

  
**nus**  
**NATIONAL  
CONFERENCE**

National Conference 2019

# Policy Lapse

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## Key Information

### Purpose of this document

Policy passed at National Conference remains live for three years. Policy passed at National Conference 2016 is due to lapse this year unless it is resubmitted by a Union. If you wish to resubmit a piece of policy below this should be included in your 1,400 word submission to National Conference.

### Contents

Key Information.....	2
Purpose of this document.....	2
Contents.....	2
<b>Priority Zone Policy passed at National Conference 2016.....</b>	<b>4</b>
Motion 101   Working for students' unions, winning more power for students.....	4
<b>Education Policy Passed at National Conference 2016.....</b>	<b>6</b>
Motion 201   Divorce our courses from market forces.....	6
Motion 202   Area Reviews – Colleges are on life support; don't pull the plug!.....	11
Motion 203   Employability isn't working.....	14
Motion 204   Free Education, Further Education, For Everyone.....	16
Motion 205   Liberate My Degree.....	18
Motion 206   Qualifications - Once the golden rule...now just pieces of paper.....	21
Policy Lapse.....	22
NC_HE_13215 : HE To Left Of Me FE To The Right, HE In FE Stuck In The Middle Confused.....	22
<b>Society and Citizenship Zone Policy Passed at National Conference 2016.....</b>	<b>24</b>
Motion 501   Right to Education for Persons in Detention.....	24
Motion 502   Divest-Invest.....	24
Motion 503   Students are Citizens, Too!.....	26
Motion 504   Refugees Welcome in Universities and Colleges.....	27
Motion 505   A long-term strategy into how we engage our students with politics to increase voter registration and turn out.....	28
Motion 506   Fight to save the National Health Service – back the junior doctors and NHS bursary struggles.....	29
Motion 507   Climate Change.....	30
Motion 508   Stand Up to Racism.....	31
Motion 509   Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees.....	32
Motion 510   Personalised toolkits for lobbying MP's and local Councillors.....	34
Motion 511   Extend EU Referendum Suffrage to EU Citizens living in the UK.....	35
<b>Union Development policy passed at National Conference 2016.....</b>	<b>39</b>
Motion 301  The Impact of Student Opportunities.....	39
Motion 302   Students' unions are valued for student engagement in learning, help us NUS.....	40
Motion 303   Safe Social Elections.....	41
Motion 304   NUS Extra commission rates.....	42
Motion 305   Support Students' Union's to deliver their services to institutions with multiple sites/campuses and modes of delivery.....	43
Motion 306   Service Privatisation ... or should that be Piratisation?.....	43
Motion 307   A Student Voice for Student Staff.....	45
Motion 308   This Student Can.....	45
Motion 309   FE-el the Love: Putting FE at the Heart of Union Development.....	46
Motion 310   Make NUS Communications work for all.....	47
Motion 311   Solidarity Forever: FE and HE Unions Makes us Strong.....	48
Motion 312   Very superficial.... the writing's on the wall (or is it?).....	49
Motion 313   Student Unionism Worldwide.....	50
Motion 314   Media and SU Officer Elections.....	50
Motion 315   KWAFF KWAFF KWAFF IS ON FIRE.....	51
Motion 316   Recognise competitive e-sports.....	52
<b>Welfare Zone Policy Passed at National Conference 2016.....</b>	<b>54</b>
Motion 401  NUS for the NHS.....	54
Motion 402   SOS – Save Our Services.....	56
Motion 403   #Grantsnotdebt.....	58





Motion 404   Anti-Semitism on Campus .....	59
Motion 405   Prioritise Students Mental Health – Now! .....	60
Motion 406   Preventing Prevent .....	64
Motion 407   Not for Profit Halls .....	68
Motion 408   Rent Strikes .....	69
Motion 409   Rogue Landlords .....	69
Motion 410   Graduation: the final hidden cost .....	70
Motion 411   Educate all FE & HE students on the risks associated with taking legal highs and lobby the government to include all legal highs within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 .....	71
NC_W_13306: Mental Health Awareness and Challenging Discrimination .....	72





# Priority Zone Policy passed at National Conference 2016

## Motion 101 | Working for students' unions, winning more power for students

### Conference believes

1. National Conference 2014 stated that students are at their most powerful when they organise collectively.
2. Student unionism, the collective action of students, is a long and proud tradition in the UK.
3. Students' unions are the collective action of students in colleges, universities and all other providers of further and higher education.
4. Students' unions work to make education better and more accessible, secure students more power, distribute it more equally and ensure every individual student is just as powerful as their institution.
5. Students' unions are the grassroots who offer students independent advice, world-class facilities and unrivalled opportunities to expand their knowledge and political awareness.
6. Students' unions defend students' interests and work to ensure that students are safe, supported and are not exploited and are the best progressive force students have in forging a better society.
7. Every student should have access to an independent, autonomous and student-led students' union and through the extension of student unionism, through students' unions, students will win more power.
8. One of the many worrying aspects of the government's HE Green Paper is the announcement that it is 'currently taking steps through our trade union reforms to improve union practices and increase transparency around how funds are spent'.
9. At the same time the government has announced the tabling of its trade union bill, in which it aims to undermine the right to strike by increasing limitations on legal industrial actions.
10. The Trade Union Bill would criminalise many forms of trade union activity; further limit the already very limited right to strike; and obstruct trade unions and the workers' movement from maintaining political representation.
11. Even before this Bill, there was a whole raft of laws aimed at crippling trade unions and stifling workers' rights, dating back to the Thatcher government.
12. The Tories are blatant hypocrites, requiring 40% or more for a strike when their party took office with less than 25% of the electorate.
13. The TUC has termed these attacks on TUs as the biggest attacks in 30 years.
14. The tone was set in the Queen's speech last year, which identified the human rights act as a key target of the Tory government.
15. We have seen similar attacks on student and trade unions take place under most tory majority government in recent memory.
16. The NUS has started to raise awareness about these threats through its #loveSUs campaign.

### Conference further believes

1. The Westminster government's area reviews in FE and its Green Paper on the future of HE threaten student representation and the autonomy of students' unions.
  2. Rising numbers of students, mergers in colleges, the government's policies on apprenticeships, devolution and changes to the funding of education have changed the landscape of education and the priorities of institutions and providers and threaten the campaigning power of students' unions.
  3. These changes have put pressures on students' unions which are underfunded or not funded at all – particularly in FE – and now have less access to national funding and grants.
  4. Students' unions affiliate to NUS and form its membership and NUS exists to champion, safeguard and make students' unions stronger.
  5. The government's attacks on SUs are part of a wider climate of attacks on civil liberties that extend well beyond our unions.
  6. The weakening of trade unions is a big reason why so many graduates and others face low pay, insecurity and a lack of rights, even when fortunate enough to find jobs.
  7. Unions are a key aspect of a democratic society that allow us to debate, decide and take action on key issues, which affect us as students or employees.
  8. Limitations on the right to organise and on the autonomy of unions is a worrying sign of a government clamping down on dissent.
  9. It is crucial to offer a broad, united, opposition to these attacks.
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10. NUS should concretely help the campaign for trade union rights.
  11. Universities are increasingly providing higher education through franchised further education colleges in
  12. Wales, however without the same requirements for an autonomous, funded students' union in the colleges.
  13. Students receiving higher education through a franchised college have a right to an autonomous representation structure that supports their needs.

### **Conference resolves**

1. Work to increase the number of students who are represented by an autonomous students' unions and work with members to ensure more students are directly involved with their students' union.
  2. Launch a programme of work to increase the block grant of every students' union and launch specific research to campaign for the statutory funding for student representation in FE.
  3. Learn from changes to provision in the nations to extend and prioritise NUS' work in FE union development and ring-fence funding for FE students' unions to campaign on area reviews in England, and devolved elections in the nations.
  4. Continue to defend students' unions against any moves to restrict their autonomy or right to organise, campaign or represent students, together with trade unions.
  5. As Northern Ireland is the only region of the U.K. which has no legal requirement or obligation on institutions to have a students' union; that NUS continue to support the ongoing work of NUS-USI to introduce legislation through the Northern Ireland Assembly for independent, autonomous and fairly resources students' unions across higher and further education institutions.
  6. Lobby sector bodies and mission groups to support and defend students' unions and work with their institutions to provide an increase in block grant for their students' unions.
  7. Support students' unions in local areas through the #LoveSUs campaign to work together to influence local decision makers to support and deliver for students' unions
  8. Ensure that students' unions are consulted in the creation of all NUS projects and campaigns.
  9. To work with unions, the Campaign for Trade Union Freedom and Right to Strike to oppose the TU Bill.
  10. To demand the repeal of all anti-trade union laws and a positive charter of rights: to join a union, organise, strike and do things which make strikes effective, including picketing and solidarity action.
  11. Work and campaign alongside trade unions and civil society organisations to launch a broad campaign against the government's attempt to limit our ability to act in an autonomous and effective way.
  12. Produce and promote useful materials explaining the implications of the government's proposals for student unions and trade unions, how the two are linked, and what kind of actions can be taken.
  13. To create a section of the NUS website to promote union membership and highlight the fight for workers' rights.
- Encourage local Student unions to approach trade unions and civil society groups in their localities in the context in order to hold joint events and initiatives to protect our democratic rights.
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# Education Policy Passed at National Conference 2016

## Motion 201 | Divorce our courses from market forces

### Conference believes

1. Successive governments have introduced policies designed to increase market competition in higher education and pass the cost of education from the taxpayer to the individual student.
  2. The marketisation of the Higher Education sector, not to be confused with privatisation, is defined as a way of changing people's relationships and values towards those of the market, while operating institutions as if they were businesses. This is not simply a state versus market values debate, as the marketisation of education has been paralleled not by a decrease but an increase in state intervention and the micro-management of university life.
  3. The previous Coalition government passed legislation which increased maximum tuition fee levels to £9,000 in England and pursued an agenda of opening up the sector to competition from private providers.
  4. The current government, through its policy proposals since the publication of the Green Paper *Fulfilling our Potential*, show an intent on implementing further market reforms that have potential to further increase the cost of education to students and force even greater competition between institutions.
  5. Higher education institutions are responding to higher education reforms and cuts to public funding by continuing to raise tuition fees where possible and by behaving as market actors, treating students as consumers, cutting corners and ruthlessly focusing on efficiency savings and competition in league tables.
  6. The UK government's marketisation agenda in England is having knock-on effects in the nations, by squeezing funding for devolved administrations, and by putting pressure on institutions in the nations to raise fees for other-UK and international students in order to compete.
  7. NUS has highlighted in publications such as *The Roadmap for Free Education, A Manifesto for Partnership* and *Democratic Universities*, how the marketisation agenda in higher education is having a negative impact on students.
  8. NUS does not currently have policy on state-enforced marketisation and how to support unions and students in challenging it systematically.
  9. The HE reforms currently being considered by the government represent a fundamental attack on the idea of education as a public service. It is a blueprint for the marketisation of the sector, introducing private providers and variable fees, and orientating the whole sector towards the needs of employers.
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10. The new Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) is a core part of the reforms and will damage the quality of education. In the years to come, the TEF will require and use data from the National Student Survey (NSS) and the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey.(1,2)
  11. The government's Green Paper represents the most significant restructure of higher education in recent times
  12. The Green Paper's reliance on metrics to assess the quality of our teaching stifles innovation in teaching
  13. The Teaching Excellence Framework's suggestion to allow institutions to increase tuition fees creates further marketization within our sector
  14. The idea to allow more private universities risks creating inferior institutions and taking valuable resources from our existing universities
  15. Making universities exempt from Freedom of Information enquiries will hurt transparency and limit students' ability to hold universities to account
  16. The plans to reform Student Unions are yet another example of the government's opposition to the student movement
  17. The proposed reforms presented in the government's Higher Education Green Paper included:
    - a. Increasing tuition fees in line with inflation.
    - b. The introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) that forces universities to compete in market-oriented metrics.
    - c. Variable tuition fees across institutions that can rise if universities meet certain criteria in the TEF, including graduate employment statistics.
    - d. Increased private sector involvement by making it easier for private providers to enter the 'market', award degrees, and compete with existing universities.
    - e. Facilitating closure of existing universities.
    - f. The exemption of universities from the Freedom of Information Act
    - g. Students' unions mentioned in the context of the Government's reforms attacking trade unions' ability to campaign and take industrial action.
  18. At the time of writing, after the consultation, we were waiting for a revised version of the reform package to be announced
  19. The proposed reforms presented in the government's Higher Education Green Paper are a potentially devastating attack on education.
  20. The HE paper threatens further fee rises, privatisation and marketisation on our campuses

**Conference further believes**



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1. Marketisation is one of the greatest threats to our education system at all levels.
  2. The so-called “benefits” to students and students’ unions from market mechanisms, such as better information and choice, higher quality provision, and greater power to change things, are often exaggerated and can be achieved via non-market mechanisms.
  3. The overreliance on quantitative data and metrics can deteriorate the relationship between students and academics, and it stifles the development of an inclusive learning environment.
  4. Students’ Unions operate in a difficult environment where they need to balance how to fight for better support and services for their members whilst actively opposing marketisation and other threats to students and education more widely.
  5. To function in the medium term, the TEF will need us to participate in the NSS and DLHE.
  6. If students and graduates either boycotted the NSS and DLHE or sabotaged the surveys by giving artificially maximum or minimum scores, this could render the TEF unworkable, and seriously disrupt the government’s HE reforms as a whole. The NSS and DLHE already form important parts of the government’s management and marketization of education.(3)
  7. There is a strategic case for using them as a highly effective form of leverage against the government’s destructive HE reforms.
  8. The Freedom of Information Act is an essential tool for holding universities to account by students and student media.
  9. There are no one-size-fits-all metrics with which the Government can quantify the quality of teaching at very different institutions.
  10. Some of the proposed metrics fail to recognise, and perpetuate, sexist, racist, socioeconomic and other disadvantages. Research has shown that the ethnicity of lecturers affects NSS scores. And given pay gaps and the biases in the job market, the use of graduate employment statistics will punish universities for accepting more women, black students, disabled students and those from poorer backgrounds.
  11. Higher education should not be seen merely as job training. A narrow-minded focus on employability will damage the quality of education, and disadvantage institutions specialising in arts and humanities. The introduction of TEF will further disadvantage struggling institutions.
  12. The TEF will increase stress and exploitation for teachers and academics, in particular casualised early career academics including postgraduates. Issues of casualisation disproportionately harm women and black academic staff. Improving teaching requires good working conditions for staff.
  13. Universities and teaching can be improved by decent public funding and democratic structures, not marketisation.
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14. The Government is proposing a structure which sets some public universities up to fail and close in order to make way for private businesses, to the detriment of students, staff, and wider society. The proposed reforms actively facilitate this process.
  15. The autonomy and campaigning activity of Students' Unions must be defended.
  16. We need to significantly up our work to stop the proposals which, combined with cuts to grants, bursaries and FE colleges, form a potentially devastating attack on public education.
  17. Universities and teaching can be improved by decent public funding and democratic structures, not marketisation.
  18. The autonomy and campaigning activity of Students' Unions must be defended.
  19. We need to significantly up our work to stop the proposals which, combined with cuts to grants, bursaries and FE colleges, form a potentially devastating attack on public education.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To actively campaign against the marketisation of education, calling for a free, publicly funded education system for all, driven by democratic values and duties for the good of society.
  2. Focus attention on combating current and future government policy which attempts to further marketise our education system.
  3. To produce further evidence of the negative effects of the market on students in higher education.
  4. To produce guidance for students' unions which can help them better understand and counteract the negative forces of marketisation.
  5. Provide direct advice and support to students' unions in fighting for improvements to the student experience whilst avoiding the pitfalls of consumerism and short-term thinking.
  6. Help drive a new language of student empowerment outside of the frame of students as consumers, where ideas of "student choice" and "student rights" have strong meaning outside of marketisation.
  7. Find more effective means for surveys and quality assurance to be used solely for enhancement rather than market competition.
  8. Help enhance students' unions negotiation and campaign tactics to encourage their institution to break from market-orientated policy and strategy, and find an alternative sustainable path to institutional success with students at its core.
  9. To work at a sector level to lobby and campaign against political inertia of organisations like Universities UK (UUK) to marketisation, pushing for institutions to change collectively.
  10. To form greater collaboration and consultation with NUS Scotland, NUS Wales and NUS-USI on how UK government policies on higher education affect the devolved administrations and institutions in the nations.
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11. The VPHE, consulting with the NEC and education workers affected by the NSS (represented by UCU, NUS Postgrad Section, and the Fighting Against Casualisation in Education campaign), will determine the most effective boycott/sabotage strategy.
  12. This will be done before June, when NUS will write to the government and announce that the NUS will mobilise students to sabotage or boycott the NSS and DLHE if the HE reforms and the TEF are not withdrawn.
  13. If the government refuses to withdraw the HE reforms, to mobilise students to sabotage or boycott the Spring 2017 NSS, and the next year's DLHE. The campaign should begin at the start of Autumn Term 2016 collecting pledges from students that they will carry out the action if the HE reforms are not withdrawn.
  14. To oppose any rise in tuition fees linked to the Teaching Excellence Framework
  15. To fight any attempt to weaken Student Unions or the Student Movement
  16. To provide resources to help SU officers to:
  17. Engage productively with their universities to ensure the student view is heard as plans set out in the Green Paper are further developed.
  18. Lobby MPs to oppose the provisions in the Green Paper that are unsatisfactory to students
  19. Continue to lobby to secure policy proposals that would make it more friendly towards the partnership between students and universities that we seek to achieve
  20. Lobby Jo Johnson, Minister for Universities, with the concerns over the Green Paper to get a change in direction
  21. Actively campaign, in collaboration with education trade unions, to stop the proposed Higher Education reforms as a whole, countering with our own vision of democratic, accessible, well-resourced public education, with academic freedom and good pay and working conditions, well-funded by taxing the rich.
  22. To put this campaign in the context of a wider fight against marketisation, casualisation, and the institutional perpetuation of oppressive biases and disadvantages.
  23. To help SUs, with resources such as toolkits, etc, to spread awareness of the content and negative consequences of the reforms in order to mobilise people to join the campaign
  24. To organise a demonstration at Parliament in the week running up to, or on the day of, any Parliamentary discussion or vote on these reforms, and to invite the education trade unions and other supporters to join us.
  25. To place this action within a wider strategy of protest, direct action and lobbying, with action at both local and national levels.
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26. To reaffirm our commitment to campaign for free and democratic education at all levels, funded by taxing the rich and big businesses, not by cutting other services or further squeezing those who can't afford it.
  27. Actively campaign, in collaboration with education trade unions, to stop the proposed Higher Education reforms.
  28. To link fighting the HE reforms to stopping the major cuts threatening further education and to reversing abolitions of grants and bursaries.
  29. To organise further local and national action – including protest, direct action and lobbying, strikes and occupations

### **Motion 202 | Area Reviews – Colleges are on life support; don't pull the plug!**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Cuts to further education colleges and sixth form colleges since 2010, including the scrapping of the Education Maintenance Allowance in England, have outrageous and disproportionate.
  2. The Association of Colleges has calculated that overall funding for colleges has decreased by 27% in real terms since 2010. Funding for 16-19 year olds fell by 14%. The Adult Skills Budget has been cut by 35% since 2009.
  3. That the latest assault on further education is coming from the Government's 'Area Reviews' of post-16 education and training in England. At least 36 reviews across England will be completed by March 2017.
  4. Whilst the Government's stated aim for the review is to create "larger, more efficient, more resilient providers" within further education, they will in reality see colleges merge, with fewer colleges, less staff and possibly more cuts to the further education budget.
  5. A similar process of regionalisation of colleges in Scotland and Wales, leading to course cutbacks, staff strikes, and prohibitive travel costs.
  6. That Sixth Form Colleges are at particular risk of closure, merger or conversion into academies and free schools.
  7. That the Public Accounts Committee of MPs has reported that the Government continually "make[s] decisions without properly understanding the impact on learners", and that "it is unclear how area-based reviews of post-16 education, which are limited in scope, will deliver a more robust and sustainable further education sector".
  8. Over the next year further education in England faces its biggest attacks yet with the government's 'Area Review' – a process which has already taken place in Scotland. This 'Review' will result in colleges merging, huge job losses and cuts on a scale we have not seen before.
  9. Since winning the General Election in May, the Tories have intensified their attacks on education.
  10. These attacks have included cutting the Disabled Students' Allowance, scrapping maintenance grants and the NHS student bursary and a new round of cuts to further and higher education which are seeing courses closed and staff losing their jobs
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11. The cuts have led to vital welfare services on campuses being axed, which has disproportionately hit women, Black, LGBT, disabled and international students as well as learners with learning difficulties and student parents and carers.
  12. Meanwhile the government is deepening the marketization of higher education with plans to allow the 'elite' universities to increase tuition fees.
  13. Schools and sixth-forms are also facing a funding crisis, with schools in some areas facing up to 30% budget cuts

### **Conference further believes**

1. Continued cuts to further education are a national scandal and undermine access to education for people of all ages and all social classes.
  2. College mergers and narrowed curriculums are only being viewed as necessary because of Governments' successive decisions to cut public funding.
  3. The Government's approach to area reviews is rushed, reckless, and is not in the interests of learners. There is confusion about exactly what the Government wants to achieve and not enough public knowledge about the jeopardised futures of many colleges.
  4. The area reviews do not account for learner voice or students' needs, and are too focused towards satisfying the needs to employers. Area reviews must listen to the needs of learners when making their decisions.
  5. Bulldozing established colleges and sixth-forms to make way for private providers and academies will further marketise further education. We cannot allow for-profit providers to take over our further education sector.
  6. There is no evidence that larger and more specialised providers are more cost-efficient than local general FE providers. Evidence from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland shows that merging colleges has not saved money, and has only led to further cuts to budgets, teaching and student places.
  7. That there is still work to be done in putting regionalised colleges in the devolved nations on a sustainable and accessible footing, and that lessons can be learned for England.
  8. That introducing a distinction between prestigious 'specialist' colleges and general FE colleges would be disastrous for the 36% of college students who study at level 2 and below. Providing second chances and basic-skills is a vital feature of college education.
  9. Apprenticeships are often fantastic, but that they are not growing quickly enough to offer all students an alternative to college.
  10. That regionalised colleges with fewer campuses will increase travel-to-learn distances and costs for many learners, and restrict access to learning for many. Some of the reviewed areas are over massive distances.
  11. Student support for travel is inconsistent across local authorities and does not cover costs.
  12. That further education and sixth-form colleges provide education for a massive range and diversity of learners, and are intrinsic parts of local communities. Small communities need local colleges to maintain their local identity.
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13. It is unacceptable and unsustainable for the Government to expect colleges to pay for student learning costs by selling off their estates and assets.
  14. That merged colleges must not cut-back on vital student support services.
  15. That NUS needs to make the case for developing students' unions in colleges more than ever, building on work by NUS Scotland during regionalisation.
  16. NUS should prioritise fighting all of these huge attacks by launching a major new campaign to Save Our Futures – Stop Cutting Education.
  17. The focus of such a campaign would be to unite the whole student movement, in all Nations of the UK, to oppose all of the cuts facing further and higher education as well as putting forward our alternative vision for free, publicly funded education for all.
  18. That NUS should approach the trade union movement to build a coalition behind the campaign.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To continue to condemn and call for a halt to cuts to further education and sixth forms across all nations of the UK, and where cuts have been halted, to call for reinvestment in the sector.
  2. To endorse the National Union of Teachers' #SaveOurColleges campaign, and any upcoming actions to campaign against more cuts and poorly planned mergers.
  3. To ensure that learners' voices are heard in the process of area reviews by bringing together college student representatives in affected areas.
  4. To run a campaign drawing attention to cuts, area reviews, and attacks on the further education sector.
  5. To make FE students aware of what is happening and the risks to their local colleges, and to enable students to advocate independently for their colleges.
  6. To provide support and guidance to students' unions undergoing mergers, to ensure that unions come out of the area reviews process stronger than ever.
  7. To lobby both nationally and locally for discounted and accessible travel for college students and apprentices across the UK.
  8. To launch a major campaign to Save Our Futures with the aim of fighting all the cuts to further and higher education
  9. To organise Save Our Futures activist training days to equip students with the skills and knowledge to campaign against cuts locally and at a national level.
  10. To put the voices of women, Black, LGBT, disabled and international students as well as student parents and carers at the heart of the campaign.
  11. To use and encourage a variety of tactics in the Save Our Futures campaign from calling national days and weeks of action to lobbying, petitions, peaceful direct actions and creative stunts.
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12. To put forward our alternative vision of free, accessible and publicly funded education through the Save Our Futures campaign.
  13. To call a national demonstration in the autumn on the theme of 'Save our futures' – stop the education cuts' with a focus on opposing all of the attacks and cuts facing further and higher education. Including stop the HE reforms, Stop College Cuts, and Grants Not Debt.
  14. To organise this demonstration on a Saturday to be inclusive of further education students.
  15. To invite the other education trade unions to jointly organise the national demo alongside the NUS.

## **Motion 203 | Employability isn't working**

### **Conference believes**

1. 58.8% of UK HE graduates are in non-graduate jobs.
  2. 47% of total U.S. employment is at high risk of automation over the next two decades with expectations of similar trends in the U.K.
  3. There remain deep inequalities in the labour market; graduates still face discrimination on the basis of their gender, gender identity, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, religion, age and disabilities.
  4. On average, women graduates still earn £8,000 less than men with the same degree. In addition, we know that when these averages are intersected by race and ethnicity, overall unemployment rates and the national pay gap of ethnic minority women is consistently lower and wider than that of white women in the West.
  5. Some of these inequalities are upheld and even sponsored by the state, in particular international students who face the xenophobia and anti-immigrant discourse of the current government. Graduates in Northern Ireland also face stances by political parties in government, such as those on abortion and gay marriage, which help to legitimise homophobia and sexism.
  6. As well as in graduate employment, and despite the progress on financial support for postgraduates, there remain key issues of fair access to taught and research postgraduate courses across all nations.
  7. Analysis has shown that human capital is the key metric of the government's current agenda in education, which reinforces the notion that higher education institutions are primarily factories for the production of a skilled workforce and that they are subservient to the needs of business and industry.
  8. The spiralling cost of study has clear effects on the decisions that students make, both at university and when they leave, limiting their options and pressurising them to focus on a simplistic notion of what education is for, based on human capital.
  9. It is widely accepted that the pedagogy of employability is more than simply learning "soft skills" and how to utilise them in work. Employability is a wide concept which encompasses many aspects of the student experience.
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10. Focusing too heavily on an employability agenda which is reduced to basic skills training is counterproductive, as this is not what students or employers need.
  11. Graduate employment prospects are still too closely linked to where and what you study, rather than what you have learnt and how you have developed as an individual. This places many students at an unfair disadvantage.
  12. The single-minded pursuit of higher graduate employment scores in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey by some institutions is counter-productive and harmful to the wider education experience.
  13. The government's Trade Union Bill threatens to further undermine the rights of workers by making it easier for employers to avoid industrial action and to break strikes with agency workers.
  14. Accurate, inclusive and relevant Information Advice and Guidance is key to graduate employment prospects.
  15. Graduate employment in the nations is affected by cross-border flow of graduates and the correspondence between their regional economies and the responsiveness of the higher education sector.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Education can and should play a key role in tackling inequalities in the labour market and in wider society.
  2. The government's economic policy and commitment to austerity are the central cause of the difficulties and inequalities that graduates face in the labour market, but the blame is being shifted onto higher education institutions and further education colleges for political reasons.
  3. The right to join a trade union and the right to strike are absolutely essential and as a movement we must do all in our power to protect and enhance them.
  4. The marketisation of higher education is part of an ongoing attempt by the rich and privileged to keep people down and maintain the existing inequalities in our society.
  5. Education means far more than simply getting a job at the end of it, but it is nevertheless important to ensure that all students are best equipped to find the right job and thrive in it when they graduate.
  6. That NUS must lead in the development of a new language of employability, one which is not tied into the government's marketisation agenda and the short-sighted pursuit of higher scores in the Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.
  7. Students' unions can and should play a key role in developing a rounded conception of employability which complements rather than stifles the other important aspects of education and the student experience.
  8. The employability agenda is economically illiterate: it is tied down to what employers think they want, rather than what society and individuals need.
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9. Academic freedom is an important concept and too much intervention by employers on the basis of securing their own business interests threatens to undermine the ability for academics to teach freely and effectively, and for students' choice of modules, courses, learning styles and environments.
  10. In courses designed specifically to equip people for certain careers, such as nursing and teaching, the government's programme of marketisation and austerity is threatening the futures of these students.
  11. Students are being given overinflated expectations as a result of poor information, advice and guidance on graduate employment prospects.

### **Conference resolves**

1. Support students' unions to provide more robust and realistic information, advice and guidance on careers and the state of the labour market, and enable all students to be able to articulate their skills and experience for the benefit of their future life choices, and to lobby their institutions to do the same.
2. To campaign for increased trade union membership among students and graduates and generate closer links between students' unions and the trade union movement.
3. Expand on the recommendations of the NUS Commission on the Future of Work and provide research on the state of graduate employment.
4. Produce guidance on how to campaign for careers services and IAG (Information Advice and Guidance) to be more inclusive and combative of social inequalities.
5. Lobby for better data on the employment destinations of both HE and FE learners, and for a more accurate definition on what constitute "graduate jobs", including the effect of cross-border flows and the effect of regional economic growth.
6. For NUS to initiate research and gather data on how students currently understand the concept of employability, their role in higher education and how it enables them more broadly as members of wider society.

### **Motion 204 | Free Education, Further Education, For Everyone**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The funding arrangements for further education across the UK are complex and spread over multiple government departments.
  2. That FE funding has been squeezed and cut across all four nations since 2010, including a 27% reduction in overall college funding and a 35% cut to the adult skills budget in England.
  3. Adult skills spending per head of working-age population in England and Wales has halved since 2009.
    - a. Funding per non-apprentice adult learner is only 15% of funding for an undergraduate.
  4. There are 1.3 million fewer adult learners in England than in 2010.
  5. FE cuts have affected all UK nations. There are 100,000 fewer college students in Scotland, in 2014 there was a £45 million cut to FE in Wales, and Northern Irish colleges have suffered a £12 million funding cut in 2015-
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- a. 16.
6. 24+ Advanced Learner Loans have been expanded to those 19 and over and to level 4 and 5 qualifications, despite loans being underutilised and leading to a 21% fall in numbers on eligible courses upon their introduction.
7. Cuts to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) and Adult Learning Grant (ALG) in England have taken money directly out of students' pockets and harmed access.
8. Cuts to English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) funding and pressure on available local authority funding for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LLDD) has hit some of the most vulnerable people in our society.
9. Around 100 colleges are reported to be financially 'stretched', whilst 39 are 'financially inadequate'.
10. That the compulsory education or training age has been extended to 18, and that 16 to 18 education is primarily delivered through colleges.
11. That the Government has introduced a new levy on business to fund an expansion of apprenticeships.
12. That the apprentice minimum wage is only £3.30 per hour.
13. There is extensive evidence demonstrating the value of further education for wider society and individuals, and in particular for working-class communities and those from the most disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds.
14. That NUS has continually opposed the ongoing attacks on further education under the current and previous government.
15. That National Conference has previously passed policy declaring NUS's support for 'free education' in higher and further education, but has not yet outlined a route to free education in further education.

### **Conference further believes**

1. That NUS and wider student movement needs to develop and expand on what we mean by 'free education' in further education.
2. That further education covers a wide-range of academic and vocational routes and many different levels and ages, and that funding arrangements need to be tailored to these.
3. That NUS needs to direct and focus its funding campaigning in further education to where it can have the greatest impact.
4. That introducing loans has not worked in FE, and their expansion is not a sustainable basis for funding.
5. That the current levels of the 16-19 bursary and discretionary learner support are unacceptably small.
  - a. Maintenance support for FE learners needs to be expanded.
6. That the apprentice minimum wage is still unacceptably low, and should be at least in line with the National Minimum Wage.
7. Government investment in apprenticeships should extend to supporting apprentices living costs as well as the cost of training.
8. That cuts to mandated ESOL funding are a disgrace, and that the ability to learn English should be a right of all UK residents.



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9. That local authority cuts are failing learners with LDD and reducing the places available at specialist colleges, many of whom are in serious financial difficulty.
  10. That 16-19 funding should be equalised with pre-16 funding and protected in real, not cash terms.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To further outline a vision for free education in further education across all four nations.
2. To campaign against the extension of the fees and loans system for adult learners and to campaign for sustainable government funding and investment.
3. To campaign for equalising the apprentice minimum wage with the national minimum wage and for a portion of apprenticeship spending to be spent on wage support and widening access, including free prescriptions for 16-18 apprentices and extension of Care to Learn.
4. To campaign for the expansion of learner maintenance grants and bursaries across all four nations.
5. To endorse the National Association of National Specialist Colleges' (NATSPEC) 'A Right, Not a Fight' campaign for learners with LDDs, demanding that all students with special educational needs have access to specialist support.
6. To campaign against any further cuts to ESOL spending, and to make the case for investment in this area.
7. To campaign for the Government to extend the statutory right to free education in all subjects up to Level 3, regardless of age.
8. Deliver activist training for FE students across the UK so they are equipped to campaign for better provision in their colleges and community, and join up nationally to fight cuts.

### **Motion 205 | Liberate My Degree**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Black students are over-represented in HE institutions in relation to the general population, but severely under-represented within academic ranks.
  2. White graduates have significantly higher degree classifications than graduates from other ethnicities. This is a 16 percentage point difference between the two groups of graduates according to HEFCE data (Sept 2015).
  3. Once other factors are taken into account, the proportion of Black graduates gaining a first or upper second continues to be 15 percentage points lower than their white counterparts.
  4. Despite the intellectual contributions Black people have made to global knowledge production, and their close relationship with Britain over the past 400 years, Black people are grossly under-represented in university curricula.
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5. A lower percentage of graduates with specified disabilities achieve a first or 2:1 class degree than those without a disability (4% in 2013-14, HEFCE Sept 2015 data) and disabled students report lower satisfaction levels with teaching practices.
  6. In the last year NUS has made significant progress with the Office For Fair Access and HEFCE on prioritising solutions to attainment gaps at national level and embedding measures in access agreements as well as with BIS on addressing the gaps at postgraduate level.
  7. The NUS Liberate My Degree campaign is ran in conjunction with the NUS Black Students' Campaign and aims to empower student reps from academic and liberation groups with the tools to transform and decolonise education so that it is more representative of the diverse student body, as well as amplifying local campaigns and initiatives to liberate education to a national level.
  8. The attainment gap (the proportion of Black graduates graduating with 1<sup>st</sup>/2:1 degrees compared to their white counterparts) is nationally 16.8%.
  9. A well-rounded, critical approach to education is crucial in producing active, conscious members of society.
  10. For this to be possible, a wide range of teaching, assessment and curriculum formats and approaches need to be adopted – education cannot be one-size-fits-all.
  11. That the student movement teaches us so much about liberation, oppression and privilege. Not all people get the opportunity to explore these topics in so much depth.
  12. If we want to free ourselves from oppression in society, we need to start educating people better and making people with privilege realise the inequalities that exist in our society and the impact that has on our minority groups
  13. Issues relating to diversity, liberation and inclusivity within the curriculum apply to FE as well as HE.
  14. FE course content and curricula often reproduce stale and tired forms of knowledge, focussing only on European history.
  15. Despite remaining a global minority, the works and theories of straight white and/or able-bodied men are promoted in education as a universal standard.
  16. The related issues arising from this for students who face oppression, such as attainment gaps and increased likelihood of not completing their studies, thus also apply to FE as well as HE.
  17. This should start in school age, to change the mindset of people as they grow up - to make people aware of their conscious and unconscious bias and to turn oppressors into allies.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Universities are not doing enough to address the racism Black students deal with during the course of their degree.
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2. The HE Green Paper talks about retention and attainment data to be considered as key metrics for university performance, identifying Black students as a particular group.
  3. While it's important to see campaigning has put the issues on the national agenda, such an approach would encourage data gaming and superficial solutions that don't seek to address cultural erasure and the Eurocentrism of the HE education system.
  4. Student engagement in designing curricula and assessment methods has been shown to improve degree outcomes, according to Higher Education Academy data.
  5. Universities too often overlook Black academics for hiring and promotion.
  6. Every student benefits from a curriculum which encompasses knowledge from all parts of the world, and every corner of Britain's former Empire.
  7. A high proportion of FE students are Black
  8. Liberation is just as important in FE as it is in HE
  9. The aggressive promotion of 'British values' as core to all teaching under the PREVENT agenda impacts the range of material that can be studied in FE, and the range of critical perspectives that can be included.
  10. A narrow approach to learning at any level is damaging to students as well as society.
  11. This year the VPHE alongside the Black Students' Campaign have conducted a 'Liberate My Degree' tour across universities.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS to prioritise supporting the NUS Black Students' Campaign and HE Zone to develop strategic approaches to tackling attainment gaps and institutional racism through challenging the sector's top-down and statistic obsessed approach and instead through student engagement in transforming education and collaboration with Black academics.
  2. To resource and plan a continued roll out of the new NUS Liberate My Degree campaign, in consultation with Students' Unions to develop strategic local approaches to campaigns and training.
  3. NUS to facilitate and resource collaboration between zone committee and \*all\* liberation committees' volunteer members who wish to drive the campaign and link with local members to support them in their campaigning efforts.
  4. NUS to continually develop resources on changing aspects of teaching and learning, and decolonising education, and upload them onto the existing online campaign hub and disseminate to members.
  5. NUS to develop reporting back mechanisms from unions so that an up-to-date bank of case studies is maintained for members' use but also for influencing the sector.
  6. NUS to develop a long-term mechanism for measuring the impact of initiatives implemented at institutional level so that best practice can be shared.
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7. To build solidarity and support Black students' campaigns for anti-racism and a more inclusive curriculum on their campuses e.g. Why Is My Curriculum White? and Rhodes Must Fall.
  8. For the VPFE to work with Liberation campaigns in developing a #LiberateMyFE tour of colleges promoting a liberated education and challenging the Eurocentricity of FE education – discussing approaches to learning that are race-critical, gender-critical and conscious of LGBT+ issues and Disability.
  9. To produce toolkits for student reps in FE in promoting a liberated education and critical approaches to learning within their colleges.
  10. To lobby to decouple 'British Values' from FE teaching and learning.
  11. Lobby for liberation, oppression and privilege to be a compulsory part of the curriculum in school and FE.
  12. In the short term, make the most of connections between HE and FE and give student unions the tools and resources to deliver workshops to young people on these subjects.
  13. We should be aiming to use our place as an educational lobbying group to change the mindsets of young people and to do all that we can to start really shaping society through combating oppression.

## **Motion 206 | Qualifications - Once the golden rule...now just pieces of paper**

### **Conference believes**

1. From 2013 students aged 16-18 studying in FE who had not achieved at least a grade C in either/both Maths and English GCSE at school have had to repeat this qualification within their Study Programme.
2. Previously those without these qualifications would do an English or Maths Functional or Key Skills qualification in addition to into their chosen qualification.
3. From 2013 institutions receive funding "per student" rather than "per qualification" and this has impacted on the amount of funding colleges receive for most 16-18 year old students, which is now around £4200 per student.
4. A new grading system for GCSE will be introduced in 2015 with 9-1 rather than A-G where a good pass becomes a grade 5.

### **Conference further believes**

1. The government wants Colleges and sixth forms to achieve in a year what schools have failed to do in 12 years with less money than schools receive.
  2. This is a disproportionate problem for FE Colleges as their entry requirements tend to be lower than sixth forms and sixth form colleges.
  3. Maths and English qualifications are a good thing but only if they are inclusive of student needs for progression and relevant to their ambitions.
  4. The new grading scale for GCSE will confuse both students and employers and may mean more students retaking at College.
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5. College's failing to improve students GCSE scores can lead to poor Ofsted grades affecting recruitment and staff morale.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For NUS to research and suggest alternate methods of delivery of Maths and English qualifications using technology and contextualised examples with modular assessment for implementation by awarding bodies.
2. NUS to lobby national government to review the current situation and push for greater funding for English and Maths in FE colleges
3. For NUS to campaign to remove retaking GCSE Maths and English as a mandatory part of a study programme with other alternatives more suited to a broader range of students within FE.
4. NUS to work with the Education & Training Foundation on the review of Functional Skills for Maths and English to ensure it meets students needs.

#### **Policy Lapse**

#### **NC\_HE\_13215 : HE To Left Of Me FE To The Right, HE In FE Stuck In The Middle Confused**

#### **Conference believes**

1. In 2012-2013 close to 10,000 'margin' places students started studying in FE colleges due to number control decisions.
2. That where colleges and higher education institutions have previously had franchise arrangements reforms to higher education have led in many cases to competition between HE and FE providers of higher education.
3. That this will lead to a loosening of ties between HE and FE unions where they exist.
4. That colleges will in some cases need to work very hard to ensure a high-quality higher education environment for HE students eg in the area of access and admissions.
5. That not nearly enough has been done to understand the different learning context of HE in FE students, and how these students can best engage with their learning and be represented to their institution(s).

#### **Conference further believes**

1. That 10,000 students left in limbo between NUS zones is not a good thing
2. That FE students' unions do not always have the experience and/or resources to support issues HE students face
3. Both HE and FE institutions see HE in FE students as the other institutions problem
4. HE unions do sometimes not know they have HE students they represent at FE institutions

#### **Conference resolves**



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1. To mandate the HE Zone to work closely with the FE Zone to undertake research to more fully understand the motivations, experience and aspirations of students studying higher education in further education.
  2. For the FE and HE Zone to collaborate on the best way for the NUS to represent HE in FE students.
  3. For the HE and FE zone to decide which zone HE in FE students fall into.
  4. For the UD zone to work with FE unions to make sure they are resourced fully to support HE in FE students.
  5. For the UD zone to consult with both HE and FE unions to develop and produce briefings, reports and other information as appropriate to support HE and FE unions to understand and represent these students.
  6. To ensure that the different models of delivering higher education in further education (for example in different Nations) are taken account of in any work undertaken.
  7. To take steps to bring together HE and FE unions to agree appropriate mechanisms for supporting students studying HE in FE eg service-level agreements.
  8. To work with appropriate sector bodies including Association of Colleges, the Mixed Economy group of colleges providing HE in FE and the funding councils to advocate for the necessity of ensuring a robust student voice for HE in FE students.
  9. The HE zone to run training events and create resources that self-awarding FE colleges can easily access to ensure HE quality is an important issue
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# Society and Citizenship Zone Policy Passed at National Conference 2016

## Motion 501 | Right to Education for Persons in Detention

### Conference believes

1. People in prison represent a highly marginalised group who often have their right to education violated whilst in detention and also after incarceration.
2. Learning in prison is normally viewed as a tool for change aimed maximising impacts on recidivism, reintegration and employment upon release. This focus is narrow as the right to education is not only a tool for change but a human right and thus the right to education not relinquished when a person enters the Criminal justice System (CJS).
3. There is need as evidenced by the Special Rapporteur for Education in their report on Prison Education to redouble efforts to respect, protect and fulfil the right to education for those in detention
4. The provision of education in detention is complex and often the environment it takes place in is hostile to the liberating potential
5. Statistics show prison population reflects a disproportionate number of people that come from poor, discriminated and marginalised groups and communities.

### Conference resolves

1. To support youth offending units that provide education to young people in prisons
2. To raise the profile of education in prison through the media and social media (blogging and vlogging) and by working with stakeholders such as but not limited to PET, ACU and Howard League
3. To work specifically with alternative, innovative and engaging media outlets such as Buzzfeed to release engaging and easy access articles on Prison Education
4. To work with FE colleges to engage persons in detention as well as governors in raising profile of prison education.
5. To use NUS voice to break the narrative that prisoners are undeserving of education and highlight the human right to education as well as its rehabilitative potential
6. To campaign for varied, adequate, relevant and quality education provisions for those serving longer term custodial sentences
7. To campaign, strengthen and champion learner voice of prisoners as well as support initiatives aimed at formalising systems and avenues for learner voice in prisons
8. To support, create and disseminate toolkits for advocacy and campaigning on prisoner rights with a focus on access to education for people in prison.
9. To work with APPG on libraries to advocate for prison libraries and increased access to education materials for students in prison

## Motion 502 | Divest-Invest





## **Conference believes**

1. Man-made climate change is real and it is happening now, caused by the burning of fossil fuels, predominantly by the world's richest nations.
2. The effects of climate are already being felt through warming global temperatures, leading to more frequent extreme weather events and rising sea levels.
3. The world's poorest people will suffer most from climate change. Local and indigenous communities on the front-line of fossil fuel extraction face land grabs, violence and ill health. The colonial models of extraction employed by the fossil fuel industry must not be replicated as we construct our low-carbon future.
4. UK tertiary education institutions are playing a crucial role in leading on climate change research globally.
5. However, many institutions have investments in fossil fuel companies, or carry out research for them into conventional fossil fuel extraction. This is not in keeping with the 'public good' remit of our institutions.
6. At the time of writing, 14 UK HE institutions have made commitments to full or partial divestment from fossil fuels. Although this is an impressive campaign achievement for the movement, many more need to divest.
7. Institutions that divest should reinvest their money into a just transition through community-owned and controlled energy in the UK and Global South, so that our institutions are making a positive commitment to tackling climate change.
8. Priority for investment should be given to transformational scale projects like the \$160mil Yansa indigenous owned wind development in Mexico which will see the creation of the largest community owned renewable energy scheme on the planet in a region where new corporate wind infrastructure has led to violence, corruption and land grabs.
9. The focus of the NUS campaign is fossil fuel divestment, and renewable energy investment from university endowments and pension funds.
10. The launch of the NUS 'Divest, Invest' Campaign, calling on Institutions to move their investments to renewable energy.

## **Conference further believes**

1. The impact divestment and investment will have on the grounds by which decisions are made.
2. That it is important to ensure the fossil free campaign is made more relevant to students on campus day to day. For instance, a focus on a balanced curriculum is essential for our students.
3. Institutions will respond more positively to campaigns that have a more strategic and longer term objective.

## **Conference Resolves**

1. Divest-invest to be a high-profile campaign for NUS in 2016/17.
  2. NUS should produce a divestment toolkit, to include:
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- a. Clear steps on how to run a successful divest-invest campaign
  - b. Justification for why institutions should be divesting their socially and environmentally damaging investments such as those in fossil fuels and the arms trade
  - c. Case studies of successful divest-invest campaigns
  - d. Guidance on positive investments that includes advice for how student unions can invest in the Yansa community wind farm at the development and construction phase.
  - e. Tailored resources for FE colleges on severing links to the fossil fuel industry.
3. NUS should thoroughly research the number of tertiary education courses that are sponsored by the fossil fuel industry, and the value of research paid for by the fossil fuel industry, with a view to establishing a baseline value for both. They should also explore the ethics and implications of course sponsorship.
  4. Society and Citizenship zone to work with Union Development to support and establish student societies coordinating divestment and reinvestment campaigns, particularly linking in with national social and environmental sustainability campaigning organisations such as People & Planet, Global Justice Now and War on Want.
  5. Society and Citizenship zone to work with Further Education Zone to ensure FE is prioritised and mainstreamed into all sustainability projects.
  6. NUS to engage AoC and UCU on climate change issues, and build consensus for divest-reinvest.
  7. NUS to engage the research funding councils on climate change issues, with specific reference to the funding of research that supports the fossil fuel industry.
  8. NUS to ensure that that it does not have any investments in the fossil fuel industry and commit to reinvest 10% of its endowment in the construction phase of the Yansa community owned wind farm in Mexico; to seek to influence any pension schemes that it pays into to divest from fossil fuels; to engage Endsleigh Insurance on divestment.
  9. To ensure that this work, at all stages, considers and is inclusive of campaigning work which is ongoing right across the U.K. and also explore potential collaboration through NUS-USI with the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) and students' unions in the Republic of Ireland
  10. To revise the Divest Campaign to focus on on-campus, local investment in community renewables and local energy.
  11. This would include:
  12. Considering the carbon-neutrality of campus estates programmes.
  13. Reduce institutions' reliance on fossil fuels.
  14. Investing in solar, wind and other renewable energy.
  15. Ensuring a balanced curriculum; teaching about renewable energy and fossil fuels.

## **Motion 503 | Students are Citizens, Too!**

### **Conference believes**



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1. Students and Students' Unions contribute to their local communities by through the economy, volunteering with local groups, and fundraising for local causes.
  2. Large numbers of students stay in their area of study after completing their course and stay as permanent residents of typically 'student' areas.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Within local communities, students living in HMOs often get treated as nuisances by permanent residents.
2. Local and national media tend to cover students in a negative way, rather than highlighting the positive impact students can have.
3. Students consider themselves residents of their local area, and deserve to be treated as such.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To work with local councils to ensure students are integrated effectively into local communities.
2. To produce a report outlining the non-economic benefits of students to communities, highlighting the positive case for students.
3. To support Students' Unions in building relationships with their local communities to ensure good levels of cooperation and collaboration.

## **Motion 504 | Refugees Welcome in Universities and Colleges**

### **Conference believes**

1. Over a million asylum seekers reached Europe in 2015 alone, many fleeing war and persecution.
  2. People seeking refugee protection and those granted discretionary leave to remain (DLR) are classed as overseas students, are charged higher fees and cannot access student loans.
  3. Students' Unions and student societies across the country have been successfully campaigning for scholarships and bursaries for refugees and asylum seekers.
  4. That there are a number of refugees arriving in the UK after suffering untold violence, political and economic insecurity in their home countries
  5. The Student Action for Refugees (STAR) and NUS campaign ensuring people in the UK seeking refugee protection have equal access to higher education.
  6. People waiting for a decision on their asylum application or have been granted Discretionary Leave to Remain in the UK don't have equal access to university.
  7. They are charged international student fees ranging from £8500 to £29200, with no access to student loans or grants. They cannot work and often live on £36 a week.
  8. With the current refugee crisis there will be increasing numbers of individuals affected by this issue (By the end of 2014 there were 117,161 refugees, 36,383 pending asylum cases).
  9. STAR and NUS are campaigning for those seeking refuge protection to be able to:
    - a study as home students
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- b be recognised as having additional needs and be given access to additional support, e.g. bursaries

### **Conference further believes**

1. Education is a right and should be free for everyone, regardless of nationality and citizenship status.
2. Current funding system leaves Further and Higher Education out of reach for many refugees and asylum seekers.
3. While free public Higher and Further Education for refugees is the ultimate goal, scholarships and bursaries funded by universities and colleges are a temporary solution and make learning possible for many.
4. That unlike some sections for our communities Students' Unions core aim is to be welcoming, inclusive environments
5. Putting international students (who often receive funding from their governments and choose to study in UK), and people who were forced to leave their countries, due to war or persecution, in the same category goes against common sense.
6. A number of institutions have already adopted Equal Access, but there are more institutions which have made little improvement to their policy.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To continue working with Student Action for Refugees on the Equal Access campaign, and make it a priority.
2. To campaign for free access to education for refugees and asylum seekers, funded by progressive taxation.
3. To encourage and provide resources for Students' Unions to lobby their institutions for scholarships for refugees and asylum seekers, covering fees and a living allowance.
4. Support students' unions to become local refugee welcome hubs with advice and support about the local community and who to speak to as part of local community open days supported by NUS.
5. Ensure this important issue is highlighted to students' unions and encourage them to lobby their institution.
6. Investigate other factors such as stigma that asylum seekers face on campus.

### **Motion 505 | A long-term strategy into how we engage our students with politics to increase voter registration and turn out.**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The amount of 18-24 year olds who vote is on average 40%.
  2. This has fallen from an average of 60% in the 1990s, and is nearly half of the amount of 65+ year olds that vote.
  3. The Government is launching attack after attack on students and young people in both FE and HE - with tuition fee increases, maintenance grants being cut and the NHS bursary being scrapped.
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4. Young people don't engage in politics, so politicians don't target their policies towards them.
  5. Voter registration drives have become a common part of students' union's annual campaigning activity.
  6. By registering students to vote and organising activities around voter registration, students' unions are consistently ensuring that university and college campuses remain spaces of political engagement and civic responsibility.
  7. By registering students to vote, students' unions can also very easily and effectively measure impact and be strategic in how they enhance their political capital.

### **Conference further believes**

1. We know for a fact that young people are nowhere near as 'apathetic' as other generations, and the media like to make out.
2. We know that there is just a disconnect between what young people care about and party politics. Young people feel let down by the Government and feel under represented in Parliament.
3. NUS does some great work on voter registration and turn outs - but it is often just in the months leading up to elections and referendums. We would get much better results if this was something we were constantly working on.
4. Online voter registration has been introduced in England, Scotland and Wales.
5. Online voter registration has to some extent made voter registration easier and more accessible.
6. Due mainly to historical reasons, online voter registration has not been introduced in Northern Ireland.
7. NUS-USI has in recent years called on the UK Cabinet office to review the current voter registration process for citizens in Northern Ireland, with the belief that there is no longer any good reason by online voter registration is not available there.

### **Conference resolves**

1. We need a full review of the way that we currently attempt to engage students in politics and activism – we need to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of what we currently do.
2. We need to lead a long term strategy into how we can improve on how we engage students in politics.
3. We need a clear action plan of the next couple of years - and how we will achieve a target of increased amounts of students and young people voting.
4. For the Vice President Society & Citizenship to work alongside the NUS-USI President to make representations to the Westminster Government and UK Cabinet office to introduce online voter registration in Northern Ireland.

## **Motion 506 | Fight to save the National Health Service – back the junior doctors and NHS bursary struggles**

### **Conference believes**

1. That the momentum of the junior doctors' dispute about working conditions and the "Bursary or Bust" campaign to save NHS student bursaries gives us an opportunity to more actively oppose the Tories' dismantling and privatisation of the NHS.
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2. That the NHS Bill, which when motions was submitted was about to return to Parliament, provides a rough outline of how to reverse the assault on the NHS.

### **Conference further believes**

1. That health workers' struggles are an essential part of the fight to save the health service. If the junior doctors' and bursary struggles win, it will put us in a much stronger position to oppose the privatisation agenda.
2. That the NHS as its best has represented at least elements of planning and provision for need in the midst of an exploitative and unequal society – at least aspiring to the idea that everyone has an equal right to life and health regardless of wealth. We must save it.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To support the junior doctors' strikes and the NHS bursary struggle.
2. To devote financial and other resources to helping students nurses and health professionals in this fight.
3. To support and campaign for an end to cuts, marketisation and privatisation in the NHS, and for a comprehensive, well funded, publicly owned, run and provided health service meeting clinical need. We support the NHS Bill and will lobby MPs to back it.

## **Motion 507 | Climate Change**

### **Conference believes**

1. The recent COP21 climate talks produced a lot of rhetoric, but insufficient concrete commitment on tackling dangerous climate change.
2. The \$100 billion pledged to help developing countries meet the COP21 targets is less than 8% of global military spending, to say nothing of corporate profits.
3. COP21 had little to say about droughts, floods, crop failures, species extinctions, coastal erosion and extreme weather, and nothing about climate-driven mass migration.
4. The UK government's seriousness about meeting a zero emissions target by 2030 is shown by the fact it recently scrapped a £1bn competition to develop carbon capture technology and cut subsidies to solar power 65%.
5. Climate change is a thing! The earth temperature is rising faster than it has in previous years.
6. Sustainability and environmentally friendly practice is a National interest and aim.
7. The use of vehicles and contribution from people day to day doesn't even compare to the percentage that animal agriculture contributes to climate change. With an around of 50% carbon emission coming from the meat and dairy industry alone.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Promoting lifestyle changes and relying on markets won't save us.
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2. Tackling climate change requires massive public spending on developing alternative energy, transport, redesign of housing, workplaces, urban environments, and more, tied to democratic public ownership in these sectors.
  3. Unsustainable industries need to be taken under democratic public ownership, their infrastructure converted and jobs transferred to prevent lay-offs.
  4. We need mass mobilisation around these goals, linking up students and climate campaigners with the workers' movement.
  5. that what we are selling in our cafeterias is more harmful to the environment than the amount of people using petrol vehicles to get to our institutions.
  6. by reducing the amount of animal products we sell we can help our institutions to become more eco-friendly and lowering their c02 emissions.
  7. by doing this it also give our students more healthy and ethical choices in turn improving their wellbeing.
  8. if there is a reduction in animal products being used in our institution's the supply and demand will decrease there for impacting on the amount of animal agricultural activities happening which then leads to a bigger reduction in the c02 imitations making a more positive impact on the climate.
  9. This will further inform people on environmental issue and in turn give them the choice to make conscious decisions in day to day life which then helps the environment.

### **Conference resolves**

1. Make campaigning against climate change and for a sustainable world a major priority this year, highlighting demands for public ownership and democratic control of energy and transport.
2. Highlight the government's lack of seriousness about reaching zero emissions by 2030.
3. Build links with trade unions on this, including support for unions representing the solar energy workers whose jobs the government is slashing.
4. For NUS to create a campaign to support the students' unions in lobbying their institutions to reduce carbon foot print and become more environmentally friendly by reducing animal produce by a third, and highlight nationally the impact that animal agriculture has on the environment
5. To lobby the government to launch a similar imitative across all educational institutions.

### **Motion 508 | Stand Up to Racism**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The refugee crisis has seen thousands of people die over the past year while thousands more languish in camps in the most appalling conditions.
  2. The government's response has been disgraceful and has sought to demonise people who are fleeing war, poverty and persecution.
  3. Across Europe there has been a staggering rise in Islamophobic hate crimes, including in Britain. Between 2013 and 2015 hate crimes against Muslims in London doubled.
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4. As the cuts bite racist scapegoating is on the rise, with politicians seeking to blame immigrants and Black communities for falling living standards which are in fact a result of the Tory government's austerity measures.
  5. Racist discrimination and institutional racism continues to rise. For example, new research from the TUC has shown that Black university graduates earn 23% less than their white counterparts.
  6. The government's response in letting only 20,000 refugees into the country across 5 years is disgraceful.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To reaffirm that campaigning against all forms of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism is a top priority for the student movement.
2. To continue to oppose and campaign against the government's racist Prevent agenda, which sees Muslim students unfairly targeted and harassed on campuses.
3. To reaffirm NUS' No Platform for Fascists policy and continue to campaign for its full implementation within NUS and all Students' Unions.
4. To work with Stand Up To Racism in campaigning against racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism including by mobilizing students to join the national demonstration to mark UN Anti-Racism Day annually.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To reaffirm that campaigning against all forms of racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism is a top priority for the student movement.
2. To reaffirm NUS' No Platform for Fascists policy and continue to campaign for its full implementation within NUS and all Students' Unions.
3. To work with Stand Up To Racism in campaigning against racism, Islamophobia and anti-Semitism including by mobilizing students to join the national demonstration to mark UN Anti-Racism Day annually.

### **Motion 509 | Solidarity with Migrants and Refugees**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The rhetoric around immigration in the UK is toxic, with politicians from all parties lining up to attack migrants.
  2. The current Government's position is that the UK should accept 20,000 refugees over a period of five years, which is a failure of its moral duty for the country to act as a place of safety for people fleeing conflict, oppression, the effects of climate change and other factors which may force people to seek asylum.
  3. Ongoing conflict in Syria will heighten the refugee crisis, with more people taking more dangerous action in order to attempt to find safety.
  4. The continuing climate crisis will increase the number of refugees and environmental migrants.
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5. Across Europe, anti-immigrant policies are being introduced, including the seizure of valuables from migrants in Denmark.
  6. NUS has a long and proud history of standing in solidarity with the oppressed.
  7. That since the start of the Syria crisis over 4 million people have been displaced
  8. That 1.2 million refugees are currently in camps in Lebanon, 650 000 are in camps in Syria, 1.9 million are in camps in Turkey and the UK has taken a pitiful number, globally places for a mere 2.6% of the refugees have been offered places by the global community
  9. That student unions have played a key role in making this crisis a national news story
  10. That local councils can offer to take refugee's
  11. That those who are trapped in Syria and in camps on the border are often the most vulnerable
  12. That as a result of a campaign by MDXSU 50 Syrian refugees have been resettled in Barnet
  13. That refugee resettlement campaigns bring together communities, with mosques, synagogue's, churches, schools and SU's all playing a crucial part

### **Conference further believes**

1. As the referendum on EU membership looms, the rhetoric used by the national media and political figures will become more and more hostile.
  2. The United Kingdom can and should accept many more refugees than the current UK government is doing.
  3. Western military intervention in Syria will only exacerbate the refugee crisis.
  4. Climate change is already disproportionately affecting people in the Global South, as its worst effects will naturally affect these countries hardest, but also because these countries are least well equipped to adapt to a changing climate as a result of a long history of Western imperialism and capitalist exploitation.
  5. Migration brings benefits both to the migrants themselves and to the country they are migrating to.
  6. Arbitrary national borders that prevent certain people entering a certain country are morally problematic and perpetuate racism and conflict between people, and that freedom of movement should become the norm, not just across Europe but across the Globe.# That the UK should do its bit, and that David Cameron has offered more rhetoric than action
  7. That there is a grassroots desire amongst students for action
  8. That many students are directly affected by the situation
  9. That NUS should be doing more to co-ordinate a national response
  10. Campaigns to help those in camps from Turkey to Calais are a way of improving the conditions in temporary accommodation
  11. Long term the solution is for the global community to step up and to do its bit
  12. Councils up and down the UK should take at least 50 refugee's each immediately
  13. This would provide emergency relief for 50,000 of the most vulnerable people in the world
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14. That by creating a safer route to the UK the UK can reduce the risks being taken in getting to the EU by refugee's
  15. That this will undermine the inhumane and immoral financial gains being made illegally by people smugglers
  16. That for us to affect this we need effective national leadership
  17. That NUS should be co-ordinating a national coalition of those students, groups and SU's who want to make the world a better place
  18. Students can play a crucial role in helping refugee's settle in the UK, providing English lessons, sports opportunities and other SU services

### **Conference resolves**

1. To express full solidarity with refugees and migrants.
2. To lobby the UK Government to accept more refugees for as long as the current crisis continues.
3. To condemn the aggressive anti-migrant policies of European governments.
4. To re-affirm our position against British military intervention in Syria.
5. To ensure that in NUS campaigns on climate change, the explicit link is made between it and the effect this has on people in the Global South.
6. To support migrant solidarity actions wherever possible by:
  7. Aiding Student Unions to run collections and organise solidarity runs to the Calais jungle.
  8. Working directly with migrant solidarity groups that seek to improve conditions in detention centres, combat fascist organisations, resist deportations and other actions in solidarity with migrants.
  9. Supporting national demonstrations in solidarity with migrants and refugees.
10. To work with Citizens UK and the National Refugee Welcome Board to campaign both for refugee's to be resettled and then to be supported upon arrival
11. To condemn the failure of the UK government to do more
12. To mandate the VP Soc and Cit to do more about this
13. To celebrate case studies from student unions who have successfully run resettlement campaigns

### **Motion 510 | Personalised toolkits for lobbying MP's and local Councillors**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Students all around the UK's accessibility to education is under huge threat at the moment – with the Government planning to cut NHS bursaries from the year 2017/18 and the cuts in maintenance grants said to result in the poorest students leaving higher education with £53,000 worth of debt.
2. Student housing is also one of the biggest issues that affects students currently, with  $\frac{3}{4}$  of students claiming to have problems with their homes.
3. These issues have huge implications for accessibility to education, retention and mental health.

#### **Conference further believes**



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1. If we want to tackle these issues, we need to start from the ground up, lobbying local MPs and councillors to do something about it.
  2. Many student unions, however, have little resource and expertise to do so, and NUS currently doesn't currently provide much support in this area.
  3. Local Councillors are crucial to engage with when it comes to issues like student housing.
  4. There is also little tailored support when it comes to tailored support for different parties – for example, student unions with Labour MP's and councils getting much more success in lobbying than student unions with Conservative MP's and councils.

### **Conference Resolves**

1. To set up resources for student unions to use on how to lobby local Councillors and MP's.
2. Tailor them from party to party - and consider other factors such as regions of the UK and specialist support that might be required.
3. Give us examples of best practice and some helpful guidance and advice of where to turn if we are struggling.

### **Motion 511 | Extend EU Referendum Suffrage to EU Citizens living in the UK**

#### **Conference believes**

1. 2.3 million EU citizens are resident in the UK.
  2. EU citizens are allowed to vote in the UK for devolved Parliaments and Assemblies, local authorities and European Parliament. They can register to vote if they have been residing in the UK for 12 months or more.
  3. British living abroad (emigrants) can vote in all British elections up to 15 years after they left the UK.
  4. Qualifying Commonwealth and Irish citizens are allowed to vote.
  5. The democratic participation in the referendum of EU Citizens residing in the UK is critical as the outcome of the referendum could bear potential life-changing consequences and serious implications on their future lives. We find it deeply unfair that the outcome of the referendum will directly affect millions of people who could not express their views democratically.
  6. EU citizens hold a diverse range of opinions about the EU but they will not be able to express them as they are not allowed to vote, regardless of how long they have been living in the UK. Non-British EU citizens will be most affected by the outcome of the referendum.
  7. Whereas the extension of suffrage to 16 and 17 year olds has already been discussed nationally, the issue of EU citizens living in the UK being excluded from voting in the upcoming referendum has not been addressed sufficiently.
  8. European migrants contribute immeasurably to the UK and its education system in a number of ways.
  9. International EU students make up an important component of the UK education system and the student movement.
  10. The date for the referendum on the UK's membership in the EU has been set for June 23 2016.
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11. The result of the EU referendum could impact the access of European students to European educational institutions.
  12. NUS has policy to campaign for the UK to remain in the EU.
  13. The ERASMUS exchange programme has provided opportunities for over 3 million student across over 30 countries to study abroad, an opportunity which would not be available for UK-based students were the UK to leave the EU.
  14. EU international students should have the choice to contribute to a referendum that could greatly impact their movement, involvement and choices to study or work in the UK.
  15. This year will be the referendum on the UK's EU membership, and David Cameron is already trying to renegotiate the terms, undermining important rights and attacking migrants.
  16. We should fight to defend the guarantee of freedom of movement for EU citizens (including students travelling to study), and fight to extend it to those currently locked out of "Fortress Europe".
  17. Despite some progressive policies, the current state of the EU protects the interests of the rich and powerful.

It is undemocratic and bureaucratic, and enforces austerity and privatisation.

18. But the UK state is no less a tool of the rich and powerful. Leaving the EU would only boost anti-migrant racists and strengthen barriers against free movement and international solidarity.
19. There are 14 Immigration detention centres/immigration removal centres in the UK
20. There's a long list of human rights abuses in these
21. One can be taken there without evidence and there is no limit on how long one may be kept there
22. Conditions in these centres are inhumane
23. Several are run by private companies such as G4S
24. Many people die in these centres, and thousands of detainees are on suicide watch
25. Since 2009, government funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) has been cut by 60%.
26. Only this summer £45 million previously allocated to fund mandated ESOL learning for job seekers was cut.
27. At the same time, roughly 850,000 residents across the UK lack basic English language skills.
28. Research indicates that language skills are the single most important alterable aspect of integration in the labour force.
29. Free and accessible language courses are a key aspect in ensuring social and economic stability for new migrants and minority language speakers.

### **Conference further believes**

1. There has not been a proper debate about the implications and repercussions on EU citizens' lives were the UK to leave the EU.
  2. Crucial questions remain unanswered, e.g. the retrospective application of restrictions to benefit access; imposition of Tier 2 working visas (with the consequent £35,000 minimum income threshold).
  3. We believe in freedom of movement for all.
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4. We are in a better position to campaign for the EU to work on behalf of workers of Europe and for the principles of free movement and to better align with our beliefs as an organisation, if we remain in it.
  5. NUS rightly already opposes Brexit. At the same time, we cannot ignore the EU's problems. We must argue to stay in as part of a fight for a genuinely democratic and socially just Europe with better rights for migrants.
  6. Universities are often international students' immigration sponsors
  7. Universities have been known to use this to threaten international students who criticise them, for example the cases of Justice 4 Sanaz and Dr Casey Briezna.
  8. The Prevent Legislation continues to demonise international students and students of colour
  9. Government policy and the current anti-immigration rhetoric in politics and the media is extremely worrying
  10. The right to learn English in a free, accessible environment is a right for all.
  11. The government's ongoing cuts in ESOL budgets are part of its wider xenophobic campaign against migrants.
  12. Depriving people from free, accessible language courses is a punitive measure by the government aimed at making the life of recent migrants harder and discourage them from remaining in the UK.

### **Conference resolves**

1. For NUS to campaign and to pressure the Government to extend the right to vote in the 2016 EU Referendum to include EU students and citizens residing in the UK.
  2. For NUS to issue resources to unions on how to engage and campaign around this issue.
  3. To take collaborate with the International Students' Campaign and namely EU-international students on conducting NUS' campaign to remain in the EU, in the lead up to the referendum.
  4. Campaign for the UK to stay in the EU, but on our own basis as above, for:
    - a. international student and workers' solidarity
    - b. levelling up of wages, conditions, services and rights across the EU
    - c. democratisation including a sovereign European Parliament
    - d. freedom of movement and an end to "Fortress Europe"
  5. Campaign against David Cameron's renegotiations undermining migrant rights, workers' rights and human rights.
  6. Put migrants' rights and freedom of movement at the heart of our campaign.
  7. To condemn the existence of any and all Immigration Detention Centres in the UK
  8. To raise attention to the racist profiling of students of colour and particularly Muslim students under the Prevent Legislation, especially with regard to immigration detention.
  9. To work with organisations such as Queer Strike and Movement for Justice to support those seeking asylum in the UK and those detained in immigration detention centres.
  10. To draw attention to the inhumane conditions inside such detention centres and to allocate financial and human resources to lobbying the Home Office to change the law and government policy to better
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carry out its obligations under international convention and the demands of natural justice, and to ultimately end immigration detention in the UK.

11. To help any individual Student Union to mobilise students for protests against immigration detention centres.
  12. Join forces with the Action for ESOL campaign and campaign for the government to reverse cuts to the ESOL budget.
  13. Campaign and lobby for publicly funded, accessible, high quality language education for all those who need it.
  14. Support the FE zone, the International Students' Campaign, and Black Students' Campaign in their ongoing campaigns for ESOL.
  15. Develop and distribute materials explaining the importance of ESOL, highlighting the ongoing cuts to its budgets, and encouraging SUs in both HE and FE to join up with Trade Unions and community groups in their locality to campaign for the reversal of ESOL cuts.
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# Union Development policy passed at National Conference 2016

## Motion 301| The Impact of Student Opportunities

### Conference believes

1. Over the last two years, particularly as a result of this government, a worrying series of events has built up a significant potential threat to the future of the student movement. This includes media attacks on the charity sector, a politically-driven and well-funded sector regulator, the Lobbying Act, the Trade Union Act, devastating cuts to FE and challenges to the transparency of students' unions.
2. Funding for SUs is also scarcer and more uncertain as budgets become even tighter and our enterprise markets more competitive. Many SUs are experiencing crisis levels of funding already, while income generation is made harder by the spiralling costs of student living, addressed by the NUS priority campaign. Furthermore a historically very successful lever for attracting HE investment in SUs, NSS Question 23, will shortly be retired.
3. All this has the effect of weakening the position of students' unions, preparing the landscape for future attack from government and its instruments.
4. When the student movement came under attack in the early 1990s we won the public debate by harnessing the love for students' unions. We turned the life-changing experiences our movement has given to students and communities into public and Parliamentary support.
5. To be able to do this again and to defend students' unions in the foreseeable future we need a deeper understanding of the impact we are having on students and society. This will help us make the case for the value of students' unions, as well as win locally on student opportunities. *e.g.* 'Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free' campaigns.
6. The Open University is the main provider of part time education in the UK
7. Part time students have unique needs and require adequate representation on a national level
8. Our national student voice is stronger when it is representative of all learners and NUS should be a home for students' unions of all shapes and sizes

### Conference further believes

1. Student opportunities are the engine of our movement. Clubs, societies, volunteering, media, fundraising and enterprise groups transform lives and fuel progressive change in society.
  2. SUs run student opportunities to make all of these broad differences, or impacts, in society:
  3. Shared Control – *maximising collective control and shared power.*
  4. Climate Justice and Sustainability – *preserving the natural environment.*
  5. Social Justice – *ensuring equal access to opportunities including employment, education and development.*
  6. Economic Justice - *resource distribution to provide dignity in human life.*
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7. Freedom from Oppression – *strengthening civil rights and liberation from oppressive power relationships between groups of people.*
  8. Wellbeing of Communities and Self – *improving health and the quality and quantity of interpersonal relationships.*
  9. Liberty, Freedom, Discovery – *individual power and liberty for the sake of discovery.*
  10. The impacts overlap but give a broad reflection of the common goals of our movement.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS to adopt these impacts both as a framework for expressing the difference students' unions are making in the world and as an overarching vision for the development of student opportunities.
2. NUS to continue the #LoveSUs campaign with a core theme of student opportunities, using recent efforts to build a national evidence base for their impact towards the defence of our movement.
3. NUS to embed these impacts across relevant areas of work. The Charitable Services board should start by looking at the NUS Awards, as a key way of acknowledging success in students' unions, recognising the evidenced difference made above and beyond other judging criteria.
4. NUS Trustee Board to explore how these impacts might be applied across the rest of the group's activities, seeing how they resonate for different stakeholder/membership groups.
5. NUS to offer support on behalf of members to national student opportunities groups where they aim to have the same impacts.
6. Work with the Open University students' association to explore options for their membership of NUS.
7. This work should incorporate specific and tailored support across Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, working in conjunction with NUS-USI, NUS Scotland and NUS Wales to demonstrate the impact of students' unions in their respective nations and regions.

### **Motion 302 | Students' unions are valued for student engagement in learning, help us NUS**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Educational partnership asks students to co-create their education, taking equal responsibility in educational and institutional decisions.
  2. Students' unions build collective power for students. Atomised student feedback could never substitute for serious student representation and as the collective voice for students in their institutions students' unions are essential to partnership. SUs empower students to improve teaching and learning, as well as to hold management of institutions to account.
  3. Sector responses to the Higher Education Green Paper highlighted this as a valuable function for students' unions within education and there is clear expectation from sector bodies in FE and HE that students should be partners in education.
  4. SUs benefit from effective democratic structures, reflective of both how their institution is managed and how students organise themselves, to achieve this mission. Without effective structures SUs and institutions will not deliver on the promise of partnership.
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5. Structures for student engagement/Learner Voice vary in success across the movement. Meaningful progress is often limited to well-resourced SUs. Many of us know our current model is not working, but the way forward is unclear and the future of our SU depends on being able to get this right.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Ensuring students are treated as partners in their education is and will continue to be a key function of students' unions, improving the quality of UK education.
2. There is plenty of work to be done with SUs on the ground to build capacity for supporting student engagement, making it effective and authentic. This should therefore be a core function of NUS's union development work.
3. Not every students' union needs to have bespoke democratic structures, there are common themes enough that off-the-shelf models can work for different types of students' unions.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS to ensure that supporting members to engage students as partners in their learning is a core purpose of NUS work in developing unions across HE and FE.
2. NUS to review current and previous work in this area with a view to consolidating it all and making basic, practical recommendations for different types of students' unions; particularly where any relevant content can be reframed in the language/culture of Learner Voice.
3. NUS to have a clear and affordable consultancy offer to members and their institutions about building a more advanced approach to student engagement.

## **Motion 303 | Safe Social Elections**

### **Conference believes**

1. Students' Unions across the country are putting more effort every year into their annual elections, with turnout increasing annually as more students are being engaged.
2. The use of social media is becoming more important in annual elections for campaigning and challenging candidates
3. Many anonymous accounts are created online for the purpose of trolling or undermining election campaigns

### **Conference further believes**

1. The use of social media during elections does more good than harm
  2. The ability for the electorate to connect directly in real time with the election process is a positive element of social media
  3. Anonymous accounts have the ability to shield racists, sexists, and cyber bullies from campus disciplinary procedures.
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### **Conference resolves**

1. That the NUS open a dialog with Facebook, Twitter, and YikYak to introduce restrictions on 'anonymous' or troll accounts during election periods

### **Motion 304 | NUS Extra commission rates**

#### **Conference believes**

1. All Students' Unions receive the same commission rates from sales of NUS Extra cards.
2. For many students' unions within FE their only source of income is from NUS Extra commission.
3. In 2014/15 FE Unions sold £1.3m of NUS cards raising over £500k in commission directly into FE Unions.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. The commission from NUS Extra sales has a much bigger positive impact on students' unions with small block grants than it does for those with large block grants.
2. Some students only have representation directly due to NUS Extra commission
3. Increasing the commission for FE unions would play a huge part in developing these unions and increase their ability to engage with NUS on a local and national level.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For NUS to introduce a sliding scale for commission from NUS Extra sales with increased rates for Students' Unions with small block grants of less than £10,000 so that these unions can raise at least £1,000 before paying anything to NUS.
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## **Motion 305 | Support Students' Union's to deliver their services to institutions with multiple sites/campuses and modes of delivery.**

### **Conference believes**

1. Across the tertiary education sector, more and more institutions are delivering learning across different sites and through different modes of study (specifically online).
2. Students not learning at the main site of an institution do not currently receive the same level of access to services/campaigns delivered by Students' Union's.
3. Multi site delivery and different modes of delivery have the potential to become more common as a result of the English Areas Reviews for FE Colleges and regionalisation of the Nations as well as the drive for institutions to generate income and consequently consider diversifying their modes of learning.

### **Conference further believes**

1. That every student, regardless of their location or mode of study, should have access to the services Students' Union's provide, particularly representation and advice.
2. That the institution, the Students' Union and the students have a responsibility to help shape and consider how an equality of service can be achieved across modes of study and location, as well as remaining tailored and appropriate.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To challenge the assumption that Students' Union's deliver their services to a specific type of learner at a specific location and to recognise the benefits and challenges presented by multi sites/mode of study.
2. To call for NUS to undertake research to understand the impact that multi site/mode of study has on student engagement with Students' Union's and to understand the scope of the issue.
3. To create a toolkit which will allow individual Students' Union's to understand a national picture of this issue, to share best practice and to ultimately ensure that all students have access to their Students' Union regardless of how they have chosen to access education.

## **Motion 306 | Service Privatisation ... or should that be Piratisation?**

### **Conference believes**

1. That in the past 20 years there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of outsourcing of services in universities and colleges
  2. Many services previously run by student unions are now run by private providers
  3. In many cases student unions no longer run any commercial services
  4. NUS Services currently provides support for unions who run services like bars, shops, café's and nightclubs
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5. NUS Services currently doesn't provide services for unions where the bar, shop, cafe or nightclub are run by a private provider
  6. NUS Services is a core part of the NUS offer
  7. A Freedom Of Information (FOI) request at Sussex University revealed contract conditions which were negative for students

### **Conference further believes**

1. Outsourcing in the public sector to profit driven private providers leads to a focus on profiteering
2. Outsourcing compounds the challenge of students being treated like consumers and not partners
3. Outsourcing leads to increased costs and reduced quality
4. Outsourcing is a favoured trick by this Tory government
5. Student unions have no divine right to run commercial services and have in some cases run services poorly
6. That some student unions have conducted boycott's against outsourced providers
7. That boycotts are a legitimate tactic
8. That other student unions have chosen to constructively engage
9. That constructive engagement can lead have a positive impact and that through dialogue constructive engagement can produce incredibly positive impacts
10. That the student movement has a long and proud tradition of constructive engagement which has changed the world for the better
11. That constructive engagement is a legitimate tactic
12. That constructive engagement should always be the first approach taken, and boycotts should be reserved for when constructive engagement has broken down
13. That the Sussex University FOI proves that making FOI requests can produce insightful results
14. That unions with no commercial services should also receive support relating to their campus services
15. That unions with no commercial services have the least favourable member benefit statements
16. That the number of unions not running commercial services is increasing
17. That NUS Services not providing support to those unions in relation to campus services provides a major strategic risk to the student movement
18. That addressing this risk should be an absolute priority

### **Conference resolves**

1. To do something about this...
  2. For NUS to make a FOI request to every institution in the UK regarding the details of its outsourced contracts
  3. To make the results of these FOI requests publically available to all student unions
  4. To highlight any patterns, trends or concerns which this reveals
  5. To include working with outsourced providers in the NUS Services work plan for 2016/17
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6. For this to include providing support for unions seeking to improve campus services which they do not control
  7. To open discussions with the main providers of university catering, cleaning and security to seek national improvements to standards and costs
  8. To publish guidance to student unions on the legal status of provision which is not directly delivered by either the institution or the SU
  9. To constructively engage nationally on behalf of students wherever possible as a first resort

### **Motion 307 | A Student Voice for Student Staff**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Students' Unions across the country employ approximately 17,000 student staff.
2. As of 2014, less than 5% of 16-24 year olds were members of trade unions.
3. One in four young people have issues with their mental health.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Student staff deserve full and equal employment rights to full-time staff.
2. As members and employees of SUs, student staff often face unique issues with representation and support, particularly when it comes to employment rights and welfare support at work.
3. Students' Unions should uphold principles of democracy and collectivism on all levels, including workforce representation.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To work with the TUC and other relevant organisations to create a student staff employee assistance programme to ensure student staff wellbeing is prioritised.
2. To create a best practice guide for SUs on student staff representation in the workplace, including but not limited to the unionisation of student workforces and collaborative consultation.

### **Motion 308 | This Student Can**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Student opportunities are an integral part to student life.
2. 'The Impact of Student Opportunities' and '#CutTheCosts' are both key campaigns for NUS this year.
3. Evidence shows participation in student opportunities improves retention and attrition rates, but also improves a students' University experience and their graduate prospects.
4. Everyone should have the same opportunity to access the vast spectrum of opportunities regardless of their SU's provision.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. There are certain groups of students within the movement who find it difficult to access these opportunities
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2. Students who have additional responsibilities to their studies often struggle to access these opportunities and often don't receive the full benefits of a student experience and the advantages that come with it.
  3. Student opportunities often have a barrier to participation, one of these barriers is often due to cost. Institutions that have a large population of students that are from widening participation backgrounds may not be able to access these opportunities.
  4. Not all Students' Unions have the provision to provide a wide range of opportunities for students which may cause some students to miss out.
  5. Student opportunities are vital for student retention, wellbeing and creating well-rounded individuals.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To create and provide Students' Unions with a toolkit in order to support their students appropriately, particularly those from a widening participation background.
2. For Students' Unions to lobby their University to show the positive impact that student opportunities can bring.
3. To encourage Students' Unions to work with local partnerships to allow for more opportunities to be delivered, particularly where these opportunities may not be able to be supplied.
4. To ensure that affordability and accessibility are prioritised in further work done on student opportunities by NUS.
5. To support Students' Unions in ensuring student opportunities are affordable for students from all backgrounds.

### **Motion 309 | FE-el the Love: Putting FE at the Heart of Union Development**

#### **Conference believes**

1. At a time when FE is facing unprecedented attacks from the government it is important NUS is able to effectively support FE students, sabbatical officers and students' unions.
2. NUS has made progress over the last few years in building a movement that is more inclusive of the needs of FE including this year's work on FE Union Development.
3. In spite of this good work there is clearly much more that can be done to both ensure FE students are able to shape the national agenda, and in turn NUS are able to support FE students more effectively.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. The Costs and Benefits Commission launched by NUS, developed in conjunction with both HE and FE unions last year identified that there is 'A need for NUS' relationships with members to be based around two major areas – 'voice' and 'development and enterprise.'
  2. NUS is only as strong as its constituent members. The UD priority motion agreed by conference last year stated that '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.'
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## **Conference resolves**

1. To again look at the reasons that despite constituting the majority of our membership FE students are still a minority at our national events, training, and policy forums.
2. To mandate the VPUD and VPFE to find a way to provide adequately support to FE unions and FE students to attend more NUS events whether that is through increased financial support, or training.
3. To mandate the VPUD and VPFE to consult with FE students' unions, and FE students in how their democratic voice can be strengthened, whether that is through; developing new students' unions, providing additional resources, facilitating democratic processes, or any other steps as necessary.
4. For progress on this work to be reported to NEC at the earliest opportunity, with further motions brought to next year's conference based on the findings of this work.

## **Motion 310 | Make NUS Communications work for all**

### **Conference believes**

1. That it is important for students' union to know and understand the work that is being done by NUS
2. Currently it is difficult to get access to information or people about the work of NUS unless you are part of the relevant networks
3. This is creating a hierarchy in NUS or those who are able to engage in the work of NUS and those that cant
4. All members of NUS should be able to communicate with, get communicate from and engage with the work of NUS
5. Student unions are all working on similar topics, usually around the same time.
6. There are excellent examples of best practice around the sector that we could all share with each other and learn from, in order to build stronger student unions.
7. Jiscmail is our only current way of sharing best practice, which is very time-consuming and not very practical.
8. It takes people a long time and effort to respond, and isn't a very informative and clear way of doing things.
9. We could be doing a lot more to celebrate our successes and support each other in what we do.

### **Conference further believes**

1. That the opt in system of jiscmail cannot be the primary source of communication with members
2. That the NUS website still needs work.

### **Conference resolves**

1. That NUS comprehensively review its communications and engagement strategy with students' union and report that review back to National Conference 2017
  2. NUS should set up an online platform for sharing best practice – divided into different subject areas.
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3. Student Unions should be able to upload work that they have done, for other unions to use as a resource.
  4. There could also be ways of unions to contact each other to ask questions and share advice, such as forums on each topic.
  5. This would make a huge difference for us to all be able to easily work together – and collectively build stronger student unions.

### **Motion 311 | Solidarity Forever: FE and HE Unions Makes us Strong**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Further Education students' unions continue to be amongst our most effective campaigners in spite of little resources and often a lack of staff and support.
2. Higher Education institutions across the country have established partnerships with FE SU's that allow for better sharing of resources and expertise.
3. Last year's voter registration campaign is evidence of the great work FE and HE students' unions can do in working together on agreed policies.
4. These partnerships can often dissolve as sabbatical teams change and academic years come to an end.
5. The Association of Colleges has calculated that overall funding for colleges has decreased by 27% in real terms since 2010. Funding for 16-19 year olds fell by 14%. The Adult Skills Budget has been cut by 35% since 2009.
6. That the latest assault on further education is coming from the Government's 'Area Reviews' of post-16 education and training in England. At least 36 reviews across England will be completed by March 2017.
7. Whilst the Government's stated aim for the review is to create "larger, more efficient, more resilient providers" within further education, they will in reality see colleges merge, with fewer colleges, less staff and possibly more cuts to the further education budget.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Effective partnerships between FE and HE students' unions makes our movement stronger.
  2. FE is under unprecedented attacks from the government and it is important that HE students' unions act in solidarity to support FE students' unions in their campaigns.
  3. NUS can do more to lead networks in local areas to maximise connections between FE and HE students' unions.
  4. Continued cuts to further education are a national scandal and undermine access to education for people of all ages and all social classes.
  5. College mergers and narrowed curriculums are only being viewed as necessary because of Governments' successive decisions to cut public funding.
  6. That further education and sixth-form colleges provide education for a massive range and diversity of learners, and are intrinsic parts of local communities. Small communities need local colleges to maintain their local identity.
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### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS should design and lead a 'buddy system' for HE and FE students' unions in local areas.
2. To identify areas of joint campaigning between HE and FE and unions, improving local links, and strengthening local networks.
3. To mandate the VPUD and VPFE to work on building stronger links between FE and HE students' unions to make us better able to resist the next wave of government attacks
4. Establish resource and training packages with the aim of developing a joint FE/HE Activist network.
5. To ensure that learners' voices are heard in the process of area reviews by bringing together college student representatives in affected areas.
6. NUS to provide lead officer and staff contacts for local FE & HE institutions
7. To actively promote and facilitate joint FE & HE campaigning against cuts, area reviews, and attacks on the further education sector.

### **Motion 312 | Very superficial.... the writing's on the wall (or is it?)**

#### **Conference believes**

1. NUS' membership includes colleges and other specialist learning institutions for students with complex learning needs and disabilities.
2. Students from these colleges require national representation which pertains specifically to their perspectives.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Whilst there has a commitment by NUS to work in partnership with these specialist colleges to enable students with learning difficulties and disabilities to participate in democratic and training events, this work must go deeper and further if NUS' values of inclusion and collectivism are to be truly realised.
2. Students with learning difficulties and disabilities' engagement with NUS should not be remarkable, it should be core activity as with every other constituent member of NUS.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS must urgently review how to accommodate and support the wide ranging access
2. s needs of students with learning difficulties and disabilities, to ensure that these students are supported and enabled to shape, and participate fully in, the work of the organisation.
3. NUS must urgently review, and prioritise, training needs across the organisation to develop and enhance capacity for supporting the access needs of these students.





## Motion 313 | Student Unionism Worldwide

### Conference believes

1. Universities across the UK operate Transnational Education (TNE) schemes, including partnership with institutions in other countries and overseas campuses. [ <https://www.hesa.ac.uk/free-statistics>, and <http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20120216105739999>]
2. TNE students are offered a 'comparable student experience' to other students, but have dramatically different experiences to students in the institution's home-countries, especially lacking autonomous student unions for representation and support. [Maxwell Stuart, R. (2015). Transnational Student Engagement: The Invisible Students? Master's Thesis. Danube University Krems & University of Tampere]
3. Many TNE schemes operate in countries where student organising and protest has been repressed, often violently.
4. UK universities have support responsibilities towards TNE students, and often require that UK-based Students' Associations represent TNE students.

### Conference further believes

1. Many TNE students do not get an appropriate level of support and representation. No UK-based Students' Association is fully equipped to represent or provide services directly to TNE students.
2. Around equality and diversity, TNE students have dramatically different support needs. There are TNE campuses in countries where homosexuality is illegal, where women face severely oppressive conditions, and students experience other conditions of extreme oppression.
3. There is very little awareness of TNE students' issues in the sector. Governments and sector bodies do not have a clear approach to the support and representation TNE students deserve or how this can be achieved.
4. Democracy and collective empowerment are foundational values of our student movement. Students' Associations should lead the way in securing these principles for TNE students.

### Conference resolves

1. NUS should bring together the Students' Associations from institutions with TNE students to discuss what support they need on TNE issues.
2. NUS should build links with international organisations, sector experts, and students' organisations overseas to support the development of student unionism on TNE campuses.

## Motion 314 | Media and SU Officer Elections

### Conference believes

1. That most Students' Unions have service level agreements (SLA's) with their media groups that contain clauses on covering SU Officer Elections.
  2. Most coverage involves either interviewing the candidates or stating the candidates manifesto points.
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3. The NUS Student Media Guide stated "Anyone can pick up a national newspaper and read about what the government is doing, but student media outlets are uniquely placed to cover what is going on locally in their institution, students' union and local community. Student journalists should take advantage of this on topics where you can be an expert, get access to information, comments and interviews, and where you can easily speak with those affected – the students on your campus.'

### **Conference further believes**

1. It is important that students are well informed on the candidates standing in SU Officer Elections, and media groups currently cannot give an accurate reflection on the viability of candidates manifesto policies and promises.
2. For the University of Bath, accountability of incumbent officers standing in media coverage is suspended until the end of the election period. Such practices harm both media groups in providing true and accurate coverage, and their ability to hold the SU to account, but also harm the electorate as they are less well informed when going to vote.
3. Democracy is at the heart of Students' Unions, and that democracy should be transparent and Media coverage helps to do that.
4. Currently, Students unions place too many restrictions on media groups during this period. This results in Media groups not wanting to do any coverage for fear of breaking these many rules, and ensures elections are primarily a popularity contest.
5. NUS, who serves as Returning Officer for many SU Elections, are perfectly placed to give better guidance to Media Groups, and allow more opinionated coverage.

### **Conference resolves**

1. For the VP Union Development to investigate how media groups can run better content for Students' Unions Officer Elections.
2. For the VP Union Development to produce guidance for Students' Unions Media Groups in running pieces that truly reflect candidates' policy proposals and incumbent officer progress.
3. For the VP Union Development to work with external organisations, such as the National Student Television Association (NaSTA), Student Publication Association (SPA) and Student Radio Association (SRA) to help find effective avenues in supporting media groups in providing coverage during officer elections.

## **Motion 315 | KWAF KWAF KWAF IS ON FIRE**

### **Conference believes**

1. Sport is a good thing
  2. Volunteering is a good thing
  3. Co-curricular activity is a good thing
  4. Most NUS national demonstrations occur on a Wednesday afternoon
  5. Lots of students don't have Wednesday afternoons free
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6. For some one students this is unavoidable but for most it could be free

### **Conference further believes**

1. Wednesday afternoons should be kept free

### **Conference resolves**

1. To support student unions who locally run KWAF (keep Wednesday afternoons free) campaigns
2. If the VP UD deems it necessary they should run a National Keep Wednesday Afternoons Free Campaign (NKWAFC)

## **Motion 316 | Recognise competitive e-sports**

### **Conference believes**

1. That E-Sports shares many common elements that feature in traditional sports such as: extensive training and practise careful strategizing and game planning skilful execution during play team and individual performance coaching and analysis spirit of competition and fair play
2. That physical exertion and outdoor playing areas are not required to classify an activity as a sport.
3. International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognises E-Sports as a legitimate sporting activity.
4. The following countries recognise E-Sports as a legitimate sporting activity:
  - a. The United States of America
  - b. France
  - c. Italy
  - d. Denmark Taiwan Malaysia South Korea China
5. The following Universities and Colleges in the United States recognise E-Sports as a varsity sport and offer scholarships to E-Sports students that have potential to turn professional: Robert Morris University – Chicago Maryville University – St Louis University of Pikeville – Kentucky Southwestern University – Texas
6. In the United Kingdom approximately 350 teams of 7 competed from 150 Universities in the National University E-Sports League in the past 12 months.
7. In the United States approximately 1600 teams of 7 competed from 600 Universities in the US E-Sports League in the past 12 months.
8. Competitive E-Sports – the League of Legends World Championship Finals had more viewers than the Major League Baseball (MLB) final.
9. E-Sports attract sponsorship from big brands such as Red Bull and The Coca Cola Company and they support events locally and nationally as they would a traditional sporting event.

### **Conference further believes**

1. E-Sports unlike some traditional sports has no issue with professional players and coaches self-identifying as members of the LGBTQIA\* community.
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2. Recognition of E-Sports as a sport would break down barriers to traditional sports and give students that are less likely to participate in these sports better access.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To petition Sport England and the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) to recognise E-Sports as a legitimate sport and for them to provide proportionate funding and support to any University Students that wish to compete in E-Sports.
  2. To support and facilitate negotiation at University level for access to appropriate facilities on campus for E-
  3. Sports Societies to allow teams to train in the same physical environment. (These may include: Computer
  4. Games Design PC Labs, Animation PC Labs and other facilities with appropriate PC Equipment)
  5. To support and facilitate negotiation at University level in order to have any restrictions lifted that prevent students from participating in E-Sports from University owned or operated student accommodation.
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# Welfare Zone Policy Passed at National Conference 2016

## Motion 401| NUS for the NHS

### Conference believes

1. Our National Health Service is undergoing severe 'reforms'. The Government is cutting back on NHS budgets , privatising entire departments and enforcing changes on the workforce that has led to a scale of industrial action not seen in decades.
  2. NHS services are the primary source of healthcare for all UK students. The NHS is currently not completely free for students: international students have to pay a fee, and prescriptions and other costs are incurred in some parts of the UK.
  3. A&E, maternity and mental health services have been the first to be affected by closure and outsourcing.
  4. Cuts have been proposed to vital funds which keep the profession accessible, including the NHS bursary for nurses, midwives and other allied health courses.
  5. The removal of bursaries would see students burdened with at least £51,600. Loan repayments will mean a nurse, midwife or allied health professional will lose over £900 a year.
  6. One of the reasons healthcare courses remain popular is that the funding arrangements are different and act as an incentive in comparison with other university programmes. Scrapping the NHS bursary is likely to discourage people from considering becoming a nurses, midwives or allied health professionals, exacerbating the current recruitment crisis.
  7. Student nurses and midwives are expected to undertake clinical placements during non-term time, which means they have little time to do paid work. While other university students take part-time jobs to support themselves, this really isn't a viable option for nurses on such a challenging and intensive course.
  8. That although the removal of the bursary is unfavourable, the retention and attrition rate for NHS Students are poor due to the financial burdens that they are faced with. Whilst the bursary relieved some of the strain, and although debt is not favoured, many students would be financially better off with a loan and wouldn't have to work an unsafe amount of hours alongside their studies and placement in order to make ends meet.
  9. With better financial support in place this will see an improvement of retention and attainment whilst also enabling further access to other opportunities to enhance their student experience and personal development.
  10. NHS students have compulsory placements as part of their course and are expected to pay for travel expenses on top of their tuition fees.
  11. The costs that are incurred through travelling to placements, which are often far away from the University campuses, are hidden course costs.
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12. That the momentum of the junior doctors' dispute about working conditions and the "Bursary or Bust" campaign to save NHS student bursaries gives us an opportunity to more actively oppose the Tories' dismantling and privatisation of the NHS.
  13. That the NHS Bill, which when motions was submitted was about to return to Parliament, provides a rough outline of how to reverse the assault on the NHS.

### **Conference further believes**

1. The National Health Service should be free everyone at the point of use, it should be well funded and people of all backgrounds should be able to work for it. All healthcare provision should be brought back into public hands: reversing all privatization and internal marketization.
2. NHS staff should be paid a fair wage for the work they carry out, whether they are trained professionals or on placement.
3. Students studying medical/health care related courses need more sufficient financial support while they study: the NHS bursary should be significantly increased, not revoked.
4. Removing the NHS-funded bursary will remove an intrinsic and financial link between students and our public health service. It is a move to further normalise private sector employment.
5. Cuts to FE budgets will disproportionately impact providers of Access courses in nursing and other health related courses.
6. Students and their unions, as primary service-users, can be integral forces in defending our national health services and advocating free healthcare.
7. That health workers' struggles are an essential part of the fight to save the health service. If the junior doctors' and bursary struggles win, it will put us in a much stronger position to oppose the privatisation agenda.
8. That the NHS as its best has represented at least elements of planning and provision for need in the midst of an exploitative and unequal society – at least aspiring to the idea that everyone has an equal right to life and health regardless of wealth. We must save it.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To work with health trade unions and SUs who represent NHS and medical students to co-ordinate a national NHS Student Summit, bringing together all relevant campaigns and stakeholders to discuss the issues and propose a co-ordinated plan of action.
  2. To provide political, practical and strategic support to campaigns by SUs and NHS students organising locally, with significant effort to support FE Unions with this work
  3. To support calls made by health unions and national campaigns for relevant, targeted action in defence of the NHS, NHS bursaries and free healthcare for all
  4. To call together students and students' unions to prepare and influence the direction of action taken, with particular focus on the involvement of FE students on health-related courses.
  5. To support SUs campaigning to reverse NHS Bursary cuts and publicise how important bursaries are currently to nursing students.
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6. For Students' Union's whose Universities have direct entry Health courses to lobby their university to help pay for students travel expenses whilst attending placement.
  7. To support the junior doctors' strikes and the NHS bursary struggle.
  8. To devote financial and other resources to helping students nurses and health professionals in this fight.
  9. To support and campaign for an end to cuts, marketisation and privatisation in the NHS, and for a comprehensive, well funded, publicly owned, run and provided health service meeting clinical need. We support the NHS Bill and will lobby MPs to back it.

## **Motion 402 | SOS – Save Our Services**

### **Conference believes**

1. Cuts to welfare and support services are being made across the UK as a result of central government reductions in spending for local authorities. A total of £12.5 billion has been cut
2. Services most affected include health and social care, housing, childcare, fire and rescue, disability support, domestic violence and rape crisis centres as well as specialist support for vulnerable communities.
3. The impact of cuts to local services in turn affect students' reliance on those provided by their institution or students' union; services already strained by ever increasing student numbers
4. The effect of funding cuts varies in different areas across the UK: poorer boroughs are disproportionately affected.
5. We need local action to prevent and reverse cuts to services, and nationwide action to challenge the cuts to local authority budgets.
6. Relying on Council Tax increases to save services can end up squeezing those who cannot afford it.
7. We must also oppose outsourcing and privatisation, and campaign for public services to be publicly owned, under democratic control.

### **Conference further believes**

1. There is a strong need for clear research into the scale of cuts in funding for both national and local services, as well as targeted action to demand their reversal.
  2. Student Unions require support in understanding budget cuts, responding to them and supporting students with the impact.
  3. In particular, small and specialist and Further Education institutions need tailored support to address specific challenges where the institution does not have the capacity to provide its own support.
  4. The impact of cuts to support services is compounded for students who experience multiple forms of oppression.
  5. In order to campaign effectively, we need to collaborate with local and national organisations with a shared interest.
  6. To ensure effective measures that cater for all students we need to work with Liberation campaigns to develop appropriate responses.
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7. Stopping and reversing local service cuts usually requires action beyond awareness-raising, to create pressure on decision-makers.
  8. Approaching elections we must put forward clear demands based on our democratic policies, use the election period to popularise them, and place pressure on candidates and parties to sign up to them using all effective methods.
  9. In the past, it has been possible for local councils, with the support of their communities, to refuse to implement cuts passed down from central government. Historic refusals to implement local cuts have been incredibly powerful and have caused changes at the national level. This requires not only councillors willing to resist, but an organised local movement ready to back them up with mass action when central government responds to push cuts through against the elected councillors.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS will promote and support regional networks of students' unions to campaign locally, and develop a toolkit for students' unions to use to research the local provision of services, in good time for local elections scheduled for May 2017.
  2. NUS will commission a national survey of students to establish the scale and impact of cuts in support services across the UK.
  3. To support Unison, Unite and others' Save our Services (SOS) campaigns and co-ordinate actions, as well as providing SUs with local contacts to initiate partnerships with trade unions and grassroots community campaigns.
  4. To propose targeted actions where some of the largest cuts are being made, with a particular focus on relevant Government Ministers; as well as producing a campaign pack detailing all appropriate ways to take action on service cuts, from petition and lobbying to protest where necessary
  5. To offer specific support to Further Education organisations and small and specialist unions where needed, including campaign training support and specialised toolkits.
  6. To lobby institutions, Universities UK and the Association of Colleges to vocalise their opposition to cuts to the welfare services that affect students.
  7. To work with Union Development to enter consultation with FE and HE Unions, and their institutions, on the possible implications and impact of the proposed cuts upon their current service provisions in order to build an evidence base; also using this to lobby for increased funding and resource to these areas where possible.
  8. Mandate the VP Welfare to develop a coherent strategy working with SUs and allies to defeat cuts to local services and win decently funded, publicly owned services, including:
    - a. Campaigns in the run-up to all relevant elections that put forward clear demands to protect services and place pressure on candidates and parties to meet those demands, including lobbying, media, protest and direct action.
    - b. Complete support for organising efforts and industrial action by service workers against attacks on their pay, working conditions and jobs.
    - c. Local lobbying, protest and direct action as appropriate in defence of specific services.
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- d. Cooperating with NUS liberation campaigns to provide information, assistance and encouragement for campus liberation groups to campaign against service cuts that are relevant to their members.
  - e. Exploring the potential for building local alliances that could effectively support councillors outright refusing to implement cuts, and for convincing councillors to take this route.
  - f. Campaigning on the national level to reverse local authority budget cuts, funded by progressively taxing the rich and business and placing the banking system under democratic public control.

## **Motion 403 | #Grantsnotdebt**

### **Conference believes**

1. Despite our protests, this Conservative government has abolished the poorest undergraduates' maintenance grants. Before it, the Coalition scrapped the FE Education Maintenance Allowance. Cutting these was shameful, but they weren't even enough in the first place. NUS previously supported universal living grants to support all students.
2. We need to ensure every student can afford to live decently during their studies – the fight for living grants is a fight for accessible, liberated education.
3. Many people fall through the gaps in any means-tested system that assumes parental support - in particular those with unsupportive families, such as many LGBT+ people. The "estrangement" system is broken, but even if we can improve it, it can only help those students who cut themselves off completely from their families. That's why NUS LGBT+ campaign voted last year to campaign for universal living grants.
4. Universalism – public services available to absolutely everyone – is a core progressive principle for our movement.
5. There is plenty of money in society to restore universal grants, plus fund good public services – it's in the bank accounts and businesses of the wealthy. That wealth should be used to pay not just for their education, but for everyone else's too.

### **Conference resolves**

1. Take up the #GrantsNotDebt campaign to first reverse the cuts to maintenance grants, and then to increase them to a decently live-able level, with additional supplements reflecting the needs of student carers and disabled students, and extend them to all students in FE and HE.
  2. Demand this is funded through progressive taxation such as an increase in corporation tax and taxes on the richest, not by raising taxes on the poorest or cutting public services.
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## Motion 404 | Anti-Semitism on Campus

### Conference believes

1. Anti-Semitism is a major problem in Britain, with increasing numbers of anti-Semitic incidents reported.
2. Anti-Semitism is a particular problem on campus, where Jewish students are often left feeling threatened and vulnerable, and with insufficient support from SUs.
3. Jewish students are the only minority group which is not directly represented by any of the NUS liberation campaigns.
4. There is a history of anti-Semitism occurring within the NUS.
5. The Holocaust, the genocide perpetrated by Nazi Germany, killed 6 million Jews and 5 million others including disabled and LGBTQ individuals, people of Roma descent and political opponents.
6. The Nazis who came to power in Germany in January 1933 believed that Germans were racially superior and deemed other groups including Jews were racially inferior.
7. Groups were persecuted on political, ideological, and behavioural grounds, among them Socialists and the LGBT community.
8. Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD) takes place every year on the 27th January. This marks the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, the largest of the Nazi death camps.
9. It was created in 2000, when representatives from 46 governments signed a declaration committing to preserving the memory of those who have been murdered in the Holocaust.
10. HMD is the day for everyone to remember the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, and the millions of people killed by Nazi persecution and in subsequent genocides in Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia, and Darfur.
11. HMD is a day to not only remember, but to honour the survivors of these hateful regimes and challenge ourselves to use the lessons of their experience to inform our lives today.

### Conference further believes

1. Anti-Semitism is a form of racism that is under no circumstances acceptable.
  2. Anti-Semitism is best defined by the 'Working Definition of Anti-Semitism' adopted by the EU's Fundamental Rights Agency in 2005.
  3. More needs to be done by institutions of higher and further education and by students' unions to tackle anti-Semitism on campus.
  4. Fighting racism and fascism should be an important part of NUS' work.
  5. There is still evidence of racism and fascism on campuses throughout the UK, resulting in hate crimes including the poster that appeared on University of Birmingham campus that displayed a picture of Adolf Hitler with the words "Hitler was right".
  6. Antisemitism, racism, and xenophobia still exist in society, and it is the responsibility of the generations following the Holocaust to fight those evils.
  7. There are very few Holocaust survivors still alive, making it vital that students hear as many testimonies as possible about the atrocities that occurred.
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8. Holocaust education is vital, especially in a time when Holocaust trivialisation and revisionism is happening in society.
  9. It is important to remember what happened during the Holocaust to ensure that it can never happen again.
  10. NUS should assist in the coordination of Holocaust Memorial Day events on UK campuses, including, but not limited to campus tours with Holocaust survivors.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To re-affirm its commitment to tackling anti-Semitism, particularly anti-Semitism on campus.
2. To widen the probe into institutional racism in the National Union of Students to include institutional anti-Semitism.
3. To lobby Student Unions to have clearer policies on responding to anti-Semitic incidents and situations in which Jewish students feel threatened.
4. To mandate the NUS to provide resources to help Student Unions to formulate these clearer policies.
5. To officially commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day each year.
6. To work with organisations such as the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) and Holocaust Educational Trust (HET) to provide educational resources for students' unions about the Holocaust.
7. To coordinate with the above organisations and the Union of Jewish Students in organising events to commemorate Holocaust Memorial Day.
8. To provide Holocaust education to sabbatical officers

### **Motion 405 | Prioritise Students Mental Health – Now!**

#### **Conference believes**

1. NUS Policy on mental health is due to lapse.
  2. One in four people will suffer from mental health problems in any given year.
  3. Severe cuts are being made to psychiatric and mental health services up and down the country, with little indicating any progressive change.
  4. Mental health trusts in England have seen their budgets fall by £600m according to Community Care; young people's services were cut by £35 million in 2015.
  5. Students face particular mental health issues. In line with national trends, mental health problems amongst students are on the increase; the proportion of disabled students who declared a mental health condition increased from 6% in 2007-09 to 9.6% in 11-12; from 0.4% to 0.8% of the entire student population
  6. Demand for mental health services at University is increasing. Counseling services are experiencing a 10% year on year usage increase according to the chair of Universities UK mental well-being working group.
  7. Financial, employability and housing concerns place a huge pressure on students, with rents rising by 25% alone between 2010-2013 (according to Unipol). The internet is also increasingly becoming a
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dangerous environment for mental health. 66% of people aged 17-22 will experience some form of online bullying according to Ditch the Label. All of these elements have been linked to a potential rise in mental health issues and stress related illnesses.

8. NUS surveyed 1,093 students in further and higher education in November and December 2015. It found:
  - a. Eight out of ten students (78%) say they experienced mental health issues in the last year.
  - b. A third (33%) also said they had had suicidal thoughts.
  - c. Among those who did not identify as heterosexual, the figure was higher at 55%.
  - d. More than half (54%) of respondents who reported having experienced mental health problems said they did not seek support.
  - e. A third said they would not know where to get mental health support from at their college or university if they needed it, while 40% reported being nervous about the support they would receive from their institution.
9. Periods of transition can be particularly problematic. Students, who often have multiple addresses for different parts of the year or who move to new areas for university, are particularly susceptible to falling through the cracks in public services.
10. The vast majority of students do not have the resources to afford private counselling, therapy etc.
11. That campaigning on mental health and suicide prevention has traditionally been a collaboration between the Welfare Zone and Disabled Students' Campaign (DSC), with feed in from other Zones and Campaigns.
12. In the year 2015/16, this work has included; building relationships with organisations with similar goals, the beginnings of a research partnership with the University of Worcester, and the production of an in-depth guide for student unions and activists, as well as the marking of key dates and supporting external campaigns.
13. That the work this year has aimed to politicise the issue of poor mental health and suicide in the student population as a result of marketization, competition, lack of support and the deprioritisation of wellbeing as a concern of colleges and universities.
14. That there is a growing sense in the movement that we need to look at both the mental health of students as students, but also the wellbeing of activists and student union officers involved in campaigning.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Stress, unhappiness, lack of motivation, anxiety and depression continue to take a toll on students nationwide.
2. The combination of greater financial and workload stress and the lack of adequate mental health services on campuses means more students suffering from mental health problems will be at risk of dropping out of education and become more vulnerable.
3. Too few Colleges and Universities have comprehensive strategies in relation to mental health and wellbeing.





This is unacceptable.

4. Mental health has become an increasingly growing concern not only amongst the student population, but nationwide. Incoming students and their families are worried and nervous about mental health support provided at their future college or university.
5. Stigma around mental health issues deemed severe, such as personality disorders, psychosis and paranoia are often sidelined and not addressed amongst other mental health struggles.
6. Universities and Students' Unions need to continue to create an environment where there is no shame in talking about mental ill health or seeking help.
7. The first point of contact for students who are struggling with mental health issues is often an academic staff member. The level of understanding a student gets from a staff member is subject to that staff member's understanding of mental health, which varies greatly.
8. This variety puts students off contacting their academic adviser for fear of being stigmatised which can have a significant impact on their university experience.
9. That mental health and wellbeing services in every FEI and HEI should be adequately resourced and the operation and capacity of services should be regularly assessed in relation to demand and effectiveness.
10. That robust arrangements should be put in place for any student with mental health difficulties who is required to undertake a period of time studying off campus, including those studying or working abroad.
11. Treatments such as counselling can be effective and help many suffering from mental ill health but both NHS and university services tend to be woefully inadequate with substantial waiting lists.
12. We need a national campaign for mental health, which must be led by NUS and implemented at all Higher Education and Further Education institutions.
13. That for collaborative work to be effective, it's important to lay out shared aims and plans as early as possible.
14. That the work this year, and the sector in general, has been too HE specific and must become more relevant to the needs of FE students.
15. That tackling the issue of activists' and officers' wellbeing involves a deeper understanding of the pressures and strains we face - including on time, relationships, and identity – as a result of our workloads, institutions, social media and oppression.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To prioritise mental health in the Welfare Zone in the year ahead.
  2. To work with Universities to ensure that students have access to the services they need and that they are appropriately funded. For example ensuring institutions will address the gap created by the DSA cuts.
  3. To lobby BIS, AoC and UUK to form a national student mental health task force, with student representation.
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4. To work with institutions to reduce the strain on student support services by improving internal signposting so students access the right services, as well as raising awareness of what support is available externally.
  5. To call for SUs to recognise the mental health of students as a priority.
  6. To develop ways that mental health support and understanding can be embedded into the structures of SUs by supporting unions to:
    - a. Lobby for relevant, well-supported and appropriate services for students at a University, Local and National level. These services must be responsive to feedback and be flexible to the needs of students, both in terms of 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).
    - b. To develop joined-up approaches across institutions and external services.
    - c. Ensure that academic policies are clear with fair expectations set in order to avoid undue mental stress upon student populations.
  7. To campaign for:
    - a. Mandatory employment of mental health staff/counsellors in all educational institutions. These staff would be separate to safeguarding staff and their roles within the institution. .
    - b. A specific student wellbeing duty to be placed on Colleges and Universities as a condition of funding.
    - c. Mandatory mental health training for academic and frontline staff, for example Mental Health First Aid Training.
  8. To ensure the above campaigns address a full range of mental health conditions.
  9. To ensure that Universities and Colleges work closely with SUs and student groups when formulating and implementing student mental health-related policies
  10. To continue fighting against the DSA cuts and highlight the connection between disability cuts and the strain on student mental health by encouraging openness.
  11. To support students to bounce back from difficult situations by building student resilience nationally and to create a positive campaigning atmosphere around mental health.
  12. To report at the 2017 NUS Conference on the specific steps taken to achieve the above resolutions.
  13. That the VP Welfare should work in conjunction with the Disabled Students' Officer to draw up a joint plan of action for the year 2016/17.
  14. That a proportion of Welfare Zone budget is allocated to carrying out that plan.
  15. That the VP Welfare should use all platforms at their disposal to increase the politicisation of this issue and embed these concerns into other issues across the Zone – such as; education funding, the welfare state, and housing.
  16. That the VP Welfare should support DSC in following up on the recommendations of this year's guide with further training and campaign support for students unions and activists.
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17. To ensure the policy focus of the Welfare Zone in the year 2016/17 is on FE students' experience of mental health and suicide and that this work should be carried out in conjunction with FE students unions.
  18. That the VP Welfare should look to innovate guidance and structures that support and protect the wellbeing of officers and activists in our movement.

## **Motion 406 | Preventing Prevent**

### **Conference believes**

1. The Government's Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 places a statutory requirement on public bodies and 'specified authorities' – including universities –to implement the PREVENT agenda.
  2. PREVENT is vague, assumptive and discriminatory.
  3. The PREVENT agenda, as part of the Government's 'anti-extremism' work has been used to create an expansive surveillance architecture to spy on the public and to police dissent, systematically targeting minorities and vulnerable individuals.
  4. The Government's counter-terrorism/security policy is fundamentally flawed in its approach; its operant concepts of 'extremism' and 'radicalism' are ill-defined and open to abuse for political ends.
  5. Under PREVENT, lecturers have been known to report students as being 'at risk of radicalisation' for merely taking an interest in political affairs in class, or for observing their religion more closely, whilst politically active students have found themselves visited by counter-terrorism officers. Lecturers and academics are also expected to have "training" to make them suitable for the role of reporting, yet when the approach is fundamentally flawed the results of such reports cannot be trusted.
  6. Multiple University Vice Chancellors have spoken out against PREVENT, including those from Oxford University, Portsmouth University and Winchester University. (awaiting reference)
  7. However we cannot get past the fact that our institutions are legally bound by the Government to follow PREVENT. We need to build on the great work we have already done by targeting the root of the problem.
  8. The Government implementation of PREVENT policies on university campuses tackling "extremism" and "radicalisation".
  9. The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 introduced a duty for public bodies, including FE and HE institutions, to engage with the PREVENT agenda.
  10. FE and HE institutions must ensure staff are trained on PREVENT, to monitor the behaviour of their students and report concerns of "extremism" and restrict external speakers.
  11. Already students are being questioned by the Police and PREVENT officials, whether for taking out a book on terrorism at Staffordshire or accessing materials on their reading list at UEA.<sup>4</sup>
  12. SUs are affected differently depending on their legal status, if they are FE or HE, and their relationship with their parent institution.
  13. Despite relentless attack, the student movement has taken a principled position opposing the PREVENT agenda.
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14. The Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015 made the PREVENT agenda a statutory obligation upon 'specified authorities', including FE colleges – this is known as the Prevent duty
  15. The requirements for Colleges under the Prevent duty are most stringent and burdensome.
  16. This includes, for example, the aggressive promotion of 'British values' in all aspects of teaching and learning
  17. Meanwhile the few safeguards for Academic Freedom assured for HE institutions, do not apply to FE under the duty.
  18. Given how many FE student unions are constituted as part of their institutions, and not as legally autonomous, the Prevent duty does in some cases apply to FE Unions.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Islamophobia is massively on the rise across Europe, is state-sponsored and legitimised by the mainstream media.
  2. Islamophobia is further perpetuated and heightened in this climate as well, and 'reprisal' attacks against Muslims increased sharply in the immediate aftermath of the Paris attacks in November 2015
  3. Alienating minority groups and those targeted by PREVENT is actually counter-productive in the war on terror.
  4. November has been marked as Islamophobia Awareness Month since 2012, initiated by a range of organisations
  5. The government's identified 'warning signs' of "radicalisation" are highly problematic and renders suspect those with mental health difficulties. PREVENT measures therefore not only encourage racial profiling but also put vulnerable groups at risk.
  6. Over half of referrals to Channel are now for school-age children, and there were more referrals within the first 5 months of 2015 than for the whole of 2014, or any year since its introduction.
  7. The Act discourages free expression and analysis of ideas. Academics, as well as anyone in a public sector job, should not have to be part of this surveillance.
  8. We fundamentally believe that universities and colleges are places for education, not surveillance
  9. The implementation of the PREVENT Strategy on campus will not only isolate Muslim students but undermine the civil liberties of other groups such as environmental, political and humanitarian activists
  10. The Students not Suspects tour brought together students alongside academics in opposition to PREVENT and showed an appetite for action against it although not always clear direction as to how to do so.
  11. That the National Union of Students (NUS) and University and Colleges Union (UCU) have both passed motions at their conferences opposing the Act and PREVENT.
  12. As charities, student unions are not legally bound to engage with PREVENT and should seek to boycott it.
  13. We can beat PREVENT with collective, democratic action that disrupts its functioning and workers responsible for PREVENT duties are particularly well-placed to take such action.
  14. It is unclear what definitions are used and which beliefs make a person "extremist" or "radical".
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15. This lack of definition makes students wary of their beliefs, despite fundamental rights to practice beliefs and values.
  16. PREVENT encourages greater scrutiny and monitoring of Muslim students, and Islamic Societies.
  17. PREVENT alienates Muslim students from wider community. This scrutiny suggesting that benign activities may lead to criminal acts, with no presumption of innocence.
  18. This monitoring promotes concept that Muslim students are potential terror suspects and prone to radicalisation.
  19. Institutions and Students' Unions supporting PREVENT condone this rhetoric that radicalisation and terrorism are directly linked to specific groups.
  20. Islamic societies are productive members of students' unions and have contributed to charity and welfare of students.
  21. Unions should not resort to underhanded methods of preventing Islamic Societies operating with autonomy, or put unnecessary barriers in place that inconvenience societies, their events and their members.
  22. Many students are afraid that association with Islamic Societies puts a mark on their record, which might affect employability, e.g. International or medical students.
  23. PREVENT opposes constitutional rights; which is a dangerous zone, that will lead to widespread discrimination. Islamic societies should not have more scrutiny than other societies.
  24. All Students' Unions should actively and publicly oppose PREVENT.
  25. The government must clarify what constitutes the 'radicalisation' that PREVENT monitors.
  26. That much of the PREVENT agenda is knee-jerk pandering to the right-wing media and political posturing by a Government desperate to look tough.
  27. That the concept of "extremism" is so ill-defined that the Government could call into question almost any critique of the status quo, including climate change activism and anti-capitalist protests.
  28. Opposition to PREVENT and concern about its impact is growing: from trade unions to the Government's independent reviewer of terrorism legislation, David Anderson QC, who has called for a complete review of PREVENT.
  29. The PREVENT agenda actively targets Muslim and Black people in the UK, making them a convenient scapegoat and demonising and alienating those communities.
  30. In FE and HE, the PREVENT duty stifles freedom of speech and academic freedom, forces institutions to spy on their own students and undermines the trust of Muslim and Black students in particular.
  31. Violence is no solution to political problems, but the causes of violence are rarely as simplistic as PREVENT suggests.
  32. The priority should be creating cohesive campuses and a cohesive society and this cannot be achieved through surveillance, silence, racism and Islamophobia.
  33. This argument must be taken directly to those in positions of power: we cannot simply talk to ourselves.
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34. That NUS desperately needs to support SUs to understand how PREVENT affects them and how to campaign against it.
  35. Our opposition to the Prevent agenda is undermined by working with organisations whose values run counter to our own.
  36. NUS and dozens of Unions have passed policy opposing the Counter terrorism and Security Act, and PREVENT on the whole, rightfully condemning the strategy as Islamophobic, discriminatory and as having a stifling effect on education, activism and democracy.
  37. This past year the Black Students' Campaign alongside the Welfare Zone and Society and Citizenship Zone cohosted the 'Students not Suspects tour' across institutions raising awareness about PREVENT.
  38. Work campaigning against PREVENT in FE however, remains more limited, and due to the reasons outlined in the Notes some FE Unions remain reticent to challenge it within their institutions.
  39. PREVENT must be opposed fully and cannot be allowed to flourish in any sector.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To educate students on the details and dangers of the PREVENT Strategy through Student Unions and their Officers.
  2. Ensure students are aware of their rights, and what help is available if they are concerned about PREVENT.
  3. Ensure Islamic Societies receive support from independent officials with the role to assist these societies, and aid them in dealing with disputes.
  4. To support Islamophobia Awareness Month as an annual initiative and encourage member SUs to mark it
  5. To work alongside the Black Students' Campaign in calling for and organising a range of actions against the PREVENT duty, from direct actions by membership to possible legal action.
  6. To develop guidance alongside the Black Students' Officer on SUs dealing with the Charity Commission and accusations of 'supporting extremism' levelled at SUs
  7. Help student unions and students to work with campus trade union branches to encourage, concretely assist and support such action and defend workers against victimisation.
  8. Fully support the initiative of education workers, through their trade unions, boycotting PREVENT duties.
  9. Work with education trade unions to facilitate branches taking such action.
  10. Work also with NUS Postgrad Section, as representatives of postgrads who teach, on how casualised student workers can contribute to such action.
  11. To lobby universities and members of the NUS to be more open and transparent about how they are engaging with PREVENT and other similar initiatives. This involves:
  12. Demanding publications of how the policy is operating within the university and Students' Union.
  13. This includes access to materials used to train staff and students.
  14. Holding consultations with the student body regarding how this affects students
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15. For NUS to demand that Ministers and civil servants in charge of PREVENT engage with and meet students and their representatives to ensure they understand why PREVENT is so damaging.
  16. To have the overall aim of tackling the problem at the root and stop PREVENT from being a legal compliance for our institutions to follow.
  17. To obtain legal advice to clarify what constitutes 'radicalisation.'
  18. To continue to oppose the PREVENT duty and the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and to demand a complete overhaul of the entire PREVENT strategy from first principles.
  19. For the relevant NUS officer to work support HE and FE students' unions with campaign materials and in understanding what the PREVENT duty means for them and their students.
  20. For NUS to identify a means of restarting the Faith and Belief project, with a focus on campus cohesion and dialogue between faith groups and others.
  21. For NUS conduct research into the impact of Prevent in FE and HE and the effectiveness of alternatives.
  22. Work with Fe Zone and the Black Students Campaign to develop specific FE-focussed anti-Prevent material.
  23. Encourage Student Unions to approach local unions (such as UCU, UNISON, UNITE) community groups, and campaigns to build broad based opposition to the duty.
  24. To lobby to decouple 'British Values' from FE teaching and learning.

## **Motion 407 | Not for Profit Halls**

### **Conference believes**

1. Nationally we are seeing students getting priced out of accommodation due to privatisation of university halls.
2. Contracts Universities have with private companies, such as UPP, reduces the control of new builds and the pricing of current accommodation.
3. Halls fees are rising year on year as Universities lose control of their halls and they become profit machines.

### **Conference further believes**

1. There are huge benefits of living in University halls, from first years settling into University to accessibility for disabled students and safety for international students.
2. Privatisation of our halls means that our Universities have less control over our halls pricing and development of new builds.
3. Marketization of University accommodation means that halls prices will continue to rise.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS must lobby the Government to stop pushing pressure on Universities to choose private accommodation providers.
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2. NUS VP Welfare to create a report that gives Universities more incentives to develop and maintain their own accommodation.
  3. NUS to support SUs to hold their accommodation providers to account.

## **Motion 408 | Rent Strikes**

### **Conference believes**

1. NUS has already committed to campaign for demands including scrapping letting agents' fees, taxing empty homes and multiple homes, scrapping council tax, permanent tenancies, a council house building program, and rent controls.
2. The housing crisis is only getting worse for both students and the rest of society.
3. The new Housing & Planning Bill is a huge further attack on social housing and will:
4. Force councils to sell off good quality council housing to private landlords.
5. Remove secure tenancies from council housing residents.
6. Push up rents for many council tenants.
7. Cut investment in social housing.
8. Undermine the rights of travellers and gypsies.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Affordable, decent housing is of huge importance to student welfare and to access to education.
2. Students at SOAS and UCL have shown that rent strikes are a powerful weapon against exploitative landlords.

### **Conference resolves**

1. Reaffirm existing housing campaigning commitments
2. Oppose the Housing & Planning Bill
3. Work with the "Kill the Housing Bill" campaign, which is a coalition of trade unions, local tenants' federations, activist groups and gypsy & travellers associations.
4. Produce and promote useful information about how to campaign for decent, affordable housing and how to organise rent strikes, and provide support and assistance to student rent strikers.
5. Continue our commitment to cooperating with non-student housing campaigns and tenants' organisations, aiming in the end to have unified democratic tenants' unions for all in every town, city and region.

## **Motion 409 | Rogue Landlords**

### **Conference believes**

1. The demand for Accommodation for students within the local community in many areas exceeds the level of supply.
  2. There is no regulatory or statutory body designed to protect students against rogue landlords.
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3. Students occupy more HMO properties than any other group in society.
  4. Average rents across Britain went up by 4.9% between 2014 and 2015 , this rate is far higher in urban areas with Brighton and Bristol seeing an 18% increase. These increases are much higher than the average increases to wages and the increase in student loans.
  5. In the 2015, 17,000 tenants called Shelter's hotline for advice on landlord harassment.
  6. More than three-quarters (76 per cent) of respondents to the NUS Homes fit for study survey had experienced at least one problem with the condition of their rented home – most commonly this was condensation (52 per cent), mould (47 per cent) or damp (41 per cent). Almost a quarter of respondents (24 per cent) reported having slugs, mice or another infestation in their home.
  7. Half of respondents (52 per cent) reported that they have felt uncomfortably cold in their home and, related to this, 48 per cent felt that their accommodation was poorly insulated and/or draughty.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Landlords should be subject to regulatory policy to ensure students are never taken advantage of due to lack of experience.
2. Rogue Landlords inflate the price of their properties in the face of growing demand and limited supply.
3. The local and national government should do more to deter landlords from exploiting students.
4. Students should have access to fit for purpose and affordable privately rented accommodation
5. Agency fees are unjustified and the cost should be absorbed by the landlord without being passed on to the tenant through rent increase.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To work alongside students unions to further develop The Code Landlord accreditation scheme delivered by Unipol to introduce the scheme to more student towns and cities.
2. To Challenge the government on rogue landlords and campaign that they do more to develop legislation around landlords and vulnerable groups of society, specifically students.
3. To give student unions the support and guidance to tackle the issue on a local level.
4. To organise a national campaign working alongside relevant national and local charities and civil society organisations to raise awareness of the costs of an unregulated rental sector.
5. To call for Students' Unions to lobby their local governments to improve local rental markets in favour of tenants

## **Motion 410 | Graduation: the final hidden cost**

### **Conference believes**

1. Most people go to university hoping to graduate
  2. The moment of physically collecting a degree is a central part of the myth and rhetoric which surrounds education
  3. There are only two providers of most graduation gowns
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4. Graduating in front of a student's parents can cost 100s of pounds

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Having paid so much to get a degree students shouldn't have to pay to collect it
2. Like all hidden course costs graduation costs are bad

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To conduct research into the average cost of graduation in the UK.
2. To work to reduce this cost.

### **Motion 411 | Educate all FE & HE students on the risks associated with taking legal highs and lobby the government to include all legal highs within the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Legal Highs are not yet controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971
2. Legal highs' contain one or more chemical substances which produce similar effects to illegal drugs
3. Legal highs first became popular in 2009, when Mephedrone became one of the most fashionable party drugs in the UK, as it simulated MDMA which is illegal
4. Legal doesn't mean that it is safe.
5. You can't really be sure of what's in a 'legal high'.
6. There has been little or no useful research into the short or long-term risks associated from human consumption of legal highs

#### **Conference further believes**

1. There is an increased mortality rate related to legal highs being so easily accessible
2. Many of these risks are increased if the 'legal high' is combined with alcohol or with any other psychoactive drug.
3. Legal highs, can be described using three main categories; Stimulants, Downers and Psychedelics or Hallucinogens.
4. Many substances that have been found in substances sold as 'legal highs' have already been made illegal.
5. 'Legal highs' cannot be sold for human consumption so they are often sold as incense, salts or plant food to get round the law
6. We know that many 'legal highs' are sold under brand names such as: "Clockwork Orange", "Bliss" and "Spice"

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To educate all students via awareness campaigns on the dangers of taking legal highs and the implications it could potentially have.
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2. Lobby and campaign the government to change the law on the sales of legal highs within shops to prevent it being so easily accessible.

## **NC\_W\_13306: Mental Health Awareness and Challenging Discrimination**

### **Conference believes**

1. Policy on mental health is due to lapse.
  2. Mental health has become an increasingly growing concern among the student population.
  3. It is reported that 1 in 4 people will suffer from a mental health condition in their life time.
  4. Between 2007 and 2011 suicides by male students in full-time higher education grew by 36%, while female student suicides almost doubled.
  5. NUS Scotland has carried out extensive work on mental health, notably the 'Silently Stressed' research and 'Breaking the Silence' report in 2010 and 2011, respectively.
  6. The NUS Disabled Students' Campaign has also carried out a lot of work in mental health in the last year.
  7. One in four adults and one in ten children suffer a Mental Health issue.
  8. Severe cuts are being made to psychiatric and mental health recovery services up and down the country.
  9. Financial and housing concerns places additional pressures on students and this has been linked to a potential rise in MH issues/stress related illnesses.
  10. That businesses could be doing more to address the issues and pressures students and community member's face in the current environment.
  11. NUS Scotland has run a student orientated Mental Health project called Think Positive, which has led to some very informative and successful research into the area, including Silently Stressed (2010) and Breaking the Silence (2011).
  12. There needs to be a national campaign for Mental Health training to be implemented at all Higher Education and Further Education Institutions across the country.
  13. Undertaking of this training by staff will mean they will be able to better differentiate between varying student welfare demands as well as having a clearer understanding of how mental health conditions can impact upon students, their studies and the relationship of staff and students with each other.
  14. This brings numerous benefits to the student experience, because if universities are better trained in Mental Health awareness, then they will be able to better meet the needs of struggling students.
  15. Administration of this training to all university and student union staff will increase their knowledge of policies and procedures that are in place to help staff understand boundaries, safe-working practices and communicating clearly with students suffering mental health difficulties.
  16. That this training will be informative and helpful, as well improving staff confidence in supporting struggling students.
  17. That the University of the West of England, in the partnership with the Students' Union has been working to implement such training and seriously challenge Mental Health discrimination within the student and staff population, which has included both parties signing the Time To Change pledge to end Mental Health Discrimination.
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18. More can be done to promote Mental Health awareness and anti-stigma campaigns at the level of the National Union of Students (NUS).
  19. Stigma surrounding Mental Health and active Mental Health Discrimination is beginning to decrease.
  20. Although stigma is decreasing, more still proactive campaigning needs to be done to ensure a continuing positive decrease.
  21. The existence of campaigns like Time To Change is very important to challenging Mental Health discrimination in general, but also specifically in the workplace and in education institutions.
  22. That liberation groups are at particular high risk of experiencing Mental Health issues and also the discrimination that goes with it.
  23. There is the existence of 'fit to sit' policies surrounding exams.
  24. This conference believes that some companies actively discriminate against people with mental health issues
  25. 'Fit to Sit' is a system that for assessments that prohibits the submission of extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances if a student has attended their exam, or submitted their assignment. This is because the student is deemed to have declared themselves 'Fit to Sit' that assessment.
  26. A growing number of institutions are introducing, or considering introducing, such policies to replace the traditional post-assessment extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances procedure.
  27. The consequences of 'Fit to Sit' policies include students sitting assessments when they are unwell (physically or mentally) or missing assessments in order to be eligible to submit extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances, which may then not be accepted by the institution.
  28. Students with reasonable, and potentially acceptable, extenuating circumstances, may not submit a claim, despite having evidence, believing they have no choice other than to go ahead with the assessment, unable to cope with the uncertainty of whether their claim would be accepted.
  29. Institutions say that 'Fit to Sit' policies reduces red tape and 'game playing' and means that less extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances are submitted (including a reduction of 'fake' claims). In turn this reduces administration costs for the institution.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Given the climate of stress faced by students; academic pressures, financial hardship, concern on graduate debt & employment, a change of environment and a total shift of support networks – students are in a far more vulnerable position to suffer from a mental health issue.
  2. In a climate of mass cuts to budgets of Colleges and Universities we cannot assume key wellbeing services are safe from cuts.
  3. Institutions and Students' Unions have a responsibility to work in partnership on mental health.
  4. Work carried out on mental health must take a pragmatic shift from just running awareness campaigns to winning adequate service provision on our campuses to help those in need, and a serious commitment from a cross section of institutions to recognise and tackle mental health.
  5. Whilst activities like 'mental health weeks' can be a useful tool for success, we shouldn't minimise the issue into a week of action as a way to tick a box of tackling the issue. We must discover the next platform for mental health.
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6. 'Fit to Sit' policies are unfair on students and put students in positions that may have a detrimental effect on their assessments and wellbeing.
  7. Students should not have to choose between sitting an assessment, and submitting extenuating (or mitigating) circumstances.
  8. Not all students are able to accurately assess their own fitness to sit an exam or submit an assessment.
  9. Many students' will 'solider on' and are reluctant to miss an exam or a deadline. Some students' believe this shows dedication to their degree.
  10. Institutions should not put reducing costs and red tape ahead of students' rights and the fairness of assessments.

#### Conference resolves

1. To ensure that any training or workshops given on mental health give explicit tangible outcomes that can be won on campuses.
  2. That the autonomy of the NUS Disabled Students Campaign on this issue is vital and to ensure leadership is derived as such.
  3. To work with organisations such as Mind and Mental Wealth UK to increase NUS' presence on work in mental health taking us from the side lines to the forefront.
  4. To continue to promote the effectiveness of peer mentoring schemes on campuses and make the case for the positive effect it can have on wellbeing.
  5. To lobby all Higher Education and Further Education institutions up and down the country to introduce and send staff on Mental Health Awareness Training to better understand how they can support students facing difficulties and know where the boundaries are.
  6. To recognise the positive work that has been done by NUS Scotland and commission similar research to take place in England, Wales and Northern Ireland.
  7. To actively declare its support for The Time to Change Campaign and work with them to promote the auditing of educational institutions and businesses on Mental Health awareness practices.
  8. To raise awareness of how Mental Health affects individuals from liberation groups and to work with these groups to implement targeted campaigns that address the issues they face.
  9. To lobby the government to U-turn on its planned cuts to welfare services and Mental Health wards.
  10. To lobby the government to review the Mental Health Act 2007 to provide more protection for individuals committed to wards.
  11. To continue to lobby to reduce public stigma surrounding Mental Health Discrimination and build upon the work started through the Mental Health Discrimination Bill.
  12. To reduce and dispel the stigmas surrounding individuals with mental health issues and ensure they are not discriminated against in the workplace.
  13. To call for 'fit to sit' policies and any similar practices to be abolished by educational institutions and review its provisions and practices for students affect by Mental Health issues.
  14. To lobby universities to include relevant information on extenuating/mitigating circumstances to help students get through their studies and not slip through the net.
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15. To lobby universities to actively oppose companies which display discrimination to students and individuals affected by mental health issues and to work with them to improve their practices.
  16. That 'Fit to Sit' is unfit for purpose.
  17. To support Students' Unions in their work against such policies by providing evidence of the impact of their introduction.
  18. To provide Students' Unions with resources to campaign against the introduction of 'Fit to Sit' at their institutions.
  19. To lobby Universities UK on this issue. To persuade their members to not introduce, or to abolish current, 'Fit to Sit' policies.
  20. To support Students' Unions in any campaigns to revoke current and/or implemented 'Fit to Sit' policies.
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