

NUS Scotland Plan of work 2018/19

A word from the President

Hello! It was an honour to be elected as NUS Scotland's President for the year ahead, and I'm excited to be working alongside our Deputy President Gemma Jones, Women's Officer Shuwanna Aaron, Vice President (Communities) Elena Semple, and everyone on the Scottish Executive Committee to improve the lives of Scotland's students.



I'm delighted to present NUS Scotland's 2018/19 Plan of Work, which sets out our priorities for the coming year. The campaigning priorities you'll read have been shaped by our membership, with delegates voting at conference on policy motions, and in electing Full Time and Volunteer Officers to deliver on our manifesto commitments.

Together, we have a long track record of success – securing a review into student support, standing at the forefront of social change on liberation issues, and defending Scottish students from tuition fees that are synonymous with education elsewhere. But there's still much more to do.

Our movement's greatest strength is our membership, and in the year ahead I look forward to working with your team of student officers to develop activism, and deliver campaigns that will make a big difference to the lives of students up and down the country: better mental health support at our colleges and universities, working to see the long overdue reforms to student support implemented, tackling the spiralling costs and low quality of student housing, and much more. This plan of work sets out what we want to achieve in the next year – and how we hope you'll engage in that work.

We are bigger than the sum of our parts - our movement has made seismic progressive changes to Scotland's education system – and I look forward to working together to continue that tradition this year.

Liam McCabe, NUS Scotland President

NUS Scotland Officers 2018/19



Pictured: just some of our Scottish Executive Committee.

Clockwise from left: Shuwanna Aaron, Women's Officer; Sorcha Kirker, Executive Representative; Matthew MacKenzie, Mature & Part-time Students' Officer; Nicoline Kure, Executive Representative; Gemma Jones, Deputy President; Liam McCabe, President; Heather Innes, Executive Representative; Manish Khatri, International Students' Officer; Ethan Wilson, Trans Officer; Jen Anderson, Executive Representative.

NUS Scotland full-time officers

President: Liam McCabe
Deputy President: Gemma Jones
Women's Officer: Shuwanna Aaron

NUS Scotland part-time officers

Vice President (Communities): Elena Semple

Executive Representatives

Jen Anderson
Heather Innes
Sorcha Kirker
Nicoline Kure
Zeyad Rashad
Jamie Grant
Tam Wilson
Asylum and Refugee Officer - vacant

Sections Officers

International Students' Officer: Manish Khatri
Postgraduate Students' Officer: Matt Crilly
Mature & Part-time Students' Officer: Matthew MacKenzie

Women's Committee

Women's Officer – Shuwanna Aaron
Terri-Jane White (FE)
Sarah Jane Mellin (Liberation)
Shivani Tandon (Caring responsibilities)
Daniela Bandeva (Open)
Diva Mukherji (Open)

Black Women's Sub-committee

Him Chauhan
Shivani Tandon
Khanya Moyo
Yetunde Ogedengbe

Black Students' Committee

Black Students' Officer – Titi Farukuoye
Jackie Ho
Haddy Jeng
Manish Khatri
Michael Obasiolu

Black Students' Procedures Committee

Moses Apiliga
Elena Semple

Disabled Students' Committee

Disabled Students' Officer – Donna Connelly
Ellie Dick
Harley Primrose
Joshua Smith
Calix Winning

Disabled Students' Procedures Committee

Eli Blyth
John Hein

LGBT+ Committee

LGBT+ Officer – Kai O'Doherty
Shannon Easton
Kerry Johnstone
Kiah Manning
Harley Primrose
Jamie Williams
Calix Winning

LGBT+ Procedures Committee

John Hein
Liam Slaven

Trans Committee

Trans Officer – Ethan Wilson
Moyo Amoo-Peters
Ethan Levi Cain
Esyld O Scolaidhe
Charlie Porter

Trans Procedures Committee

Rhea Livesey
Vacancy

A strong student movement achieving change

It's been a big year for the student movement, with significant progress made across a diverse range of areas. At a national level, we have:

- secured a number of improvements to student support, including over £21 million a year investment in student bursaries, and secured an ambition from the Scottish Government to giving every student financial support tied to the real living wage
- successfully lobbied the Scottish Government to take important first steps to ensure all college and university students have access to mental health support
- supported the #EmilyTest campaign which secured investment to support colleges and universities to tackle gender-based violence on campus
- put an end to the unfair 100 per cent attendance policy tied to further education bursary support
- continued our fight to make access to higher education for students from deprived backgrounds fair
- responded to consultations on issues from free bus travel for apprentices, to period poverty, the Gender Recognition Act, suicide prevention and more
- held our first ever Trans Conference, electing our first Trans Officer and Trans Committee

At membership level, we have:

- supported the development of 19 college students' associations by developing bids for additional resources, setting up advisory boards, sharing experience of human resources issues, developing strategic and operational plans, reviewing constitutions, and offering advice to officers and staff
- celebrated the successes of the student movement with the NUS Scotland Awards, which this year had a record number of 76 submissions
- trained 39 student officers from students' associations across the country to carry out their roles effectively, through our headline event Lead and Change: College Student Representation
- launched the Scottish Campaigns and Representation Staff Network, allowing students' association staff who work in the areas of policy, campaigns, democracy and/or representation a space on and offline to share best practice and network
- Secured £270,000 from the Scottish Government to continue the Student Mental Health Agreements project, and produced a charter for students' mental health

Our vision and mission: students shaping the future

Part political, part business and part charity - NUS Scotland is a third sector membership organisation with a twist! Professionally run, but different – the exact-opposite of a corporate. Collaborating with amazing students' associations up and down the country, we provide a huge range of services and support to them. We work together every day to support elected student leaders. As they make change in the world and improve the lives of students - we help make it happen!

The year ahead: getting the most out of NUS Scotland

The Plan of Work brings together your priorities for 2018/19, based on what delegates voted for at NUS Scotland Conference – in electing student officers, and by voting on policy resolutions. These priorities align with the NUS100 strategy, which guides the work of NUS all the way up to 2022, when the organisation celebrates its 100th birthday.

Our plan builds on the positive campaigns and achievements of previous years, recognising the dynamic environment we operate in and the challenges and opportunities that come with it.

Included in the Plan of Work are the campaigning priorities of our Liberation Campaigns, which are decided autonomously by the Liberation Committees. We also run a number of externally funded projects – like Think Positive and the College Development project – which cannot be modified.

An outstanding student-led campaigning and membership organisation

*We're full of energy and authority, speaking
with and for 7 million student voices.*

Developing a strong and influential collective voice

The collective power of the student movement is enormous. We harness this power to strengthen students' associations, and improve students' lives up and down the country.

Mental health campaign

Drastically different levels of mental health support are available to students depending on where they study with under-provision being a particular problem in colleges. We will campaign for new, ring-fenced funding in the sector for counselling provision to support student wellbeing and improve mental health.

Student finance

Following our campaign for additional funding for the poorest students, the Scottish Government agreed to invest an additional £21 million each year in student bursaries. This investment means care-experienced students reaching the Scottish Living Wage threshold of £8,100, and the Government announced an ambition to work towards giving every student support at this level.

The independent student support review included a number of recommendations that NUS Scotland believes would radically improve cost-of-living support. We will continue to push for these to be implemented. We will ensure members are supported to participate in the upcoming consultations on funding for disabled students, part-time students, and carers – and any other further work on student support.

Alongside direct funding students are facing a range of additional hidden costs to participate fully in their education, including graduation fees, increased rental costs for campus accommodation, and specialist equipment necessary to complete their course. We will provide campaign organising training to support members to identify local funding issues that are widely felt and winnable on their campus.

Brexit

Membership of the European Union brings with it huge benefits and opportunities for Scotland's students, education system, and wider society. Scottish and EU students currently enjoy the right to study, work, and live across the EU – as well as receiving financial support to access new opportunities through the Erasmus+ programme.

As conversations progress about what Scotland's relationship with the European Union will look like in the future, NUS Scotland will be ensuring that students' interests remain at the heart of negotiations. We'll be ready to react to developments, and work with politicians and other organisations across the UK to protect and enhance the benefits that students currently enjoy as part of our EU membership.

Combatting gender based violence

NUS Scotland Women's Campaign will release a guidance toolkit to support students' associations to engage in their institutions' work around preventing gender-based violence. Officers and staff involved with this work will get the opportunity to take part in a network of peers hosted both online and in person to support the development of this work across the sector and to feed into the Scottish Government's Equally Safe in Higher and Further Education strategy.

Developing activism

Students organising locally can achieve significant wins. We will offer campaign organising training to support grassroots membership engagement and draw on existing networks including liberation groups and student opportunities to identify local leaders to build powerful local campaigns.

We will support members to collaborate regionally, outline the benefits of regional forums and provide guidance on local authority remits to enable regional campaigning.

Women's Campaign on tour

The Women's Campaign will deliver a series of on campus workshops and training events to support the development of women's liberation groups and feminist societies, as well as engaging local campaigns with the national movement. This includes: activist training days, women in leadership, Consent Train the Trainer, Practising Self-Care and Taking Up Space, Tackling Transmisogyny and Feminism 101!

Anti-deportation toolkit

In recent years we've seen a number of incidents where students have faced deportation, or other difficulties with the Home Office, and grassroots campaigns fighting for the rights of those individuals. We will develop a toolkit to help members, and their institutions, to support and fight for students on their campuses facing deportation or other problems with the Home Office.

Developing a vision for free education in Scotland

The expectations and needs of students are changing rapidly, the economic impact of austerity has curtailed the ambition of our education sector and the impact of technology offers opportunity and challenges within education and employment. We need a new vision for free and inclusive education in Scotland. We will take initial steps to gather the views and ideas of members on the future of education.

Supporting excellence in students' associations

We want to achieve excellent governance within NUS Scotland and students' associations. We want students' associations to receive tailored and relevant support from NUS, and from each other, so we can continue to represent, organise and innovate as well as generate income for the movement.

Support university students' association development

We will support staff, officers and students' associations to be as strong and effective as they can be. We will offer training to students' association officers and staff where appropriate, and signpost associations to development opportunities offered either by NUS UK or by other suitable organisations. We will support students' associations who are undergoing or emerging from significant change, as well as assisting strong associations to become centres of excellence and focus on continuous improvement.

Quality Students' Unions (QSU) is a tool developed by NUS to assure the effectiveness of students' unions across the UK, and around which to structure their continuing development. Students' associations in Scotland can choose to take part in QSU either as an individual association or as part of a cohort learning together, which will begin in April 2019. NUS Scotland will support members in Scotland to take part in QSU.

Support college students' association development

We will support members working within the National Framework for the Development of Strong and Effective College Students' Associations in Scotland to ensure they succeed as autonomous, effective and sustainable associations. Backed with funding from the Scottish Funding Council we will develop strategies with college students' associations to support them to achieve their ambitions and operationally provide support to train staff, develop talent and support good governance, utilising the Framework and opportunities for evaluation to ensure associations continue to thrive.

Generate income for the movement

The NUS Extra card offers students market leading discounts and provides a vital source of income for the student movement. The launch of TOTUM begins the digital evolution of NUS Extra and provides students' associations with opportunities to promote and connect students to activities and events. TOTUM will be launched at freshers fairs across Scotland this summer.

Sharing success

We will use the opportunities that NUS offers to share and amplify members' successes and ensure that the expertise and knowledge NUS has is available, accessible and well communicated to members to support them.

Supporting continuous professional development

Working in the student movement is a unique experience. Part political, part charity and part commercial there are great opportunities for staff to develop and learn. Peer learning and networking with other staff provides essential development opportunities and we will facilitate and support Communities of Practice for Senior Managers and Campaigns and Representation Staff across Scotland.

The Gathering

Collaboration is essential for a strong student movement in Scotland. Getting to know other members and hear about their successes is the starting point. The Gathering is our launch event for academic year 2018/19 and provides an opportunity for officers to showcase their award-winning campaigns, share best practice and be enthused by talented student leaders from across Scotland.

Zone Conference – 22 November 2018

We will bring student officers together at Zone Conference to look at how we deliver strong student-led campaigning.

Annual Conference - March 2019

We will bring student officers together to debate policy and elect a Full Time Officer and Scottish Executive Team for 2019/20.

Liberation and Sections conferences – Spring 2019

We will hold Liberation and Sections conferences to elect new officers and debate policy.

Shaping education and empowering individuals

Everyone can access and excel in post-16 education

We want to achieve a post-16 education system that works for all students now, while also securing political, professional and public support for transformative education in the future.

Widening access to education

Ensuring fair access to education has been a key priority for NUS Scotland. We will keep the pressure on to ensure that the recommendations from the Commission on Widening Access and the targets set for the sector are met.

Researching the experiences of women of colour in Scotland

During our conversation cafés at the Women of Colour Brunch, students have identified unique experiences as women of colour in education in Scotland, most of which is often overlooked and undermined. This research aims to explore these experiences across Scotland and develop recommendation for institutions to combat institutional racism and deliver an inclusive, and liberated education.

We will also work with the Black Students' Campaign to co-host the Women of Colour Brunch again, creating opportunities for more women and non-binary people of colour to network, access training and feed into the priorities of the Black and Women's Liberation groups.

Better representation for Black students

The Black Students' Committee will support students' associations to establish structures to represent Black students on their campuses, and will facilitate events and training for Black students to engage and support each other to ensure a better experience in further and higher education.

Making education accessible for disabled students

This year the Disabled Students' Committee will work with external organisations to make Scotland's colleges and universities accessible to disabled students. At the local level, the Committee seek to support students' associations to audit the accessibility of their institution. At the national level, the Committee will engage with the Scottish Government's consultation looking at all the barriers that have an impact on disabled students.

National Society of Apprentices Scotland (NSoAS)

NUS Scotland will work with and support the National Society of Apprentices Scotland (NSoAS) on the four main priorities set out by the NSoA leadership team: apprenticeship pay, quality apprenticeships, cost of living, and transport.

As part of this work, NUS Scotland will continue to campaign for free bus travel for apprentices, as promised by the Scottish Government, and NSoA will work with trade unions to identify best practice to enable better support for apprentices whose employer or training provider has gone out of business.

The learner voice creates change in education

We want to achieve a post-16 education system that works for all students now, while also securing political, professional and public support for transformative education in the future.

Quality

Scotland has a world-leading approach to quality education, one which our sector is rightly proud of. As we see a move towards the marketisation of education in England, we'll be fighting to protect Scotland's quality assurance and enhancement arrangements – which place the learner at the heart of our universities and colleges.

Working with sparqs and other sector organisations, we'll be supporting students to engage with the College Quality Framework, as well as seeking to shape the guidance attached to the new UK-wide Quality Code. It's vital that any UK-wide framework recognises the importance of student partnership and quality enhancement to the UK sector.

We'll empower members to oppose the Teaching Excellence Framework in any form, ensuring that Scotland's Quality Enhancement Framework, and its student-centred principles, remains the leading mechanism for quality enhancement in Scotland.

Wellbeing and welfare are central to the student experience

We want to achieve a universal understanding that welfare and wellbeing enables students to enter, remain and flourish in education – and that help, advice and support is therefore a core part of our work.

Think Positive (externally funded)

Demand for mental health support has increased drastically amongst students in recent years. Our Think Positive projects, funded by the Scottish Government, enable us to support students' associations to develop Student Mental Health Agreements and work towards achieving awards as part of our Healthy Body Healthy Mind scheme. This year we will look to boost membership participation in both projects.

We will also commission research on student mental health in Scotland and identify best practice to support our campaigns for improved provision in colleges and universities.

Housing

Empowering students with the knowledge to challenge bad practice in the rental sector is essential in improving tenancy arrangements for students. We will work with housing experts to develop a guide to ensure students know their rights and where to go for help. We will actively support the Living Rent campaign and encourage members to participate. We will benchmark the education sector to investigate how they support students facing homelessness and lobby the Scottish Government to improve students' rights within Purpose Built Student Accommodation.

Improving trans healthcare

This year NUS Scotland's Trans Committee will focus on improving trans healthcare. The Committee will seek to get a commitment from the Scottish Government to move towards a system in which trans people are given the autonomy to decide on their healthcare without unreasonable barriers being put in their way. This will be based on informed consent, and implemented nationally. The committee also wants to see local health boards meet this agreed standard with the removal of the regional disparities that currently exist in relation to access, waiting times and availability of options for trans healthcare.

Student sex workers

While criminalised, and stigmatised, sex workers are often left without support. This year the LGBT+ Committee will seek to better understand their circumstances and needs for support through research and engagement with external organisations. We will also create resources for student sex workers outlining how to maximise their safety when engaging with the industry and how to leave the industry if they desire.

Students should be confident to engage in civic life

We want to continue to be leaders in political education; to work in partnership to build the quality and quantity of student opportunities as a core part of the educational experience.

Support students' associations to engage in policy at a national level

We will continue to support students' associations to engage in policy and politics at national level by providing briefings on current policy issues and advising on consultation responses.

Student workers and staff trade unions

We know how powerful the collective voice of students' associations and their students are when united. The same is true of trade unions who represent workers individually and collectively in the workplace. We will develop our relationship with, and continue our support for education sector trade unions to defend their members' rights at work. We will support trade unions to recruit student workers and support Better Than Zero to campaign against precarious work.

Sustainability and environment (delivered by NUS UK)

Through our work we want to ensure that students remain at the forefront of tackling social, economic, and environmental issues. This work will be led by the NUS UK Sustainability Team.

Skills for good

Delivered in partnership with the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), this pilot will be advertised to student groups in three institutions across Scotland and will challenge them to design and deliver mini-projects that demonstrate a positive impact for the environment, and make use of movement-building and peer engagement. Students will be offered a package of learning and development opportunities, both to help them achieve in their projects, and to develop their soft skills and employability.

Green Impact Students' Unions

Green Impact Students' Unions is our flagship sustainability accreditation scheme for students' unions. Our vision is that through sustainability initiatives on campus alongside the content of the taught curriculum, students will graduate from higher education being equipped to deal with the global challenges we currently face. As part of our support schedule for this year, we will run more webinars and support visits to ensure that SAs progress through the toolkit.

Mapping the Sustainable Development Goals in the curriculum

We are launching a new Sustainable Development Goals curriculum mapping project. Based on the Global Goals Curriculum Mapping project developed at the University of Winchester, this programme is offered to those students' associations taking part in Green Impact Students' Unions.

Responsible Futures

Responsible Futures is a partnership initiative between institutions and their students' association to review and transform the curriculum to better reflect solutions to environmental problems. In Scotland there are five colleges and one university taking part this year and we expect them to continue their student-led curriculum audits.

Student Eats

Student Eats supports institutions in cultivating their own student-led growing sites for fruit and vegetables. The Sustainability Team hope to get more students' associations involved in the next round of funding.

Student Switch Off

The Student Switch Off is a not-for-profit campaign that encourages students to reduce their environmental impact when living in halls of residence. The programme has run very well at the University of Strathclyde over the past few years and we are continuing it during the 2018-2019 academic year as well, with a potential new bolt-on for bringing more waste segregation and recycling awareness to students in their first year at university.

Dissertations for Good

This ongoing programme connects undergraduate and postgraduate students with organisations to complete research projects together into social, economic and environmental sustainability.

New Fairtrade Universities and Colleges standard

There is a huge appetite amongst students to understand the impact the products they buy are having on the people and the planet along the supply chain, and to buy ethically sourced products. It is so important to enable students to have access to information about this at the time when they are forming their values and habits for life.

The Fairtrade Foundation and NUS have formed a partnership to redevelop and deliver the Fairtrade University and College (FTUC) Award. The new award recognises the range

of ways that institutions are engaging with Fairtrade, and offers greater opportunity to develop activities year on year. The new FTUC Awards programme will open for registration in September 2018.

Climate Change Bill

The new Climate Change Bill was introduced in mid-2018 and is likely to be passed in early 2019. Even though 19,000 called for the Scottish Government to commit to a strong and ambitious Bill, it falls very short of public expectations, and includes unambitious targets.

In coalition with other organisations, we'll be asking students and the public to lobby their MSPs and push for changes to the Bill as it makes its way through Parliament – including through a mass Climate Lobby of the Scottish Parliament. We're asking MSPs to support a net-zero greenhouse gas emissions target by 2050 at the latest in the Bill.

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