
Stop Tuition Fee Rises: Boycott the NSS

This Union Notes:

1. The government's May 2016 White Paper outlined extensive reforms to higher education.
2. The flagship reform, the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), will rely on data from the National Student Survey (NSS) and Destination of Leavers from Higher Education (DLHE) survey.
3. Institutions which score highly in the TEF will be able to raise fees in line with inflation from 2017-19, followed by even higher level fees in 2019-20¹.
4. NUS is mandated to organise a national boycott/sabotage of NSS and DLHE as part of a strategy against the reforms; following a consultation, the NUS VPHE Sorana Vieru has announced that NUS will "support [the student movement] in undertaking NSS boycotts."²
5. Warwick SU has policy to oppose the TEF and the Higher Education reforms as a whole.³
6. That there is a nation-wide ballot being held on whether an equality impact and risk assessment should be carried out on the NSS boycott strategy.⁴

This Union Believes:

1. The reforms fundamentally attack the idea of education as a public service.
2. There are many reasons to oppose NSS, e.g. that it discriminates against BME academics⁵, is centred on crude, narrow evaluations of 'customer satisfaction' rather than genuine dialogue and democratic feedback⁶, and exerts undue pressure on staff due to potential penalizations imposed by Universities because of low survey scores, pitting students and staff against one another⁷.

¹ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/higher-education-white-paper-key-points-glance>

² <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/articles/the-next-stage-of-our-quality-doesn-t-grow-on-fees-campaign>

³ <https://democracy-files.warwicksu.com/council/Policy/Policy/Education%20Zone/071%20-%20Condemning%20the%20HE%20Green%20Paper.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.nusconnect.org.uk/shape-our-work/articles/chief-returning-officer-announces-national-ballot>

⁵ <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/biased-students-give-bme-academics-lower-nss-scores-says-study>

⁶ https://www.ucu.org.uk/brief_satissurveys

⁷ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7397979.stm>

3. Boycotting NSS and DLHE will disrupt the introduction of TEF, giving us leverage.
4. That the ballot for the 'risk assessment' is an unnecessary bureaucratic procedure by certain individuals who want to undermine the NSS boycott strategy.

This Union Resolves:

1. To organise a boycott of NSS and DLHE, including:
 1. Refusing to promote NSS or have any pro-NSS material in any SU media channels;
 2. In term one 2016 running a campaign collecting pledges from finalists to boycott the NSS;
 3. Working with UCU to discourage NSS promotion by academics and encourage academics to actively promote the boycott instead;
 4. Promoting the boycott through posters, leafleting, door-knocking and social media especially when the survey is released. Door knocking will include sending teams around final-year student accommodation at reasonable times of the day to encourage people not to fill in the survey;
 5. Taking part in national actions and demonstrations linked to the NSS boycott.

Policy History		
Action	Body	Date
Carried	SU Referenda	2016/17, T1W7
Policy Review	Student Council	2018/19, T1W7