership with their student body to enhance the educational experience.
2. There is a need to ensure that students' voice isn't lost as employers become more influential in governance structures.
3. Students have the right to access clear, autonomous complaints procedures.
4. Data on provider performance should be open and easily accessible to allow students to make informed choices about their education.
5. Students should have confidence that information about provider performance is an accurate reflection of the quality of the educational experience they receive at a provider
6. No-notice inspections are by definition anti-worker. Increased pressure caused by reducing or removing the notice period given for inspections would have a negative effect on teaching and learning.


Conference resolves:

1. To work to improve the clarity and quality of information about provider performance available publicly, including lobbying for a single, high-profile student satisfaction survey for further education.
2. To continue to lobby for an independent complaints authority in further education which is easily accessible to students
3. To reject any move towards no-notice inspections from FE regulatory bodies
4. To take a lead in the conversation to improve college regulation and accountability both to students, provider stakeholders and the local authority across the board

Motion 203: Doctor, Doctor, we need to talk about Postgraduates

Conference believes:

1. Excellence in UK higher education teaching and research requires a well-funded, accessible and innovative postgraduate research sector. However, PGR is becoming increasingly important for delivering the right skills and experience in a number of fields outside of higher education.
2. Funding for postgraduate research is too concentrated among a small number of research-intensive universities, and in particular subjects, and this does not represent the good work being done by other institutions and subject areas that require heavy cross-subsidisation.
3. While a majority of postgraduate research students have career aspirations in research and/or teaching inside higher education, only a minority will find an academic job after graduation, and many of these opportunities will not be permanent or full-time.
4. Issues of underrepresentation, particularly for black and disabled students and for women in STEM subjects, are extenuated at PGR level, and not enough is being done to tackle these participation issues.
5. PGR training and development should better reflect the fact that a growing number of PGR graduates will work in non-academic jobs in a number of different sectors of the labour market.
6. Employers require better information of the doctorate and what knowledge, skills and experience a doctoral student can offer.

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7. Many postgraduate research students face serious mental health issues, suffering from stress, anxiety disorders and depression.
 8. The health and wellbeing of PGR students is adversely affected by pressures from lack of funding, unmanageable workloads and poor support in part-time research and teaching roles, lack of key resources such as office space, and poor support structures.
 9. Some institutions do not take seriously enough issues of mental health and wellbeing because of a “culture of acceptance” in the academic environment when examining the pressure and stress of academic work.
 10. The culture of acceptance, and wider academic cultures often disproportionately affect women PGR students due to their masculine nature.
 11. PGR students on Centres for Doctoral Training may not be able to gain access to other resources available to other PGR students such as DSA. This harms these PGR students’ ability to feel supported by government and institutions.
 12. They may also not integrate fully with the wider student body due to being the potential of being unable to access certain aspects of university life, such as students’ union services due to not being affiliated across different students unions.


Conference resolves:

1. To lobby HEFCE and the Research Councils to increase the level and distribution of funding for postgraduate research and ensure its fair distribution so that it reflects both research excellence wherever it is found, but also high-quality PGR provision wherever it is found.
2. To lobby for more funding to be distributed on the basis of improving underrepresentation of groups in PGR.
3. Examine the quality of careers advice and professional development options for PGR students, supporting students unions to campaign for improvements where necessary.
4. Monitor the progress of institutions that have developed or are thinking of developing doctoral colleges to support PGR students, supporting students’ unions to engage in the structure and content of the colleges.
5. Work with students unions to further investigate issues of PGR mental health and wellbeing, and work up guidance on best practice.
6. Work with sector organisations and mental health charities to develop guidance for supervisors to help them to spot signs of stress and anxiety in their students and act as signposts to the right support structures.
7. Encourage institutions to offer more staff resource for mentoring and pastoral support for PGR students, and to develop processes for checking student progress that support students rather than add more pressure or encourage students to suspend study.
8. Provide support for students’ unions to raise awareness and campaign for improvements in tailored welfare and counselling services for PGR students.
9. Continue to develop the “postgraduates who teach” campaign, to ensure that all PGR students who work at institutions are treated fairly and given the support they need to develop.
10. Continue to support and strengthen unions to provide better representation for postgraduate students.
11. Mitigating circumstances / performance management – how to deal with processes / checks and balances that support students rather than add more pressure.
12. NUS needs to develop a benchmark framework for new forms of doctoral training and partnerships to ensure those students benefit from representative structures and support services available to students not in these schemes and there is a parity of experience.
13. Centres for Doctoral Training based at one or several institutions and Doctoral Training Partnerships need a clear framework on student integration with the institution and respective Students' Union.

Motion 204: Black students are NOT the problem, institutional racism is!

Conference Believes:

1. Nationally, Black students are on average 20% less likely to achieve First class or Upper Second class degrees than their white counterparts, despite entering their institution with the same FE qualifications.
2. The ethnicity attainment gap is a national crisis
3. The academic attainment gap between non-black and black students continues to widen
4. The effect of low academic achievement could present difficulties, potentially affecting life chances and advancement in their careers.

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5. The attainment gap is symptomatic of many issues relating to racism within education, including but not limited to Eurocentricity of the curriculum, experiences of overt and covert racism and microaggressions within institutions, lack of diversity within student body and faculty, poor pastoral care towards Black students, lack of student support services and other institutional and systemic failures within the academy.
 6. Despite this, many institutions operate a deficit model in addressing the attainment gap, problematising Black students and focusing on the false idea that the issue lies within them.
 7. All this is coupled with the fact that Black communities are dealing with being 7 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the police, and even killed in police custody¹, 50% youth unemployment, and an overrepresentation in prisons and psychiatric wards.
 8. Policies and procedures currently operated may be wittingly or unwittingly be operating as disadvantageous/discriminatory against Black students.

Conference further believes:

1. Tackling the ethnicity attainment gap needs to be a priority for the education sector.
2. There is a lack of research into how the attainment gap affects Black students of intersecting identities and liberation groups, such as Black women, Black LGBT and Black Disabled students.
3. The issues surrounding race that feed into the attainment gap also contribute to the disproportionate drop-out rates for Black students.
4. By focusing only on access to education (and barriers affecting it), we fundamentally fail to address the issues affecting student retention.
5. There is also an attainment gap between international and Home students.
6. There are no national statistics available on the attainment gap for international students.
7. 'Internationalisation' of the academy must mean more than understanding how to profit off of globalisation; it should include a holistic integration of non-Eurocentric perspectives into the curriculum, and a shift away from a hegemonic university environment that privileges the white British male experience.
8. When articulating and developing solutions to the attainment gap, we should centre issues around structural failures in dealing with racism and highlight the responsibility of institutions to proactively address it, not problematise Black students.
9. Black people have the solutions to their own oppression.

Conference resolves:

1. To set up a working group between the Black Students' Campaign, HE and FE zones to address and tackle the attainment gap
2. To adequately support the Black Students' Campaign by allocating funding to research and produce regular briefings and reports into the attainment gap, especially its effect on Black students of intersecting identities, and corresponding issues such as the Eurocentric curriculum and Black representation in education.
3. To work with the Black section of UCU to support Black-led initiatives to tackle the attainment gap, including developing workshops and webinars for institutions.
4. Work with QAA to push for statistics into the international student attainment gap to be developed and disseminated.
5. We demand:
 - 1) An inquiry undertaken by an independent external panel to investigate the academic marking
 - 2) Evidence of statistical data from institutions' equality committees showing academic attainment levels of the black student cohort over the last 3 years
 - 3) the number of black student cohort and their ethnic origin over the last 3 years
 - 4) Representation dedicated for Black students on top-level equality committees in all FECS and HEIS.

Motion 205: Students aren't consumers but they do have rights

¹<http://www.stop-watch.org/about-us/>
<http://www.irr.org.uk/research/statistics/criminal-justice/>
<http://www.theguardian.com/society/2012/mar/09/half-uk-young-black-men-unemployed>
<http://www.voice-online.co.uk/article/rise-black-people-detained-under-mental-health-act>
<http://www.inquest.org.uk/statistics/bame-deaths-in-police-custody>



Conference Believes:

1. Over the past few years Government has tripled HE fees in England yet has done nothing to strengthen students' rights.
2. The marketization of education has brought with it a flurry of suggestions that students are now consumers.
3. This "students as consumers" approach promised more power to students that has never materialised.
4. Research by "Which?" in 2014 found widespread problems in the practices of HEIs - in poor information and advice, standards for complaints, and exploitative and one sided student contracts.
5. This year the Competition and Markets authority found institutions seriously lacking in their procedures and practices.

Conference Further Believes:

1. "Which?", the consumers association, campaigns "to make consumers as powerful as the companies they face every day", and in doing so they work to support individuals with information about their rights, and consumers collectively with campaigns for change.
2. Few of us would argue with the idea that we should campaign to make students as powerful as the universities and colleges they face every day, and in doing so we should work to support students with information about their rights, and students collectively with campaigns for change.
3. Whilst our squeamishness about viewing students as consumers is understandable, it plays into the hands of powerful university and college managers who want to do all they can to retain disproportionate power over students.
4. A smart student movement would say "No" to students as consumers whilst supporting and championing regulation that makes students powerful in the face of well-funded, exploitative and highly defensive institutions
5. Often what should be basic student rights are touted as special features of a particular HEI as part of the process of competing with others, or labelled "consumer rights" to put us off arguing for them.
6. That a system of Post qualifications admissions is long overdue, has clear WP benefits and should be imposed by Government as a condition of funding
7. That UCAS should consider offering an institutional switching service for all students after their first term, incentivising institutions to provide a good student experience
8. There should be a statutory duty on HEIs and FEIs to fund and support students' union/independent advocacy for students
9. A new code of Post 16 Governance should be issued guaranteeing student and staff involvement in both the Governance and executive management of Universities and Colleges
10. There should be legal backing for student charters which should exist in every HEI and FEI
11. The Government should introduce regulation for any HEI or FEI charges made to students outside of a main fee- and if there are fees, what students get in exchange for that fees should be subject to clear regulation
If there have to be student loans, the terms of repayment should be specified in statute.

Conference Resolves:

1. To work with the CMA and Which to strengthen students' rights in HEIs and FEIs
2. To mandate the NUS HE Zone to include student protection demands in post-election work with political parties
3. To run a major campaign involving SUs calling on these issues to be included in legislation or regulation as soon as possible

Motion 206: Changing the Structure of maintenance loans

Submitted by: Anglia Ruskin Students' Union, Newcastle University Students' Union, Birkbeck Students' Union

Speech for: Anglia Ruskin Students' Union


Speech against: Free

Summation: Proposer of last successful amendment

Conference believes:


1. The current system of loan payments in England and Northern Ireland means that Maintenance Grants and Loans are paid at termly intervals throughout the academic year. These are roughly equal payments made at the start of each term, with dates advised by the University. (www.gov.uk)

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2. Despite each termly payment being roughly equal, term length and costs throughout the academic year such as accommodation and materials are not. Due to the timing of payments students can have shortfalls during one term and excesses in another.
 3. In Scotland the Student Loans Company pay loans in monthly installments. Scottish students also get a double payment in their first month to help pay for start-up costs. (www.saas.gov.uk)
 4. NUS research shows that many students find it difficult to budget and hardship funds see a spike in applications at the end of each term.
 5. One in four adults will have a mental health problem at some point in their life. One in two adults with debts has a mental health problem. One in four people with a mental health problem is also in debt. Debt can cause, and be caused by mental health problems. (Royal College of Psychiatrists).
 6. Current university undergraduate fees are £9000 a year.
 7. A graduate with two undergraduate degrees or two masters, will have an advantage over someone with only one when applying for jobs or PhDs.
 8. Many jobs require a specific degree.
 9. There are not many places on 4 year, funded graduate entry courses to medicine or dentistry, leaving many graduates to apply for non-funded 5 year courses, costing them £45,000 in fees
 10. Maintenance Grants are not allowed for part-time students.
 11. The UK government has announced plans to introduce a new system of postgraduate loans from 2016; such loans will have an age cap of 30.
 12. Mature students should not be ignored. There are many different ways the government and the loans company (student finance) can still benefit from giving loans to people over the age of 30, including higher interest rates, or a shorter term in which to repay, or a lower income threshold for repayment. By only giving funding to the under 30's; the government are discriminating against the majority of mature and postgraduate taught students, especially student parents who have had to take a break in studies, and those who have served the country in our Armed Forces. It is therefore imperative that we move to get this restriction removed, in the name of equality.
 13. The recent announcement in the Autumn statement by the UK Government proposed the introduction of loans of up to £10'000 for students domiciled in England studying postgraduate courses anywhere in the UK.
 14. Postgraduate education is expensive and inaccessible with, historically, poorer students less likely to study at postgraduate level.
 15. This announcement was welcomed as a move towards making postgraduate study more accessible, however it is limited to only English-domiciled students.
 16. Through consequentials from the Barnett funding formula, any increase in spending in education should result in the Welsh Government and Northern Irish Assembly being offered a match level (equivalent) funding to be spent in the same area.
 17. This funding is likely to come with a strict set of conditions as to how it should be spent, which would limit the Welsh Government's ability to offer loans to all students.
 18. The current independent review into education funding and student support (also known as the Diamond Review) is currently examining postgraduate education funding as part of its terms of reference.
 19. Although there has been a significant movement towards an effective postgraduate taught loan system, there is still exclusion. As a country based on equal rights it is abhorrent to see that anyone who does not fit in to the extremely narrow restrictions placed on this new funding proposal, is being discriminated against.
 20. The new policy restricts mature students over 30 from accessing government-backed postgraduate taught funding streams. This leaves them looking towards bank loans and other alternative funding options. Mature students should not be ignored.
 21. There are many different ways the government and the loans company (student finance) can still benefit from giving loans to people over the age of 30, including higher interest rates, or a shorter term in which to repay, or a lower income threshold for repayment. By only giving funding to the under 30's; the government are discriminating against the majority of mature and postgraduate taught students, especially student parents who have had to take a break in studies, and those who have served the country in our Armed Forces. It is therefore imperative that we move to get this restriction removed, in the name of equality
 22. Prospective postgraduate taught students have faced a "credit crisis" with banks extremely reluctant to offer loans. Figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act show that last year less than half of the 20,000 prospective students who applied for a government-supported career development loan received an offer of a

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- loan. This struggle will be ongoing for mature students as long as they are denied access to government-backed postgraduate taught loans.
23. Maintenance Grants cease for adults at the age of 60 on full time degree courses.
 24. Many students are surprised and concerned upon discovering that final year undergraduate students receive maintenance loans at a lower rate than in other years of their undergraduate study.
 25. Student Finance England (SFE) have previously attempted to justify this policy by stating that students complete their studies in May or June and therefore require less financial support; this argument fails to take into account.
 26. That many costs and in particular rent, one of the most significant, often run on 12 month contracts which do not end early in response to graduation,
 27. That many students already rely on their loan only in term time and not over the summer, or;
 28. That current youth employment rates mean a significant number of students are unlikely to find work immediately upon graduation and cannot guarantee that a salary will be able to compensate for the reduction in support.
 29. Furthermore, the lack of publicity regarding the final year reduction is both dishonest and disadvantages students who may sign up for housing and other outgoings under the impression that they will receive an amount comparable to that in their previous years of study.
 30. The present system of means testing fails to properly take account of the individual circumstances of students in different financial brackets and can result in students being over reliant on parental contributions which parents are unable to provide.
 31. The cost of living for students is an ever increasing problem for students; maintenance loans should reflect the reality of students' needs and should cover basic living essentials – including accommodation.
 32. That student finance should be an open and understandable process for students and their family, and to campaign for a revision of the presently over complicated application process.


Conference further believes:

1. Students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and study under a wide variety of circumstances. The English student loan arrangements are 'one size fits all' and do not currently allow for students in different circumstances.
2. More consistent payments could avoid periodic shortfalls in money and therefore debt. This could impact on students' nutrition, physical and mental health.
3. The option of student loan payments on a monthly basis would allow students to experience budgeting and spending in line with other forms of payment such as wages.
4. Greater flexibility in the payment options would allow students to select payment schedules appropriate to their personal circumstances.
5. Larger, termly lump sum payments can cause increased debt for students who do not continue studying and drop out or intermit.
6. By only being able to obtain student loans for a single degree, students from poorer backgrounds are disadvantaged as they cannot afford to independently fund a second degree
7. All people, regardless of background or age, should have the same access to education.
8. NUS Wales believes the Welsh Government could delay a decision on Welsh postgraduate loans until after the conclusion of the 'Diamond' review in 2016; and therefore any system proposed would not be enacted until 2018/19.
9. Through the introduction of postgraduate loans in England only, there is a danger that a pseudo-market may appear, whereby universities across the UK will raise the cost of all postgraduate courses to at least £10'000, in order to benefit from the full loan from the students studying that course.
10. If Welsh and Northern Irish students are not offered comparable financial support to study postgraduate courses, they could be priced out of the system, and unable to afford the increased cost of postgraduate study.
11. Any delay in formulating a Welsh and Northern Irish PG loan system will result in a generation of Welsh students unable to afford postgraduate study and being disadvantaged compared to their English counterparts.
12. The English PG loan system recommends limiting the accessibility of loans to those under 30, discriminating against those returning to education later in life.

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13. Any proposal to limit loans to particular subject areas would result in certain groups of students being disadvantaged in accessing postgraduate study.
 14. NUS has stated the importance of mature students in UK higher education in its never too late to learn report, and should not ignore them as the government have.
 15. That any age cap on a postgraduate loan system is purely arbitrary and ageist and Contrary to the spirit of European Law
 16. That there should be fair and equitable rates of repayment that are comparable for undergraduate and postgraduate loans.
 17. There is evidence that it is increasingly the 'better off' who engage in postgraduate study, especially Masters or PhDs, and the number of students from lower income backgrounds is decreasing. This has implications for fair access and social mobility.
 18. By having the loan available only to those under 30 is simply unfair. All who want to access postgraduate study should have equal opportunity to do so.
 19. Age is a protected characteristic and as such the government are actively discriminating individuals on these grounds.
 20. Over 30's are perhaps more likely to have greater responsibilities (e.g. children, mortgage etc.) than under 30's and may further require the extra support.
 21. Undergraduate students with extra responsibilities currently receive additional financial support to help them through their studies.

Conference resolves:

1. To consult with students regarding increased flexibility in the loan payment schedule. This may include monthly (over 12 months), monthly (term-time only), and termly options for payment.
2. To lobby Student Finance England to research and implement viable options for the provision of more flexible loan payments. This will include the opportunity for students to alter their payment schedule with each annual re-application.
3. If implementation of a new system is successful, to work with Student Finance England to provide students with guidance in selecting payment options.
4. NEC demands UK Government enables maintenance grants on part-time courses.
5. For NUS to actively campaign and lobby the government to lift the age cap on postgraduate loans and create a national campaign around this, removing exclusion from those who cannot afford to self-fund their postgraduate students.
6. To ensure that such a campaign is a priority in the year ahead.
7. To support, and advocate for, no age limit to postgraduate loans.
8. To ensure that any NUS response to the ongoing consultation on a postgraduate loan system outlines these views.
9. To mandate the NUS Vice President Higher Education to write to the Universities Minister to demand a change in policy, outlining the arguments for fair postgraduate funding for all.
10. To instruct the Higher Education Zone, in conjunction with the Postgraduate Students' Section and Mature & Part-Time Students' Section, to launch a Fair Postgraduate Funding for All campaign.
11. To develop a briefing and resources for Constituent Members so that they are equipped to lobby their institutions and policies locally on this issue to support students entering postgraduate study, particularly mature students.
12. For NUS to work with the sector to provide a more viable option for postgraduate loan funding
13. For NUS UK to work with devolved nations NUS elected officers to ensure any unintended consequences of any English loan system for students from the devolved nations don't arise.
14. For NUS UK, in all future conversations with the UK Government about postgraduate loans, to lobby for a flexible financial arrangement for devolved nations to allow the respective government to introduce a complementary postgraduate loan system.
15. NEC demands UK Government to withdraw any age restrictions on maintenance grants on all full time degree courses.
16. To campaign for immediate changes to student finance information, and in particular the student finance calculator on SFE's website to draw particular attention to the final year reduction to maintenance loans.

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17. To campaign in the long term for the final year maintenance loan to be assessed on the same grounds as in other years.
 18. To mandate the National President, Vice Presidents Welfare and Higher Education to work with member Unions to gather student and parent feedback and exemplar cases to draw attention to student hardship caused by the final year maintenance loan policy.

Motion 229: We are Sections, let us roar!

Submitted by: NUS Mature and Part-Time Students Committee

Speech for: NUS Mature and Part-Time Students Committee

Speech against: Free

Summation: NUS Mature and Part-Time Students Committee

Conference believes:

1. The Mature & Part-Time Students' Section created the "Child Free to Child Friendly" campaign.
2. Student Sections are the bodies that are responsible for the formation of policy and the carrying out of the policy work of the National Union that has been allocated to them by the National Conference and that is of concern to the Students represented by each Student Section.
3. Repeatedly work by the NUS has shown that students who are mature and/or part-time and/or postgraduate are not receiving the support they need.
4. The Mature and Part-time Students Section and the Postgraduate Students Section are unable to carry out the work they need because they have no budget for it.
5. The Mature and Part-Time students' campaign needs funding.
6. The Postgraduate Students' Section needs funding.

Conference further believes:

1. The Mature and Part-time Students Section and the Postgraduate Students Section need funding to conduct relevant research.
2. The Mature and Part-time Students Section and the Postgraduate Students Section need Funding to produce resources for SUs.
3. The Mature and Part-time Students Section and the Postgraduate Students Section need funding to provide training.
4. The Mature and Part-time Students Section and the Postgraduate Students Section need funding to be able to actually do what their conferences mandate.
5. The Mature and Part-time Students Section and the Postgraduate Students Section need funding to campaign to raise awareness of the complex issues our students face.
6. That all sections should be funded equally.


Conference resolves:

1. The Child Free to Child Friendly campaign should be renewed, and made accessible for all institutions.
2. That the campaign for fair postgraduate funding for all be made a priority of Mature & Part-time Students' Section, the Postgraduate Students' Section and the HE Zone.
3. That the Mature and Part-time Students Committee and the Postgraduate Students Committee will hold a joint meeting to discuss and plan the Fair Postgraduate Funding for all campaign.

Motion 207: No FE cuts

Conference believes:

1. The Coalition Government has imposed massive cuts to Further Education over the past 5 years, removed vital financial support to hundreds of thousands of FE students and introduced a disgraceful fees and loans system for FE adult learners.
1. FE has come under sustained and severe attack since the coalition came to power in 2010
2. FE often offers opportunities to students who have been otherwise shut out of education due to various forms of disadvantage

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3. Adult education funding has been reduced by government cuts by 35% since 2010, whilst the budget for 16-18 year olds has been slashed by £250 million this year alone.

Conference further believes:

1. That the government needs to reverse all cuts to FE and instead provide a well, publicly funded FE which is accessible for all.

Conference resolves:

1. Campaign nationally to restore all FE funding cut since 2009 and for yearly real-terms increases and to work with trade unions to demand Labour commit to this.
2. Produce materials to help students and SUs oppose FE funding cuts.
3. To launch a 'Defend FE' campaign
4. To call mass meetings in FE colleges to discuss the situation we are facing and to organise action
5. To organise a programme of action including college protests, strikes, walk-outs and occupations
6. To support action taken by and build campaigning links with trade unions organising in FE.

Motion 208: Coming of 'Digital' Age/Digital Literacy motion

Conference Believes:

1. There is a lack of digital self-awareness amongst the student population, about the risks that can have legal, employability, societal and university ramifications.
2. Student representatives sit on disciplinary panels and consistently see students fall victim to their own lack of digital self-awareness.
3. Some students are unaware of the legal implications of taking and sharing pictures and/or comments of a sensitive nature.
4. Some students are becoming the unsuspecting victims of sexual harassment and bullying facilitated through online technology.

Conference Further Believes:

1. The NUS has a duty to help develop students' unions understanding of the risks and consequences which can affect employability and civil liberties.
2. The NUS has a duty to protect victims with disseminating vital information from changes in the law.


Conference Resolves:

1. NUS should work with its members to understand the grassroots of the problems that arise from the lack of awareness of digital literacy.
2. NUS should lobby the government to embed Digital Literacy as a cross curricular issue through, primary and secondary education and put significant pressure on institutions and FE colleges to educate students.
3. The NUS should run awareness campaigns about the legal, institutional, employability and societal dangers of both taking and sharing sensitive photos and information. The NUS should keep students' unions up to date about changes in laws regarding online behaviour.

Motion 210: Bad organisation and management makes for a bad student experience

Conference believes:

1. In the NSS, the "organisation and management" category comes out as a consistent concern for students. O&M on a course underpins the entire academic experience – it directly affects students' ability to learn.
2. Problems with organisation and management are stressful and distracting for students.
3. Conversely, when a course is well organised and running smoothly, students can concentrate on their studies rather than having to focus time and energy on administrative issues.

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4. High-quality organisation and management facilitates positive relationships between staff and students by eliminating unnecessary points of conflict and dissatisfaction.
 5. Good organisation and management promotes widening participation.

Conference Further Believes:

1. The choice to study part-time or to enter higher education as a mature student or a student with caring responsibilities is often determined by factors such as a timetable that is amenable to balancing study with other responsibilities.
2. Other issues like placements and assessment “spacing” all impact on the student experience. Too often these decisions are reached without input from students and with the needs of the institution, not students, at the forefront.

Conference Resolves:

1. To mandate the VP Higher Education to develop bargaining resources for SU officers and reps on organisation and management issues in 15/16.
2. To commit to researching and issuing a wider, regular programme of bargaining resources and to monitor wins that unions have when using them.


Motion 211: Free Education

Conference believes:

1. There is an alternative to paying for university through tuition fees or a graduate tax – public investment for free education.
2. Last year Germany scrapped tuition fees – proving once again that free education is possible.
3. 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.
4. Higher education is a public good and should be free for everyone to access.
5. 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.
6. If the government increased tax on corporations and the wealthy, scrapped Trident or reduced military spending, billions of pounds would be made available to fund free education and other vital public services.
7. Nus policy to fight for free education has not been implemented for FE
8. The nus roadmap to free education is for HE only and ignores FE completely.
9. Education is a right, not a privilege
10. Fees in FE disproportionately affect women
11. NUS leaders have a history of refusing to stand up for students and confront the government when Labour is in power.
12. Labour leaders’ talk of 6k undergrad fees and graduate taxes isn’t good enough and doesn’t help FE, but shows they are feeling pressure from students. We should capitalise and push for more.
13. Our broken political system won’t represent our needs unless we force it to. Whoever wins the election, we must give that government no choice but to meet our demands, through a determined protest and direct action campaign. Lobbying is important – but powerless on its own.

Conference further believes:

1. Abolishing fees is insufficient if students are excluded or impoverished by the cost of living.
2. NUS has a long history of campaigning against fees and cuts, and has played a key role, along with other groups within the student movement in overturning the proposed privatisation of student debt and delaying cuts to DSA.
3. Working with allies within the student movement, trade unions and other campaign groups, an effective and broad based campaign can be built and sustained to fight and end the marketization of education and austerity policies.
4. It is vitally important that after the General Election, we continue to campaign in this vein. Whoever wins in May, they must be held to account and as a movement we must continue the campaign against fees and cuts.

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5. Our vision for free education goes beyond abolishing fees: it is for a liberatory transformation of the education system.
 6. Fighting for a truly free system of education will not be easy or quick, and we will not win everything at once. But unlike graduate tax or fees, free education is an inspirational policy, and every step closer we get to our goal, the more accessible and liberatory education will become.
 7. Fe is seen as an easy target for cuts by government
 8. Cuts to fe are unprecedented and extreme in comparison to he
 9. It doesn't make sense to fight for free education in he but not fe
 10. Fe colleges are life changing for the poorest and disadvantaged in society
 11. Fe is progression to HE so fees in FE are a financial barrier to HE and therefore counterproductive to free education in HE
 12. Recognises that further education receives less funding per student than other sectors
 13. Educational policy is not always coherent and owing to the 2 education departments influencing FE

Conference resolves:


1. 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'.
2. To campaign for free education funded by taxing the rich for all students in FE and HE. We demand:
 - a. a liberated curriculum
 - b. the abolition of student debt
 - c. open and public access to universities and colleges, democratically-controlled institutions free from surveillance and harassment by police and immigration officials
 - d. the abolition of all fees for home and international students
3. NUS to lobby government for free education in FE
4. Identify a good economic argument for free education in FE
5. To create separate roadmap to free education in FE
6. Lobby government to give an equal amount of funding to FE as schools.

300 Welfare Zone

Motion 301: Supporting for Success: Getting the most out of student support services


Conference Believes:

1. The work of student support services is hugely important to access and retention, but is often undervalued within institutions.
2. Student support services can include but aren't limited: to advice, counselling, campus medical centres, disability services, mental health services and other types of pastoral care.
3. Recent years have seen a number of pressures on student support services including: increasing demand, insufficient funding, threats of cuts and the potential loss of Disabled Students' Allowance.
4. In addition to this, overstretched NHS services are resulting in increasing strain being placed on services provided by institutions.
5. The increasing marketisation of education is leading to prioritisation of more superficial services and expenditure linked to 'the student experience' rather than the vital services that students need.
6. Leadership within institutions, as well as sector bodies should place higher priority on delivering adequate, well-resourced services that support students who are struggling.
7. Students should be partners in the shaping of services, and students should be empowered to decide their own journey through services.
8. Students' experiences of services and support should be joined-up and coherent from pre-application through to completion and students should not be expected to disclose support needs at multiple points.
9. That student support services should not be profit making.
10. Services should be delivered by staff who are paid fairly for their work, and supported through proper training.

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11. The student movement should stand in solidarity with student services staff fighting for fair pay and terms and conditions.
 12. Academic staff should be trained on how to approach and to identify student welfare issues, as they can play an important role in signposting and acting as a consistent and trusted point of contact for students.
 13. Attendance monitoring should not lead to the surveillance or singling out of international students. Where and if it is used, it should be for supportive and pastoral reasons to help identify vulnerable students across the board.
 14. Institutions should ensure that services and support extend to bullying and harassment experienced in online spaces.
 15. The hours support services are available often make them completely inaccessible to students whose modules occur during the evening and/or weekend periods.
 16. As the demand for Student support services increase, institutions should review resourcing annually to ensure that advertised services are delivered and that student expectations are met.
 17. Institutions should ensure the full complement of services is offered throughout the year including vacation periods.
 18. That one of the key student support services provided by institutions is hardship funding.
 19. Despite this, hardship funding has been seen as an easy target in recent years: the Westminster government scrapped the ring-fenced Access to Learning Fund in HE in England from 2014/15, whilst the budget for the 16-19 Bursary Fund in FE has not increased since 2012; the HE Financial Contingency Fund in Wales was saved for a year by an NUS Wales campaign but is under threat for 2015/16 as is funding in FE; whilst in
 20. Northern Ireland and Scotland these budgets have been cut or are inadequate. Some SUs, such as Sheffield Hallam, have been successful at winning additional funds for their students, but in many cases this essential safety net has been cut to the bare minimum.
 21. That students may need to take interruptions from their study for a number of reasons including but not limited to: health, mental health, financial and family
 22. Students have the right to an informed decision as to whether an interruption would be more beneficial to their education instead of carrying on with that year's study
 23. There are a number of inhibitive reasons other than the educational impact of taking an interruption including, but not limited to: visas, finances and poor information
 24. That presently there is little consistency of information from institutions, Student Finance [England / Wales / NI], local councils and national government with respect to policy, procedures and support
 25. Many academic institutions lack empathy and this can add stress to students during an already intensely stressful period
 26. That students may need to take interruptions from their study for a number of reasons including but not limited to: health, mental health, financial and family
 27. Students have the right to an informed decision as to whether an interruption would be more beneficial to their education instead of carrying on with that year's study
 28. There's number of inhibitive reasons other than the educational impact of taking an interruption.

Conference Further Believes:

1. Student support services should be made available to all students outside of traditional office hours.
2. Hardship funds are by their nature targeted at precisely those students who need urgent financial help to continue their course and succeed.
3. Some of the most vulnerable groups who most rely on hardship – student parents and carers, disabled students, healthcare students, adult learners, care leavers and those estranged from their parents – are exactly those groups NUS research has demonstrated are under the most financial strain.
4. Hardship should be provided through ring-fenced budgets at a national level, with national criteria to ensure consistent decisions, but with enough local discretion to address unusual circumstances and needs.
5. Hardship funds are by their nature targeted at precisely those students who need urgent financial help to continue their course and succeed.
6. That students can find themselves in a financial limbo when taking a year from study, with respect to financial support from Student Finance, their institution or benefit office
7. That more can be done by institutions to make disruption to study easier
8. That finding a job short term is increasingly difficult
9. That financial support from family is never guaranteed

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10. That international students taking a year out may find their visa revoked if declared as not on a full-time course.

Conference Resolves:

1. To call for restoration of funding cut from student support services in institutions
2. To commission a piece of work which looks at students' experiences of student support services and makes recommendations in relation to the distinction between academic and pastoral care services (in consultation with UCU and other sector groups), as well as plotting what students' journey through support services might look like.
3. Within this work, recommendations will also be made on the level of training that is appropriate for academic and other frontline staff to receive in relation to student support and mental health, as well as how best to communicate services so that they become a more prominent feature of institutions.
4. This work should not be prescriptive, but should instead aim to provide a framework for reasonable student expectations, with details of service provision rightly determined and negotiated on a local level.
5. To incorporate examples of where services have innovated and established new ways of delivering support.
6. In order to ensure that services are fit for purpose for all students regardless of identity.
7. To consider and challenge structures that make it difficult for liberation groups (who may be particularly vulnerable) to access services
8. To encourage greater participation among other groups less likely to access services (e.g. men accessing mental health services, international students, distance learners)
9. To emphasise the importance of ongoing evaluation and an effective feedback loop between students (and particularly those using services), students' unions and institutions in relation to the delivery of services.
10. To consider the student services arrangements for students on years abroad, as well as part-time students and distance learners to ensure that all students can expect a minimum level of service at all times.
11. To push for parity of access to services for international students, both within institutions and outside (particularly within the NHS)
12. To fight outsourcing and cuts and the effects this can have on the position of staff, as well as the services delivered to students.
13. To emphasize that mature students often require differentiated services compared to traditional students.
14. To launch a commission of student hardship that calls on government across 4 nations to address the issue.
15. To survey SUs about hardship provision and identify where the cuts have been greatest and their effects.
16. To campaign to defend hardship funds in FE and HE from cuts.
17. To call for a reinstatement of hardship funds where it has been lost and to extend funding where it is inadequate.
18. To call on institutions to ensure that staff who manage appeals and complaint procedures are aware of how the provision of support services can be the vital lifeline for many students.
19. To call on institutions to conduct a detailed analysis of support service usage and relate it to access and retention.
20. To call on institutions to commit to ensuring that financial support lost when the Access to Learning Fund was scrapped are replaced by the institution and that allocation criteria are open and transparent, ensuring that Union officers are be part of the review of how funds are spent each year.
21. To lobby institutions to ensure that the right support services are available for students to make an informed decision about interruptions to their study
22. To work with institutions, students unions, NUS Liberation Campaigns, and other support bodies to ensure that staff and services are fully educated on the issues surrounding disruption to study
23. To work with the NUS Liberation campaigns to develop research and campaign to ensure that support services are able to cater to the different access needs of students who are facing interruptions to their study
24. To develop guidelines for students unions and academic institutions on how best to support students undergoing disruption to their studies and build bespoke, case by case support services for individual students
25. To campaign against institutionalised discrimination that prevents students accessing an accessible education

Motion 302: No room for Unfair Housing

Conference believes:

1. A housing crisis is fast developing in Britain, particularly for young people and students
2. According to a NUS survey from 2013:
 - a. Average student rents doubled in just the 10 years from 2002 to 2012
 - b. Private sector housing costs students on average more than £1500 more than university accommodation
 - c. The number of private housing firms that provide no accommodation adapted for disabled people whatsoever has shot up to more than 1 in 4
 - d. At more than 1 in 5 universities students have no access to any system that can accredit the quality of privately rented accommodation
3. Paying extortionate rate for sub-standard housing is extremely detrimental to one's academic studies.
4. There has been a longstanding and false debate about students living in the private rented sector that pits students against other citizens on who is 'most deserving' for housing supply.
5. Article 4 Directions, a policy that aims to control where students can and can't live in communities, was introduced as a central government policy under Labour and pushed down to local decision makers under the Coalition Government.
6. There is currently a housing crisis in Britain.
7. The cost of student accommodation should be matched to student incomes, not the market.
8. That Universities increasingly seek to 'widen participation', yet do not offer halls at a price that working class students can afford
9. Some institutions heavily recruit international students, yet do not offer a guarantor scheme.
10. The housing crisis has led to spiralling rents in the private rented sector.
11. Weekly rent for students increased by 25% between 2009-10 and 2012-13 nationally with the average rent being £123.96.
(<http://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/Accommodation%20Costs%20Survey%20V6%20WEB.pdf>)
12. In 2009-10 the average non-ensuite self-catered single room in institution accommodation was £78.84 a week but by 2011-12 the cost was 23% higher at £97.08.
(<http://www.nus.org.uk/Global/Campaigns/Accommodation%20Costs%20Survey%20V6%20WEB.pdf>)
13. Many universities across the country have relationships with private halls suppliers, in which their service is recommended to students.
14. Many students see living in halls as a central part of their university experience.
15. It is crucial that students are independently represented by their SU in relationships between private companies, institutions and students.
16. In some instances, the commercial nature of this relationship means the student voice can be unheard.
17. It is unacceptable for students to not be a partner in their housing.
18. There is a substantial amount of students within higher education who are; estranged from their family, who are fostered or live with parents who are disabled.
19. When graduated most of these students will be searching for the appropriate job. Some will find work locally; some will find work further away.
20. For those who find work further away, they will then need to find a place to live in order for them to accept the job.
21. However in order to rent a property you must provide at least one of the following; a guarantor, evidence of income or payment of up to six months' rent. (All major letting companies require this).
22. Some institutions heavily recruit international students, yet do not offer a guarantor scheme.

Conference further believes:


1. Everybody has the right to a safe, affordable home whether studying or not.
2. The problem is not about who is most deserving of housing but that the government needs to build more homes and this debate will not cease until that happens.
3. Building more purpose built accommodation for students is not the solution. They are unaffordable, lack real choice and put students in the hands of greedy private accommodation providers seeking profit. Many

students like living in homes in the private rented sector that sit within a wider community and the provision for student homes must reflect that balance.

4. NUS must place its work on housing in the context of wider communities and work to achieve success for everyone in order to win for students.
5. The student movement should care about wider housing campaigns in order to create a fair and sustainable future for students.
6. Student housing campaigns should unite both those living in university halls of residence and private accommodation, they could campaign around the following demands:
7. Rents paid to university accommodation should be capped and brought down to a genuinely affordable level
8. All privatised university housing and services must be brought back 'in-house'
9. University owned accommodation must be democratically run with a say given to students, student unions, and trade unions on campus
10. Set up Student Union run letting agencies that refuse to charge artificial fees and can blacklist dodgy landlords
11. Councils should use their legal powers to introduce rent control, so housing is something we can actually afford
12. Opposing the selling off of publicly owned council housing, which has been run down and depleted by successive governments – nationally just 840 were built by councils in the 2013-2014 financial year
13. Mass council house building would provide jobs in the construction industry, flood the market with extra housing stock, and drive down rents
14. Accommodation in halls and the private rented sector is too expensive and the result is that students are either put off from applying to institutions, have to reject offers from their chosen institution, or struggle to afford accommodation fees and take on an unsustainable amount of part-time work or debt to pay them.

Conference resolves:


1. To conduct a review on the effectiveness (or lack of) that Article 4 Directions has had on housing supply in local communities and call for their withdrawal.
2. To lobby the next government to ensure adequate spending is given to building new homes.
3. To join Shelter's call to extend the Affordable Homes Programme to 2020 and to build 250,000 a year with a diverse portfolio that includes adequate social housing.
4. To call for letting agency fees to be scrapped across the UK, longer and more flexible tenancies and an end to revenge evictions.
5. To show support and solidarity to local community housing campaigns that resist eviction and demolition of homes.
6. To support a range of initiatives that boost standards in student housing, including community tenants' unions and supporting those that already exist.
7. Student Unions should be encouraged to campaign on housing as a top priority in these several ways:
8. To campaign for their university and local council to work together to implement a mandatory accreditation scheme for all private landlords / letting agencies to subscribe to.
9. To set up democratically student-run Tenants Unions to serve as a genuine campaign organisation / platform for all students renting in private / university owned property (not a rubber stamp organisation for university management)
10. To break up the monopoly of housing controlled by private landlords by encouraging alternatives such as student union run letting agencies, student housing co-ops.
11. All 'housing fairs' should have all and any commercial aspects removed and turned into events that promote awareness on such matters as tenants' rights etc.
12. NUS should launch a housing campaign around the demands mentioned above
13. To lobby the Office for Fair Access in England and regional forums elsewhere to make affordable housing and guarantor schemes components in Access Agreements, and run training for SUs to influence locally.
14. To call for rent controls, organising with campaigns like the Radical Housing Network and Living Rent Campaign; and lobby for housing officers to be brought back to Local Authorities, with the power to cap rents and prosecute bad landlords.
15. For NUS to support and help create the development of progressive rent structures that students' unions can lobby their institution to implement, for example where 25% of bed stock is maintained at a level of 50% of maximum student finance grant, loan and bursary.

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16. For NUS to organise with sabbaticals and activists and lead a campaign to reduce rents for students in the private rented sector, demanding sustainable rent control policies and ambitious long-term affordable accommodation building projects from government.
 17. For NUS to provide resources to Students' Unions to enable students to campaign on affordable accommodation issues on their own campuses, including support for rent strikes, occupations and similar actions where necessary.
 18. To mandate the NUS VP Welfare to establish a toolkit for working with external halls suppliers and universities, in order to strengthen the representation provided by Students' Unions.
 19. To implement a university service where students can request the university to act as their guarantor if needed (estranged, care leaver)
 20. Universities will act as a guarantor until the graduate receives their first six payments from their employer.
 21. Graduates will then be able to provide evidence of income and will be credit checked by the letting agencies which would mean the university will no longer need to be a guarantor.
 22. Graduates seeking support from the Universities to act as a guarantor would have to provide evidence supporting the situation in which they cannot provide a guarantor.
 23. Graduates seeking support from Universities have to provide evidence of employment in which they are about to start (confirmation of job).

Motion 303: Student Financial Support


Conference believes:

1. Student support in England has been under attack for too many years. Whether the disgraceful 'modernisation' of the DSA, the appalling abolition of the Education Maintenance Allowance and Access to Learning Funds, or the slow decline in value of bursaries, grants and loans across FE and HE, we face a cost of living crisis.
2. The nations have had some success, such as securing greater support for the poorest HE students in Wales and Scotland and defending EMAs, but the threat of cuts is still real.
3. In England the student movement has secured some important wins – defending Care to Learn, stopping the worst cuts to DSA, and securing improved postgraduate funding – but these wins aren't nearly enough.
4. Too many students struggle to make ends meet.
5. NUS published Pound in Your Pocket (England) in 2012 but its response has been piecemeal and too many recommendations remain unaddressed.
6. Students are struggling to afford the cost of living whilst being at university.
7. The cost of living is increasing at a higher rate than student maintenance loans and grants, the increase between this academic year and the last equated to less than 1% (which is below inflation rate.)
8. Accordingly this means that there is an increasing gap between student income and the cost of living in the UK. The maximum grant based upon means tested measures that a student who lives outside of London can receive is £3,387. The average expenditure for living costs across the year is £12,056 (based upon 2010 figures). This leaves a gap of £8,889.
9. There is evidence to suggest that the maintenance loan for most students does not even cover their student accommodation. For example the lowest price of accommodation per annum at Reading is £3,995.60, meaning that there is a difference of £608.60 which would have to be funded by the student.
10. Therefore students are reliant on parental support, yet 1 in 5 parents of students face financial pressures as a result of this.
11. This is assuming that parents are willing to support their child in such a way; some students may not have good relationships with their parents/ guardians.
12. It is now assumed that a student should get a part-time job to support the cost of living whilst being at university, this can affect negatively upon a student experience due to time poverty factors. Whereby students do not have the adequate time to fulfil their studies or extra-curricular activities.
13. Evidence shows that these factors are negatively affecting student well-being. Students unions are witnessing a rise in finance –related health issues.
14. There is generally an expectation that maintenance loans should cover student costs of living, so many new students are unprepared for the above factors.
15. The majority of UK students must apply for funding through Student Finance England (SFE).
16. The number of students not receiving their funding on time is increasing.

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17. Although, some of these are complex situations, many of these are due to clerical/administration errors. For example: losing declarations three times even though they were sent signed for delivery and confirmed as received by the postal service. Another person was told not to send a photocopy of a birth certificate and then when the evidence arrived was told it needed to be the original document.
 18. 1 in 3 students experience sleep problems due to financial worry.
 19. The scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) has had a hugely detrimental impact, hitting the poorest families, women and Black students.
 20. Government grants for 24+ FE students have been replaced with loans, with a disproportionate impact on women students who are the majority of adult learners in FE.
 21. EMA was a lifeline to thousands of students that, in England, was cruelly scrapped by the government in 2010
 22. This cut forced thousands of young people out of education and made college inaccessible to many more
 23. NHS funded students receive a bursary and 'reduced-rate' student loan. In London this is just over £4k for students studying for 45 weeks a year. All other funding is means tested and the maximum someone could receive is just over £5000.
 24. A survey conducted by the Medical Students Association at KCL shows that only 44% of students were aware of changes to finances in their final year and, of those who were aware, most found out via word of mouth.
 25. In some multi-disciplinary Universities, up to 63% of expenditure of the access to learning fund goes on NHS funded students.
 26. NHS funded students are more likely to access low and high risk debt funds and have more financial worries than non-NHS funded students.
 27. 60% of the medical workforce are women, and in courses like nursing women far outnumber men.
 28. That the current funding system for nursing and midwifery students is broken and too many students are struggling to pay for their final placement at the end of their final year.
 29. The Student Finance England is abandoning those students whose academic year doesn't finish in June but actually the ends at the end of August.
 30. That the NHS Bursary, which is meant to provide support for these students, isn't timed effectively to support nursing and midwifery students.
 31. That because of these factors nursing and midwifery students are left without any financial support during their final placement, which is a requirement for registration.
 32. That financial pressure on students can lead to poor performance and can a cause for a student to leave their course.

Conference further believes:

1. We need to take radical action to secure greater investment in student support across the board.
2. Real progressive politics means ensuring that it is those most in need who receive the most support.
3. Simply making vague calls for living grants completely fails students and will do nothing to actually improve their situation.
4. The EMA and support for adult learners must be reinstated and improved.
5. Grants and loans – and the thresholds at which they are paid – must see their value restored and enhanced and the DSA must be defended.
6. The utterly inadequate support for NHS-funded healthcare students must be drastically improved.
7. Course costs support – particularly for childcare – needs to be provided to part-time students.
8. Urgent reforms must be made to the mechanisms of student support – monthly payments, abolishing the final year rate of student loan, and much easier online applications.
9. Student life is stressful enough and that money issues already play a large part in that, without the added stresses produced by misinformation and clerical errors.
10. Students' Union exist to support students in areas such as matter, however this is only tackling the 'symptoms' and not the 'cause'.
11. Tackling the root of the issue would decrease the pressure on our Advice Services.
12. That the next government should bring back EMA. We need a new, bigger and better EMA that provides greater levels of financial support to more students.
13. While EMA was an important lifeline, it was far from perfect
14. EMA was only available to a minority of 16-18 year olds and £30 a week is not enough.
15. NHS funded students are already underfunded and not well supported financially during their studies.
16. NHS funded students should have access to extra funding in the form of a living grant, not a loan.

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17. The lack of financial support for NHS students disproportionately affects women.
 18. The retention of NHS funded students will become harder (nursing student drop-out rates at some Universities is at 25%).
 19. Wider issues affecting the NHS (such as pay freezes, pay caps and privatisation) impact on healthcare students now with funding and in their future careers with pay.

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS lead a high-profile campaign that demands urgent action from the new government on all these areas and others arising from Pound in Your Pocket etc.
2. To reaffirm our commitment to targeting support at those most in need.
3. To resist any attempt at further cuts.
4. That the NUS should lobby the government for a more realistic student maintenance funding system.
5. This includes funds in the form of hardship funds/ grants/ bursaries which are not presented in a loan system, which creates additional student debt.
6. Any loan system should take into account parents who have multiple children who attend university.
7. The government should subsidise funds for universities to use for cost of living purposes to enable cheaper student accommodation, catered packages, extra-curricular activities and travel.
8. To campaign to raise awareness of the cost of living whilst studying.
9. Universities should publish any hidden course costs for example the cost of books, university trips and printing costs.
10. Campaign and lobby for better service within SFE.
11. Conduct research into the problems faced through SFE. This will enable NUS to gather research to decide further action.
12. Work with NASMA to conduct this research.
13. Bring the evidence Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. This would lead up to the improvement of services dependent on research, which could include, but not limit; staff training, quality of service and improvement in telephone services.
14. Campaign to end loans in FE.
15. Launch a major national campaign to bring back EMA with national days of action and a protest outside the Department of Education – demand the next Government brings back EMA.
16. To lobby the Government to secure more funding for NHS funded students.
17. To make clear the gendered gap in the funding of health students compared to other students.
18. To support local student campaigns to 'Defend our NHS' and 'Keep our NHS Public'.
19. For NUS and the Vice President Welfare to lobby Student Finance England to review their policy on payment wards for students on extended courses and cover the whole period of required study.
20. For NUS and the Vice President Welfare to lobby the NHS to review the NHS bursary payment schedules to better support health care students.

Motion 304: 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
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:

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2. Lobby for relevant and appropriate training for all staff
 3. Ensuring that academic policies do not cause undue additional mental distress for students experiencing mental health issues
 4. 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
 5. 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
 6. 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)
 7. Support students' unions to develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services.

Motion 305: Stand up to racism and scapegoating

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 scapegoating 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: Nazi swastikas have been daubed on campuses; further attacks on civil liberties and divisive rhetoric surrounding the PREVENT agenda; and students have been assaulted and even killed in racist attacks.
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.
6. Giving fascists a platform in the student movement destroys the safe spaces our campuses must be for the diverse student population.
7. Campuses must be safe places for students to live and study
8. We have seen too many instances of hate crime taking place on campuses recently
9. Some students' unions have done work to become third party hate crime reporting centres.
10. There were 1,168 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2014, more than double the 535 antisemitic incidents recorded in 2013, and the highest ever annual recorded number of incidents since the Community Security Trust (CST) began recording them in 1984 (1).
11. 314 antisemitic incidents took place in July 2014 during the period of the summer conflict in Israel and Gaza. This acted as a trigger event for attacks on Jews in the United Kingdom. This is in contrast to the 59 incidents recorded the year before in July 2013, and is higher than the 304 antisemitic incidents which occurred in the first six months of 2014 combined (2). There were also 81 violent antisemitic assaults in 2014, whereas in 2013 there were none (3).
12. There were 19 incidents that took place on and off campus where the victims were Jewish students, academics or other student bodies (4).
13. During 2014, 239 incidents involved Nazi and/or Holocaust language and imagery, including swastikas and reference to the Holocaust (5), often using age-old antisemitic tropes and propaganda messages against synagogues; Jewish community centres, schools and individuals.
14. In recent months, there have been three major attacks in Europe targeting Jewish centres and individuals. Four Jews were killed in an attack on the Belgian Jewish Museum in May 2014; four Jews were killed during an attack on a Parisian Kosher supermarket following the Charlie Hebdo murders this January; and one Jewish volunteer security guard was killed in an attack on Copenhagen's Great Synagogue this February.


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15. There has been a rise in neo-Nazi, fascist student-led groups such as National Action, who use social media platforms to promote and incite hatred against Jewish students, Jewish organisations, Muslim students, and anti-racism and anti-Fascism campaigners. National Action and affiliate students have been banned from Warwick University due to their action on campus, including giving Nazi salutes in lecture halls.
 16. When National Action has been present in city centres, they have gone on to target university campuses, both with leafleting and physical intimidation. In September 2014, National Action targeted and attempted to intimidate a restaurant that sold Halal meat in Coventry and then the group targeted Warwick University. In September 2014, National Action targeted Rotherham with a far-right anti-grooming protest, after which the group travelled to Sheffield University and displayed a racist banner promoting "White Youth Against the Grooming Gangs". National Action has further been active at Swansea, Cambridge, Exeter, Nottingham, Chester, Aberdeen, Robert Gordon, Sunderland, Stirling and Glyndwr Universities.
 17. National Action is an antisemitic group who have stated that "there is no legitimate reason to not be racist or an anti-Semite in 2014". The group have pushed the antisemitic claim that Jew run the financial sector and member Benjamin Raymond has openly proclaimed adoration for Adolf Hitler and stated that "I am not ashamed to say I love Hitler". Garron Helm, a member of National Action, was sentenced to 4 weeks in prison for sending antisemitic twitter abuse to Jewish MP Luciana Berger. National Action have also specifically targeted the Union of Jewish Students on one of their YouTube videos and appeared in Leeds performing a Nazi salute.
 18. National Action is a racist group who directly target students; the group have said they want to send black and Asian students "home on a plane". National Action also praised the racist Norwegian killer Anders Breivik and one member stated that it is a "big no" for "coloured people" to come to the United Kingdom".
 19. National Action is a homophobic group and stated that they are against the education of homosexuality in schools. Specifically, the National Action's North West branch has used social media to proclaim that "homosexuality is a mental illness" .

Conference further believes:

1. There are innovative ways that students' unions can be a part of both tackling and preventing hate crime such as hate crime reporting centres.
2. It is unacceptable for any individuals or communities to become a physical target purely on the basis of their religious or racial identity.
3. That during times of conflict abroad, minority communities in the UK can be targeted by racist groups here.
4. Students unions and their academic institutions have a duty of care and protection to all their members' safety both on and off campus.
5. That building strong interfaith links between religious groups, and educating the wider community on different cultures and religions, will help to bring about long-term change, both on and off campus, which in turn will bring about a and more tolerant society which seeks to understand differences.
6. Surrounding the period of Holocaust Memorial Day 2015, campuses were targeted with Nazi imagery and graffiti which was daubed on campus walls, including at Birmingham.
7. Students unions, academic institutions and university security have a duty of care and protection to all their members' safety, both on and off campus.
8. The NUS has a long-standing precedent for standing up to fascist and racist groups that seek to divide students on racial, religious or ethnic lines. The British National Party and the English Defence League are both currently No Platformed by NUS.
9. That it has a responsibility to ensure that university campuses remain an open, tolerant and safe space for all ethnic and religious minorities and groups.

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 unions and anti-racist organisations to mark UN Anti-Racism Day.
5. To investigate the idea of students' unions acting as hate crime reporting centres

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6. To ensure NUS remains committed to fighting hate crime on campuses and to work with liberation and faith groups to achieve this.
 7. To ensure that long term, sustainable mechanisms exist to ensure that no student is targeted or harassed for their religious, national or racial identity.
 8. Provide educational training on antisemitism as part of the Sabbatical Officer summer training and throughout the year.
 9. To lobby institutions to provide additional support to students during times of higher tension to ensure that campus remains a fair, open and safe space to all students irrespective their religious, national, ethnic or racial identity.
 10. To work with universities and students unions to improve hate crime reporting procedures.
 11. To No Platform the neo-Nazi fascist group National Action, all its representatives and affiliate students from attaining a platform at any NUS or university events, and this will extend to all NUS and university officers and representatives.
 12. To No Platform any future reincarnation or manifestation of National Action under any other name.
 13. To ensure all Student Unions, academic institutions and university security teams are educated and briefed on the dangers of Neo-Nazi groups on campus, particularly National Action.

(1) <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

(2) <http://blog.thecst.org.uk/?p=5047>

(3) <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

(4) <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

(5) <http://www.thecst.org.uk/docs/Incidents%20Report%202014.pdf>

Motion 306: Dealing with debt

Conference believes:

1. Many institutions have had longstanding regulations allowing them to apply academic sanctions to students to recover non-academic debt. This could mean students who have already paid thousands of pounds in fees being denied graduation, restricted access to services or even thrown off their course for falling behind on the rent or having unpaid library fees.
2. In 2013, NUS filed a complaint to the OFT (Office of Fair Trading), now CMA (Consumer and Markets Authority), against institutions who employed such regulations.
3. After an investigation, the OFT ruled in NUS' favour and ruled this practice as 'unfair, aggressive and probably illegal'.

Conference further believes:


1. There is evidence that some institutions have not changed their policies in light of this ruling and are still placing unfair sanctions on students.
2. If institutions didn't charge such extortionate rent on their accommodation less students would fall into debt and behind on payments.
3. Institutions should treat students like individuals, providing support where needed, and not as a block number with a price tag attached to them.

Conference resolves:

1. To undertake a review of institutions in breach of the CMA ruling.
2. The name and shame institutions in breach of the ruling and report them to the CMA.
3. To provide students' unions with support to successfully lobby their institutions to implement a fair approach to handling non-academic debt.

Motion 307: Free prescriptions for students in England

Conference believes:

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1. The “Pound in your Pocket” research conducted by NUS found many students were at the “brink of dropping out” and that financial difficulties impacted on the wellbeing of around a third of students. This research also found that financial difficulties were the highest rated reason for considering leaving education in both FE students and HE undergraduates.
 2. Students are under increasing economic and financial pressures with increased tuition fees, rises in rents, and reductions in government allowances and financial support, for example EMA cuts and DSA changes.
 3. Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales all have universal free prescriptions.
 4. Prescription charges in England have increased to £8.05 per prescription since April 2014 and are set to rise again next year.
 5. Students particularly affected by these increases are those with long term and incurable illnesses and medical conditions who will often require several different medications, requiring payment of repeat prescriptions on a regular basis. This will result in additional costs to students who are already under financial pressure. .
 6. Students can get free prescription if they are in education up until they are 19. This excludes the majority of students in HE and any mature FE students. Students’ can fill in the HC1 form to help fund prescriptions, which is based on student’s income
 7. This form must be completed every year.
 8. In England there exists a NHS Low income scheme which helps with prescription costs, dental costs, eye care costs and healthcare travel costs
 9. The majority of students are eligible for this scheme (average student for full-time students in 2011/12 was £10,931 and £15,198 for part-time students and the limit for the support is an income of over £16,000)
 10. To take part in this scheme you have to fill out a HC1, HC2 or HC3 form
 11. These forms are several pages in length and require a lot of personal information including past proof of income
 12. These forms are available on many university campuses
 13. Support to complete these forms exists in many universities

Conference further believes:

1. The government’s disregard for students has been already showcased in the raising of tuition fees and defunding of financial support programmes for students, namely its proposed cuts to DSA.
2. The government’s defunding and continued privatisation of the National Health Service, has not only affected the quality of these services but also put these services out of reach for those who need them most.
3. Making prescriptions free for students in England is a real and achievable goal as shown by their removal from the nations.
4. Access to medical care is vital to students and the Government policies on funding should reflect this need.
5. Releasing the financial pressures students face will support student wellbeing.
6. Having something as vital as free prescriptions will not only alleviate some of these pressures but will also help to encourage more students to receive the medication they need and deserve.
7. Students should not be risking their health due to financial pressures and lack of awareness of support schemes.
8. NHS Low Income Scheme information and HC1 forms are buried information and the NHS do not provide clear guidance if students are eligible.
9. This also means students in need of immediate medication who haven’t already completed a HC1 form and been accepted will have to pay for prescriptions to get their medication immediately. Although this can be reimbursed to them afterwards it still acts as a barrier to medicine.
10. Disabled students already face barriers in education and HC1 forms add another needless barrier.
11. Students are not accessing the NHS Low Income Scheme enough even though a large proportion of students can get free prescriptions but currently aren’t due to this archaic system which dissuades students from claiming what they are entitled to.
12. Income should not be a barrier to healthcare
13. The length of these forms and the nature of the evidence that needs to be provided will cause many students to not complete them or not send them off, meaning that they do not get the support and that income will be a barrier to healthcare
14. That as the majority of students are eligible to receive the support it should be available for all students at point of contact



Conference resolves:

1. For NUS to investigate and quantify the financial effects of prescription charges on students, particularly those with long term illnesses and medical conditions.
2. For NUS to lobby government to abolish NHS prescription charges and for NUS to support students' unions in lobbying for free NHS prescriptions.
3. For NUS to support students' unions in advertising the NHS Low Income Scheme, namely HC1 forms, to students.
4. To lobby the government for prescription costs, dental costs and eye care costs to be free under the NHS, possibly on production of a valid student ID card
5. To release a statement in support of the above resolves


Motion 308: Eating Equality: Improving the catering provisions for students with dietary requirements

Conference resolves:

1. 1 in 100 people in the UK suffer from coeliac disease, although only about 24% have a clinical diagnosis (Coeliac UK Fact Sheet 2014).
2. Coeliacs may experience a severe reaction from eating food contaminated by small amounts of gluten, such as breadcrumbs (Coeliac UK Fact Sheet 2014).
3. Approximately 15% of people in the UK suffer from lactose intolerance (<http://www.lactoseintolerant.co.uk/what-is-lactose-intolerance/lactose-intolerance-facts/>).
4. Approximately 21 million adults in the UK suffer from at least one allergy (Mintel, 2010)
5. The UK is in the top three countries in the world for number of people with allergies.
6. Dietary requirements are a commonly occurring condition in modern society particularly among young adults, many of whom are students entering university and are either unaware that they have these conditions or are recently diagnosed.
7. Difficulties in finding suitable food can severely limit the quality of life and the student experience for sufferers. Social ostracism due to a lack of appropriate catering is a major cause of depression among sufferers (Addolorato et al. 1996).
8. For many sufferers, eating contaminated foods can lead to severe reactions and long – medium term illnesses severely impeding ability to study and risking life.
9. For many students, coming to university is the first time they will be catering for themselves.
10. Many university caterers do not provide sufficient catering for those with dietary requirements.
11. Free-from food is often more expensive to buy in consumer volumes than their normal counterparts.
12. Following a campaign by students at the University of Leicester, their university is now accredited with Coeliac UK and continues to work with students to improve their catering for dietary requirements.
13. Sourcing free-from foods to sell can be a difficult task for individual unions to undertake alone which could be made easier by coordinating sources nationally.
14. Some dietary requirements organisations and charities (such as Coeliac UK) provide offers and discounts to students.

Conference resolves:

1. To launch a national campaign to improve the catering provisions for those with dietary requirements at universities and colleges and their surrounding areas. This campaign should also raise awareness of dietary requirements among those without requirements who may share living, cooking and eating spaces with those with requirements. It should also encourage those experiencing symptoms to seek diagnoses.
2. To support and promote the existing dietary requirements campaigns at local
3. universities and colleges.
4. To work with the campaigners involved in successful local campaigns, such as at the University of Leicester, to share and disseminate best practice to those wishing to launch their own dietary requirements campaigns.
5. To work with NUSSL to ensure good provisions for dietary requirements are supplied to unions. Advice for sourcing free-from foods may be sought from relevant charities and unions who have successfully sourced free-from foods.

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6. To work with dietary requirements charities (including but not limited to Coeliac UK) to produce an information pack detailing how best to live as a student with a dietary requirement and where best to seek support from. This information pack should be disseminated to all relevant students and promote student offers, discounts and specialist information from relevant charities and other organisations (such as Coeliac UK).



400 Union Development Zone

Motion: FE Leaders – Learning Difficulties and Disabilities

Conference believes:

1. NUS is the self-professed national voice of students, with around 600 affiliated students' unions.
2. NUS members include higher education institutions, further education institutions and apprenticeship providers. Within our members are specialist institutions including Derwen College, a specialist residential FE college for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
3. NUS liberation campaigns are at the heart of our work, fighting for liberation from oppression.
4. NUS this year has created a training programme – FE Leaders – developed specifically for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Conference further believes:

1. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are entitled to a voice within our structures, entitled to have their views listened to and their voice heard.
2. NUS prides itself on access awareness, but is still falling short for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Our campaigns and national conference remain inaccessible to this group.
3. NUS has a duty to ensure that all members are able to understand processes, to make an informed decision and choice. However, if learners with learning difficulties and disabilities cannot understand or interpret the information provided by NUS, then this is a barrier to participation.
4. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are very limited in their choices for further education, and it is essential that their rights are promoted, defended and extended.

Conference resolves:

1. To maintain the FE Leaders programme developed specifically for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
2. For the VPFE and VPUD to work with the Disabled Students' Officer, to review NUS information and produce accessible versions.


Motion 401: Students' unions reimagined for the common good

Around the world students' unions provide a platform for students to be leaders in social movements. Much more than service centres, students' unions bring their members together and enable them to make collective demands on others – be that a college, university, government or otherwise.

However in the context of the UK's increasingly marketised education system, a complex web of regulation and red tape, students' unions increasingly struggle to fulfil this purpose, pressured instead to act like consumer rights champions as part of a customer feedback system.

Conference believes

1. Over the last 20 years, students' unions have become increasingly regulated, clouding and conflating their purpose.
2. Furthermore a market has been created in education by successive governments increasing fees, reducing funding and championing private providers.
3. SUs should exist to democratically represent, campaign on behalf of and provide for students – so they need to be as open, transparent and democratic as possible. This is an inherently political task, so they cannot shy away from political debate and taking political stances.
4. Meaningful democracy requires freedom of expression, and the right of students to disagree, debate and challenge each other.

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5. Recently, college/university managements have closed down the University of London Union, used police and judicial suppression against student protest, like at Warwick, and bullied student officers against criticising them, like in Edinburgh.
 6. Unions need;
 - a. Elected, not appointed, representatives
 - b. A constant flow of easily accessible information to members (records of decisions, reports from elected officers, etc);
 - c. Regular, well-built General Meetings;
 - d. Councils open to all to attend, speak and put motions;
 - e. All important decisions to be made by students and their elected representatives;
 - f. Autonomous liberation campaigns, and preferably full-time Liberation officers
 - g. SU independence from institutional management, including guaranteed, secure resources and space; means of communication with members; automatic annual elections; and accountable election returning officers with no employment or trusteeship connection with the institution.
 7. Unions should be able to elect 'major union office holders' (as referenced in the Education Act 1994) from restricted franchise groups (i.e. women, graduates, etc).
 8. The education act 1994's restriction on having major union office holders elected from limited franchise (Education Act 1994, 22 (2)(d)) undermines efforts to ensure liberation and representation of under-represented groups are at the heart of SUs and the student movement.

Conference further believes

1. The market has brought with it a new set of competitive motivations and financial considerations for institutions, students and students' unions.
2. In this context, the purpose of students' unions has become gradually more limited to the protection of students' individual investment in their own education - an education that is understood primarily as a means of earning more money after their studies.
3. In the absence of healthy democratic engagement, students' unions have turned to using market indicators to assure this investment, rather than challenging wider values-based issues within education, employment and society, including the behaviours of institutions and external organisations.
4. In this way, students' unions have become a further function of the market, using consumer feedback mechanisms to 'add value to the student experience'.
5. Additionally narrow charitable objects are seen to limit the scope of students' unions work to issues faced by their members as students, rather than as citizens.
6. However if society is to recognise the public value of educating people and invest in tertiary education then students and their collective political platform (students' unions) must be understood as a force for equality, social justice and the common good in society, not just as self-interested members of private clubs.

Conference resolves

1. NUS must consult on and campaign for a revised regulatory framework that catalyses, rather than constrains, students' unions to use the collective power of their members as a united force for equality, social justice and the common good in society.
2. NUS should support students' unions to invest in regional campaigning partnerships in order to:
 - a. Campaign outside of the current regulatory framework of students' unions
 - b. Organise around regional social issues and allow students to campaign shoulder-to-shoulder with other members of the local community
 - c. Formalise existing links, which vary in success due to lack of support, resource and structure, between students' unions and wider civil society groups
 - d. Enable more collaboration between local students' unions (particularly across the gap between HE and FE) to share resources, create capacity for innovation and support collective social enterprise
 - e. Reinforce the understanding of students as a force for the common good in society
3. NUS should support students' unions to uphold their own progressive values within organisational practices, including employment and purchasing. Examples like paying the living wage, reducing environmental impact

and using Fairtrade supply chains must be understood as essential steps towards advancing students' unions' values-based ideas within education and society.

4. NUS should help students' unions to experiment with models of inclusive governance which position students as mutual partners in their union, rather than individual beneficiaries of a charity. Whilst remaining student-led, these governance models should reflect the new social focus of students' unions by including a broader range of stakeholders from across society in their decision-making.
5. NUS should campaign for national levers to ensure institutions give students' unions a guaranteed level of funding, granted unconditionally, and influence over key decisions. This funding and influence must be accounted for, so should be granted on the understanding that students' unions demonstrate their success by preparing publicly-available social accounts to document the difference they've made to students and wider society.
6. Help SUs campaign for independence.
7. Work with SUs to promote SU democracy as above.
8. Encourage SUs to help students set up meetings, protests and campaigns on campus.
9. Condemn institutional managements when they close SUs or call police and security to close down peaceful protests.
10. To mandate the VP UD to lead lobbying efforts to change the 1994 education act to ensure that major union office holders can be elected from restricted franchises and report back on the progress of this lobbying by NUS conference 2016

Motion 402: Keep the National Society of Apprentices on Top

Conference believes:

1. The National Society of Apprentices (NSoA) it continuing to develop since it's launch in 2014 and this year has delivered a number of events and engaged with more apprentices than ever before.
2. That over 150 training providers and colleges have now signed up to be a part of the NSoA, reaching over 150,000 apprentices.
3. The apprentice extra card funds activity of the NSoA and the card has increased in sales year on year.

Conference further believes:

1. This year the NSoA held its first democratic events regionally to elect a leadership team and select priority areas to work on.
2. In addition to that a national voice of apprentice's day was developed with the Trade Union Congress (TUC) to identify issues apprentices face as learners and workers.
3. That development of a new apprentice training course alongside FE leaders was a big step forward to include apprentices in all NUS activity.

Conference resolves:

1. To continue to make the development of the NSoA a priority for NUS and to run regional democratic days to elect the leadership team.
2. That funds created from selling the Apprentice Extra card should continue to be ring fenced to fund the NSoA and its activities.
3. To develop local models of learner voice to support apprentices to have a strong voice locally.
4. To adopt the 5 policy areas, as chosen by apprentices at the regional democratic days, they are to campaign and work on:
 - a. Apprentice sick pay
 - b. Raise minimum wage of apprentices
 - c. Quality teaching and Learning
 - d. Develop a kite mark for excellent apprenticeships
 - e. Care2Learn for apprentices
5. That in any review of governance, NUS should consider how the NSoA and the democratic structure of NUS should link together, and make steps to include more apprentices in decision making processes.



Motion 403: Live your values

Conference believes:

1. Students' unions should champion collectivism, equality and social justice in society.
2. Our behaviours and practices are the most powerful way of showcasing our beliefs.
3. The way we communicate or 'frame' our thoughts is very important – provoking patterns of thought and behaviour. In this way ideologies can be advanced or suppressed.

Conference further believes:

1. Students' unions should practice what we preach, showing socially-responsible business practices can not only be achieved but allow us to flourish.
2. The student movement should communicate in a way which reflects our values and emboldens them in others.
3. The student movement has had a positive history in challenging our institutions and other organisations ethical practices'.

Conference resolves:

1. NUS to support students' unions to pay the Living Wage for all staff (or commit to do so as soon as possible) and provide case studies on those who have successfully delivered it.
2. NUS to support students' unions to move to trading where possible in ethical and Fairtrade products and services.
3. NUS to investigate with students' unions the effect of communicating in frames which reinforce ideas of collectivism and collaboration rather than individual power or competition.

500 Society and Citizenship Zone

Motion 501: Citizenship education and SRE

Conference Believes:

1. Students should leave our education systems (Primary, Secondary and Tertiary) equipped with the skills, knowledge and experience to become active, well-informed, confident members of their local, national and global communities.
2. This means making sure that education covers politics and democratic life, as well as social issues such as sex and relationship education (SRE), sustainability and inequality, critical thinking and a holistic understanding of equality and diversity.
3. There is currently a lack of commitment from the Department of Education towards citizenship education and SRE, and free schools and academies are able to opt-out of these curriculum areas.
4. The scope of citizenship education is currently too narrow and should encompass wider political and constitutional rights, as well as social issues including global citizenship and sustainability, legal rights and financial literacy, human rights, liberation, and diversity. 'Active citizenship' should be given priority and embedded as far as possible across the curriculum.
5. The delivery of SRE has been found by Ofsted to be inadequate in a third of schools, sometimes confined to a single biology lesson. SRE should be holistic, inclusive, timely, and relevant to the pupils and students receiving the training.
6. Training, development and specialist support for teachers in the potentially complex and sensitive issues of citizenship education and SRE should be extended to ensure that those delivering these programmes are confident, competent, impartial, consistent and professional.
7. The next government should introduce compulsory basic citizenship education and SRE to pupils in Key Stage 2, and improve and expand the provision at Key Stage 3 and 4.
8. The adequate provision of citizenship education and SRE should be prioritised similarly in FE and HE contexts, with content developed in partnership with students at those levels.
9. Students' unions have the potential to play a key role in developing and nurturing peer-led partnerships between Primary, Secondary and Tertiary student groups in the creation and delivery of 'active citizenship' education at all levels.
10. That SRE, when it is even provided, does very little to address sexual consent, boundaries, signs of abuse and where to find support.
11. That sexual violence, and partner abuse are endemic and hidden problems.
12. That 1/3 of people believe a woman is partially or totally to blame for rape if she has been flirting. (Source: Amnesty survey).
13. The majority of people who have experienced sexual violence are women, with lesbian and bisexual women being more likely to experience sexual violence, often as part of a homophobic or biphobic attack.
14. Trans people are far more likely than cis people to experience sexual violence.
15. Only 1,000 rapists are convicted annually despite up to 95,000 people surviving rape each year. (Source: UK Home Office)
16. That young women aged 16 -19 are statistically the most likely group to face partner abuse, although abuse can happen to people of all ages and all genders. (Source 2011-12 England Wales crime survey).

Conference further believes

1. That education around sexual consent, sexual violence and partner abuse should form a central component of SRE.
2. That the information and training provided on consent, abuse, and sexual violence should be inclusive of all gender and sexual identities.
3. That consent and anti-abuse initiatives shouldn't just stop at the end of secondary school.



Conference Resolves:

1. Create a framework for a partnership-based approach to shape citizenship education in FE and HE, ensuring 'active citizenship' is embedded as a key component across disciplines.
2. Campaign for the prioritisation of relevant citizenship education and SRE, starting from Key Stage 2 and on throughout our education institutions.
3. Engage education professionals on SRE and citizenship education by working with teaching unions to support thorough, ongoing training and development for teachers.
4. Support Sexpression in offering peer-led teaching on SRE.
5. Engage with faith groups through the NUS faith and sexuality training and resources.
6. Encourage partnerships between students' unions and schools on mentoring schemes and 'active citizenship' projects within their shared local communities.
7. Continue to formally support the Sex Education Forum's 'SRE - It's My Right' campaign, to urge all political parties to commit to statutory SRE in their general election manifestos.
8. Continue to support Brook's 'Talk about Stuff' project to deliver age-appropriate SRE in FE colleges.
9. To campaign for consent and anti- abuse education to form a central part of SRE from Key Stage 2.
10. To support existing and new student led-initiatives in HE and FE, especially student sexual consent workshops which aim to promote consent and fight abuse.
11. To work to tackle the problems of sexual violence and partner abuse on campus and beyond.
12. To campaign for specialist youth services and counsellors for survivors of sexual violence and partner abuse, and to create strong relationships with existing support organisations for example, shelters and rape crisis centres.


Motion 516: Defend the right to protest

Conference believes:

1. Police racism and victimisation of protest is a major issue in the UK.
2. Civil disobedience is not a crime
3. At the end of last term the police responded to an occupation for free education at Warwick University with repression and CS gas.
4. That several students were arrested and badly beaten by the Metropolitan police on the streets of London at the Free Education demo on 19th November 2014.
5. That the police force is systematically used to attack protests, strikes and occupations and weaken the effectiveness of protest movements in Britain.
6. The attempt to demonise protesters in the media has created a false dichotomy between good and bad protesters.
7. That excessive punishing of protesters and "exemplary" sentencing are devastating to those individuals' family and friends and are designed to intimidate others from protesting in the future.
8. That the best way to defend the right to protest is by protesting

Conference resolves:

1. That NUS should campaign against any attempts to curb the rights to protest in the UK.
2. To join the UCU in calling for a public inquiry into the arrests and violence used against demonstrators and to include in this an inquiry into the overcharging of protesters
3. To launch a campaign highlighting the human stories behind police brutality and the importance of protest rights.
4. To fully support imprisoned students including by supporting the DTRTP "twin with a prisoner" scheme and work with Student Unions, UCU and Universities to ensure those students are facilitated and supported to continue their studies during their sentence and following their release.
5. To work with Student Unions to make sure students know their rights in advance of protests including aiding the distribution of DTRTP/NUS bust cards.
6. To call for universities to be places of political asylum
7. NUS should campaign against any introduction of a financial fee/cost for protest
8. To condemn the racism and brutality of the police, and work with campaigns against police repression including Defend the Right to Protest.

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9. Campaign against the ability of police to use water cannon, which can kill and maim protesters, and kettling, which amounts to punishing protesters, false imprisonment and an attack on freedom of expression.

Motion 502: Defend youth work and community education

Conference Believes:

1. NUS polling indicates that 63% of students have been involved in some form of youth organisation across the statutory and voluntary sectors.
2. Legally, councils must provide “sufficient leisure-time activities” for teenagers, but only “so far as reasonably practical” with no other guarantees in place, making youth service funding an easy target when making cuts.
3. The last three years have seen some 40% of cuts to youth work, and this continues with some local authorities cutting services by over 90%.
4. Cuts in services contribute to a national shortage of placements for Youth Work and Community students.
5. In 2014 funding to Funky Dragon – the voice of young people in Wales – was cut completely, leaving no representation of youth voice in Wales.
6. Similarly to students’ unions, youth organisations provide a range of activities, rely heavily on volunteers and focus on youth leadership.
7. NUS works in partnership with nine other youth sector organisations and is a constituent member of the British Youth Council.

Conference Resolves:

1. NUS will campaign for government to introduce a statutory duty for youth work with guaranteed quality services that are concerned with the personal and social education of young people.
2. NUS should support placement opportunities for Youth Work and Community students within students’ unions in both HE and FE where appropriate.
3. NUS will continue to champion youth leadership within the youth sector and in its partnerships.
4. NUS will support cuts campaigns where they are happening, locally and nationally.

Motion 503: Youth Unemployment

Conference believes:

1. 250,000 young people in the UK are “long term unemployed” – unemployed for 6 months or more
2. Whilst the unemployment rate amongst the general population in the UK has reduced, youth unemployed has continued to rise
3. Long term youth unemployment has a scarring effect – meaning that those who are unemployed whilst young are more likely to be unemployed later in life
4. Young black people are twice as likely to be unemployed as young white people in the UK
5. The increase in employment figures relies upon thousands more people in low skilled work or on zero hours or part time contracts
6. Zero hours contracts can be convenient for young people and students, as they flex around exams and courses, but all too often they are used for the employer’s flexibility, not the employee’s
7. Non-graduates remain twice as likely to be unemployed as graduates
8. Unpaid internships remain a reality of life for young people in the UK, requiring them to work for free

Conference resolves:

1. To work with trades unions and campaigning organisations to continue to call for investment in youth employment
2. To demand an end to unpaid internships, with a legal 4 week limit placed upon their use
3. To target campaigning activity at employers who use unpaid interns, under pay apprentices or exploit zero hours contracts
4. To develop a Zero Hours code of practice that ensures that any zero hours contract works in the favour of the employee, not the employer
5. To develop trade union gateway membership with the Trades Union Congress to support young people and students to become trade union members, and learn about their rights at work.



Motion 504: European Union

Conference Believes:

1. NUS is a member of the European Students' Union
2. 14,527 UK students studied in the EU as part of the Erasmus scheme in 2012/13; from 2014 the new Erasmus+ will be expanded to UK school students, volunteers and apprentices and will invest nearly £100 million each year into UK mobility in Europe.
3. There are 15 times more EU students studying at UK universities than UK students studying in the EU.
4. UK Universities receive an additional 15% in funding from the European Union (EU), on top of contributions from the UK government.

Conference Further Believes:

1. EU cooperation greatly enhances education experiences and the pursuit of knowledge.
2. The UK should remain a member of the EU to promote universal human rights, peace, stability and free movement within the EU and around the world.
3. The EU has not only enabled the free movement of millions of people across national borders and facilitated cultural exchange, but has done so while protecting their rights within the countries they travel to.
4. The UK's membership in the EU enables over 140,000 students to travel for study between the UK and Europe each year, which enhances the educational and cultural diversity of our colleges and universities as well as the educational experiences of the students who travel.
5. The UK's membership in the EU allows UK students to study in countries where free education is a founding principle of their education system and UK graduates and apprentices to follow their career paths without the constraints of borders.
6. We must fight the idea there is a problem with immigration. Lack of jobs and services is the result of government and private sector cuts, seeking to boost profits and the wealth of the rich at the expense of workers.
7. We must fight the idea that the problem is "Europe". We oppose the re-raising of national barriers. We need cross-European campaigns to defend and improve services and rights, and to defend migrants' rights.


Conference Resolves:

1. To campaign for the UK to remain a member of the EU in any EU referendum.
2. To campaign for free movement to remain a key principle of the UK's political engagement with the EU.
3. To lobby the UK education sector and apprentice providers to increase access for UK students and apprentices to study abroad with the Erasmus+ programme.
4. To work with the European Students' Union to actively lobby Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from the UK on issues which will impact students and education.
5. To proactively engage with the European Students' Union to ensure the voices of students in the UK are heard at the European level.
6. To support freedom of movement and equal rights for all, and taxing the rich to create jobs and rebuild public services.
7. Oppose withdrawal from the EU and work with our partner federations across Europe to build a campaign to level up services and rights, including for students.
8. To work with and support migrants' rights campaigns in the UK.

Motion 517: Counter-Terrorism and Security Act


Conference Believes

1. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act received royal assent in February 2015
2. The Counter-Terrorism and Security Act proposes a number of new measures, such as placing a statutory requirement on public bodies – including universities – to 'PREVENT people being drawn into terrorism', permitting for the seizure of travel documents of those 'suspected of intending [to travel] in connection with terrorism-related activity', and allowing the temporary exclusion of individuals from returning to Britain, including British nationals.

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3. PREVENT and the Government's 'anti-extremism' agenda have been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent.
 4. The Act builds upon decades of previous 'anti-extremism' legislation that has served to legitimise mass surveillance and erode the civil liberties of people in the UK. Any expectation by the state for academic staff to be involved in monitoring their students is deeply worrying and could have a chilling effect on relations between staff and students. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance
 5. The Government's anti-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach, and its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.
 6. The Government's anti-terrorism process remains opaque and its application arbitrary; with increased security measures come the risk of increased abuse of those measures.
 7. Muslims and Black people and communities are systematically targeted by this state surveillance and authorities to a greater degree – they are the object of a political climate of intense paranoia and scrutiny, and subject to an effectively two-tiered legal system with fewer safeguards for due process.
 8. Healthcare and mental health practitioners have been provided guidance on 'risk factors' for 'radicalisation' which include: a "need for identity, meaning and belonging", "a desire for political or moral change", and "relevant mental health issues" as well as describing people with mental health issues or learning disabilities as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism.
 9. The government is using the conflicts in Syria and Iraq and the threat of terrorism to attack civil liberties and attack Muslim and Muslim-background people, notably through the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act (CTSA).
 10. They are attempting to monitor and control Muslim students, and attacking freedom of speech, organisation and discussion on campus more generally.

Conference Further Believes

1. The new proposals of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act further criminalise Muslims and Black people, and have come amidst a campaign of fear and demonisation from the government seeking to validate the intrusive new measures proposed by the Act.
2. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
3. The Government is manipulating public perceptions and current global events to scale back civil liberties and freedoms as part of a political agenda.
4. A Government with such an agenda is not one we can reasonably take funding from in order to facilitate 'good campus relations' and believe it to be unbiased.
5. The statutory responsibility placed on Universities by the Act may conflict with their responsibility under the Education Act 1986 to secure and protect freedom of speech.
6. The new proposals of the Act are a significant threat to civil liberties and freedom of speech on campuses, and will likely lead to an even greater climate of suspicion, and greater suppression of expression on campuses.
7. These proposals will have a detrimental effect on academic freedom, rights of protest of campuses, wider political expression, campus and community cohesion.
8. Channel has been implemented in the healthcare sector without peer review, the BMA criticised the expansion of PREVENT into the healthcare sector in 2011, and work is being undertaken to integrate PREVENT into undergraduate curriculum for healthcare qualifications.
9. PREVENT actively politicises issues around mental health and adds to the stigma surrounding them.
10. PREVENT turns issues of welfare and social deprivation into ones of national security.
11. Applying PREVENT and Channel in healthcare damages the relationship between practitioner and patient; making the latter a suspect and seriously undermining patient-doctor confidentiality.
12. This adds further barriers to accessing mental healthcare for communities who have traditionally been failed by such services.
13. Historically, psychiatry has pathologised behaviours of Black people in the West, and PREVENT carries this into the 21st century.
14. That students are not suspects.
15. That the CTSA isolates many students who already feel that the only avenue through which the Government will engage them is 'anti-radicalisation' initiatives, resulting in further alienation and disaffection.

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16. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas.
 17. The monitoring and exclusion of ideas from public debate opposes the basic function of universities; introducing students to a variety of opinions and encouraging them to analyse and debate them.
 18. The policy significantly undermines the freedom and activities of university staff and students.
 19. Educational institutions (and other public services, e.g. hospitals) should not act as police agents.
 20. The problem with e.g. ISIS/IS isn't that it's radical, but that it's radically reactionary and oppressive. Demonising "radicalisation" and "extremism" can and is being used to target anyone who dissents from the unjust, oppressive and exploitative state of society.

Conference Resolves


1. To publicly oppose the Counter Terrorism and Security Act, for the NUS President to issue a public statement condemning the PREVENT Strategy and the Government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act, and alongside civil liberties groups including CAGE, lobby the government to repeal it immediately.
2. To publically (re-)affirm NUS' opposition to PREVENT, and to work with civil liberties organisations working to challenge it.
3. To investigate, identify and block/cease accepting any PREVENT funding for any NUS activities or departments.
4. NUS officers will not engage with the PREVENT strategy.
5. To call for the Government's anti-extremism agenda to be thoroughly reviewed and overhauled.
6. To lobby the Government to make its criteria and process under anti-extremism law more transparent, accountable and open to scrutiny.
7. To support an independent review into the legality of the proposals under the Equality and Human Rights Act 2010.
8. Condemn the Home Office for its treatment of mental health issues.
9. To work with UCU and Unite to develop a campaign against PREVENT and the Act on college campuses.
10. To work with the aforementioned civil liberties groups and Muslim students organisations to develop and roll out workshops and guidance on anti-PREVENT/dealing with the bill.
11. To encourage Unions and institutions to not comply with or legitimize PREVENT and to develop guidelines for Unions on effective non-cooperation with the Act and its proposals.
12. To give support to any academics or other staff who face discipline for non-compliance.
13. To lobby BMA to (re-)affirm its stance in opposition to PREVENT and the Act
14. To work with the NUS Black Students Campaign and Disabled Students' Campaign to lobby for the removal of PREVENT teaching from healthcare qualifications.
15. To mandate student officers to lobby their universities to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with PREVENT, CHANNEL and other similar initiatives. This involves demanding publications of how the policy is operating within their university and gaining access to materials used to train staff and students.
16. That NUS will educate students on the dangers of the counter terrorism and security Act and the PREVENT Strategy.
17. Continue campaigning against the CTSA, and the related PREVENT and CHANNEL strategies, and the idea that it is possible to defeat reactionary forces like ISIS/IS by demonising Muslims and destroying civil liberties.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/counter-terrorism-and-security-bill-receives-royal-assent>
<http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2013/jun/05/islamophobic-hate-crime-getting-worse>
<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/dec/10/islamophobia-racism-dresden-protests-germany-islamisation>

Motion 505: Workfare doesn't work

Conference believes:

1. According to figures published by the DWP, the total number of sanctions against benefit claimants in the year to September 2013 was 897,690, the highest since 1996 and 374,850 more than in 2010.
2. In addition there were 22,840 sanctions imposed on claimants of ESA – the chief benefit for the sick and disabled in the work-related activity group.

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3. There is a growing list of workfare schemes now in place incl: Mandatory Work Activity (mandates four weeks' unpaid work for up to 30 hours a week), the Work Programme, and Community Work Programme (mandating up to six months of unpaid work).
 4. There numerous other mandatory programmes specific to different regions such as the Day One Support for Young People Trailblazer in London, the Steps to Work programme in Northern Ireland and Derbyshire Trailblazer Mandatory Youth Activity Programme.
 5. In addition to these there are different, officially voluntary, schemes such as Traineeships which are expected to replace the work experience and sector based work academies.
 6. Each of these schemes mandates a jobseeker to work without pay on threat of loss of benefits ("sanction"). Since October 2012, the government can stop benefits for up to three years.
 7. In his autumn statement 2011, George Osborne promised, "Young people who don't engage with this offer will be considered for mandatory work activity, and those that drop out without good reason will lose their benefits."
 8. Corporate Watch research has found that 1 in 5 people sent on workfare have been sanctioned for between three and six months.
 9. People in workfare placements are counted as "employed" in government statistics.
 10. Oxfam have refused to take part in workfare because they say it is incompatible with the goal of reducing poverty in the UK

Conference further believes:

1. All workfare schemes either threatens benefit sanctions – the removal of welfare – directly or indirectly to compel people to undertake unpaid work
2. Workfare replaces jobs and undermines wages
3. Workfare profits the rich by providing free labour, whilst threatening the poor by taking away welfare rights if people refuse to work without a living wage
4. Workfare is part of a growing number of initiatives that embed precarity and anxiety in the workplace
5. There are an increasingly large number of students who have to go on jobseekers benefit after leaving university or college.
6. Students must act in solidarity with the most vulnerable in society to protect benefits as part of defending society against a wider attack on the welfare state as a whole

Conference resolves:

1. NUS should ensure all graduates know their Jobcentre rights <http://refuted.org.uk/rights/>
2. NUS should make a public statement, pledging* to boycott workfare and join the 400 voluntary sector organisations and over 20 councils who have pledged to Keep Volunteering Voluntary
3. NUS should support Students' unions to campaign to ban any company or charity from campus known to be using workfare. For a full list see http://www.boycottworkfare.org/?page_id=16
4. NUS should actively encourage job applications from people facing workfare *Boycott Workfare's pledge reads: We the undersigned commit to refusing to participate in compulsory work-for-benefits placements. We want volunteering to remain just that!


Motion 506: Votes at 16 and Voter Registration

Conference Believes:

1. Previous work and policy carried out by NUS on votes at 16 should remain a priority
2. Every person should have a right to register to vote and be educated about voter registration
3. Young people who pay tax have a right to have a say
4. Young people are in touch and up to date with current affairs as much as those over 18
5. Decisions made today impact the future of young people

Conference further believes:

1. Citizenship/political education should be built into the curriculum of schools and colleges and universities with a focus on voter registration
2. Automatic registration opportunities in schools, colleges and universities will increase uptake in voting
3. There is no guarantee a "householder" will identify a person of registration age as being at the address

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4. Being informed of the right to register is a basic human and democratic right
 5. As students are in education until 18 this makes the automatic registration opportunity consistent throughout the UK.
 6. There's likely an economic argument automatic registration opportunity in schools and colleges (administration savings for councils)

Conference Resolves

1. Continue to lobby government for votes at 16 after the 2015 elections
2. Lobby government to ensure all educational establishments offer automatic voter registration opportunities to all of their students.
3. Evaluate potential cost savings for registration through educational establishments
4. Run a campaign within the next 2 years for votes at 16



600 Challenges to the Estimates

Motion 601: Increase the Mature and Part Time and Postgraduate activity funds

Conference Resolves:


- 1. **Amount to be reallocated:** £6000
- 2. **Area(s) this reduction to be reduced from:**
Area: Zones, Liberation & Sections - Campaigns
Amount: -£6000
- 3. **Area(s) this amount to be reallocated to**
Area: Zones, Liberation & Sections - Mature & Part Time
Amount: +£3000
Area: Zones, Liberation & Sections - Postgraduate
Amount: +£3000





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