

Queen's University Students' Union

Live Policy File

Last updated: May 2022



Contents

JARGON BUSTER	5
SECTION 1: ACADEMIC & ACADEMIC RELATED ISSUES	6
1.01. Minimal Time Between Examinations.....	7
1.02. Disabled Students' Needs during Examination Periods	8
1.03. Asylum Seekers and Access to Education	9
1.04. Access to University	11
1.05. Protecting Democracy in Academia.....	12
1.06. Alternative Assessments	13
1.07. Postgraduate Staff Conditions.....	14
1.08. Record Lectures to Aid Accessibility.....	15
1.09. Supporting UCU Strike Action	16
1.10. Introduction of Postgraduate School Representatives	18
1.11. Academic Freedom in QUB (Professor Colin Harvey)	20
1.12. Supporting UCU Strike Action	21
1.13. Introduction of Lecture Recording	23
1.14. Referendum for Student Support on 2021-22 Academic Year University and College Union Strike	24
1.15. The Students' Union must make a decision on the strikes.....	26
1.16. Introduce Assessment and Feedback Calendars for All Students	27
SECTION 2: FUNDING ISSUES	29
2.01. Protecting the NHS	30
2.02. Council Condemns Unnecessary Cuts by Queen's University.....	31
2.03. Supporting Students Living Costs	32
2.04. Supporting Nursing Staff, Students and Allied Health Professionals.....	33
2.05. Financial Support for Health & Social Care Students	36
2.06. The Students' Union Calls on the University to Re-evaluate its Decision to Raise Student Accommodation Fees	37
SECTION 3: WELFARE ISSUES	39
3.01. Availability of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP).....	40
3.02. Accessibility for Students with Sensory Disorders to University Fairs	41
3.03. Union to Publish Material Detailing its Accessibility Arrangements	42
3.04. Presidential Voting Rights for Irish Citizens	43
3.05. Support of Parents due to Miscarriage and Stillbirth.....	44
3.06. Mental Health Charter	46
3.07. Universal Gym Membership	49
3.08. Mental Health Care Reform Advocacy	51
3.09. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training for Student Officers.....	54
3.10. Reproductive Justice	56
3.11. Universal Basic Income Trial	58
3.12. Period Poverty	60
3.13. The SU and Council to Declare Gender-Based violence an Emergency	61
3.14. Support for Student Parents and Carers	62
3.15. Support for the Campaign to Ban Conversion Therapy	64
SECTION 4: DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE (LOCAL AND NATIONAL) AND REPRESENTATION	65
4.01. Women in Leadership in the Union.....	66
4.02. Queen's University Belfast Students' Union Autonomy.....	67
4.03. QUBSU Supporting the Removal of the Academic Standing Rule	68
4.04. An Autonomous and Independent Students' Union	69
4.05. Bio-degradable Cutlery in the New Students' Union	71
4.06. Student Officer Scrutiny Committee	72
4.07. QUB Strategy 2030 – Consultation.....	74

4.08. Amendments to the QUB Green New Deal	75
4.09. Religious Persecution.....	77
SECTION 5: CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT.....	83
No Policies.....	84
SECTION 6: COMMUNITY ISSUES	85
6.01. Homelessness Prevention.....	86
6.02. Xenophobia.....	87
6.03. Education for Disadvantaged Communities.....	88
6.04. Establishing a Campaign to Make QUB a University of Sanctuary	89
6.05. Student-Led Campaign for the Improvement of Sustainable Transport in Belfast	90
6.06. Off Campus Discipline.....	91
6.07. Anti-Fascism & Anti-Racism.....	92
6.08. Support for Providing Meals to School Children During the Coronavirus Pandemic ...	94
6.09. Off Campus Discipline.....	96
6.10. An Antifascist and Antiracist Students' Union	98
SECTION 7: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS.....	99
7.01. Supporting and Valuing International Students.....	100
7.02. Guarantor Support for international students.....	101
7.03. Financial Support for International Students.....	102
7.04. Visa Issues for International Students	104
7.05. Enable International Students to Sit August Examinations in Their Home Countries	105
7.06. Supporting the campaign to bring back the post-study work visa	106
7.07. International Student VISA Waiver Scheme	108
SECTION 8: OTHER POLICIES	109
8.01. Constitutional position on Northern Ireland.....	110
8.02. Paying the Living Wage in the Students' Union	111
8.03. Gender Identification and Sexual Identity on Forms	112
8.04. Disclosure of University Investments.....	113
8.05. Fossil Fuel Divestment.....	114
8.06. Organise Mental Health Training for Students.....	115
8.07. Freedom of Information	116
8.08. Marijuana Regulation	117
8.09. Integrated Education	118
8.10. A Breastfeeding Friendly Union.....	119
8.11. Save our Schools – Size and Shape Review 2016.....	120
8.12. Student Staff Alliance.....	121
8.13. 'Take Back Queen's' Program of Reforms.....	122
8.14. Irish Language Act	124
8.15. USI Support for the Irish Language	125
8.16. Justice and Human Rights for Palestine	126
8.17. Trade Union Alliance.....	128
8.18. University and College Union (UCU) at Queen's Industrial Action on Pensions.....	129
8.19. Bilingual Signage on Campus	131
8.20. Support The Campaign To Decriminalise Sex Work.....	132
8.21. Reform of Gender Recognition Act (2004).....	134
8.22. Marriage Equality for Northern Ireland.....	135
8.23. Opposition to the Far Right	136
8.24. Climate Emergency.....	137
8.25. Pledge for Climate Action.....	138
8.26. Opposition to the University's new Chancellor Appointee.....	140
8.27. Hong Kong Society Request for Support.....	142
8.28. Solidarity with Indian Students protesting against Hindutva.....	143
8.29. Queen's University Belfast's 'Green New Deal'	145
8.30. Irish Language Rights	148
8.31. Endorsement for the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill.....	150

8.32. Fossil Free Careers..... 152

JARGON BUSTER

Not Closed

Policies categorised as Not Closed refer to policies that the Student Officer Team have not completed actions on or are awaiting an appropriate time to take action on a policy.

Continuing Campaign

A Continuing Campaign is one that is very long term in nature with no short-term end goal.

Closed

A policy is categorised as Closed if the end goal has been achieved, or if those responsible for a policy have deemed that all reasonable efforts have been made to progress a policy.

Lapse

Policies are scheduled to lapse as specified within Constitution and Rules of the Students' Union. Policies due to lapse may be reaffirmed at the Annual Business Meeting of the Students' Union Council.

Actions Taken/Notes

These are substantial millstones towards the achievement of a policy.

SECTION 1: ACADEMIC & ACADEMIC RELATED ISSUES

1.01. Minimal Time Between Examinations

Policy Title:	Minimal Time Between Examinations		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2015/1/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that:

- There is complexity in appropriately scheduling tens of thousands of individual examinations each year.
- Examinations will continue to be used for assessment even after the introduction of the proposals for a reformed academic year.
- Most Exams are currently timetabled for 9.30am, 2.30pm and 6.30pm
- The process of constructing examination timetables commences in early October for Semester One examinations and early February for Semester Two examinations.
- Students may find themselves having two exams in one day (ie. one scheduled at 9.30am and the next at 6.30pm)

Council believes that:

- This is unacceptable and that this situation can have detrimental effects on both academic performance and students' wellbeing during what is already a stressful time.
- Students are entitled to a reasonable respite period between individual examinations, to rest, recover, reduce stress and promote a healthy approach to examinations.

Council instructs the Union President, VP Education and VP Welfare:

- To seek to establish a formal University policy regarding the minimum time between examinations, with a minimum time between examinations of twenty four hours, and the average time between examinations being no less than forty eight hours.
- To seek to formalise the process by which students can seek modifications to examination timetables in the event that their timetable has inadequate respite periods between examinations.
- In the interim, to appeal to the relevant University bodies in order to eliminate the potential for students to sit two exams in one day in future exam sessions, with the intention of having this in place by January 2016.

To continue to campaign for on this policy issue, if it is not achieved by January 2016.

Date of Approval: 6 May 2015
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.02. Disabled Students' Needs during Examination Periods

Policy Title:	Disabled Students' Needs during Examination Periods		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2015/1/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes with grave concern that disabled students have been unable to have their needs assessments altered as their condition changes or worsens, primarily prior to examination periods.

Council notes that hospitalised disabled students have been unable to make requests for assignments in lieu of examinations to reflect their worsening condition and change in needs.

Council believes that the University has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled students throughout their time at Queen's.

Council instructs the Disabled Students' Officer and the Equality and Diversity Officer to liaise with Disability Services to ensure that Disabled Students needs are met throughout the year, including during assessment periods and that changes can be made successfully throughout the academic year.

In addition, Council instructs the Equality and Diversity Officer to provide an update at the next meeting of Council as to the results of communication with Disability Services.

Date of Approval: 17 Nov 2015

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: VP Equality and Diversity & Disabled Students' Officer

1.03. Asylum Seekers and Access to Education

Policy Title:	Asylum Seekers and Access to Education		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2015/1/3	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

This Council recognises:

1. According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights "Everyone has the right to education... and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit".
2. The term refugee applies to any person who, owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country.
3. An asylum seeker is someone who has lodged an application for protection on the basis of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.
4. Discretionary leave to remain (DLR) is a 3 year renewable status that may be granted to individuals on the basis of an asylum claim, including many separated children from countries such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iran and Iraq.
5. Meanwhile asylum seekers are:
 - not allowed to take out student loans;
 - not allowed to apply for grants and bursaries;
 - unable to study in another country;
 - denied the right to work in the UK;
 - sometimes required to wait like this for years while a decision is made as to whether they can stay in the UK;
 - are given less than £5 a day in Government benefits.
6. Asylum seeker students and students with DLR are routinely charged overseas fees, yet their situation and needs are different to those of international students.
7. There is no consensus policy from UK universities on access to education for asylum seekers and individuals granted DLR on the basis of an asylum claim.
8. A number of UK universities have amended their admissions policies to allow asylum seekers and/or students granted DLR as the result of an asylum application to pay 'home' tuition fees, or have waived fees entirely. These include: Manchester University, Leeds University, Royal Holloway University of London, Salford University and many more.
9. Yet Queens continues to offer no scholarships to asylum seekers forcing them to pay international fees which in the majority of cases is impossible. Student

Action For Refugees QUB have therefore started a campaign at QUB supporting equal access to university for students seeking refugee protection as part of the *Equal Access* campaign. We will ask Queens to introduce a number of fully funded scholarships for asylum seekers already residing in Northern Ireland.

10. The *Equal Access* campaign is being led by the National Union of Students and Student Action for Refugees and is supported by a range of other organisations.

11. The experiences and insights of students seeking refugee protection have the potential to greatly enrich the intellectual and social life of the university.

12. Furthermore giving asylum seekers the opportunity to study at Queens will help the University in its drive to increase its international student population by 2020.

13. This Council Believes:

The University should adopt a fair and equitable approach in providing access to Higher Education on the basis of merit for all, including asylum seekers or individuals granted DLR on the basis of an asylum claim.

14. This Union Resolves:

- To support the *Equal Access* campaign and work closely with NUS and QUB STAR to create a campaign specific to our institution/students' union.
- To lobby the University to sign the *Equal Access* Pledge and remove financial barriers preventing students seeking refugee protection from studying here.

15. Specifically to:

- Enable all those seeking refugee protection to be able to study as home students
- Recognise that, like other vulnerable groups, students seeking refugee protection have additional needs and give them access to additional support, such as fee waivers, bursaries, scholarships and grants.

Date of Approval: 17 Nov 2015

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.04. Access to University

Policy Title:	Access to University		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2015/1/4	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes that University is not for everyone but for those who have the ability and ambition, they should be enabled. This council firmly believes that access to university should not be limited because of where you live or what your parents earn. Access to University can and should be widened, especially within target, low participation groups.

Currently the two universities within Northern Ireland have small widening participation units. This council calls on the DEL minister to ensure that, should efficiencies need to be made to the Higher Education sector, that these units are protected. This Council believes he must ensure that the most vulnerable get a fair chance at attending University.

The Council mandates the EMC to make representation to NUS-USI and the Vice-Chancellor to pursue this issue further. The council requests that a letter be written to the DEL minister regarding this issue and that widening participation be included in our response to DEL. The council further requests the President writes to all the Chief Executives of the 11 Councils in Northern Ireland and advise that they include access into University as part of their community plan and to engage with QUB's and UU's Widening Participation Units as part of that process.

Date of Approval: 3 December 2015

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.05. Protecting Democracy in Academia

Policy Title:	Protecting Democracy in Academia		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2016/1/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council recognises that recent Government proposals to limit the ability of academics to use their research to critique government policy if they receive state funding came into effect on May 1st.

Council further recognises that this is the latest in a number of governmental reforms (such as reduced opposition party spending money and the charity sectors 'Gagging Bill') that have limited the scope of various sections of society to be able to provide the public with the information needed to judge the effectiveness of the Government.

Council believes that democracy depends on the ability of a variety of sections of society to be able to use their specialities and knowledge to be able to inform public debate, and that academia in particular relies on this freedom to be able to flourish. Council further believes that this latest proposal by the government undermines both academia and this country's democracy.

Council therefore condemns this latest restriction of academic freedom by the UK government, council stands in solidarity with any academics that are hampered by the new rules and mandates the incoming sabbatical team to publicly oppose and campaign against this policy, and to include the democratic deficit in academia in future campaigns on and considerations of the future of Higher Education.

Date of Approval: May 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Vice President Education

1.06. Alternative Assessments

Policy Title:	Alternative Assessments		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2016/1/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes that a number of students with disabilities undertake Alternative Assessments in place of examinations.

This Council further notes that the general teaching plan for a great number of modules fails to properly accommodate and cater for students undertaking Alternative Assessments, especially when taking into account the pace of the teaching plan and the amount of coursework to be completed.

This Council believes that every student should have an equal opportunity to achieve their full academic potential in a manner best suited to their needs.

This Council therefore mandates the Vice President Education, the Vice President Equality and Diversity and the Disabled Students' Officer to liaise with Disability Services, the Schools and Institutes and other applicable bodies and persons to research and determine a solution to this issue and to report to this Council on any progress made.

Date of Approval: May 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Vice President Education, Vice President Equality and Diversity and the Disabled Students Officer

1.07. Postgraduate Staff Conditions

Policy Title:	Postgraduate Staff Conditions		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2016/1/3	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

This Council supports the campaign for a fairer system of payment for staff on casual contracts as outlined in the report: 'Undervalued, Overworked, Taken for Granted'.

We support fair pay and decent working conditions for staff. Furthermore, we acknowledge that underpayment for marking and preparation for tutorials undermines the level of teaching given to undergraduates at Queen's.

We encourage management at Queen's to work constructively with the University and College Union in order that this issue is resolved quickly.

Date of Approval: 15 November 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Vice President Education

1.08. Record Lectures to Aid Accessibility

Policy Title:	Record Lectures to Aid Accessibility		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2017/1/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes currently the majority of lectures are not recorded and it is creating an accessibility issue for students who are disabled, carers, commuters, international students (ESL) and those who are struggling due to general or mental health. Many Russell group universities have implemented this system and this renders QUB outdated, providing a substandard education.

Council Believes that:

- This is a natural progression alongside introduction of VLE which would be designed to support such technology.
- It would support independent student study, in particular with the implementation of the new “long-thin” modules where students are examined on content from the entire academic year.
- This would raise standards of teaching to meet other institutions as well as provide a platform to more accurately assess lectures as well as assisting them improve teaching techniques (with help from recordings of other lecturers).
- This has the potential to reduce failure rates and will aid students re-sitting modules.
- This would help prevent accessibility issues, in particular for the above mentioned groups; students who are disabled, carers, commuters, international students (ESL) and those who are struggling due to general or mental health.
- With scarce research to prove that recordings affect attendance, this will have long-term benefits for students.

Council instructs:

- The Executive Management Committee to campaign for the introduction of lecture recordings across the University.

Date of Approval: April 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.09. Supporting UCU Strike Action

Policy Title:	Supporting UCU Strike Action		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2019/1/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- The University and College Union (UCU) have balloted for strike action on two separate legal disputes, one on pensions and one on pay and working conditions.
- 79% of UCU members who voted backed strike action in relation to pensions, 74% supported strike action in relation to pay, equality, casualisation and workloads.
- Industrial action has been called for November 25th – December 4th 2019.
- Locally, UCU at Queen’s have confirmed their intention to join with 60 universities across the UK in the industrial action.
- This follows strike action taken in 2018 which was initiated by proposed reforms to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension scheme, which UCU UK cost affected staff (both academic and non-academic) up to £200,000 over the course of their retirement.
- These threats are likely to be most damaging to workers at the beginning of their careers, including PhD students, which will have devastating impact in future.

Council believes:

- Staff should receive fair pay, pensions and working conditions.
- Staff’s working conditions are inseparable from students’ learning conditions.
- Students and staff should stand in solidarity, including the struggle for fair pay, pensions and working conditions.
- Threats to staff pay, pensions and conditions are part of the same ideology of marketization that is to blame for rising tuition fees, rising costs of education and cuts to education.

Council mandates:

- Members of the Executive Management Team to give public support to UCU in their struggle
- To join the picket line during the 8 days in November and to encourage students to do the same
- To lobby the University to oppose the proposed reforms in the USS and to improve staff pay and conditions
- To meet, on a regular basis, with the executive of UCU at Queen’s to discuss a joint strategy both in relation to this industrial action and in the future in relation to the wider issue of marketization.
- To see that all possible provisions are made by the Union and the University to ensure that students face minimal adverse academic impact from the strike without compromising the principles of the strike, such as ensuring that

students are not assessed on content covered during the eight days of strike action as far as possible

Date of Approval: Nov 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.10. Introduction of Postgraduate School Representatives

Policy Title:	Introduction of Postgraduate School Representatives		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2019/1/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- The number of postgraduate representatives on Council has increased from 13 to 20 this year.
- PG students are still disproportionately underrepresented across the University.
- PG students are one of the fastest growing student cohorts at QUB and they are significantly academically underrepresented, despite their diverse academic needs
- Currently, the percentage of filled postgraduate Course Representative positions for PGR and PGT programmes sits at 27% and 49% respectively, out of a total of about 250 postgraduate representative positions that should be filled each year.
- This year it has been agreed with the University that student representatives on the University's Postgraduate Forum are to be elected by the Students' Union, rather than nominated by Schools. This is, at best, a short-term measure and does not resolve the deficit in PG representation across campus.

Council Believes That:

- There should be formal representation across the University, at School-level for PG students.
- Postgraduate students should not be represented by undergraduate students in SSCCs as they are unlikely to understand and effectively put forward the issues that affect postgraduate students.
- Increasing elected postgraduate representation at all levels, including at school level, is necessary to ensure postgraduate engagement within the QUBSU as well as within their schools and Faculty.
- School-level representation should be expanded to include one School Rep (Undergraduate) and one School Rep (Postgraduate) for each School/Institute that offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Both of these roles should be regarded as co-equal School Representatives, with the duties and responsibilities pertaining to their respective roles.

Council Resolves That:

- The Vice President Postgraduate and Vice President Education shall lobby the University to give recognition to these posts across the University by embedding these in the appropriate University Regulations / Guidelines.

- The Students' Union shall bring forward appropriate amendments to the Constitution to enable the election of postgraduate School Representatives and to give them membership of the Students' Union Council and other relevant fora.
- The Vice President Postgraduate and Vice President Education shall work with Students' Union staff and the Graduate School to develop a model of training to support postgraduate academic representatives to fulfil their role effectively

Date of Approval: Nov 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.11. Academic Freedom in QUB (Professor Colin Harvey)

Policy Title:	Academic Freedom in QUB (Professor Colin Harvey)		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2019/1/4	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that:

- Free speech and debate is the corner stone of any democratic society
- Professor Colin Harvey of QUB law school is a highly respected leading academic
- There have been efforts by paramilitaries, and political parties, to oust Professor Harvey due to his opinions and beliefs on the constitutional position of the North of Ireland//Northern Ireland
- Twenty-one years since the good Friday agreement any type of intimidation from paramilitaries need to be condemned from the highest levels of political office

Council believes that:

- Everyone has the right to freedom of speech and association
- All professors of this University should not be subject to harassment from sections of society, and paramilitaries
- Twenty-one years since the good Friday agreement the aspirations of both traditions needs to be respected

QUBSU remains politically neutral on the constitutional question and condemns all threats to staff and students as well as the oppression of the freedom of speech.

Date of Approval: Nov 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.12. Supporting UCU Strike Action

Policy Title:	Supporting UCU Strike Action		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2020/1/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- The University and College Union (UCU) have balloted for strike action on two separate legal disputes, one on pensions and one on pay and working conditions.
- In 2019, 79% of UCU members who voted backed strike action in relation to pensions, 74% supported strike action in relation to pay, equality, casualisation and workloads.
- Industrial action has been called for February 20th – March 13th 2020.
- Locally, UCU at Queen's have confirmed their intention to join with 73 universities across the UK in the industrial action.
- This follows strike action taken in 2018 which was initiated by proposed reforms to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension scheme, which UCU UK cost affected staff (both academic and non-academic) up to £200,000 over the course of their retirement.
- These threats are likely to be most damaging to workers at the beginning of their careers, including PhD students, which will have devastating impact in future.

Council believes:

- Staff should receive fair pay, pensions and working conditions.
- Staff's working conditions are inseparable from students' learning conditions.
- Students and staff should stand in solidarity, including the struggle for fair pay, pensions and working conditions.
- Threats to staff pay, pensions and conditions are part of the same ideology of marketization that is to blame for rising tuition fees, rising costs of education and cuts to education.

Council mandates:

- Members of the Executive Management Team to give public support to UCU in their struggle
- To join the picket line during the 14 days in February and March and to encourage students to do the same
- To lobby the University to oppose the proposed reforms in the USS and to improve staff pay and conditions
- To meet, on a regular basis, with the executive of UCU at Queen's to discuss a joint strategy both in relation to this industrial action and in the future in relation to the wider issue of marketization.
- To see that all possible provisions are made by the Union and the University to ensure that students face minimal adverse academic impact from the

strike without compromising the principles of the strike, such as ensuring that students are not assessed on content covered during the eight days of strike action as far as possible

Date of Approval: Feb 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.13. Introduction of Lecture Recording

Policy Title:	Introduction of Lecture Recording		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2020/1/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- SU Council passed policy in 2017 to support lecture recording to aid accessibility
- A high majority of universities in UK have some form of lecture capture. The HeLF report (2017) noted that 86% of universities who responded had lecture capture, mainly taking place in lecture theatres.
- Literature suggests that lecture attendance is not significantly impacted by lecture recording
- In the Russell Group, every university apart from Cambridge, has a centrally supported [lecture capture solution](#).
- The University recently committed to pilot lecture recording

Council believes

- Recorded lectures aid student learning in a number of ways, increasing engagement and accessibility
- Recorded lectures may improve the learning experience by supporting distance/flexible learning, providing an opportunity to better understand content (complex topics, students for whom English is not their first language), allowing content to be viewed when not physically able to attend lecture, providing support for students with disabilities, supporting revision and increasing student engagement
- There is an urgent need for Queen's to develop policy on lecture recording to address staff concerns around the use of lecture recording for issues such as use of recordings for performance management and use during periods of industrial action.

Council mandates:

- Executive Management Committee and in particular the SU VP Education, to campaign for the full implementation of lecture recording across the University.
- SU VP Education to work with Centre for Educational Development to develop policy on lecture recording based on wide-reaching consultation with staff and students.

Date of Approval: Feb 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.14. Referendum for Student Support on 2021-22 Academic Year University and College Union Strike

Policy Title:	Referendum for Student Support on 2021-22 Academic Year University and College Union Strike		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2022/1/2	Policy Status:	Closed

Context:

This emergency council motion's goal is for approval of an all-student referendum on Students' Union support for the 2021/22 academic year University and College Union strikes. Whilst an existing petition to referendum does exist, due to the time sensitivity of University and College Union planning to soon publicly announce their strike plan, the timeline needs to be escalated before the 20 working days originally allotted has finished.

Council approves calling of a Referendum to determine the opinion of Student Members on the following issue:

"The Students' Union should support recently announced strike action by the University and College Union (UCU) staff trade union"

Background to the Strike

At the time of this referendum, the University and Colleges Union ([UCU](#)), which represents over 130,000 academics, lecturers, and university staff, have voted in favour of strike action. This is over the Universities Superannuation Scheme ([USS](#)) pensions and pay, staff workload, casualization, and equality issues. This is a UK-wide strike, meaning the decision was made across UCU's full membership, rather than just one singular branch. This is due to a dispute on a number of topics summarised below:

- **USS Pension Scheme:** University staff are currently in a [defined benefit pension scheme](#), meaning a staff member receives a set amount of benefits every year after they retire. This is not dependent on individual investments, and is based on factors like length of time worked for an employer and salary amount. The proposal is for these benefits to be cut by [35%](#).
- **Pay:** This ask relates to the negotiation of [pay and conditions](#) of employment.
- **Workload:** This ask questions the manageability of workload and its impact on staff wellbeing.
- **Casualisation:** This ask covers [the continuity of employment](#) and a move away from zero hour and temporary contracts to deliver teaching and services.
- **Equality Issues:** This ask covers a range of provisions to ensure equity in the workplace. Find out more [here](#).

More information on why the UCU are striking can be found here ([UCU - HE national disputes](#)).

The Students' Union's Position

The Students' Union has policy which generally supports the aims of these asks and collaborative work with Trade Unions. We will continue to lobby the university on our own policy and prioritise finding possible mitigation to minimize the impact of industrial action on students.

Impact of Students' Union Support for Strike Action

If students vote in favour of Students' Union support for strike action:

- The Students' Union will give full and public support to UCU
- Student Officers will support the cancelling of classes, lectures and teaching where staff members have chosen to strike
- Student Officers will attend and encourage other students to join the picket line when possible
- Student Officers will have very limited attendance at University meetings. (e.g., student disciplinary meetings, meetings about the strike action etc.)

If students vote against the Students' Union supporting the strikes, this means:

- Student Officers will not attend the picket line
- Student Officers will continue to attend university meetings as normal

Links:

[1] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/>

[2] <https://www.uss.co.uk/>

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/pension-types>

[4] <http://ucu.org.uk/article/11811/UUK-must-withdraw-pension-cuts-if-they-want-to-avoid-strikes-says-UCU>

[5] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/hepay>

[6] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/stampout>

[7] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/equality>

[8] <https://www.ucu.org.uk/hedisputes>

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.15. The Students' Union must make a decision on the strikes

Policy Title:	The Students' Union must make a decision on the strikes		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2022/1/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- The University and Colleges Union (UCU) have recently balloted for strike action over a dispute relating pay and working conditions.
- The ballot received a high turnout and overwhelming support for strike action.
- UCU membership includes many postgraduate student workers who are exploited by the ever-increasing marketisation of higher education - being forced to work unpaid hours and rely on precarious contracts.
- The National Union of Students (NUS) have called for Students' Unions to support the UCU strikes.

Council Believes:

- Time is of the essence and that we must make a decision on the level of support by the Union for the UCU strike.
- Students have been hit hard by the pandemic but so too have staff who have been forced to adjust to teaching, assessing and supervising online - while also being forced at times to work in unsafe classrooms during the pandemic.
- That academic staff have face years of repeated cuts to salaries, pensions, and been forced to sign precarious contracts.
- Student and staff solidarity has been historically, and continues to be, fundamental and been crucial during campaigning such as the 'Save Our Schools' campaign in 2016 which saved Sociology and Anthropology from being cut. Staff have also stood with Irish speaking students time and time again in favour of bilingual signage.
- Not supporting striking lecturers would cause unprecedented damage to the solidarity that has been built up between staff and students, and would also mean the Students' Union would be refusing to support striking postgraduate student members of UCU.

Therefore, this Council Affirms:

- The Students' Union will give full and public support for the UCU strike.
- Union Officers will attend the picket lines with striking staff as often as possible.
- Union Officers will have a very limited attendance at University meetings.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

1.16. Introduce Assessment and Feedback Calendars for All Students

Policy Title:	Introduce Assessment and Feedback Calendars for All Students		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2022/1/4	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- Queen’s University Belfast has repeatedly performed poorly in its NSS Scores relating to Assessment and Feedback, with QUB falling to 56% of students agreeing that feedback was timely last year (1).
- This shows that many students face untimely feedback after completing assessments, sometimes receiving feedback after their next similar assessment has already been completed which does not allow for sufficient improvement.
- Assessment and Feedback submission dates can be poorly communicated by Schools, with students being left unsure and anxious as 72% of students struggle with deadlines (2).
- During focus groups conducted by the VP Education, Academic Reps and students identified areas of improvement for academic feedback and every student endorsed the idea of an Assessment and Feedback calendar.
- These calendars should be readily accessible online, and will include module codes, the form of assessment, the date for assessment submission and the date of expected feedback. For example:

Module Code	Module Name	Assessment Type	Assessment Submission Date	Feedback and Marks Return Date

Council believes:

- Assessment and Feedback calendars should be implemented in every School and made readily available at the beginning of each term.
- The calendars will clearly depict incidences of bunched assessments, as it will provide dates across modules and joint degrees, and students will be able to raise it to staff as an issue well in advance.
- The calendars will also highlight if the student will not receive feedback before their next assessment submission and will be able to raise this as an issue with staff if reasonable explanations are not provided.
- It will empower students to study more effectively and manage their timetables efficiently.

Council mandates:

- The VP Education will liaise with the Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education and key members of staff to ensure the successful implementation of these calendars university wide.
 - The VP Education will continue to lobby against bunched deadlines and for quality feedback practices to be established university wide.
 - They should be introduced onto Canvas and built into modules' assessment pages.
1. NSS Data for QUB, OfS ([NSS data: provider-level - Office for Students](#))
 2. OMNI Report, QUBSU ([556341_b24ed2e75c2f414ba0ec25faa1820a2d.pdf](#) ([qubsu.org](#)))

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

SECTION 2: FUNDING ISSUES

2.01. Protecting the NHS

Policy Title:	Protecting the NHS		
Policy Reference:	FUN/2016/2/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council recognises the importance of the NHS to all students in this country, with particular importance to those studying medicine and nursing. This Council expresses its concern at recent Government action towards junior doctors and nursing students. This council states its opposition to:

- The ongoing reduction of bursaries for nursing students and the drive towards replacing bursaries with loans.
- The ongoing threat to social work bursaries.
- The attempts to implement a new contract for Junior Doctors which would increase working hours from 60 hours to 90 hours per week with a 30% cut in wages

This Council believes protecting the interests both of students and graduates falls under the remit of the Union. Equally this Council believes these changes would weaken the standard of care provided by the NHS by reducing the number of talented individuals able to work in the Service. Therefore council requests that the President and Vice President of Campaigns and Communications to:

- Lobby the both the Secretary of Health and the Northern Irish Minister for Health to reverse these proposals
- Support relevant trade unions such as the BMA and offer assistance to medical and nursing students in their campaigns against the proposed changes.

Date of Approval: 8 Feb 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Union President

2.02. Council Condemns Unnecessary Cuts by Queen’s University

Policy Title:	Council Condemns Unnecessary Cuts by Queen’s University		
Policy Reference:	FUN/2016/2/2	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

Council notes that the results of a recent FOI request have revealed that Queen’s University has introduced cuts to its budget of almost twice the amount the reduced funding from Stormont would require. This has led to job losses, academic or otherwise, and possible course closures and mergers that are simply unnecessary. Council refutes that an ambition to pursue ‘Vision 2020’ is a legitimate reason for ideologically driven budget cuts.

Council believes that universities should not be run like businesses or for profit, instead they should aim to foster a public good, academic excellence, critical thinking skills, a social conscience and the broadest and best education possible to its students. Council also believes that important decisions regarding the future direction of higher education at Queen’s should be driven by students and their needs, not by corporate concerns.

Council therefore condemns the decision by Queen’s to introduce unnecessary and damaging budget cuts and calls upon the university to provide to Council and the student body a more detailed justification as to why staff, courses and student support continue to suffer to bolster a marketisation agenda.

Date of Approval: 8 March 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

2.03. Supporting Students Living Costs

Policy Title:	Supporting Students Living Costs		
Policy Reference:	FUN/2017/2/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- There are a variety of reasons students may be entitled to Maintenance Loan Only. Students studying a three year course are generally entitled to four years of Student Finance, allowing them one repeat year as a result. Students who change course, or drop out only to resume studies later in life, along with those who suffer from medical conditions, disabilities or other compelling personal reasons, may use up their entitlement and be left in a position where they are entitled to Maintenance Loan Only.

Council recognises:

- Students who are entitled to Maintenance Loan Only may suffer from extreme hardship as a result. The Maintenance Loan itself does not even cover full tuition fee costs and leaves students with nothing to live on for the remainder of the year. Such students do not generally qualify for benefits, and support fund arrangements do not make a significant difference.
- This hardship is not made easier by the University expecting students to make tuition fee instalments before students even receive their student loan payments.
- This hardship can be particularly difficult for those students from low-income backgrounds and those suffering from medical conditions, disabilities and other compelling circumstances.

Council believes that no human being, student or otherwise, should be expected to live on nothing for an entire year.

Council mandates:

- The President, VP Equality & Diversity, VP Welfare and VP Education to lobby government to ensure that all students are provided with a basic income that will be sufficient to meet their basic needs.
- The President, VP Equality & Diversity, VP Welfare and VP Education to lobby the University to ensure students who receive Maintenance Loan Only no longer have to make tuition fee instalments prior to receiving their student loan payments, and to increase support fund payments to such students.

Date of Approval: 2 May 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

2.04. Supporting Nursing Staff, Students and Allied Health Professionals

Policy Title:	Supporting Nursing Staff, Students and Allied Health Professionals		
Policy Reference:	FUN/2019/2/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- Members of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) in Northern Ireland have voted overwhelmingly to take industrial action, including strike action, over the current nursing staffing crisis and pay discrepancies when compared to nurses working in England,
- Scotland and Wales. This is the first time in the history of the organisation that RCN members have voted to take strike action. 96% of those members who returned their ballot papers voted to take industrial action and 92% voted to take strike action (1) The total number of those balloted was around 8,000, with turnout of 43.3%. The main driver behind this decision is that staff feel all other avenues to advocate for building a safer health service have been exhausted and this is the only way to bring about the changes necessary to deliver the expected high standard of patient care.
- On December 3rd, 10th and 11th members of the RCN intend to take Industrial Action including not carrying out overtime, they will not work unpaid additional hours, they will not be answering phones, they will not be doing administrative tasks and will only complete paperwork directly related to patient care, and they will not be collecting bloods or pharmacy prescriptions in the community. This will subsequently be followed by full strike action on December 18th. The RCN will work with the employer to agree exemptions from taking action where there would otherwise be direct harm to patients or danger to the life or limb of any person. This means that members covering roles that are exempted are not expected to participate in strike action. (2)
- There are currently 3000 unfilled nursing staff vacancies within Health and social care
- Northern Ireland (1). Across the NHS 1 in 10 posts are vacant (3). A newly registered nurse in Northern Ireland currently earns £1,419 less each year than in England and
- Wales, and £1,875 less than in Scotland. This is a major contributing factor to the number of vacancies in the country, which in turn has a significant impact on patient care. (4)
- The British Medical Association is supportive of this action and is in agreement that “the current Northern Ireland nursing workforce is in crisis. Nursing staffing levels has a serious impact on service delivery and patient care as well as having a negative impact on the productivity of the medical workforce in many parts of the health and social care system.” (5) In particular Emergency Departments and the mental health sector are particularly affected by staff shortages (6).

- The Conservative Party, the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrat Party are standing on manifesto pledges to increase NHS funding if they are successful in the December 12th Parliamentary election
- Throughout their training Queen’s Nursing Students undertake regular clinical placements in which they contribute significantly to the care of patients. After they graduate they continue to contribute to the education of future nurses through acting as mentors and tutors for QUB students. Without the input of these mentors the QUB nursing programme would not function. Furthermore, nursing students spend half of their training in clinical practice placements, and due to staff shortages are being relied upon more and more when staffing the ward, even though they are supposed to be supernumerary. The effect of this on their learning is that they get less one to one time with their mentors and cannot always avail of learning opportunities such as going to theatre or observing procedures, which translates to poorer development of their clinical practice, due to the fact they are relied upon to essentially work as an unpaid nurse.
- There are very limited placement opportunities for current nursing students. The School of Nursing and Midwifery is finding it challenging to get all their students good quality placements despite the Nursing and Midwifery Council requiring all providers to offer student placements

Council believes:

- The NHS is a public service we should all be proud of, and one which serves a vital function in caring for all members of society in times of sickness, injury and other medical situations such as child-birth. The dedication and commitment of all NHS staff to their patients is to be commended, and the future of the NHS must be protected
- The high level of vacancies puts staff under considerable pressure with staff having to work extra shifts and many wards not being covered with the number of staff the Regulatory and Quality Improvement Authority (RQIA) sets out as being required. This leads to a detrimental impact on patient care (7)
- The training of nursing students by Queen’s University must not be compromised by using nursing student merely for service provision due to staffing shortages as it is vital that all students are fully trained, educated and prepared for the roles they will be fulfilling in the NHS in the coming years.
- Local political parties should advocate for an increase in local NHS spending to be prioritised on hiring and retaining nursing staff and allied health professionals to ensure all Northern Ireland hospitals are staffed to a safe level (as advised by RQIA)
- Nursing staff working in Northern Ireland should receive fair and equal pay, pensions and working conditions to those working across the rest of the United Kingdom

Council mandates:

- The SU President and Faculty Officer for MHLS shall write to the Minister of Health (or if one is not in place at the time, to leaders of all parties that stand in the upcoming
- December 12th election in Northern Ireland) along with the permanent secretary for health to outline our above concerns relating to patient care and to encourage them to take action to improve staff levels and working conditions for nurses and allied health professionals within the NHS; and to acknowledge the invaluable contribution being made by QUB nursing students to the NHS in Northern Ireland
- Executive Management Committee to lobby for an increase in the number of nursing course places made available by the University to help train additional nurses to fill vacancies and support this by advocating the Faculty Education Board to encourage more providers to facilitate more nursing students as they are duty bound to do by the Nursing and Midwifery Council
- SU Welfare Officer to release a press statement in support of nursing students and communicate via global email to all current QUB nursing students to advise on the outcome of this motion in order to communicate to students that the Students Union is fully aware of the concerns about NHS working conditions along with student placement difficulties and is using its voice to lobby for reforms on their behalf

References

1. NI, Royal College of Nurses. RCNNI. [Online] [Cited:] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/news-and-events/news/nurses-vote-to-take-industrial-action-including-strike>.
2. Ballot FAQs. RCN. [Online] [Cited:] <https://www.rcn.org.uk/northernireland/getinvolved/ballot/ballot-faqs>.
3. Smyth, Chris. NHS figures bad news for Tories. The Times. 2019. Vol. 14/11/19.
4. Nurses feel exploited and can take no more. RCN. 2019, s.l. : RCN Bulletin, Vol. August.
5. BMA. [Online] [Cited:] <https://www.bma.org.uk/news/media-centre/pressreleases/2019/november/bma-statement-on-rcn-vote-to-take-industrial-action-in-ni>.
6. Graham, Seanín. Mental health service shortages putting vulnerable patients at risk, campaigner warns. The Irish News. May 30th, 2019.
7. Smyth, Lisa. Shocking number of nurses giving up jobs in Northern Ireland. Belfast Telegraph. January 1st, 2018.

Date of Approval: Dec 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

2.05. Financial Support for Health & Social Care Students

Policy Title:	Financial Support for Health & Social Care Students		
Policy Reference:	FUN/2021/2/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- Students on health and social care-related degrees in NI do not receive payment for the work undertaken on mandatory educational placements throughout their degrees
- Many students are eligible for bursaries, but it is widely acknowledged that the bursaries available are insufficient to cover costs of living.
- Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, students on placement in health and social care settings have proven to be an invaluable resource in ensuring patient care and service user support.
- Queen’s University educates students across medicine, nursing, midwifery and social work degrees, who undertake regular, unpaid placements across NI in clinical, community and residential health and social care settings.
- The School of Nursing & Midwifery and the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences have the highest rates of students applying for the Student Support & Hardship Funds, with these students accounting for 38.1% of applications in 2019/20.

The council believes:

- students on health & social care degrees should receive financial support for the work they undertake on their educational placements.

The council mandates:

- QUBSU to work alongside UUSU and NUS-USI to lobby the NI Executive to provide increased funding for students in health & social care disciplines.

Date of Approval: 27 January 2021

Lapse Date: March 2024

Officer responsible: VP Welfare

2.06. The Students’ Union Calls on the University to Re-evaluate its Decision to Raise Student Accommodation Fees

Policy Title:	Emergency Motion: The Students’ Union Calls on the University to Re-evaluate its Decision to Raise Student Accommodation Fees		
Policy Reference:	FUN/2022/2/5	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- The University in mid-December indicated via the media that there will be an increase in student accommodation fees in the next academic year. Considering that these fees have not yet been implemented, the Student Union is empowered now to swiftly act and support the efforts by Student Officers to avoid fee increases
- The Students’ Union has long called on the University to suspend increases to student residential fees
- The Students’ Union and Student Officers have a demonstrated record of advocacy for equitable and affordable housing

This Council Further Notes:

- The Students’ Union reserves the right to organize protests surrounding the hyper-commercialization of housing costs at Queen’s Accommodation sites if the proposed increases move forward
- The University received nearly £50m in fees paid by international students in the last academic year
- The University has decided to continue to subsidise housing for only 800 rooms in halls, leaving a remaining expected 1,600 students without support
- The University cites utility costs for the fees increase; however, there has been little transparency from the University to support this claim
- It is highly likely that these fee increases will disproportionately impact international students – who remain critical to the University’s 2030 strategy – yet face additional hurdles securing alternative accommodation
- The NUS has denounced the commercialization and outpricing of student accommodation fees

The Council Believes:

- Students have been heavily financially impacted by the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic with access to limited savings and limited access to loans and borrowing schemes
- The University should stand by its commitment to providing affordable housing to students

- The University must commit to a robust and transparent review of its accommodation fees and collaborate with the Student Council on a sustainable and equitable fee system moving forward

Therefore, this Council Resolves:

- To reaffirm its commitment to equitable and affordable student housing
- To reaffirm its commitment to empowering the Student Union to support and engage with any and all campaigns to fight against the hyper-commercialization of accommodation fees
- The Student Union will request that the Director of Student Plus outline a plan in which student accommodation fees remain below market value indefinitely, in line with the University's commitment to providing affordable education and alignment with SDG 11
- Union Officers will develop a scheme for a student accommodation guarantor system, inclusive of international students, to support students forced to seek accommodation elsewhere

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

SECTION 3: WELFARE ISSUES

3.01. Availability of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)

Policy Title:	Availability of Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP)		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2017/3/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that:

1. Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) is a drug which reduces the risk of HIV infection in people who are at high risk by more than 90 per cent.
2. It is not currently available on the NHS.
3. PrEP is recommended by the World Health Organisation, UNAIDS, and US Centers for Disease Control.
4. HIV and AIDS diagnoses are increasing rapidly in the UK and Ireland.
5. Where PrEP has been made more widely available, the number of diagnoses have reduced.

Council supports:

1. The full introduction of PrEP which is accessible via the NHS.
2. The work of advocacy organisations who support the wider availability of PrEP.
3. The decision by the NI Assembly to support a motion calling for the Minister of Health to bring forward proposals to ensure that everyone in NI has access to PrEP.

Council Mandates:

1. The VP Equality & Diversity and VP Welfare to write to the Minister for Health to lobby for the introduction of PrEP to the NHS in each health trust.
2. To closely monitor the process by which decisions will be taken on this issue by governmental and health agencies.

Date of Approval: April 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: VP Equality & Diversity and VP Welfare

3.02. Accessibility for Students with Sensory Disorders to University Fairs

Policy Title:	Accessibility for Students with Sensory Disorders to University Fairs		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2018/3/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes that currently access to Freshers' Fairs, Employment Fairs, and Placement Fairs are inaccessible to students with sensory disorders such as Autism Spectrum Disorder due to their massive crowds. The Union should implement a system to make sure that these events are accessible to everyone.

This motion calls on Council to introduce a system where students who otherwise couldn't, can access these events. The finer details as to how this will be implemented should be decided in conjunction with disability services.

Date of Approval: 12 February 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.03. Union to Publish Material Detailing its Accessibility Arrangements

Policy Title:	Union to Publish Material Detailing its Accessibility Arrangements		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2018/3/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council calls on QUBSU to provide more resources and publish more information about what is available to those with access needs such as wheelchair accessible toilets. This information should also be published for the decant facility (the former ELTC) and for the new student centre when it has been completed.

Additionally, QUBSU should support other parts of the university in publishing all relevant accessibility information for its buildings, as it plans to do so in the upcoming months through DisabledGo.

Date of Approval: 15 May 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.04. Presidential Voting Rights for Irish Citizens

Policy Title:	Presidential Voting Rights for Irish Citizens		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2018/3/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that:

- The President of Ireland represents every Irish citizen at home and abroad.
- The Good Friday Agreement upholds the right of people in the North/Northern Ireland to Irish citizenship and to provide equal treatment for the identity, ethos, and aspirations of both communities in this part of Ireland.
- Ireland is one of the very few countries that deny citizens abroad the right to vote.
- Irish students that permanently live in the North/Northern Ireland do not have the right to vote in Presidential elections.
- In 2013, the Irish Constitutional Convention recommended that citizens in the North/Northern Ireland, and abroad, should have the right to vote in Presidential Elections.
- In 2014 the European Commission called on the Irish government to grant voting rights to Irish citizens and outlined multiple ways in which this can be achieved.
- The Irish government has committed to holding a referendum in May 2019 on the extension of presidential voting rights to Irish Citizens in the North/Northern Ireland, and abroad.

Council believes that:

- Granting voting rights to Irish citizens in the North/Northern Ireland, and abroad, will enhance democracy.
- The granting of presidential voting rights for Irish citizens, will result in equal citizenship, which will be a positive advancement for everyone in Irish life.
- The Irish Constitution should be amended to give Irish citizens in the North/Northern Ireland, and abroad, the right to vote in Presidential elections.

Council instructs:

- The Students Union to actively campaign for the Irish government to follow through on their commitment to hold a referendum on this issue.
- The Students Union to actively campaign, with others, during the referendum for Presidential voting rights to be extended.

Date of Approval: 13 November 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.05. Support of Parents due to Miscarriage and Stillbirth

Policy Title:	Support of Parents due to Miscarriage and Stillbirth		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2019/3/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- An estimated 1 in 4 pregnancies end in miscarriage (the loss of a pregnancy during the first 23 weeks - NHS UK) in the UK, with rates of between 15%, 16% and 18% in women of 20, 25 and 30 years respectively.
- That around 1 in 100 women in the UK experience recurrent miscarriages (three or more miscarriages in a row).
- In 2017 1 in every 225 births ends in a stillbirth (when a baby is born dead after 24 completed weeks of pregnancy - NHS UK,) in the UK which equates to 9 babies every day.
- That in 2016 Northern Ireland had a rate of 3.4 stillbirths per 1,000 births (the lowest on record) compared to the UK average of 4.2 per 1,000 in 2017 (also the lowest on record). However, this is a higher rate than other European countries such as Croatia, Poland and the Czech Republic.
- That around 60% of stillbirths are unexplained and around 50% of recurrent miscarriage causes are unknown.
- That around half of parents who have suffered a stillbirth feel they should not talk about their stillborn baby because it makes others feel "uncomfortable" and two-thirds of parents feel that the people around them believe most stillbirths are unavoidable.

Council Believes That:

- Each of these miscarriages and stillbirths are a tragedy and offers condolences to any person, especially students, that have gone through such an experience.
- The loss of 9 babies per day in the United Kingdom due to still birth is still 9 too many.
- Women and pregnant people should feel able to talk about any issue, including going through a miscarriage or stillbirth, openly and honestly without a stigma against them and Men should also feel able to talk about their loss.
- The Government department for Health and the Health and social care trusts within NI must continue to strive to work towards reducing the rate of miscarriages and stillbirths within NI by conducting research and raise awareness of risks. Charities such as
- SANDS (Stillbirth & neonatal death charity) do an exceptionally good work by
- supporting bereaving parents.

Council Resolves That:

- The Students' Union shall engage with the "Baby loss awareness week" campaign from the 9th-15th October every year to reduce stigma of miscarriage

and stillbirths as well as stand in solidarity with those who have gone through or are going through this difficult time.

- The Vice President - Welfare shall write to the Minister for Health (or if one is not in place at the time, to party leaders) to encourage them to take action to ensure that all parents who experience pregnancy or baby loss and need specialist psychological support can access it, at a time and place that is right for them, free of charge, wherever they live; and to call for better established perinatal care and testing in early pregnancy.

References:

1. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/miscarriage/>
2. <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stillbirth/>
3. <https://www.tommys.org/our-organisation/charity-research/pregnancy-statistics/miscarriage>
4. <https://www.tommys.org/our-organisation/charity-research/pregnancy-statistics/stillbirth>
5. <https://www.sands.org.uk/baby-loss-awareness-week>
6. <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2018/09/06/lucy-selman-reducing-preventable-stillbirth-rates-in-the-uk/>

Date of Approval: Nov 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.06. Mental Health Charter

Policy Title:	Mental Health Charter		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2020/3/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This proposal is supported by a number of additional reference papers.

- The University Mental Health Charter (Full Charter) (SUC/P/20/1)
- The University Mental Health Charter Summary) (SUC/P/20/2)
- Charter Information Leaflet Text (SUC/P/20/3)

Council notes:

- There has been great political, public and professional concern in recent years about student mental health. In the past year QUBSU has undertaken a significant survey into student mental health (OMNI) and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust has launched a Student Mental Health team.
- Current figures state that each year in Britain an estimated one in four adults will experience at least one diagnosable mental health problem, though only 230 of every 300 will actually visit their GP (NHS England data)
- A 2013 major NUS survey with 1,093 students discussing mental health on behalf of the all-party parliamentary group (APPG) showed: - 78 percent of respondents said they believe they have experienced mental health problems in the last year, (whether diagnosed or undiagnosed). - 87 per cent have felt stress; 77 per cent have suffered anxiety; and, 69 percent have felt depressed in the last year. - 33 per cent have had suicidal thoughts – around double the figure (17%) for the general population. Of respondents who did not identify as heterosexual, 55% reported suicidal thoughts. Results from our own OMNI survey are awaited but likely to show similar findings.
- Data from the Office for Students has demonstrated that students experiencing mental illness are more likely to withdraw from university, to underperform academically and are less likely to secure higher level employment or go on to post-graduate study. Most significantly, it is estimated that in 2017/18, 95 students took their own lives across the UK.
- There has been great political, public and professional concern in recent years about student mental health. The mental wellbeing reported by university students is among the lowest across the population and the sector has seen a dramatic rise in help-seeking, with some institutions reporting that one in four of their students are either being seen or are waiting to be seen by the university counselling service (IPPR, 2017). Whilst further research is required, experts have connected this to a range of academic, social and financial pressures. While much of the focus of concern has been directed towards undergraduate students, recent research has moved attention towards the whole university community. Studies suggest that the mental health of many post-graduate students may also be poor, with elements of their university life, such as supervision, identity, preparation and belonging, being highlighted as important for mental health.

- Mental health is a critical factor in student and staff retention and success. Universities, as a community setting, present an opportunity to change people's health outcomes for life. As well as responding to illness, we need to promote and improve the mental health and wellbeing of all members of the university community.
- Student Minds have put together a Mental Health Charter (see papers SUC/P/20/1 – Full Charter; SUC/P/20/2 – Charter Summary, SUC/P/20/3 – Charter Information Leaflet Text) in order to help universities work to improve mental health in an evidence based manner that is flexible and adaptable to local situations and is not merely a checklist but which leans heavily on quality improvement and shared learning principles.
- The Charter focuses on four domains – Learn, Support, Live, Work. Each domain is broken down into a number of themes with an explanation of the issues currently faced that affect student mental health and wellbeing, along with suggestions of strategies for improvement and principles of best practice.
- Student Minds have been working to improve the mental health and wellbeing of students and university communities since 2008. They now work with over 120 universities across the UK, supported by national research, policy and campaigning work. They have worked with advisors including Professor Jo Smith (Chartered Clinical Psychologist, member of The Alliance for Student Led Wellbeing), Gareth Hughes (Psychotherapist and Research Lead for Student Wellbeing at the University of Derby), Professor Janet Treasure PhD FRCP MRCPsych OBE (psychiatrist), Dr Dominique Thompson (GP, Director of University of Bristol Students' Health Service 2010-17), Dr Denise Meyer (Chartered Counselling Psychologist), Stuart Read (Community Programmes Manager at Mind), Dr Katharine Rimes (clinical psychologist, Academic Director in Clinical Psychology King's College London). The Charter is being developed in partnership with Universities UK, National Union of Students, the Office for Students, SMaRteN and AMOSSHE and supported by key stakeholders in the Department of Education. The UPP Foundation and the Office for Students have provided funding for the Charter and support the ongoing governance of the project.
- This charter covers a broad range of points that will allow universities to reflect on current practice and highlight opportunities for enhancement. It offers the incentive universities need to go beyond baseline requirements and invest time and resources into driving ongoing improvement and developing good practice. It also provides a mechanism for identifying and disseminating examples of effective practice to facilitate sector-wide learning. It will be supported by an Award Scheme, a voluntary scheme that will assess universities progress against the principles of good practice within the Charter, supporting participating universities to identify opportunities for improvement, as well as recognising and rewarding example of excellent practice.

Council believes:

- The new Student Minds Mental Health Charter is a meaningful scheme designed to improve outcomes for all students and ensure universities

understand what good practice looks like in improving mental health and wellbeing. The Charter will be an important tool to support cultural change in universities, improve wellbeing outcomes for students, university staff and their local communities and ensure mental health does not fall off the Higher Education policy agenda.

- Given that we have previously identified Student Mental health as a significant issue, and it is important that it is tackled in an evidence based manner with learning shared across the sector it would be of great benefit to QUBSU to sign up to this national charter at an early stage and work towards achieving accreditation status via the Award Scheme.
- Given that this Charter is a national initiative with significant backing it will carry substantial prestige and is likely to attract interest from many universities. Given the good work we have already done to make improvements to student and staff mental health it is therefore important we sign up to the Charter in order to ensure our efforts receive the recognition they deserve, and to ensure as a University that QUB does not become complacent but continues to seek to improve how it handles mental health and well-being and is able to take advantage of shared learning from other universities across the UK.

Council mandates:

- Queen’s University Students Union signing up to the Student Minds Mental Health Charter
- The Executive Management Committee to apply to the Charter Award Scheme as a candidate for the 2020 pilot, and if unsuccessful to sign up when the full national roll-out launches
- Working with Senate, Faculty Boards and the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Student Mental Health Team to ensure there is cross-spectrum support for our efforts to achieve Charter Award status

A copy of the papers referenced in this policy may be requested by contacting the Students’ Union.

Date of Approval: Jan 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.07. Universal Gym Membership

Policy Title:	Universal Gym Membership		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2020/3/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- That various universities across the country including Trinity, UCD and UCC give universal gym membership to their students. Said memberships are paid via the students' contribution fees. This policy even expands to low income students exempt from paying contribution fees.
- That 37% and 27.5% of adults in the North of Ireland are obese and overweight respectively. These figures have been on an upward trend since the DoH began its annual Health Survey in 2011. These are the highest figures in Ireland.
- In 2012 a DOH study found that obesity alone costs the taxpayer £370 million a year.
- That people from a working-class background are three times more likely to be obese and overweight.
- That exercise plays a major role in combating our obesity epidemic
- Exercise has additional benefits to mental health by helping relive stress and help combat depression.
- That the removal of universal gym membership in IT Tralee lead to a 25% decrease in students availing of the gym in Tralee's Sport's Complex.
- PEC peak time membership for students costs £25.50 per a month, while off peak time membership costs £16.50 per a month.
- That students residing in QUB accommodation currently avail of off-peak PEC membership.

Council believes:

- That current pricing of gym membership only adds to the monthly costs of students adding to economic anxiety.
- The current pricing of gym membership is exclusionary to students from a working-class background.
- The current scenario in which QUB accommodation residents can avail of off-peak PEC membership creates a two-tiered system which is fundamentally unfair
- The universal PEC membership would be beneficial the physical and mental health of the student body.

Council Mandates:

- That the Students' Union executive lobbies the PEC and the University to establish universal peak time PEC membership to all students.
- That the Union President and Welfare Officer raise this issue directly with the Head of Queen's Sport and with the Director of Student Plus.

- That the Union’s position regarding support for universal PEC membership is effectively communicated to all students and the public via its channels.
- That the Students’ Union executive lobbies the University to work in partnership with PEC and other local gyms to deliver this in a cost effective manner and ensure there is capacity for the increased number of students likely to avail of this with no reduction in services offered.

Date of Approval: Jan 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.08. Mental Health Care Reform Advocacy

Policy Title:	Mental Health Care Reform Advocacy		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2020/3/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- Mental health is a significant issue within Northern Ireland at present
- Mental illness is most likely to emerge for the first presentation in people aged 16-25, which corresponds to the age of many of our students
- OMNI survey data has shown mental illness to be a major issue among students, with 71% of respondents feeling their quality of life was impacted by their mental health while at QUB
- Despite Northern Ireland having a higher rate of suicide than all other regions of the UK, and the poorest mental health ratings in the UK and Ireland, it allocates the lowest proportion of its health budget to mental health (1) (2)
- Action Mental Health partnered with Queen’s University on a study that reported that psychiatric support services in Northern Ireland are systemically failing the needs of the mentally unwell (2)
- Health care within Northern Ireland is a devolved issue, and all areas of the Health and Social Care Service have been experiencing significant challenges over recent years, exacerbated by the fact that for three years the NI Assembly was not sitting (from January 2017 – January 2020)
- There have now been more people who have died by suicide in Northern Ireland since the signing of the Belfast Agreement in 1998 than died during 30 years of the Troubles. (1)

Council Believes:

- Mental health is an issue that affects all communities and people of all ages, educational background and profession; however, given the fact that the age a person is most likely to develop a mental illness for the first time corresponds to the age of many of our students, and given that it has been found that student mental health is among the lowest of society, we have a particular need to advocate for improvements to Mental Health care on behalf of our students who currently are suffering from, or will develop, mental illness during their time at QUB. We believe by campaigning for these changes it would benefit not only our students, but the wider Northern Ireland population, and so this would show our university to be concerned with improving the well-being of the population, and highlight how concerned we as students are by the increasing crisis in mental health in our country.
- The Royal College of Psychiatrists (the regulatory body that is over all Psychiatrists working within the UK, and which works closely with the College of Irish Psychiatrists) produced a 11 point manifesto in the run-up to the 2019 UK election, calling for evidence based changes to how mental health care is provided. (3)
- These requests are:

- Provide high quality care close to home
- Make the NHS a great place to work
- End the NHS pensions crisis
- Double the number of medical school places
- Give mental health a fair share of capital spending so patients can be treated safely and with dignity
- Give every patient with mental illness their own private room
- Change the way we commission addictions services to provide joined up care to those who suffer from mental illness as well as addictions
- Point 8 not relevant to Northern Ireland due to our new Mental Capacity Act
- A cross-governmental mental health strategy overseen by a Cabinet Committee
- Tackle the mental health social care crisis
- Invest in research to find better treatments for mental illness
- The Northern Ireland Branch of the Royal College of Psychiatrists supplemented this by re-circulating their 2016 Assembly election manifesto, which further calls for: (4)
 - Appointing a Champion for Mental Health
 - Funding the physical health needs of individuals with mental illness and learning disability
 - Ensure that all those who suffer from severe mental illness are offered ongoing multi-disciplinary, evidence-based care
 - Introduce a minimum price per unit for alcohol of 50p
- Furthermore in their most recent election manifesto from 2016 the College of Irish Psychiatrists calls for: (5)
 - 24/7 Community mental health teams for all ages nationally
 - Multi-Disciplinary Team Development, Training & Retention in Mental Health
 - Nurturing the Mental Health of the Future Generation
 - A Mental Health Information Technology System is Urgently Needed
- Each of these manifestos are supported by references and suggestions as to how they should be acted on
- Every student deserves access to high quality, appropriately resourced mental health care. We have a duty to speak up and advocate for the above changes to be made to ensure this is provided in Northern Ireland in order to ensure our students have access to quality mental health care and do not feel disadvantaged due to choosing to study in Belfast as opposed to other parts of the United Kingdom or Ireland.

Council Mandates:

- Given that we now have a functioning Assembly that can deal with the devolved issue of Mental Health within the wider picture of Health Care within Northern Ireland we mandate the VP Welfare and the MHLS Faculty Officer to utilise all available channels at NUS, USI and NUSI to bring motions to those councils and advocate that these unions lobby at Stormont for the full implementation of the Royal College of Psychiatry and College of Irish Psychiatrists election

manifestos in Northern Ireland in order to improve the level of care available within the NHS for any of our students, staff, alumni, family or friends who suffer from mental illnesses at any time.

- MHLS faculty officer to write to the Royal College of Psychiatrists and College of Irish Psychiatrists to express our solidarity with their burden to see mental health care reformed

References:

1. [Online] <https://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/commons-select/northern-ireland-affairs-committee/news-parliament-2017/ni-health-funding-evidence-17-194/>.
2. AMH. [Online] <https://www.amh.org.uk/news/research-warns-mental-health-services-are-on-the-cusp-of-crisis/>.
3. RCPsych. [Online] https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/docs/default-source/improving-care/better-mh-policy/parliamentary/rcpsych-manifesto-2019.pdf?sfvrsn=b95b0d21_2.
4. RCPsychNI. [Online] <https://www.nicva.org/sites/default/files/d7content/attachments-articles/rcpsych-ireland-manifesto-final-012.pdf>.
5. Irish College. [Online] <https://www.irishpsychiatry.ie/eap/manifesto-for-the-2016-general-election/>.

Date of Approval: Feb 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.09. Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) Training for Student Officers

Policy Title:	Mental Health First Aide (MHFA) Training for Student Officers		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2020/3/4	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- Northern Ireland is currently facing a mental health crisis and students across the UK are increasingly reporting mental health difficulties
- In 2015/16, 15,395 UK-domiciled first-year students disclosed a mental health condition – almost five times the number in 2006/07. (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2017)
- Just under half of students who report experiencing a mental health condition choose not to disclose it to their university (Institute for Public Policy Research, 2017)
- This evidence suggests that there are many students dealing with mental health difficulties not in contact with disability services. It is important that Student Officers feel confident when interacting with students experiencing mental health difficulties to ensure the correct language is used and gain skills in identifying students in crisis
- One study found that one of the main reasons students do not disclose their mental health conditions is they do not think they would receive any support. This training will allow officers to meet students where they are at and signpost on to the relevant services. (Equality Challenge Unit, 2015)
- Kings College London provides MHFA training for student-facing staff members as part of a £500,000 pledge to tackle the student mental health crisis.

Council believes:

- Student officers are in contact with a wide range of students from across the university. It is important that officers are better equipped to identify students in a crisis and use appropriate language to support and signpost students to the appropriate support services
- Student officers are not expected to diagnose or treat students experiencing mental health difficulties however MHFA training will enable officers to recognise signs/symptoms when interacting with students.

Council mandates:

- The Students Union to fund and source a qualified service provider to deliver Mental Health First Aid Training to all Sabbatical and Non-Sabbatical Officers at the beginning of their elected term.

References:

1. Institute for Public Policy Research - <https://www.ippr.org/files/2017-09/not-by-degrees-summary-sept-2017-1-.pdf>
2. Equality Challenge Unit: https://www.ecu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/ECU_Understanding-adjustments.pdf

Date of Approval: Feb 2020
Lapse Date: Mar 2023
Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.10. Reproductive Justice

Policy Title:	Reproductive Justice		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2020/3/5	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes the following:

- Abortion was decriminalised in Northern Ireland in October 2019 under The Northern Ireland (Executive Formation etc) Act 2019 (NI EF Act), and a new framework to provide lawful access to abortion services in Northern Ireland must be created by 31 March 2020.
- The NI EF Act states that this new framework must be informed by paragraphs 85 and 86 of the United Nations CEDAW report of March 2018.
- In the absence of local abortion access, Northern Ireland residents must travel to receive abortion care. During 2018-19, 8 abortions were performed in NI hospitals while 28 people a week travelled from Northern Ireland to Great Britain to access abortion.
- Abortion access is restricted by factors other than criminalisation such as stigma, conscientious objection, rural health deprivation, and barriers relating to gender identity, migrant status, disability, or socio-economic class.

Council further notes:

- Protests outside healthcare facilities intimidate patients and staff within the facilities, and cause significant emotional distress.
- The concept of reproductive justice includes the right not to have a child; the right to have a child; and the right to parent children in safe and healthy environments.
- Reproductive justice is an intersectional framework which aims to address the specific barriers that marginalised groups face in accessing equal reproductive and sexual healthcare e.g. the UK maternal mortality rate is five times higher among Black women than white women.
- Core components of reproductive justice include equal access to safe abortion, affordable contraceptives, comprehensive sex education, and freedom from sexual violence.
- The work currently being done by students' unions and grassroots organisations across the rest of the U.K. and Ireland to decriminalise abortion in England and Wales, to reform abortion and sex education legislation in the Republic of Ireland, and the campaigns for reproductive justice in Argentina, Gibraltar and throughout the world.

Council believes that:

- Access to reproductive healthcare is a student welfare issue. The lack of free, safe, and local access to abortion services in Northern Ireland can significantly impact the personal and academic lives of students with unintended pregnancies. The inaccessibility of abortion in Northern Ireland places an undue burden on students in an already stressful situation.

- A commitment to reproductive justice is essential to ensure that every student of this university has equal access to reproductive and sexual healthcare.
- No healthcare professional should be criminalised for providing reproductive healthcare services, including abortion services.
- Safe access zones must be created to safeguard the rights of staff, patients and members of the public to enter healthcare facilities without fear of harassment or intimidation.

Council thus resolves:

- To campaign for reproductive justice and for all barriers to accessing reproductive and sexual health services to be eliminated. This will involve campaigning for:
 - Safe access zones so that no person will be harassed, intimidated, or shamed when seeking healthcare.
 - Abortion access that is completely in line with the CEDAW recommendations, and is free, safe, and local. This will take into consideration the barriers that groups such as transgender people, migrants, international students, disabled people, and those from lower socio-economic backgrounds face when seeking abortion care.
- To maintain a strong relationship with organisations including but not limited to Alliance for Choice and Doctors for Choice NI in campaigning for free, safe, and local abortion services, safe access zones, and against the potential criminalisation of healthcare professionals.
- To stand in solidarity with reproductive justice movements globally and to support all campaigns for the decriminalisation of abortion worldwide.

Date of Approval: May 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.11. Universal Basic Income Trial

Policy Title:	Universal Basic Income Trial		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2020/3/6	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes the following:

- The latest Northern Ireland Composite Economic Index indicates that economic output decreased by 13.6% in real terms over the quarter to June 2020. Meanwhile economic output in the year to June 2020 decreased by 17.8% compared to the same period in the previous year. Furthermore, from October 1st, 2019 - 30th September 2020 with nearly 9,000 redundancies proposed (2nd highest annual total on record) it is clear that the Northern Ireland economy is facing a crisis. Universal Credit is not fit for purpose to provide the levels of social security and financial well-being required to ensure basic needs are met and that households have the consumer confidence required to spend in order to kickstart the required economic recovery.

Council further notes:

- During the last global recession, the group hardest hit were young people with youth unemployment rising over 1 million people in the age-group 16-24. This trend is likely to be repeated amidst the economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic as a study in March from the Institute of Student Employers 27% stated that at the time that they would be recruiting less graduates in the near future. In addition, the imminent recession may well, as suggested by the Institute of Fiscal Studies, result not only in graduates finding it less difficult to find work but under such circumstances, having to settle for lower paid non-graduate level occupations.

Council believes that:

- This Council recognises the need for a reformed, fairer welfare system that protects everyone in society. It recognises the need to provide economic security for all and invest in people to protect livelihoods and kickstart the economy.
- Therefore, this Council calls on the Departments of Communities and Finance and the UK Treasury to design and deliver a recovery Universal Basic Income (UBI) for Northern Ireland.
- Additionally, this Council supports in principle the investigation of a full, permanent UBI for Northern Ireland, recognising the need for a radical overhaul of the welfare state and the positive impact this would have on poverty alleviation, inequality and mental health in particular.

Council resolves that:

- Council to write a letter to both the Minister for Communities and Finance expressing its support for Universal Basic Income (UBI) and calls on their departments to design a recovery UBI for Northern Ireland.
- Council to request that the University financially supports efforts to produce a feasibility study for how a pilot of a full UBI would be implemented and formally expresses its support for said pilot.
- Council to request that the University will contact academics working in this research at Queen's to support delivery of this study.

Date of Approval: 16 Nov 2020
Lapse Date: March 2024
Officer responsible: Union President

3.12. Period Poverty

Policy Title:	Period Poverty		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2021/3/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- Period poverty is the lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints. (1)
- In the UK, 1 in 10 people who menstruate can't afford to buy menstrual products, while 1 in 7 have struggled to afford them. (2)
- Almost a third of people who menstruate aged 14-21 have had issues either affording or accessing period products during COVID-19 lockdowns. (3)
- Scotland recently became the first government in the world to legally require the provision of free period products to anyone who requires them. (4)
- Period products will be introduced free in schools in NI from 2021-22 (5)

Council further notes:

- Lack of access to period products can have a significant detrimental impact on students' university attendance, therefore potentially impacting academic attainment.

Council believes:

- That people who menstruate should be able to access period products for free, as they are an essential healthcare item.

Council mandates:

- QUBSU to work with other Students' Unions to collaborate on lobbying efforts to combat period poverty nationally.
- QUBSU to identify means of ensuring free period products are available to any student who may need them.

Date of Approval: 27 January 2021

Lapse Date: March 2024

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

Footnotes:

1. Royal College of Nursing, <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/womens-health/promoting-menstrual-wellbeing/period-poverty>
2. Plan International UK, <https://plan-uk.org/media-centre/plan-international-uks-research-on-period-poverty-and-stigma>
3. Plan International UK - <https://plan-uk.org/period-poverty-in-lockdown>
4. BBC - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-51629880>
5. BBC - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-55339850>

3.13. The SU and Council to Declare Gender-Based violence an Emergency

Policy Title:	The SU and Council to Declare Gender-Based violence an Emergency		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2022/3/8	Policy Status:	Not Closed

TW: discusses sexual violence and gender-based violence more broadly.

The UNCHR defines gender-based violence as “harmful acts directed at an individual based on their gender” . We know that women and girls experience this disproportionately. The World Bank suggests that GBV affects 1 in 3 women - although it is important to note that this unfairly affects minority genders too. GBV describes a myriad of behaviours including those that impose physical, mental, sexual or economic harm.

We are calling on you to vote for the SU to declare gender-based violence an emergency. According to Revolt Sexual Assault, 62% of students across UK universities have experienced sexual violence. Within this NUS found that 70% of female students and 61% of non-binary students had experienced sexual assault. Furthering this research in October by the University of Kent found that in a group of 554 male students interviewed 63 admitted that they had committed a total of 251 instances of sexual assault, rape and other coercive or unwanted behaviour in the last 2 years.

To make this more specific, we know from data collected in 2018 SCORE found that 170 students had victims of sexual assault at QUB and a further 246 were victims of attempted sexual assault. Last year research also found that there has been an 750% increase in human trafficking across NI in the last 8 years. This also constitutes gender-based violence.

The recent murders of Ashling Murphy, Sarah Everard and Sabina Nessa have brought GBV to the forefront of media coverage and the public eye. Yet it goes without saying that it always has been at the forefront for women and minority genders.

Therefore, we believe it is time for the SU and Council to take responsibility and take a stand to declare this as an emergency. To ensure that the safety of students is being made a priority for everyone until it is no longer an issue. The members of the Feminist & Equality Society feel incredibly strongly that the safety of women and minority genders should not be up for discussion, and we feel that by declaring an emergency and taking subsequent action the SU and Council will make victims of GBV feel heard, seen and taken seriously. As well as preventing this altogether for students moving forward.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022
 Lapse Date: Mar 2025
 Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.14. Support for Student Parents and Carers

Policy Title:	Support for Student Parents and Carers		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2022/3/9	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- QUB currently has no formal process for student parents and carers to receive an ISA (individual support agreement). This means there is no formal process for Student parents and carers to request reasonable adjustment such as 48hr extensions on assignments etc.
- Currently disability services operate the exceptional circumstances procedure under a disability framework which includes legal obligation to mitigate barriers to education which arise from disability.
- This results in student parents and carers being neglected in terms of the support they can access from the university and no specific mitigation is given to student parents and carers to help them balance their parental/caring responsibilities and academic progression.

Council Believes:

- Parental/Caring responsibilities should not prevent students from achieving their academic potential and the university should provide mitigations to ensure this.
- Flexibility embedded in a formal process of specific exceptional circumstances process for student parents and carers would provide significant mitigation against these barriers.
- Achieving formal ISA (Individual Support agreements) for student parents and carers would promote gender equality within university structures. As well as encourage more applications and academic progression for parents and carers fostering heightened accessibility of university level education at QUB.

Council Mandates:

- The Students' Union formally acknowledges the disproportionate impact of academic disruption such as COVID-19 pandemic and industrial action by UCU on student parents and carers.
- The Students' Union continue to lobby the university on establishing a formal process for students who are parents and carers to achieve an

ISA which allows for academic mitigations such as 48 hour extensions on assignments.

- Student Officers to engage with university management and student stakeholders to ensure that appropriate consultation on the needs of parents and carers is undertaken.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

3.15. Support for the Campaign to Ban Conversion Therapy

Policy Title:	Support for the Campaign to Ban Conversion Therapy		
Policy Reference:	WEL/2022/3/12	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- Conversion Therapy is classified as “degrading, inhuman and cruel” by the United Nations.
- The assembly called for the Minister for Communities to bring forth legislation before the end of the assembly mandate, which unfortunately did not occur.
- The UK Government have stated that they will ban conversion therapy but have excluded therapy targeted at Trans people.
- It was revealed in 2019, that conversion therapy had been practiced on students at QUB including electro-shock therapy, a university spokesperson expressed ‘regret’ but refused to answer key questions posed by the Rainbow project around what had happened, the time period, number of people affected etc.

Council Believes:

- QUBSU should stand against the practice of conversion therapy and join the coalition to support calls for legislation.
- Any legislation banning the practice should be inclusive of trans people and their experiences of this practice and we should advocate for this inclusion whenever possible.

Council Mandates:

- QUBSU will engage in the campaign against conversion therapy, join the coalition and sign any public letters of support for the campaign
- QUBSU will lobby the university to investigate its role in conversion therapy and provide LGBTQ+ community with answers. QUBSU will lobby for Queens to issue an apology for their role in conversion therapy and a clear statement offering support and guidance to their LGBTQ+ students should they need it.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

SECTION 4: DEMOCRACY, GOVERNANCE (LOCAL AND NATIONAL) AND REPRESENTATION

4.01. Women in Leadership in the Union

Policy Title:	Women in Leadership in the Union		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2015/4/1	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

This Council notes the serious lack of representation of women in leadership positions across society and believes that this is something that needs to improve.

Council notes the excellent work that is being done by our three national unions in promoting leadership in underrepresented groups of students.

Council commends the officer boards of NUS-USI, NUS and USI for focusing on promoting Women in Leadership and particularly commends the intersectionality aspect that these campaigns have taken.

Council believes that these campaigns have successfully led to a more diverse range of candidates and officers elected to our national unions.

Council believes that it is important that our sabbatical officer team is reflective of the diverse nature of our student body.

Council instructs the Executive Management Committee to prioritise diversifying the sabbatical elections and work on breaking down the barriers to elections that exists for underrepresented groups, particularly women, lgbt+ students and international students.

Council also instructs the Executive Management Committee to facilitate an environment where these groups can come together to share their experiences and contribute to the discussion of breaking down the barriers to elections.

Date of Approval: 6 May 2015

Lapse Date: March 2022

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

4.02. Queen's University Belfast Students' Union Autonomy

Policy Title:	Queen's University Belfast Students' Union Autonomy		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2015/4/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that the University has the power to overturn democratic decisions made by the Students' Union Council, as seen by the decision to overturn the removal of the Academic Standing Rule endorsed by Council in the last academic year.

Council recognises that the relationship between Queen's University and the Students' Union is unique in comparison to the autonomous relationship between these institutions in the UK and Ireland.

Council endorses an autonomous Students' Union and instructs the Executive Management Committee to liaise with NUS-USI, MLAs and other authorities to ensure that the Students' Union become independent from the University within the next five years.

Date of Approval: 17 November 2015

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

4.03. QUBSU Supporting the Removal of the Academic Standing Rule

Policy Title:	QUBSU Supporting the Removal of the Academic Standing Rule		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2016/4/1	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

Council notes that in previous years, this council has voted to remove the academic standing rule from the constitution.

Council notes with concern that this rule disproportionately affects the opportunities for disabled and bereaved students, as well as those with caring responsibilities from participating fully in the democratic processes of the union, and acts as a barrier for those students in running for election as student officers.

Council asserts that no student, whether they have failed or deferred assignments, should be barred from running for election as a student officer.

Council reaffirms its commitment to the complete removal of this rule, and rejects moves taken by the University Senate to undermine the autonomy of the Union, and dictating who can and cannot run for election to represent the best interests of students at Queen's.

Council calls upon the University Senate to respect the autonomy and democratic mandate of the Students' Union, this Council and student referenda which all support the removal of the academic standing rule.

Date of Approval: 8 March 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

Note: An amendment to the Constitution to remove the 'good academic standing' requirement for Executive Management Committee elections was approved by Council at a Special Meeting held on 17 April 2018. The proposed amended is scheduled to be considered by Student Members via a referendum and will then be put forward for consideration by the University Senate on Tuesday 19 June 2018.

4.04. An Autonomous and Independent Students' Union

Policy Title:	An Autonomous and Independent Students' Union		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2017/4/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes:

1. That the vast majority of Students' Unions in the UK and Ireland are independent, autonomous membership organisations, established to represent the views of its members, individually and collectively
2. That Students' Unions exist to promote, extend and defend the rights of students
3. That the Education Act 1994 allows Students' Unions the legal right to exist, to be recognised, and to operate independently of their institution
4. That the relevant provisions of the Education Act 1994 have not been extended or devolved to the Stormont Assembly
5. That the Union of Students in Ireland (USI) Constitution states: "USI shall defend the right of students' unions to be autonomous, democratic, student led organisations"
6. That the National Union of Students (NUS) Diagnostic Report, conducted in 2015-16, recommended that Queen's Students' Union and Queen's University Belfast give serious consideration to the formal development of an independent Students' Union

This Council believes:

1. That Students' Unions should be inherently independent and autonomous bodies, tasked with effectively and democratically representing the views of its members
2. That Queen's Students' Union should not be an exception to this principle and should strive to manage its own affairs in any relevant area, particularly in democratic, financial, legal, human resource, and operational areas
3. That an effective Students' Union should not be directly linked to their University, except insofar as is necessary to conduct the proper processes of fairness and transparency
4. That effective collaboration with the Institution can be achieved in an independent setting, and is highly regarded as the best practice model of adoption for Students' Unions

This Council therefore mandates:

1. The entire Executive Management Committee to lobby the University to develop Queen's Students' Union as an independent SU and work towards implementation over the coming years
2. The President to bring forward proposals on behalf of the Executive Management Committee to relevant parties, including but not limited to University Senior Management
3. The President to propose the feasibility of moving towards an independent and autonomous Students' Union, giving serious consideration to areas including, but not limited to, financial, human resources, legal, operational, and charitable statuses

4. The Executive Management Committee to review this particular policy on an annual basis and update Council on any progress made

Date of Approval: 14 November 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

4.05. Bio-degradable Cutlery in the New Students' Union

Policy Title:	Bio-degradable Cutlery in the New Students' Union		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2018/4/1	Policy Status:	Not-Closed

For the new student's union to remove single use items (forks, spoons, bottles, straws etc.) unless they are bio-degradable.

How much waste is created every day in this building?

Every day in this building plastic knives, forks, spoons, plastic bottles and coffee cups are disposed of. Even if these materials are recycled, which many can't be currently, there is a large amount of energy required to recycle many of these materials. For example, to create another new clear plastic bottle from recycled material is difficult (requiring high temperatures) and creates a cloudy rather than clear product which companies are reluctant to use. We need a method to decrease waste and increase sustainability with everyday products

This student's union can change that opening and immediately placing a ban on all single use materials and pledging to go "Disposable free by 2023". By eliminating all single use materials, it will create a lower waste footprint and encourage a more sustainable mind-set throughout the building and university. Alongside this supporting renewable local alternatives such as:

- Paper straws
- Wooden knives, forks and spoons
- Bio-degradable coffee cups
- Dispensers for soft drinks rather than plastic bottles

With this motion we hope that the new student's union is more sustainable creates a place where people are encouraged to bring their own items and if they forget them the alternatives are sustainable.

Date of Approval: 15 May 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

4.06. Student Officer Scrutiny Committee

Policy Title:	Student Officer Scrutiny Committee		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2019/4/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes that:

- Elected Student Officers are accountable, through Council, to the membership of the Students' Union.
- Student Officers provide verbal and written reports to Council throughout their terms of office.
- Student Officer can be questioned on their work by Councillors, both formally and informally.
- Student Officer reports are voted upon by Council, which has the power to ensure that mechanisms are put in place to monitor the work of an Officer.

Council Believes that:

- Student Council meetings do not provide sufficient time to provide detailed scrutiny of the work of Student Officers.
- Student Officer are not sufficiently questioned by Council nor are Student Officer reports given due consideration by many Councillors.
- The Students' Union Council will be more effective if a Scrutiny Committee is established for the purpose of reviewing Student Officer reports and questioning Student Officers.
- Such a Committee should support, and not replace existing scrutiny undertaken by Council.

Council Resolves to:

- Establish a Special Committee, to be known as the Scrutiny Committee of Student Councillors to review the work of Student Officers on an on-going basis for 2019-20 academic year.

Committee Remit:

- The remit of the Scrutiny Committee, as delegated by Council, shall be:
- To review the work of Student Officers, in particular by reviewing their published Reports
- The question Student Officers on their published Reports
- To make recommendations to Council on the work of Student Officers
- The make recommendations to Council on existing processes for scrutinising the work of Student Officers

The Council may request the attendance of any Student Officer at a meeting of the Committee.

Student Officers are obliged to attend any meetings to which they are summoned.

The Committee shall meet on at least one occasion between each Statutory Meeting of Council.

The membership of the Committee shall be nine elected members of the Council, with voting rights, and the Union Speaker (who shall chair the Committee), without voting rights.

Date of Approval: Nov 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

4.07. QUB Strategy 2030 – Consultation

Policy Title:	QUB Strategy 2030 – Consultation		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2020/4/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- The University has begun a consultation process on their new strategic direction for 2030. Staff and student representatives are concerned that the consultation is narrow and not truly representative of all relevant stakeholders, including staff and students.
- How It Affects Students: As this will establish the strategic direction for the university for the next ten years, it is imperative that their vision for the University is considered and part of the University's strategic direction.

Council Believes:

- We believe that students, including their needs and interests, should be at the centre of decision-making processes regarding the strategic direction of the university.

Council Resolves that:

- We will work with staff representatives on university committees to pause plans strategic reforms to ensure that students, staff and wider society are fully engaged in a consultation process that is co-designed by staff, students and their representatives.

Date of Approval: 10 Dec 2020
Lapse Date: March 2024
Officer responsible: Union President

4.08. Amendments to the QUB Green New Deal

Policy Title:	Amendment to the QUB New Green Deal		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2021/4/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- The Green New Deal (GND) was originally composed in 2019 by the Climate Action Group, asking Queen’s senior management to both declare a climate and ecological emergency, and achieve the carbon targets which the GND set out.
- Whilst the spirit of the GND’s composition is still relevant, the current structure and numbering of policy points is not reflective of the order of importance or urgency needed to make environmental change.
- The dates used in the GND do not reflect the up to date guidance for the higher education sector
- Some of the terminology and language utilised is inaccessible and goes unexplained, which does not reflect the ethos that the climate crisis impacts everyone.

Council believes:

- This new policy position of the Green New Deal (GND) would be grounded in sector appropriate asks, with scientific backing. The most notable shift is the changing of “the aim to make Queen’s net carbon neutral by 2025, with a commitment to become net carbon neutral by 2030” to “with an aim to be net zero by 2030.” The reasoning for this and other similar changes is to allow the Climate Action Group and the Students’ Union to advocate for targets which align with the most appropriate university sector guidelines. These are provided by NUS SOS: <https://www.carbontargets.uk/> , making both our asks more credible and achievable.
- To increase accessibility of language and give specific detail to the meanings behind our word choice, we have included a glossary of definitions.
- Along with changing some of the content and merging the asks, the order of the GND’s policy points have been changed, to create an intuitive sense of importance of what needs prioritised. This was written with contributions from both Climate Action Group and Queen’s Climate Action Network.
- Our Updated Position: This Council accepts these changes to the Green New Deal, believing that sustainability and climate-related targets should be led by sector appropriate guidance.

Council mandates:

- QUBSU to lobby Queen’s University Belfast to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency, as well as lobbying on the newly accepted terms of the Green New Deal.

Date of Approval: 21 January 2021

Lapse Date: March 2024

Officer responsible: Union President and VP Campaigns & Engagement

Note: The full text of the proposed amendments are detailed in paper SUC/P/21/02 - Amendments to the Green New Deal.

4.09. Religious Persecution

Policy Title:	Religious Persecution		
Policy Reference:	DGR/2021/4/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- On the 13th January Open Doors held the UK launch of the 2021 update of their annual watchlist of the 50 worst countries for persecution of Christians
- In the Open Doors' World Watch List Top 50 alone, 309 million Christians face very high or extreme levels of persecution and discrimination for their faith – an increase of 19 per cent since last year (1)
- It is noted that 4,761 Christians were killed for faith related reasons last year (2) – 3,530 of these were in Nigeria (1)
- It is noted that in the 2020 Watchlist it was reported that 2983 Christians were killed for faith based reasons (3) – this indicates a 60% increase in faith-based killings in the past year
- Those countries making up the 2021 watchlist Top 50 are as follows (2):

North Korea

Afghanistan

Somalia

Libya

Pakistan

Eritrea

Yemen

Iran

Nigeria

India

Iraq

Syria

Sudan

Saudi Arabia

Maldives

Egypt

China

Myanmar

Vietnam
Mauritania
Uzbekistan
Laos
Turkmenistan
Algeria
Turkey
Tunisia
Morocco
Mali
Qatar
Colombia
Bangladesh
Burkina Faso
Tajikistan
Nepal
Central African Republic
Ethiopia
Mexico
Jordan
Brunei
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Kazakhstan
Cameroon
Bhutan
Oman
Mozambique
Malaysia
Indonesia

Kuwait

Kenya

Comoros

- Women are disproportionately affected by persecution of Christians. Women and young girls are kidnapped, raped and often forced to marry their persecutors. (4)
- Covid-19 has exacerbated the level of persecution faced by many, with Christians in many countries reporting not getting access to state-aid or getting less aid than that being offered to those of majority faith groups (eg India, Myanmar, Nepal, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Central Asia, Malaysia, North Africa, Yemen and Sudan) (1)
- On February 16th 2020 gunmen killed 24 people and wounded 18 in an attack on a Protestant church in a village in northern Burkina Faso during a Sunday service, and according to UN figures, nearly 4,000 people were killed in jihadist attacks in Burkina Faso and neighbouring Mali and Niger in 2019 (5)
- Further to the countries on the watchlist Amnesty International has highlighted they have concerns over the denial of freedom of religious expression in Austria and the Netherlands in their 2017/2018 International Report on the state of the world's human rights (6)
- While the data gathered by Open Doors to compile this list focuses on Christian persecution it should be noted that often the persecution of Christians goes hand-in-hand with persecution of other religious groups, and a focus on Christian persecution does not mean ignoring or downplaying the plight of others (4).
- Those persecuted for their Christian faith are also often some of the poorest people in the world, a fact that must not be overlooked (7)
- A report commissioned by the British Foreign Secretary and carried out by Rt Rev Philip Mounstephen found that pervasive persecution of Christians, sometimes amounting to genocide, is ongoing in parts of the Middle East and north Africa, specifically naming Algeria, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria and Saudi Arabia. (8)
- The Pew Research Centre data for 2017 suggests religious groups face harassment in 187 countries, with Christians harassed in 143, Muslims in 140, Jews in 87, Hindus in 23, Buddhists in 19 and religiously unaffiliated people (including atheists, agnostics and people who don't identify with any religion) were harassed for religious reasons in 23 countries (9)
- Council has previously mandated that “religious freedom is an important part of each individual's freedom of choice and should not be oppressed or limited”; Policy Reference: OTH/2015/8/2. At the January 2020 meeting of student Council we condemned the religious persecution currently being faced by non-Hindus in India; Policy Reference: OTH/2020/8/3.
- Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states “Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance”.

- Lord Collins (Labour humanist peer) has stated that “countries that do not respect religious freedom or the right to no belief invariably do not respect other basic human rights” (10)
- Within our country between 2016 and 2019 there were 445 recorded attacks on places of worship including churches, churchyards and cemeteries (11)
- With regards the Open Doors World Watch List, this list undergoes an annual independent audit by the International Institute for Religious Freedom. (12) This serves to ensure the validity and reliability of the data, and to remove any bias that may come from Open Doors being an evangelical Christian organisation. The IIRF audit is headed by Professor Sauer, who has published a list of 20 Suggestions for Appropriate use of the Watch List (see Appendix 1). In particular he highlights that the numbers reported facing persecution and the numbers killed for their faith are minimums based on verifiable data, and do not reflect the global totals, which will likely be higher.
- The definition of Persecution within this motion refers to any person who for their religious beliefs faces restrictions, pressure, discrimination, opposition, disinformation, injustice, intimidation, mistreatment, marginalization, oppression, intolerance, infringement, violation, ostracism, hostilities, harassment, abuse, violence, ethnic cleansing and genocide. For example, the World Watch List analysis states “Any hostility experienced as a result of one’s identification with Christ. This can include hostile attitudes, words and actions towards Christians.” (13)
- Professor Sauer states “Even though there are many scores and statistics presented in the WWL, the authors rightly emphasize that it is ultimately about real human beings and about their fate, and in this case specifically about Christians. Such a focus on Christians is justifiable, since this kind of data-gathering requires a lot of effort and the means and personnel are limited. Experience also demonstrates that comprehensive religious freedom reports that cover multiple or all religions or worldviews can only give limited attention and space to specific groups. In comparison to most other regularly issued country-based religious freedom reports, the WWL achieves the greatest depth and density of information on Christians, and this is due specifically to its strict focus. It is therefore not necessary that any given persecution report includes all different worldviews. Reports exclusively or mainly focusing on specific groups also have their significance. In the WWL’s accompanying country dossiers there is a brief section highlighting, where members of other religions or none also suffer from discrimination and persecution.” (14) (emphasis added)
- Professor Sauer concludes that “Too frequently, critics ignorantly and often erroneously claim a lack of transparency or methodological reflection because they do not make the effort of reading all available information and looking up the original source.” (14) Open Doors makes complete, in-depth data analysis and individual country dossiers available on request via OpenDoorsAnalytical.org – this data includes details on the methodology used to compile the Watch List, along with the actual data for each country featured in order to show why a given country has been included, and makes it clear that any country featured on the list has had to “earn” their position by significant persecution of Christians residing in that country. It should also be noted that this watchlist focuses on persecution perpetrated within a country that is specifically due to an individual’s Christian faith and does not capture atrocities

carried out by an external agent, or atrocities that are not specifically targeted only at the Christian population. Dossiers on the countries QUB has commercial relationships with attached as appendixes for reference purposes to ensure council members are able to review the level of data that goes in to placing a country on the watchlist. These dossiers contain extensive reports, statistics and references to mainstream secular news reports.

- “World Watch Research (WWR) is the research department of Open Doors International. It has been set up to carry out well-documented research that withstands scholarly scrutiny and accepts scholarly guidance. WWR has been gathering and publishing detailed data on the persecution of Christians since 1992. One of their main tools for tracking and measuring the extent of persecution in the world is the World Watch List (WWL). WWL methodology has gradually evolved since the 1990s and in 2012 the methodology was comprehensively revised in order to provide greater credibility, transparency, objectivity and academic quality. As of June 2019, the WWL research team consists of one managing director, seven persecution analysts and one communicator, all with university degrees. Three of the team (including the managing director) have or are completing PhDs. Five are lawyers with experience in the field of human rights, constitutional law or governance. An Arabic language assistant and other parttime consultants assist in monitoring news reports and other tasks. The persecution analysts collaborate closely with researchers and other experts operating at regional, national and subnational level. Some of these are Open Doors staff, others are external experts who come from a variety of professional backgrounds. Since 2014, the International Institute for Religious Freedom (IIRF) 3 has audited the WWL process. By selecting sample countries for investigation, it has repeatedly confirmed the correct application of WWL methodology for scoring and for making transnational comparability possible. The main focus of the audit is on consistency in the processing of the WWL questionnaires. The annual WWL audit statements express IIRF’s conclusions, enhance the quality of the WWL and contribute to the objectivity and transparency of the results” (15) Further detailed description of the methodology used (including the questionnaires used and details of cross-checking by external experts) is published in Appendix 2.
- The decision to place a country on the World Watch List is based on scores from analysis of data, as collected in a methodological and transparent manner, and is solely guided by data and not any political or cultural agendas.
- Alongside the persecution that Christians face, Council also notes other religious groups face persecution, including (but not limited to) Bahá’ís in Iran (16), Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh, Muslims in parts of Europe including France and The Netherlands, Jews in many parts of the world, and Sikhs in India.

Council believes:

- This Council operates by the principles of the United Nation Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- This Council stands against anti-Christian hatred, Islamophobia, Hinduphobia, and anti-Semitism. We uphold the right of all to have the freedom to practice

their faith, or to choose to be religiously unaffiliated, without it impacting on their freedom to live and work as a valued and respected citizen.

- We must ensure that all people can live out their faith or absence of faith equally and free from threat.
- We cannot sit by while people across the world are facing harassment, persecution and death because of their faith views – we must take an active role as defenders of their human rights. We recognise that though we may not necessarily share in their religious beliefs, we do share in their humanity.

Council mandates:

- EMC will take responsibility for issuing a reactionary public statement (e.g. via social media) condemning all faith-based persecution if a relevant (national or global) event occurs. The intention of this will be to reaffirm the commitment to uphold the right of all individuals to have freedom of religious choice without oppression or limitation.
- Particular focus being given to advocating for the previously approved policy position that ‘religious freedom is an important part of each individual’s freedom of choice and should not be oppressed or limited’ should form a central part of our forthcoming involvement with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Consortium when discussing what should be included in a Northern Ireland Bill of Rights.
- EMC to encourage QUB to advocate for reform in countries that violate the basic human right protections that this Council upholds, taking as one source of guidance in this the countries featured on the World Watchlist, and taking as further sources similar publications by Amnesty International.
- EMC to work with QUB Chaplains to provide support for any of our international students from a country where they may face persecution for their religious beliefs.”
- EMC to partner with QUB Chaplains to explore potential aid organisations for the SU to support which would work directly with those suffering persecution for their faith in the context of being denied local state aid during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Date of Approval: 27 January 2021

Lapse Date: March 2024

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

SECTION 5: CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND STUDENT DEVELOPMENT

No Policies

SECTION 6: COMMUNITY ISSUES

6.01. Homelessness Prevention

Policy Title:	Homelessness Prevention		
Policy Reference:	COM/2016/6/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes with sadness that there has been a rise in the number of homeless people who have died on our streets since the beginning of the year.

This Council also notes that a number of students have found themselves without a home during their time at university.

This Council stands in solidarity with those who find themselves in a situation in which they have no permanent home.

This Council instructs the VP for Campaign and Communications and VP for Community to run a campaign focusing on promoting homeless prevention services.

Date of Approval: 10 May 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Union President

6.02. Xenophobia

Policy Title:	Xenophobia		
Policy Reference:	COM/2017/6/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

The Council notes that:

- The current political conversation in the light of Brexit, and the recently called snap General Election has been marked with deeply toxic debate around immigration and racial minorities.
- The current British government and establishment is institutionally racist in its policies and campaigns, by targeting and blaming people of colour (PoC) and immigrants for the economic crises and austerity- and this is despite xenophobia being illegal in UK.
- These policies and campaigns not only adopt a racist rhetoric, but also legitimise and normalise it, creating a climate that has made outward racism acceptable.
- By blaming immigrants and PoC for the failures and shortcoming of the government, alongside running Brexit campaigns fuelled with bigotry and racist rhetoric, the government is directly responsible for encouraging the resurgence of facism and white extremism terrorising PoC.

The Council recognises that:

- This ‘normalisation’ of being openly casually racist has spread even amongst young adults and has made university campuses unsafe around the UK.
- There have been several instances - that have been raised - of international and/or ethnic minority students in QUB who have had racial slurs thrown at them in and outside the classroom, leaving students feeling unsafe in even academic spaces.
- Reports of racist hate crimes around the University area, especially in the Holylands, have been constantly increasing over the past few years, especially in view of the growing Romanian community in the area.

The Council mandates:

- That the Students’ Union adopt a ‘zero tolerance’ approach to racism, discrimination and hate crime.
- To actively campaign to mobilise and educate the student body against racism and xenophobia.
- That the Executive Management Committee, including but not limited to the VP Student Activities, VP Equality & Diversity and the BAME Officer - ensure all students, but especially ethnic minorities, have equal access to all aspects of university life in an environment free of discrimination, harassment and intimidation.

Date of Approval: 2 May 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.03. Education for Disadvantaged Communities

Policy Title:	Education for Disadvantaged Communities		
Policy Reference:	COM/2018/6/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council recognises that the educational underachievement disparately affects those from particular disadvantaged communities in Northern Ireland. Council recognises that the single biggest factor leading to educational underachievement is socioeconomic status; that through no fault of their own, children from disadvantaged communities are much less likely to achieve even basic qualifications, never mind gaining access to University.

Council further recognises that issues around mental health also play a significant factor in terms of underachievement. Council contends that our institutions are not doing enough to address underachievement, and that this must be addressed if we are to build a truly fair and inclusive society. Council recognises that having a diverse population of students is beneficial to all students, not just those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Council mandates the Student Officer team to campaign and lobby our institutions to address these disparities. Council further mandates the Officer team to campaign and lobby both our institutions and the University itself to make more places available to those from disadvantaged communities who may not have the required grades through no fault of their own.

Council further mandates the Officer team to campaign and lobby both the institutions and the University itself to create more access routes, and better funding for these access routes, to allow those who are disadvantaged a fair chance to access a university education. Council finally mandates the Officer team to campaign and lobby the University to provide increased support funding to support those who need it the most, no matter what their background.

Date of Approval: 15 May 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.04. Establishing a Campaign to Make QUB a University of Sanctuary

Policy Title:	Establishing a Campaign to Make QUB a University of Sanctuary		
Policy Reference:	COM/2018/6/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Sanctuary provides refuge or safety from pursuit, persecution, or other danger. The sanctuary message of welcome is vital in all spheres of society and must be visible in our public spaces including the University.

The University should strive to be a place of sanctuary for all people seeking refugee from, war, violence, political persecution, poverty, discrimination, and marginalisation. The three principles of the university of sanctuary are; learn, embed, share.

We are asking council to support our campaign to make QUB a university of sanctuary, canvassing staff, fellow students, departments, and senior management to make the message of sanctuary part of the ethos of our institution.

We are also asking council to recognise the ability of the students and the Students' Union to implement these three principles and make QUB a university of sanctuary. To engage with ourselves and other grassroots community groups to ensure the message of sanctuary is effective, engaging, and sustainable.

Finally, we are asking Council to extend their support to other higher education institutions fighting to make their universities places of sanctuary recognising that there is strength in unity.

Date of Approval: 4 December 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.05. Student-Led Campaign for the Improvement of Sustainable Transport in Belfast

Policy Title:	Student-Led Campaign for the Improvement of Sustainable Transport in Belfast		
Policy Reference:	COM/2018/6/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This council recognises:

The role of accessible, affordable and sustainable modes of transport in better enabling students to pursue their education and access services, and, in particular, the importance of cycling in reducing carbon emissions and tackling obesity.

This council calls for:

NUS-USI to establish a student-led campaign for the improvement of sustainable transport in Belfast, with involvement from Queen’s University and its constituent colleges; Ulster University; and Belfast Metropolitan College;

for this campaign to have specific aims including, but not limited to:

The expansion of the Belfast Bikes scheme, in particular to areas with a high student population such as the Holylands and Lower Ormeau, and to areas with services and amenities which students could benefit from greater access to#

The extension of Belfast Rapid Transit (Glider buses) to the main Queen’s campus, and beyond to the Stranmillis campus and Elms Village, and the improvement of Translink’s bus and rail services more generally

The improvement of cycling infrastructure and services in the city, including segregated cycle paths and greenways, more bike parking spaces, and greater availability of cycle training for students, university staff and others

Campaigning for the University, university suppliers based in Belfast, businesses, and employers to become more cycle friendly by encouraging their employees and other relevant stakeholders to cycle, in order to increase the numbers of cyclists on the roads and thereby improve safety

To lobby the University, Belfast City Council, Northern Ireland Executive and other relevant stakeholders in order to achieve these goals

Date of Approval: 4 December 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.06. Off Campus Discipline

Policy Title:	Off Campus Discipline		
Policy Reference:	COM/2019/6/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that:

1. Students of QUB are regularly punished by the University for incidents that take place off campus.
2. Punishment can range from advice and warning, alcohol awareness programme, fines, suspension and at the worst expulsion.
3. Students of QUB have been punished under these regulations for many reasons including, taking part in peaceful protests.

Council believes that:

1. The University has no jurisdiction over the regulation of students' activities outside of University.
2. That the application of the off-campus discipline regulations is inconsistent, as it tends to only focus on students surrounding the University, therefore it is not applied equally to all students.
3. By punishing students for taking part in legitimate, peaceful protest that the University is setting a dangerous precedent on the ability of student activists to fight for change.

Council therefore instructs the SU Executive:

1. To lobby the University to reopen the Off-Campus discipline review group with the view that students' private lives must be respected as codified in article 8 of the Human Rights Act 1998).
2. To support efforts to oppose off campus discipline through the Courts."

Date of Approval: 5 February 2019

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.07. Anti-Fascism & Anti-Racism

Policy Title:	Anti-Fascism & Anti-Racism		
Policy Reference:	COM/2019/6/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

There has been a widespread resurgence and emboldening of fascism globally, presenting an existential threat to communities of colour, migrants, minoritised faiths, and LGBT+ people.

1. Ruling governments have pandered to fascist populism through xenophobic/racist scapegoating.
2. Westminster and Stormont governments cannot be relied upon to 'deal' with the threat of fascism, as the policies of austerity and privatisation create the conditions in which fascism grows.
3. Anti-fascism must be driven by grassroots organisations, which can both respond to the threat of far-right mobilisations and proactively build mutual aid and solidarity in communities, to outmaneuver fascist populism.
4. Throughout 2018, a number of far-right groups rallied in Belfast on multiple occasions around various issues; from calling for the Islamophobic, racist-Tommy Robinson's release, to pedalling Islamophobic, anti-migrant, fascist & racist rhetoric.
5. Many far-right fascist groups- including Generation Sparta, a group linked to European neo-nazi Generation Identity- have been organising actively in NI, an example being the anti-islam leaflets that were distributed in Ravenhill Rd.
6. In October 2018, a group of people dressed in KKK costumes gathered outside an Islamic centre in Newtownards; just a year before a pig's head was left outside the very same Islamic centre.
7. The border between the North & South of Ireland, has always been a 'hard' border for people of colour- these are the harsh realities of Stop-and-Search laws used to target and police the movement of people of colour through the border.
8. Asylum Seekers- who are by an overwhelming majority, people of colour- under the direct provision centers in ROI, have to often make long difficult journeys for various official documentation appointments as well as to access healthcare. Many of these centres are situated in areas where public transport options involve crossing the border into NI illegally en route- hence making accessing legal help/services & healthcare close to impossible.
9. An outrage about 'Free Speech' in universities has been manufactured by the government/press.
10. This often relies on crude, false connotations between diverse direct-action tactics/campaigns with 'No Platforming'/ 'Safe Spaces'.
11. Jo Johnson announced that the Office for Students would take a more aggressive role in securing 'freedom of speech' in universities. It's unclear exactly what this new 'duty' would add to existing law in practice, but in context

it's likely that student direct action will be targeted - including anti-racist protesting.

Council further believes:

1. 'Anti-racist' state laws, such as bans of far-right groups are inevitably utilised to target progressive organising that the state disapproves of – example being the Public Order Act.
2. No Platforming is an important tactic developed by antifascists to counter fascist organising. It has been widely adopted in SU's across the country, as well as being a core of NUS UK's organising.
3. The success of No Platforming, as a tactic, hinges on robust grassroots organising, not just as a 'policy'.
4. No Platforming should never seek to emulate state control or draw legitimacy from their laws – we should support bottom-up and democratic antifascism, not top-down policing.
5. Furthermore, No Platform should apply only to fascism/far-right organising, in specific response to the methodology of fascism.
6. Free Speech is one of a number of rights to hold power to account, and is inseparable from the right to organise and the right to protest. Therefore, it must be defended and exercised 'from below'.
7. There is indeed an attack on Free Speech in universities – it comes from the state & institutions cracking down on student political organising.
8. Direct action has a proud tradition that we must defend. Universities should not be made to police students' action, nor should SUs ever be complicit in doing so.

Council resolves:

1. To mandate the SU executive to work with trade unions and our national unions- NUS, NUS-USI & USI- to provide anti-fascist training days open to students and communities covering: self-defence training, direct action training, know-your-rights legal training.
2. To affirm QUBSU's support for No Platforming, as a bottom-up tactic.
3. To stand in solidarity with our siblings in direct provision in the Republic of Ireland and to call for its abolition.
4. Robustly oppose any new repressive state laws that stifle our right to organise, protest and/or oppose the far-right and campaign against any future laws or policies that stifle or criminalise direct and disruptive action.
5. To actively use No Platforming in the political organising of the SU, to actively oppose any and all fascist and racist organising.

Date of Approval: 5 February 2019

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.08. Support for Providing Meals to School Children During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Policy Title:	Support for Providing Meals to School Children During the Coronavirus Pandemic		
Policy Reference:	COM/2020/6/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- The issue of provision of food to children during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic has attracted significant media and political attention in recent months.
- Children who are hungry at school struggle to concentrate, perform poorly, and have worse attendance records. (1)
- A hot, freshly-cooked school lunch is, for some children, the only proper meal in the day, providing a nutritional safety net for those at greatest risk of hunger or poor diet. (1)
- As of 2018 in Northern Ireland 100,254 pupils in grant-aided schools are entitled to free school meals; this represents 29.9% of pupils (2). These meals are provided during term-time only.
- FoodFoundation estimates that across the UK 200,000 children had to skip meals during the national Coronavirus lockdown due to families not being able to access food (3)
- During the ongoing coronavirus pandemic there have been prolonged periods of additional school closures, and in addition to this there has been increasing financial uncertainty for families that disproportionately affects the least well-off in society – 46% of food insecure homes surveyed by FoodFoundation reported a loss of income as a result of the crisis. (3)
- Covid-19 is an unprecedented situation, with extraordinary steps being taken in many aspects of life.

Council Believes:

- No child should ever have to go hungry. We believe every child matters and deserves a fair chance, especially during the crucial early years of life
- The decision by the NI Executive to offer direct payments to families in lieu of free school meals during the national lockdown and to extend this during the Autumn circuit-breaker school closure is to be commended, as is extending the payment to cover the Halloween half-term holiday. However given that Covid-19 is expected to remain an issue for a prolonged period of time, with further school closures likely, we believe this scheme should be extended further.
- More long-term, work needs to be done to look at the root causes as to why families are unable to afford to feed their children, however that is a large piece of work requiring review of the benefits system payments, child benefit

payments, child maintenance payments and minimum wage levels, and falls beyond the remit of this motion, which is focused on the immediate extraordinary support that can be provided to children who are being impacted through no fault of their own.

- The work of Marcus Rashford in using his platform to draw attention to this issue is to be highly commended, as is the response of the many cafes and restaurants that have offered free meals to children, including locally Loaf Café Belfast.

Council Mandates:

- VP Welfare to advocate via all available mechanisms (including but not limited to issuing a public statement of support, advocating via NUS, USI and NUS-USI, and correspondence with the NI Executive) for the continued provision of direct payments in lieu of free school meals during periods of school closure (exceptional or planned) during Covid-19, and more long-term, to encourage the NI Executive to consider how healthy meals can be provided during regular school holidays to those who receive free school meals (As recommended by Henry Dimbleby in the 2020 National Food Strategy report (1).)
- The Students' Union to seek opportunities for the Union and the University to donate any unused packaged food on campus to the the food distribution charity FareShare to help provide meals to vulnerable children.
- Provision of food bank collection points within QUB accommodation and teaching facilities

Date of Approval: 4 November 2020
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Vice President Welfare

6.09. Off Campus Discipline

Policy Title:	Irish Language Residential Scheme		
Policy Reference:	COM/2022/6/6	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes: -

- Cumann Gaelach QUB have been engaged in ongoing lobbying work for the university to introduce an Irish Language Residential Scheme.
- A group named Dearcan, comprised of members of An Cumann Gaelach, members of staff and SU Officers, developed a proposal for the scheme which was presented to the University in 2021.
- Existing policy on Irish language promotion includes an Irish Language Rights policy (REF: OTH/2020/8/5) outlining the SU's mandate to support Irish language activism on campus - The University's Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy (2020) section 6.5 specifies that the university must "proactively seek opportunities... to promote the importance of linguistic diversity through outreach events, education, campus and off-site activities, and through supporting staff and student access to language courses, networks, information and resources."
- Irish Language Residential Schemes exist in universities all over the island of Ireland. An Irish Language Residential Scheme was established in Ulster University Magee campus in 2021.
- Language Residential Schemes also exist in universities in Scotland and Wales to promote minority languages.

Council believes:

- The introduction of an Irish Language Residential Scheme would be a positive step forward in securing language rights for Irish language speakers in Queen's.
- An Irish Language Residential Scheme would prove to be academically beneficial for students who speak Irish to continue to develop their skills and proficiency.
- An Irish Language Residential Scheme would help promote the language, increase visibility, and therefore normalise the language.

Council mandates:

- The Students' Union formally supports the campaign of An Cumann Gaelach in lobbying for an Irish Language Residential Scheme
- Student Officers to engage with University management to ensure the Scheme proposal is implemented as soon as possible
- Student Officers to engage with An Cumann Gaelach QUB and Irish language speakers on campus to ensure their needs are met within the creation of the Irish language residential scheme.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022
Lapse Date: Mar 2025
Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

6.10. An Antifascist and Antiracist Students' Union

Policy Title:	An Antifascist and Antiracist Students' Union		
Policy Reference:	COM/2022/6/7	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council Notes:

- That there have been numerous attacks against asylum seekers in student areas by extremist and fascist militant groups
- That this was partly enabled due to the inappropriate living conditions that MEARS, a state housing department specifically to handle asylum seekers.
- There has been an increase in hate crimes over the course of the pandemic and 2021 saw a record number of hate crimes.
- There has been an increase in fascist activity, in Ireland and the rest of Europe.

This Council also notes:

- This Students' Union has an anti-fascist policy.
- The Students' Union has a policy of trying to achieve QUB as a University of Sanctuary.
- This Students' Union has not been involved in any antifascist activity since 2018.
- Students Together for Asylum Seekers and Refugees has been lapsed during this academic year.

This Council Believes:

- The increase in hate crimes is a threat to many students at Queens.
- The Students' Union is an institution that is committed to equality and the safety of all.

Therefore, this Council affirms:

- The Students' Union should make an active attempt to revive STAR.
- The Students' Union should engage with any antifascist activity.
- The Students' Union should reach out to any movement that is supporting refugees in the local area and engage with them.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

SECTION 7: INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

7.01. Supporting and Valuing International Students

Policy Title:	Supporting and Valuing International Students		
Policy Reference:	INT/2016/7/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes QUB's internationalisation strategy as laid out in Vision 2020. Council recognises the fact that this core document impacts the entire strategy for the University in the years ahead, while also noting that this 'vision' had absolutely no input from students.

Council believes that the current internationalisation strategy at Queen's is based on an exploitative drive to increase cash flow from the higher tuition fees that international students can be charged. Considering the stance of this Union on tuition fees, especially at the time of an Assembly Election campaign in which we are insisting that the fee cap should not be lifted, we believe that international students should not be charged extortionate tuition. International students are important in our drive to become a diverse place of learning, and should be treated with the utmost respect which is currently lacking at an institutional level. Council condemns the current internationalisation strategy at QUB and across the Higher Education sector as not only exploitative, but inherently bigoted.

The Students' Union resolves to challenge the University's current attempt to "recruit" international students in order to increase funding, while putting in place no additional support for these students who often face different needs and issues. This Union values our international students and staff, and affirms to ensure that they are considered not as 'cash cows', but as integral to diversification, learning, research, and societal change.

This Council instructs the Vice President Equality & Diversity, alongside the International Students' Officer, to lobby the University on the impact of their current strategy, to demand that support services are increased across the University to reflect the changing needs of our student population, and to ensure that the University commits further staff and monetary support to international Welcome programmes and integration efforts. While this Council also instructs all members of the Executive Management Committee to ensure that in their day-to-day work of representation, committees, and campaigns, that the issues of supporting our international students is to the forefront.

Date of Approval: 8 Feb 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: Vice President Equality & Diversity

7.02. Guarantor Support for international students

Policy Title:	Guarantor Support for international Students		
Policy Reference:	INT/2016/7/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes that:

- Returning International Students prefer living in privately owned accommodation for the following reasons:
- Economical Value (cost-effective)
- Accessibility to frequently used services and places of personal interests (for e.g. School of study, 24hr Shops, PEC, Pubs etc.)
- Communal living with friends of mutual endeavours
- General freedom (for example: last check-in time for friends 11:00 pm, Elms)
- Normally leasing a private accommodation requires a UK based Guarantor, which most international students find difficult to arrange.
- This immediately reduces the number of choices of agencies\landlord and locations available to students.
- Moreover, many landlords and agencies exploit this opportunity and demand at least six-month's (if not full) rent plus the deposit payable upfront.
- Some demand payment of double deposit etc.
- Many students end up paying more than usual to these landlord and letting agencies to secure accommodation.
- While this is convenient to some students others find it difficult to arrange. However, the main limitation is that it puts students at a financial threat allowing the landlords an upper-hand in dealing with queries.
- Some landlords/agencies do not respond to or even completely ignore queries or issues raised by the tenants. This raises unnecessary worry and welfare issues amongst students.

Council resolves that:

- The University should act as a guarantor for international students or to install such a scheme for internationals students.
- This provides financial freedom to students who otherwise find it difficult to arrange upfront payment. This ensures financial safety, security and wellbeing of our international student
- In return, all students must pay their rent promptly as per the contract demands.
- This is a common practise by many Universities in the UK.

Date of Approval: 10 May 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Vice President Equality & Diversity

7.03. Financial Support for International Students

Policy Title:	Financial Support for International Students		
Policy Reference:	INT/2017/7/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council recognises:

- That there is a lack of financial support for International students, regardless of students coming from less fortunate backgrounds or in the case of any unexpected circumstance,
- That the DfE Support Fund, a discretionary fund for students with financial difficulties is only available for NI and GB students,
- That the UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs) specifies that only International students whom are classified as ‘Home Students’ might be able to receive support funding from the Government; leaving other International students with no alternatives for funding except for the University’s Hardship Fund which constitutes of a much smaller pot of money as compared to the DfE Support Fund,
- That there is no clear explanation as to how candidates are selected as recipients of the Vice-Chancellor’s International Attainment Scholarship for Undergraduates,
- That the International Office Undergraduate Scholarships offered by the university are significantly incomparable to the rest of tuition fees to be paid.

Council believes:

- That this is unfair because not all International students come from financially strong backgrounds and a provision should be available for support funding if necessary,
- That as a result of increasing tuition fees and the inability of some of these students to support the expenditure of tuition and living costs, the amount of prospective International students enrolling in the future might reduce significantly.

Council mandates:

- That there should be a fund which provides a capped amount of financial support to International students provided that there is a legitimate reason,
- That the award process for students whom applied for the Vice-Chancellor’s International Attainment Scholarship should be transparent and the results of the award process should be publicised so as to raise awareness on how such recipients were awarded and allow future applicants a guideline to the award process,
- That if a fund which provides a capped amount of financial support to International students is not feasible, a mechanism should be put in place for international students to obtain loans from the University in case of financial hardship and emergencies which would be repaid once the international student starts work,
- That the International scholarships should be further divided into merit-based scholarships and needs-based scholarships,

- That the SU Executive including but not limited to VP Equality and Diversity, the International Officer and the BAME Officer, look into the above and help alleviate these issues.

Date of Approval: 6 April 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

7.04. Visa Issues for International Students

Policy Title:	Visa Issues for International Students		
Policy Reference:	INT/2017/7/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council recognises:

- That there are cases where international students have had to pay additional fees for their UK Tier 4 visa for various circumstances, through no fault of their own.
- That these additional fees and expenditure can be burdensome for international students and their families.
- That some Study-Abroad students have to apply and pay for their UK Visa application twice due to miscommunication or even false advertising, between QUB and their Home University.

Council has concerns:

- Although QUB is a recognised sponsor and issues CAS (Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies) to international students and has the responsibility of “...doing all it can to ensure that prospective students are genuine students who can comply with their Immigration Rules, and that students enrol, comply with their conditions of leave, and see their course through to completion” (Tier 4 of the Points Based System: Guidance for Sponsors; 2.3), the University management does not seem to reflect such behaviour.
- That due to miscommunication between international Study-Abroad students and the University management, such students are misinformed about their Student Visa until after they have received it, and have to incur significant costs to rectify it

Council instructs:

- The incoming Vice President of Equality and Diversity, International Officer and BAME Officer (2017-18) to organize a confidential survey aimed for international students on the subject of student visa issues, with the overarching aim of finding the number of international students whom have had issues with their student visa during their study in QUB.
- The incoming Vice President of Equality and Diversity (2017-18) to discuss and resolve the issue on the lack of communication between University Management and other partner universities whom send students for Study Abroad with regards to their Student Visas
- The Students’ Union to work with other organisations and the national union to highlight the injustices imposed by the Home Office and call for reform.

Date of Approval: April 2017

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Vice President Equality & Diversity

7.05. Enable International Students to Sit August Examinations in Their Home Countries

Policy Title:	Enable International Students to Sit August Examinations in Their Home Countries		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2017/7/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council recognises:

- That international students at QUB who have examinations during the August period can only sit these papers by travelling back to Belfast during August.
- That this requirement for international students to travel all the way back to Belfast earlier, just to sit for their papers in August, can be a huge disruption to them and their family in terms of costs and convenience.
- That the lack of an alternative for international students at QUB to sit for their August papers outside the UK will not only put the current international students at QUB in a highly difficult position, but also poses a significant deterrent for potential international students to apply to study at QUB in the future.

This Council notes:

- That there is no specific reason as to why international students at QUB cannot have the alternative of taking their resit papers in their respective home countries.
- That other Russell Group universities across the UK have provisions for making arrangements with the British Council and/or the British Embassy for international students to sit for their examinations in August outside the UK, simultaneously with the exams held in the main campus in the UK. Examples of these institutions include, amongst others, the University of Leeds, the University of Liverpool, and the University of Sheffield.
- That international students at QUB should also have the alternative of being able to sit for their August papers at a relevant British Council Office or the British Embassy outside the UK.

This Council mandates:

- That the University should make arrangements with the relevant bodies such as the British Council to enable the international students at QUB to sit for their written examinations during the August period overseas, to relieve the difficulties currently faced by the international students at QUB by having to travel all the way back to Belfast to do so.
- That the QUBSU Executive Management Committee, including but not limited to: The SU VP Education and the International Officer, assist in addressing these issues.

Date of Approval: 2 May 2017
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: VP Education

7.06. Supporting the campaign to bring back the post-study work visa

Policy Title:	Supporting the campaign to bring back the post-study work visa		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2019/7/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

1. There are 442,375 international students in the UK, including 312,660 non-EU international students- about 3000 of these international students are enrolled in institutions across Northern Ireland.
2. The post-study work visa scheme was introduced for international students to
3. International students pay staggering amounts of money in tuition fees, visa costs, and NHS bills – they are being treated like cash cows.
4. The international student community in Northern Ireland contribute about £170 million to the economy fiscally- let alone the cultural diversity, global outlook, and internationally relevant skills they bring to our campuses.
5. The current hostile environment policy makes international students feel unwelcome in the UK, and 19% of non-EU students would not recommend the UK as a place to study for a friend or relative (this is as high as 34%, 36% and 38% for students from India, Nigeria, and Pakistan respectively).
6. The number of non-EU international students finding employment after graduation has fallen by seven and a half times since the UK government scrapped post-study work visas in 2012.
7. During International Student Day 2018, a PostStudyWorkVisaNow campaign was launched in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh with various politicians and students.

Council further believes:

1. International students are now being forced to go home unjustly despite having built their lives in their city of study, and despite making the UK culturally, socially, intellectually and financially stronger. It is a disgrace that international graduates are being deported or otherwise forced to leave.
2. International students are fed up with the long wait and empty promises that have constituted the conversation about re-establishing the post-study work visa in the UK –the sad reality being that it has become a buzzword or unfulfilled manifesto pledge.
3. The PostStudyWorkVisaNow is an independent campaign that focuses on collective direct action from international student voices from SU's across the UK, to our national unions- presenting our elected representatives in Westminster that there is a demand for the post-study work visa; and that international students deserve the ability to be able to secure a future or career in the UK.

Council resolves:

1. To support and campaign to bring back the Post-Study work visa for international students in the UK.

2. To mandate the SU executive to jointly campaign with NUS-USI & NUS UK in supporting a secure future for international students in NI, and lobbying representatives in Westminster.
3. Endorse the PostStudyWorkVisaNow campaign and join an alliance of international students from across the UK actively campaigning for this cause. The campaign demands:
 - i) That the government to reintroduce a post-study work visa that allows graduates to work in the UK for at least two years after graduation.
 - ii) A lower, regional salary threshold.
 - iii) No restrictions; a post-study work visa should be offered to anyone who graduates from an FE or HE programme that lasts for 11 + months in the UK.
 - iv) A healthy ecosystem- the government must support FE and HE institutions in offering opportunities to enhance employability, build capacity and engage with the job market while in education.
 - v) FE & HE institutions to include employability and local as well as overseas job opportunities in their internationalization strategy.
 - vi) That international students be removed from net migration targets.

Date of Approval: 5 February 2019

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

7.07. International Student VISA Waiver Scheme

Policy Title:	International Student VISA Waiver Scheme		
Policy Reference:	ACA/2022/7/9	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

- The number of international students studying on the island of Ireland continues to increase.
- International students contribute enormously to student life and should not experience any undue or unfair restrictions on their lives while studying.
- The Common Travel Area (CTA) does not apply to international students who do not hold UK or Irish citizenship.
- Many international students studying in NI institutions face visa-based restrictions on travel within the Irish state.
- The current immigration system requires many international students to apply for short-term visas to attend events / activities within the Irish state, which is onerous, overly bureaucratic, time consuming, and limits participation in student life.

Council believes:

- International students should not face additional barriers to travel or to participation in opportunities on the island of Ireland.
- International students studying in NI institutions should be able to travel without restriction on the island to participate in educational, social and student experience activities.

Council therefore mandates:

Queen's Students' Union to work with other students' unions and other organisations to secure the implementation of a travel visa waiver - or visa exemption - system within the Irish state for all international students registered as studying in a further or higher education institution in NI.

Date of Approval: Mar 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

SECTION 8: OTHER POLICIES

8.01. Constitutional position on Northern Ireland

Policy Title:	Constitutional position on Northern Ireland		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2014/8/1	Policy Status:	N/A

“This Students’ Union is a shared space that is inclusive for all students and should therefore have a neutral stance on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland.”

This policy remains in effect until amended or overturned by a mandatory decision, by means of referendum, of the student membership of the Union.

Date of Approval: 27 Oct 2014 (Referendum)

Lapse Date: N/A

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.02. Paying the Living Wage in the Students' Union

Policy Title:	Paying the Living Wage in the Students' Union		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2014/8/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council believes that the current UK minimum wage is insufficient for people with or without dependants to survive upon and that, in grim recent economic times and with increasing student poverty, it is unacceptable that Queen's University Belfast Students' Union pays their staff a salary that fails to support a basic standard of living.

This Council therefore instructs the Students' Union to pay all staff, and to ensure that all outsourced staff are paid, the UK Living Wage which is currently £7.85 per hour, in order to become an accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation. This Council wishes this recommendation to be effective immediately and to be implemented in advance of the next Statutory Meeting of Council.

Date of Approval: 04 Dec 2014

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.03. Gender Identification and Sexual Identity on Forms

Policy Title:	Gender Identification and Sexual Identity on Forms		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2014/8/3	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

This Council recognises the continued discrimination and problems that are faced by the Trans* community here at Queen's and within wider society. The Trans* community face many barriers in the quest for recognition of their gender identities, and often face difficulties in meeting their basic needs as human beings. In that light, Council regrets that gender identity questions on Students' Union and University forms have been alienating and counter to the inclusive environment that students should feel a part of.

Council recognises Union of Students in Ireland (USI) policy that states that, if gender is not a necessary requirement, then questions of gender or sex should not be included on forms that students or staff are asked to complete.

Council instructs that the Vice President Equality and Diversity acts to ensure that all Students' Union forms are amended to remove gender or sexual identity questions. Furthermore, where the question is indeed necessary - such as on an Equality Monitoring Form - that the current question be amended to be entirely inclusive, and brought back to Council for approval.

Council also instructs that the Sabbatical Officers do all within their power to ensure that the University adheres to the same principle.

Date of Approval: 04 Dec 2014

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.04. Disclosure of University Investments

Policy Title:	Disclosure of University Investments		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2015/8/1	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

This Council calls upon Queen's University Belfast to publically disclose information concerning the details of the investments made using QUB's endowment funds. In particular, we call for the public disclosure of:

1. A list of the companies which Queen's is currently invested in;
2. The amount currently invested in each company; and
3. The annual returns being made on each investment.

Date of Approval: 27 Apr 2015

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

Note: The Students' Union secured access to this information in 2016 via a Freedom of Information Request and subsequent appeal to the Information Commissioner for the University to reveal the information. The University has yet to publically disclose this information or include it in its Freedom of Information publication scheme.

8.05. Fossil Fuel Divestment

Policy Title:	Fossil Fuel Divestment		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2015/8/2	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

Queen's University Belfast should divest from fossil fuels.

This Council demands that Queen's University Belfast immediately freeze any investments and commits to the complete withdrawal of any existing investments, in:

1. Companies whose main business is the extraction and / or production of fossil fuels; and
2. Any co-mingled or mutual funds that contain fossil fuel holdings.

Date of Approval: 27 Apr 2015 (Referendum)

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

Note: Queen's University Senate agreed, in April 2017, to disinvest from indirect investments in fossil fuels, subject to this not materially impacting on expected investment returns. The Students' Union shall keep the progress of this commitment under review.

8.06. Organise Mental Health Training for Students

Policy Title:	Organise Mental Health Training for Students		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2015/8/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes that the number of students registered with disability services due to mental health problems is rising every year.

This Council proposes that the student officers look into the feasibility of providing Mental Health First Aid training for students, in partnership with Aware Defeat Depression or a similar organisation.

This Council requests that the Vice President Welfare provides a verbal report on progress at the next Statutory Meeting of Council.

Date of Approval: 6 May 2015
Lapse Date: March 2026
Officer responsible: Student Officer Welfare

8.07. Freedom of Information

Policy Title:	Freedom of Information		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2015/8/6	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council recognises the importance of Freedom of Information requests in the work of campaigners both within and outside of the student movement and their vital role in holding public institutions (including Queens University) providing information to the general population.

Council notes with concern the proposals of the Conservative Government in Westminster to introduce a charge for Freedom of Information requests, which will make gathering information more difficult for campaigners who do not have the financial backing of large political or media institutions.

Council therefore condemns these proposals and instructs the full-time student officers to lobby local politicians to oppose this restriction of information to the public.

Date of Approval: 3 Dec 2015

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.08. Marijuana Regulation

Policy Title:	Marijuana Regulation		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council recognizes that the so-called ‘war on drugs’ has been an abject failure in preventing drug addiction, reducing crime, and limiting the availability of drugs.

This council also recognises the significant social and economic benefits enjoyed by areas of the United States, Uruguay and other nations that have legalised marijuana, with appropriate and necessary age restrictions and distribution regulations. Council also recognises the progress made in addressing addiction and associated social problems by countries such as Portugal which have decriminalised substances classified as illicit in the UK.

This council, therefore, supports the legalisation of marijuana as a state produced, regulated and administered good, for both medicinal and recreational use.

Date of Approval: 8 Feb 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.09. Integrated Education

Policy Title:	Integrated Education		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes with concern that nearly 20 years since the Good Friday Agreement, 93% of young people are still being educated in a system of segregation in Northern Ireland.

Council believes that Northern Ireland's politicians have failed in their responsibility to "facilitate and encourage integrated education"; a responsibility they signed up to in the Good Friday Agreement and one that was ratified by the vast majority of people both North and South.

Council notes that the Assembly appears to be substituting its legislative requirement to work towards integration with a "separate but equal" approach through so-called shared education. Council believes that this model sustains division and is unacceptable in a society where we should be pushing towards equality, inclusivity and mutual understanding.

Council believes that while young people remain segregated and contentious issues remain unresolved; tensions will continue to simmer and ultimately the peace process itself could be at risk contributed to by segregated education. Council maintains that this situation cannot be allowed to continue.

Council instructs the Students Union President, VP Equality and Diversity, and VP Campaigns and Communications to campaign and lobby the Assembly resolutely to move away from this "shared education" approach towards a genuinely shared future through a singly publically funded integrated education system in NI.

Date of Approval: 8 Feb 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Students Union President, VP Equality and Diversity

8.10. A Breastfeeding Friendly Union

Policy Title:	A Breastfeeding Friendly Union		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council aims to provide an open and inclusive environment for all. This includes those with children. This Council therefore instructs the Students' Union to adopt a breastfeeding friendly policy.

Date of Approval: 8 Feb 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Students Union President, VP Equality and Diversity

8.11. Save our Schools – Size and Shape Review 2016

Policy Title:	Save our Schools – Size and Shape Review 2016		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/4	Policy Status:	N/A

Queen’s University Belfast should reverse course closures, cuts to student places and the arbitrary increase of A-level entry tariffs, as outlined in the Size and Shape Review.”

This policy remains in effect until amended or overturned by a mandatory decision, by means of referendum, of the student membership of the Union.

Date of Approval: 12 May 2016 (Referendum)

Lapse Date: N/A

Officer responsible: Student Union President

8.12. Student Staff Alliance

Policy Title:	Student Staff Alliance		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/5	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes the major campaign victories achieved recently by students and staff campaigning together on the issues of course closures and other measures of marketisation.

This Council believes that the interests of students and staff are invariably aligned, and that a University workforce which is healthy, respected, afforded academic freedom, adequately paid and empowered to have an input in the institutional direction of Queen's University, will provide the highest quality education and student experience to our members.

This Council also believes that the rights of students and the student experience will be best protected and enhanced when Queen's Students' Union is supported by staff members at Queen's University and their trade union representatives.

Many University staff are also students, and we therefore have a duty to campaign in the interests of our members.

This Council, therefore, supports that Queen's Students' Union will enter into a campaign alliance with trade unions representing University staff, and with the wider trade union movement, in order to:

- Campaign for a democratic, public university
- Oppose any increases in tuition fees
- Oppose marketisation of higher education
- Promote trade union membership
- Build links to ensure greater protections of student workers

Date of Approval: 5 December 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Students Union President, VP Equality and Diversity

8.13. 'Take Back Queen's' Program of Reforms

Policy Title:	'Take Back Queen's' Program of Reforms		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/6	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council supports the 'Take Back Queen's' Program of Reforms, adopted as the campaign platform for the alliance between the Students' Union and staff unions. *The Programme of Reforms is detailed in paper SUC/P/17/9.*

Programme of Reforms: This Program of Reforms is a campaign platform supported by 'Take Back Queen's', an alliance of Queen's Students' Union and UCU.

Issues – Marketisation

The Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF), which will marketise and cause reputation damage to universities, has been introduced to Northern Ireland.

A consensus has emerged from Universities, business and political representatives to increase tuition fees.

Increasingly teachers lack autonomy as education and the dissemination of knowledge have been turned into exercises in customer service provision.

Academic freedom has been curtailed to pursue research funding.

Issues – Equality

Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) are used to take decisions regarding staff probation and promotion, despite inherent biases that amount to an indirect form of discrimination.

A gender pay gap and unequal opportunities for promotion discriminate against female academics.

Issues – Democracy

In recent years, Senate has repeatedly blocked the decisions of elected Students' Union councillors. This is a gross infringement on SU democracy.

Key decision-making at Queen's University is made through an undemocratic and centralised corporate governance structure. This disempowers staff and students and leads to unpopular and unrepresentative decision-making.

Issues – Working Conditions

The lack of definition of job duties following restructuring has led to staff taking on additional responsibilities without being evaluated or risk assessed.

There is a large degree of casualization with many employees working on precarious contracts with inadequate pay.

Unrealistic Academic Standards and conditions for confirmation in post have been imposed which have had a huge impact on staff morale, retention and recruitment.

PhD students do not receive adequate pay across the institution for teaching assistance.

Solutions – Marketisation

We seek a commitment from Senior Management not to enter into the Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF) and to lobby for a system of quality assessment that actually measures teaching quality.

Protect academic freedom by acknowledging and encouraging different ways in which research can generate impact and be beneficial to society. Safeguard teachers' autonomy by valuing teaching quality over 'customer satisfaction'. Ensure a diverse university education portfolio by resisting trends to only offer courses that sell well.

Publicly commit to oppose, and lobby against, a rise in tuition fees.

Solutions – Equality

Put an end to the integration of Student Evaluations of Teaching (SETs) into staff assessment procedures and personnel decisions. Instead, a new system of peer-review should be used to assess teaching quality.

End the Gender Pay Gap, taking loss of lifetime earnings into consideration, and modify promotion procedures so that they become equality proofed.

Solutions – Democracy

We seek a commitment from the University Senate to end interference in SU democracy and to endorse changes to the SU Constitution to make our democratic procedures sovereign.

We seek a review of governance mechanisms and culture in the University carried out by a new Democratisation & Decentralisation Committee. This should be followed by the creation of an agreed charter of democratic and inclusive principles and reforms, to be approved by an all-staff and all-student referendum.

Solutions – Working Conditions

Academic standards have to be reviewed across the university in full collaboration with the concerned members of staff. Expected aims and norms for good performance at Queen's must be set out, which allow for a fair degree of flexibility for taking disciplinary specifics and particular individual circumstances into account.

End widespread casualisation and improve the working conditions of those working on an hourly-paid basis by eliminating for service contracts and offering fair pay.

Date of Approval: 5 December 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Students Union President, VP Equality and Diversity

8.14. Irish Language Act

Policy Title:	Irish Language Act		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/8	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council recognises that an Irish Language Act was promised within Annex B of the 2006 St. Andrew's Agreement but that it has still not been passed within the Assembly.

This Council calls for the passage of an Irish Language Act in the Assembly as soon as possible.

Date of Approval: 5 December 2016
Lapse Date: March 2023
Officer responsible: VP Equality and Diversity

8.15. USI Support for the Irish Language

Policy Title:	USI Support for the Irish Language		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/9	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council recognises:

- That one major duty of Leas Uachtarán na Gaeilge (V.P. Irish language) at Union of Students in Ireland is to promote and campaign for Irish language rights for all members of USI, including Ulster University and Queens' University Belfast students' unions.

This Council notes:

- That an Irish Language Act was promised within Annex B of the 2006 St. Andrew's Agreement, and that there has still been no Irish Language Act passed in Stormont and that there has been a revival in calls for an ILA over the month of January.

This Council mandates:

- That sabbatical officers and USI delegates must hold the inaction of USI in recent years regarding the protection, promotion and campaigning of Irish language rights for Irish speaking students in the north to account. And also, ensuring that all candidates running for the position of LU na Gaeilge has a clear plan of action in regard to working with groups in the north, especially given the lack of an Irish language officer at both QUBSU and NUS-USI.

Date of Approval: 05 December 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: VP Equality and Diversity

8.16. Justice and Human Rights for Palestine

Policy Title:	Justice and Human Rights for Palestine		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2016/8/10	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Student Council notes:

- That the state of Israel is involved in a brutal military occupation of the Palestinian territories.
- The occupation is responsible for systematic, widespread and ongoing human rights abuses against the local Palestinian population, including destruction of homes, theft of land and water resources, imprisonment without trial, torture of prisoners, and construction of Israeli settlements on occupied Palestinian land.
- That the State of Israel is in violation of international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of the United Nations. The settlements have also been declared illegal by the International Court of Justice and the UK government with Amnesty International stating that “Israel’s settlement policy is inherently discriminatory and has resulted in grave human rights violations including destruction of homes, forced evictions, unlawful killings, arbitrary detentions and collective punishment”.

Student Council believes:

- That Israel should end its occupation of the Palestinian territories and allow the return of Palestinian refugees in accordance with international law.
- That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of person, self-determination, security and parity of esteem as all other peoples in the world today.
- That a boycott of Israel’s entire regime of oppression, including all of the Israeli companies and institutions that are involved in its violations of international law, is a reasonable non-violent activity that can be taken to register opposition to such crimes.
- That the Palestinian led BDS campaign does not target anyone or anything based on identity, but rather based solely on complicity in denying Palestinian rights and that BDS is a strategy for effective solidarity, not a dogma or ideology and certainly not an attack upon Jewish communities or individuals.

Student Council resolves:

- To inform our members of the background to the situation in Israel/Palestine and to commemorate Palestine Solidarity Day, working with any relevant groups such as student societies and civil society organisations local to each of our campuses.
- To support an Academic Boycott of Israeli Higher Education institutions complicit in normalising, providing intellectual cover for, and supporting settler-colonialism. This includes policies that amount to Apartheid, encouraging recruitment to the Israeli Defence Forces, and providing support to the militarist occupation of Palestine.

- To lobby our university to divest itself from and terminate any contracts with companies that are complicit in the occupation of the Palestinian territories and violation of Palestinian human rights more widely.
- To join the global movement for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against Israel until it ends the occupation and complies with international law.

Date of Approval: 5 December 2016

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: VP Equality and Diversity

8.17. Trade Union Alliance

Policy Title:	Trade Union Alliance		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2017/8/1	Policy Status:	N/A

Queen's Students' Union should enter into a campaign alliance with trade unions representing Queen's University staff and the wider trade union movement in order to:

- Campaign for a democratic, public university
- Oppose any increases in tuition fees
- Oppose marketisation of higher education
- Promote trade union membership
- Build links to ensure greater protections of student workers

This policy remains in effect until amended or overturned by a mandatory decision, by means of referendum, of the student membership of the Union.

Date of Approval: 7 February 2017 (Referendum)

Lapse Date: N/A

Officer responsible: Student Union President

8.18. University and College Union (UCU) at Queen's Industrial Action on Pensions

Policy Title:	University and College Union (UCU) at Queen's Industrial Action on Pensions		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2018/8/1	Policy Status:	Continuing Campaign

The Union President proposed an emergency motion to support the University and College Union (UCU) at Queen's Industrial Action which was circulated in hard copy to members of the Council:

Council notes that:

- The University and College Union (UCU) at Queen's have balloted by a majority of 88% for industrial action following the incredibly damaging proposed reforms to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension scheme.
- The majorly focuses on a change from a Defined Benefit (DB) Scheme to a Defined Contribution (DC) Scheme.
- UCU UK have estimated that this could potentially cost affected members of staff – both academic and non-academic – up to £200,000+ over the course of their retirement.
- Universities UK's (UUK's) position advocates for a move to a DC Scheme, which will greatly jeopardise the guaranteed nature of a DB scheme.
- Pension totals are open to much greater risk, depending on investment performance and stock market fluctuation.
- The USS pension scheme's own analysis shoes that the employers find the funds to avoid this and keep guarantees on pension pay-outs.
- NUS has voted to support the industrial action and has released a joint statement with UCU.

Council believes that:

- Staff should receive fair and equitable working conditions, including a fair pension.
- Staff's working conditions are also students' learning conditions.
- While staff may be impacted in the short-term, there is ultimately a greater risk to staff's financial well-being, which represents yet another attack on staff's working conditions.
- Students should stand in solidarity with workers at the University in their fight for a fair pension.
- Threats to staff working conditions are part of a wider picture of cuts to education funding and marketisation.
- These attacks will be most damaging to workers at the beginning of their careers, including our members such as PhD students looking to begin research careers, which could have a devastating impact in years to come.

Council mandates:

- The Executive Management Committee to give full and public support to UCU in their struggle.

- To encourage students to show solidarity by supporting the strike and not to cross the picket line.
- To encourage students to join the picket line.
- To lobby the University to oppose the changes to the USS.

Date of Approval: 15 February 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Student Union President

8.19. Bilingual Signage on Campus

Policy Title:	Bilingual Signage on Campus		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2018/8/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council acknowledges:

- That bilingual English-Irish signage was erected around Queen's University Belfast in 1987 and removed ten years later in 1997.

This Council recognises:

- That an Irish Language Act was included in the St. Andrew's Agreement in 2007, and this Council voted to support calls for this Act only last year.

This Council also recognises:

- That bilingual signage follows the international best-practice set out in the European Charter for Regional and Minority Languages that was ratified by the UK Government in 2001. The Charter states the need for bilingual signage to increase awareness of minority languages and to help increase the visibility of the language to normalise it within the community, and society as a whole.

This Council notes:

- That An Cumann Gaelach have written an open letter to the Vice-Chancellor in order to plan a meeting to discuss the possibility of returning bilingual signage to the QUB campus. This letter was co-signed with the French Society, Spanish Society, English Society, Amnesty International, Sinn Féin, QUB Alliance, QUB SDLP, An Cumann Gaelach at St Mary's College, QUB GAA, and activist group An Dream Dearg.

This Council mandates:

- That the VP Equality and Diversity and Students' Union President work closely with An Cumann Gaelach to ensure that the bilingual signage is returned across campus at Queen's University Belfast and Queen's University Students' Union.

Date of Approval: 13 March 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Student Union President

8.20. Support The Campaign To Decriminalise Sex Work

Policy Title:	Support The Campaign To Decriminalise Sex Work		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2018/8/4	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes the following:

1. Sex work refers to escorting, lap dancing, stripping, pole dancing, pornography, webcamming, adult modelling, phone sex, and selling sex (on and off the street).
2. At present in Northern Ireland, the exchange of sexual services for money is not illegal for the seller, but associated activities (soliciting in a public place, kerb crawling, operating a brothel) are illegal.
3. The purchase of sexual services is illegal in Northern Ireland, criminalising the buyer.
4. The 2015 NUS Student Sex Work project report showed that significant numbers of students are turning to sex work in order to avoid debt and cover basic living expenses.
5. In 2012 the World Health Organisation produced guidelines recommending the decriminalisation of sex work.
6. In 2014 Department of Justice research found that 98% of sex workers surveyed believed that criminalising the purchase of sexual services in Northern Ireland would put them in danger.
7. In August 2015, Amnesty International voted to adopt policy to protect human rights of sex workers. The resolution recommended that they develop a policy that supports the full decriminalisation of all aspects of consensual sex work. The policy also calls on states to ensure that sex workers enjoy full and equal legal protection from exploitation, trafficking and violence.
8. There is an ongoing judicial review of the criminalisation of purchase of sexual services in Northern Ireland.
9. Decriminalisation is the legal model preferred by many sex-worker led organisations, including Sex Workers Alliance Ireland.

Council believes that:

1. Sex work is work: it is the exchange of money for labour.
2. With the rise in living costs, the increase in tuition fees, the attack on maintenance grants and the slashing of benefits for disabled people, it is highly likely that some students will do sex work alongside their studies. Some Queen's students have already disclosed via survey that they have done sex-work[1].
3. The criminalisation of sex workers' clients has been proven to lead to further distrust of the police amongst sex workers and a willingness of sex workers to cease using client screening and security procedures out of desperation.
4. Decriminalisation of sex work would ensure that sex workers feel able to report unsafe clients or violence at work without the worry of criminal repercussions. It would also allow sex workers to work together for safety and ensure that those who wish to leave the sex industry are not left with criminal records as a result of their job.

5. Following the criminalisation of purchase of sexual services sex workers in Northern Ireland have been subject to increased violence, both from clients and vigilante groups.
6. Human trafficking, coercion, sexual assault and rape are already illegal in Northern Ireland, regardless of the law on sex work. These issues are in no way exclusive to the sex industry.
7. NUS-USI currently has a policy on supporting the decriminalisation of sex work, and as members of NUS-USI we are mandated to support this, therefore this policy would enable QUBSU to support QUB students on this matter and campaign for them specifically.

Council resolves:

1. To support and publicly campaign for the full decriminalisation of sex work.
2. To support the ongoing judicial review on the criminalisation of purchase of sexual services in Northern Ireland.
3. To resist any future introduction of the criminalisation of purchase of sexual services in the United Kingdom.
4. To support efforts to decriminalise sex work in Ireland.
5. To support and be led by sex worker led organisations, such as the Sex Workers Alliance Ireland and the English Collective of Prostitutes.
6. To support QUB students who work in consensual sex work and advocate for the rights of these students to ensure their safety and wellbeing.

Date of Approval: 15 May 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.21. Reform of Gender Recognition Act (2004)

Policy Title:	Reform of Gender Recognition Act (2004)		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2018/8/6	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council recognises:

- The importance of legal gender recognition for transgender people enabling them to obtain a birth certificate that reflects their true gender.
- The current process to obtain legal recognition under the Gender Recognition Act (2004) is bureaucratic, expensive and intrusive and not accessible to most trans people.
- Gender recognition is a devolved power but trans people in NI use currently use the Gender Recognition Panel in England.
- Consultations on the Act have taken place in Scotland and England/Wales but none is planned for Northern Ireland.
- The Irish Gender Recognition Act is more progressive self-declarative system that is fast and non-intrusive but is not available to those born in Northern Ireland. This is currently under review.
- Non-binary people are unable to have their gender identity legally recognised.

This Council is concerned that:

- Current processes pathologise being transgender despite all trans related diagnoses been removed from the World Health Organisations mental health chapter of the International Classification of Diseases.
- Current processes do not meet the requirements of the Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution 2048(2015)7, which states that gender recognition procedures should be quick, accessible, transparent and based on self-determination.
- Changes to the legislation in Scotland, England and Wales could leave Northern Irish Trans people with no pathway to legal recognition.

This Council therefore supports the rights2recognition campaign for Gender recognition reform in Northern Ireland that provides:

- A gender recognition system that's based on Ireland's model of self-declaration, not on psychiatric assessment
- A gender recognition system that's available to trans people at any age
- A gender recognition system that provides for the recognition of non-binary people

Date of Approval: 13 November 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.22. Marriage Equality for Northern Ireland

Policy Title:	Marriage Equality for Northern Ireland		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2018/8/7	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes:

- That since the last passage of policy on marriage equality in 2015, the political context in which the campaign for equal marriage operates has changed drastically.
- That Northern Ireland still does not have equal marriage, as of 2018.
- That the Petition of Concern blocked equal marriage in the Northern Irish Assembly in 2015 after a vote for marriage equality was won 53 - 52.
- That a Sky Data poll in 2018 found that 76% of people supported equal marriage in Northern Ireland.
- That Northern Ireland does not have a functioning government.
- That a Private Member's Bill on equal marriage has been blocked twice in the House of Commons.
- A civil coalition for equal marriage exists in Northern Ireland called Love Equality, of which Amnesty International NI, The Rainbow Project, Here NI, Cara-friend, NIC-ICTU and NUS-USI are members.
- That through NUS-USI, QUBSU is a member of Love Equality.

This Council believes:

- That according to the democratic will of the people through the Northern Irish Assembly in 2015, Northern Ireland should already have marriage equality.
- That the petition of concern was abused in the blockage of equal marriage legislation.
- That the UK Government has failed to deliver on its promises of equality by refusing to back equal marriage for Northern Ireland.
- That the failure of the UK government in legislating for marriage equality is the responsibility of the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Minister for Women and Equalities.
- That devolution is not an excuse for denial of equal rights.

The Council resolves:

- To unequivocally support the campaign for marriage equality in Northern Ireland.
- To support the introduction of legislation on marriage equality which does not exclude trans people.
- To support the efforts of Love Equality, in rallying students to attend the annual Belfast rally and/or in fundraising during LGBT+ history month.
- To call on the UK Government to act by either legislating for marriage equality in Northern Ireland or backing the Private Member's Bill proposed by Conor McGinn MP.

Date of Approval: 13 November 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.23. Opposition to the Far Right

Policy Title:	Opposition to the Far Right		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2018/8/8	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council notes:

1. There has been a disturbing increase in the presence of the far right across Europe in recent years. This has also been true in Belfast and across the UK and Ireland.
2. July 2018 saw hundreds of far right followers take to the streets of Belfast, outside City Hall, for a 'Free Tommy Robinson' rally and a 'UK Freedom March.' Some of the attendees were pictured giving Nazi salutes.
3. During the Freshers' period a man was standing outside the front of QUB's Lanyon gates handing out Islamophobic flyers with cartoons of the prophet Mohammed in front of the Twin Towers.
4. On June 16th 2016, Jo Cox, MP for Batley and Spen was murdered outside her constituency surgery by a man who had links to a US based Neo-Nazi group and shouted 'Britain First.' She was the first MP to be assassinated since 1990.
5. In June 2017, a van was driven into pedestrians in Finsbury Park, London, killing one person and injuring 9. This was a deliberate attempt to inflict pain and suffering of the Muslim community of the area and further afield.
6. In July 2018, the Senior Assistant General Secretary of the RMT (National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers), Steve Hedley, was attacked after speaking at a 'Free Tommy Robinson' by far-right activists.
7. These are just some of the more extreme examples of the threat of the far right, but on a daily basis people of colour, particularly visibly Muslim people, are intimidated and feel unsafe in their homes and communities.

Council believes:

1. That the growth of the far right is a concern for Student Unions who have a duty of care for all students.
2. That the far right have no place within our society and must be opposed at every opportunity.
3. That some of the media legitimise the far right through their scapegoating of immigrants, normalisation of Islamophobia and misinformation on asylum seekers and refugees and many other areas.

Council therefore resolves:

1. To oppose the far right in whatever way necessary, this includes but is not limited to, protests and rallies.
2. To join forces with other organizations such as trade unions and civil society groups to oppose the far right."

Date of Approval: 13 November 2018

Lapse Date: March 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.24. Climate Emergency

Policy Title:	Climate Emergency		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2019/8/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- That the impacts of climate breakdown are already causing serious damage around the world
- that the ‘Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C’, published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in October 2018, (a) describes the enormous harm that a 2°C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause compared with a 1.5°C rise, and (b) confirms that limiting Global Warming to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector;
- That students across the world have played a leading role in pushing climate breakdown to the forefront of government agendas, and that it’s important that this work continues and that Universities are also held accountable for their climate policies as well as local and national governments;
- That whilst the Students’ Union can carry out an action plan to reduce its own carbon footprint, so much of our ability to do this is controlled by the University’s own carbon management plan due to our lack of autonomy, and Queen’s ownership of our Students’ Union buildings
- that strong, radical policies to cut emissions are essential to our future, and also have associated health, wellbeing and economic benefits; and
- That, in recognising this, a growing number of local authorities, unions and institutions have already passed ‘Climate Emergency’ motions.

Council therefore commits to:

- Declare a ‘Climate Emergency’ that requires urgent action
- Lobby the University to make their activities net-zero carbon by 2030
- Ensure that all future decisions by the University and the Students’ Union, budgets and approaches to planning decisions are in line with this shift to zero carbon by 2030
- Establish a Climate Action Group within the Students’ Union to monitor progress on all of the above

Date of Approval: Oct 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.25. Pledge for Climate Action

Policy Title:	Pledge for Climate Action		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2019/8/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council acknowledges:

- The passing of a Climate Emergency motion at the last meeting of Student Council on 28th October 2019 that declared a Climate Emergency, mandated the Students' Union to lobby the University to become net-zero carbon neutral by 2030 and the establishment of a Climate Action Group in the Union.

This Council also Acknowledges:

- The significance of school strikes for climate action and the growing frustration and activism of school children and young people cross the world.

This Council Recognises:

- The establishment of Múscail, a network of Belfast-based community, trade union, human rights, environmental organisations and school pupils mobilising in response to the climate crisis and the development of a five point pledge for schools and workplaces that is as follows:

“Making Another World Possible”

5 pledges for Environmentally Responsible Schools and Workplaces

1. Bees, Trees and Sustainability

We will start and/or participate within the school, workplace and the wider community to protect biodiversity and fight carbon emissions

2. Leave it in the Ground

We will remove materials that produce a high carbon output from our schools and workplaces

3. Retrofitting for the Future

We will become Carbon Neutral by 2030. We will audit the carbon output of our school or workplace and develop an 'Action Plan to Zero by 2030' within a year of adopting this pledge. This will involve:

- Identifying how any planned maintenance, refurbishments or rebuilds will support the environment
- Transferring to renewable energy where possible
- Changing how we use our buildings and spaces, such as electricity usage.

4. Promote the Positive

We will develop policies and procedures that support and reward behaviour which protects the environment. This ranges from:

- Promoting walking, cycling and using public transport to travel to and from school or work
- Engaging creatively with the Student Climate Strike global movement to raise awareness of the climate breakdown
- Leading or volunteering on recycling or local 'clean-up' schemes

5. Sharing Best Practice

We will appoint colleagues, students, teachers, parents and staff to be part of a network which can publicly share resources, ideas and best practices. We will develop ways of integrating this work into school/work time. We have to change the way we do things, not just do more.

Who will pay for this?

- We will do what we can with what we have. Unlocking the resources and expertise that exist in our families, communities, schools and workplaces is critical in preventing climate breakdown.
- However, organisations that sign this pledge will also be invited to support campaigns which call for environmental justice by making big polluters pay big taxes to fund sustainable alternatives.

Therefore, this Council Mandates:

- The Students' Union to sign this pledge
- The new Climate Action Group to work with Múscail and other environmentalist and civil society groups to put this pledge into action
- The Students' Union Executive to lobby the University to act on the principles of this pledge.

Date of Approval: Nov 2019

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.26. Opposition to the University's new Chancellor Appointee

Policy Title:	Opposition to the University's new Chancellor Appointee		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2020/8/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes:

- The appointment of Hillary Rodham Clinton as the new Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast
- Rodham Clinton in 2018 received an honorary degree from the university for her "outstanding contribution to peace and reconciliation."

This Council recognises its live policies:

- Policy 1.03 "Asylum Seekers and Access to Education" through which council agreed to support the needs of those seeking asylum in Belfast, particularly higher education.
- Policy 1.14 "Decolonising Education" that seeks to challenge the marketisation of higher education that disproportionately affects students of colour, fights for free education and the democratisation of higher education.
- Policy 6.05 "Establishing a campaign to make QUB a University of Sanctuary" which works to create a safe environment for those fleeing war, violence, political persecution, poverty, discrimination and marginalisation.
- Policy 8.22 "Justice and Human Rights for Palestine" where council supported "That the Palestinian people are entitled to the same human rights, dignity of person, self-determination, security and parity of esteem as other peoples in the world today" and the global Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign.
- Policy 8.29 "Support the Campaign to Decriminalise Sex Work" that supports students engaged in sex work, decriminalisation and challenges the practice of criminalising those engaged in this work.

This Council also recognises:

- Student protests against Rodham Clinton's honorary degree in 2018.

This Council understands:

- That Rodham Clinton "conflated sex work with human trafficking and failed to acknowledge that anti-trafficking efforts often criminalize the most vulnerable populations in America: women of colour, undocumented people, trans people, and single parents." (<https://www.redumbrellafund.org/feminism-supports-sex-workers-rights/>)
- Rodham Clinton had implemented inherently racist and inhumane policies regarding South Americans seeking asylum and migrating to the US. As a Senator voting in favour of the Secure Fences Act 2006 to build more walls across the US's southern borders, while also discussing further barriers during primaries in her latest presidential run.

- Rodham Clinton, as Secretary of State in the Obama registration, is known to have used drone strikes to attack its foreign “enemies”, killing many civilians. The White House released a figure of 116 civilians, while human rights organisations have rightly challenged this.
- Rodham Clinton, in her run for President, also fell short when it came to her policies on higher education funding as she does not support free education for all.
- In 2015, Rodham Clinton wrote a letter, with her Presidential campaign logo as its heading, to billionaire Haim Saban stating that “we need to make countering BDS a priority. (<https://www.documentcloud.org/documents/2158218-hillary-clintons-letter-to-haim-saban-against-bds.html>)

This Council believes:

- In her actions as a Senator, Secretary of State, First Lady and a Presidential candidate, Hillary Rodham Clinton has indicated that her values and the values of this Union are not the same.

Therefore, this Council:

- Opposes the appointment of Hillary Rodham Clinton as Chancellor of Queen’s University Belfast.
- Mandates the Union President to write to the Vice-Chancellor stating the Students’ Union’s official opposition to Rodham Clinton’s appointment.
- Mandates the Officer Board of this Students’ Union to boycott meetings, receptions and other events with Rodham Clinton – with the exception of Graduations – and support student-led demonstrations against her appointment and presence at university events.
- Calls for the Officer Board to lobby the University to provide a student-wide referendum on those taking up the Chancellorship in future.

Date of Approval: Jan 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.27. Hong Kong Society Request for Support

Policy Title:	Hong Kong Society Request for Support		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2020/8/2	Policy Status:	Not Closed

“Dear Members of Student Council,

We are a group of Hong Kong students in QUB. 2019 has been a tough year for Hong Kong since there have been many severe conflicts between the Hong Kong Police Force and the protesters. Lots of protesters or even innocent by-standers suffered from police brutality and state-sanctioned triad violence. More than 6000 protesters have been arrested, with cases of first-aiders and journalists getting shot in the eye and losing their vision reported; we also saw police shooting protesters with live rounds at nearly point-blank range in extreme cases. Many Hong Kong students at QUB are deeply pained about the situation back home. We would like do our part in this movement through presenting facts to our fellow students and raising their awareness on the humanitarian crisis in Hong Kong, thus garnering support for "Support Democracy in Hong Kong" campaign.

To ensure the safety of Hong Kong students in our peaceful campaign on campus, we hope the Students' Union can express concerns on the suppression faced by Hong Kong people in our democratic movement, both back home and abroad. There are lots of reports that Hong Kong university students involved in similar campaigns in the UK, Canada and Australia saw their booths and posters vandalized, while some were threatened or even assaulted by others holding a different view towards their campaigns. These actions must not be tolerated in civilized societies since everyone has freedom of expression; it is ridiculous that Hong Kong students and their sympathizers participating in peaceful rallies and campaigns have to live under constant fear about lack of personal safety, imposed by barbaric bullies who aim to silence dissidents. This is something we certainly do not want to see at QUB, because it is students' basic right to live our university life without any fear of suppression when we openly discuss an issue of great moral importance.

We believe a mutual understanding between the Students' Union and us on our goals can prevent uncivilized hate actions and promote a liberal environment. The Students' Union reaffirms its belief that every student deserves the freedom to express their political views. Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you very soon.

Best regards,
QUB Hong Kong Society.”

Date of Approval: Jan 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.28. Solidarity with Indian Students protesting against Hindutva

Policy Title:	Solidarity with Indian Students Protesting against Hindutva		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2020/8/3	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

- India’s ruling majority headed by the right wing nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) & Prime Minister Modi adheres to the ideology of Hindutva which states that India belongs to only Hindu’s and anyone else is an ‘infiltrator’ in the country.
- Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) is a bill which amends the Indian Citizenship law to provide citizenship to religious minorities but excludes Muslims and Sri Lankan Tamils from the process.
- The bill violates the secular principles of the Indian constitution as faith cannot be made a condition of citizenship and technically makes Indian Muslims as second-class citizens.
- The government has further proposed to implement National Register for Citizens (NRC) which is very closely interlinked to the CAA. This is a citizen’s register, the government first plans to offer citizenships to persecuted minorities apart from Muslims. Anyone not in the list shall be put into detention centres.

Council Further Notes:

- In Aug 2019, the BJP majority government voted to revoke Article 370 which gave autonomy to Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state, between Pakistan and India. Since then, the state-sponsored Hindutva regime has seen police brutality against innocent civilians, an internet shut down and house arrests of key Kashmiri leaders.
- Kashmir’s internet blackout has now lasted more than 150 days, the longest ever in a democracy, and has severely impacted people’s lives, jobs and the local economy.
- Students have been at the forefront of fighting this across India, their voices have been stifled and are facing violence as a result.
- Police brutality carried out at protests in December and against the students of public universities (Jawaharlal Nehru University, Aligarh Muslim University & Jamia University).
- Most recent one, being JNU where students & teachers were attacked by masked Nationalist mobs by an outfit related to the BJP/Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) combined under the lens of the State Police.

Council mandates:

- The Students' Union to stand in solidarity with Indian students, Indian citizens & members of the diaspora fighting the BJP's Hindutva agenda and the implementation of CAA & NRC.
- To reaffirm the SU's anti- fascist stance through standing against the state-sponsored violence against Kashmiri Muslims and the unconstitutional implementation of CAA & NRC to create a Hindu State.
- For the VP Equality & Diversity and the International Officer to engage in actions of solidarity to support anti-CAA/NRC action.

Date of Approval: Jan 2020

Lapse Date: Mar 2023

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.29. Queen’s University Belfast’s ‘Green New Deal’

Policy Title:	Queen’s University Belfast’s ‘Green New Deal’		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2020/8/4	Policy Status:	Not Closed

We demand:

- Queen’s University Belfast to declare a Climate and Ecological Emergency.
- QUB to act upon this declaration by agreeing to the below ‘QUB Green New Deal’ which will aim to make Queen’s net carbon neutral by 2025, with a commitment to become net carbon neutral by 2030.

We propose:

- Changes across campus to cancel out the University’s carbon footprint, combined with essential changes to our education system to prepare our students for the future of work, alongside educating them to become ecologically conscious and active citizens:

1. Educational and curriculum reform:
 - a. Changes to our current education system at Queen’s will be shaped through the UN’s 17 Sustainable Development Goals.
 - b. Introduction of mandatory online module that students & staff must take upon registering for the year, based on the SDG’s. Ensuring this is critical and transformative to the way we teach at Queen’s.
 - c. Introducing incentivised (Degree Plus, extra credits etc.) extra module for students of any discipline to take – focusing on moving forward to a sustainable future as future workers and citizens.
 - d. Introducing new degree pathways i.e. offering ‘Sustainability’ as a Minor with various degrees.
 - e. Introducing elements of sustainability into different subjects and faculties – embedding this as a core aspect of the University’s teachings across the board. E.g. introducing elements of environmental law into mandatory law modules, introducing elements of SDG’s teaching into Medicine modules, recognising that the climate emergency poses a massive threat to healthcare.
 - f. Reviewing how Queen’s currently teach certain subjects e.g. management school currently focus on neo-liberal economic teachings which are entirely incompatible with the post-growth economy we’ll need to tackle a climate emergency. Environmental economic teachings currently barely exist in the management school.
2. Queen’s will produce and follow a new procurement policy, to apply to every department at Queen’s & across campus. This will ensure that any procurement of goods or services, will be environmentally, sustainably & ethically sourced.
3. Switching to a green energy provider – consultation to review departing from current energy contract as soon as possible. Wherever possible, Queen’s should provide its own energy through solar panels & other methods.

4. At last count in 2015, the University invested £6 million in companies involved in the production of fossil fuels. After the Fossil Free QUB campaign, an agreement was made that Queen's would divest from these companies over a period of 10 years. This has not happened. The University needs to divest this money rapidly, with a clear and transparent plan on this process.
5. Queen's commercial services will review their menus to become more sustainable & ensure food is ethically sourced. The current culture of food waste will also be ended.
6. Every new Queen's student will receive a reusable plastic water bottle, and a reusable coffee cup upon registering with the University. The majority of current reusable water bottles are made in China & are non-recyclable. Queen's will ensure these bottles & cups are ethically sourced & recyclable in line with their updated procurement policies.
7. Single-use plastics will be completely phased out across campus and commercial services by 2022.
8. Increased funding will go into the University's current 'Green Fund', to fund student efforts on environmental initiatives and campaigns.
9. A number of solar panels will be installed across the University's buildings wherever possible, to decrease use of electricity across the board.
10. Moving to complete organic, chemical-free gardening across campus, and identifying more green spaces on land that Queen's owns to be set aside for natural carbon absorption.
11. Investment in a number of new water fountains across campus ensuring students can effectively use their reusable water bottles.
12. Introduction of more recycling bins across campus.
13. A review of how offices within the University operate e.g. reviewing office printers, use of paper, ensuring sensor lights are in every office etc.
14. Introducing a travel policy aimed towards University staff & review the University's current role in paying for long-hall flights for staff.
15. The University should take a leading role in lobbying government, local organisations, and secondary schools into following their lead in cutting their carbon footprint entirely.
16. Queen's is a key partner in the 'Belfast Region City Deal', which Belfast City Council has stated aims at 'creating up to 20,000 new and better jobs alongside delivering a 10-year programme of inclusive economic growth'. Queen's will play a leading role in shaping this deal to ensure this money is invested sustainably & creation of new jobs are focused towards a 'just transition' of workers in a post-growth, sustainable economy.
17. Queen's will adapt a strategy in dealing with climate resilience. Whilst we aim to be a leader in becoming net-carbon neutral, many effects of climate change cannot be reverse & a strategy to support areas and people affected already is essential.

Accountability and Overview:

- We require a cross-University working group, with SU and student representation, to devise and monitor progress on an action plan to deliver our aim to be carbon neutral by 2025, with a commitment to be carbon neutral by 2030.

Date of Approval: 30 Jan 2020 (Referendum)
Lapse Date: Mar 2023
Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.30. Irish Language Rights

Policy Title:	Irish Language Rights		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2020/8/5	Policy Status:	Not Closed

This Council notes:

- The advances made in the New Decade New Approach agreement reached by the Stormont executive regarding the Irish language; including the creation of an Irish language commissioner and the repeal of the final penal laws.

This Council also notes:

- The radical and brilliant activism carried out by An Dream Dearg and student activists in the six counties in achieving these provisions.

This Council recognises:

- The support of Irish language rights by this Council in previous years, through support for bilingual signage and a standalone Irish Language Act.

This Council believes:

- That while these achievements are positive, they fall far behind what activists, including our own students here at Queen's University Belfast (QUB), have been calling for in a standalone Irish Language Act, largely by not including any provisions for bilingual signage.

This Council mandates:

- Queen's University Belfast Students' Union (QUBSU) to support the continuing activism by An Dream Dearg and student Irish language activists at QUB.
- QUBSU to develop a campaign along with NUS-USI, USI and other Students' Unions to prevent cuts to Irish language courses, for the expansion of courses able to be studied jointly with Irish, increase funding to Irish faculties and to support the lobbying and activism of An Cumann Gaelach and the work of an Oifigeach Gaeilge.
- QUBSU to work with NUS-USI, USI, Conradh na Gaeilge, An Dream Dearg and the new Irish language Commissioner, once appointed, to create recommendations of best practice to present to universities in the north pertaining to Irish language visibility, promotion and protection.
- All members of the Executive Management Committee to liaise with the Oifigeach Gaeilge (Irish Language Officer) to ensure Irish speaking students who contact the SU in Irish, receive a response in Irish.

This Council encourages:

- The use of the Irish language by all Full- and Part-Time Student Officers in campaigns, lobbying efforts and within the media.

Date of Approval: May 2020
Lapse Date: Mar 2023
Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.31. Endorsement for the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill

Policy Title:	Endorsement for the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2022/8/1	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Context and Introduction:

Employees and Trade Unions in Northern Ireland are currently protected under the Employment Rights (Northern Ireland) Order (the 1996 Order) and the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (the 1995 Order). Actors across society see this as ineffective and outdated, resulting in People Before Profit bringing forward the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill for consideration by NI Government. This has gone through public consultation with relevant actors for fifteen weeks and has been shared with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland.

This Bill has six policy objectives for the improvement of current legislation to increase the rights and protections of workers and Trade Unions across Northern Ireland:

1. Remove the ban on 'solidarity' industrial action to permit those involved from potential civil prosecution
2. Remove the mandatory requirement of the postal ballot process when voting to determine whether to commence industrial action.
3. Simplify the type and amount of information required from trade unions to employers before undertaking industrial action;
4. Reduce the notice period before needed before any industrial action may be taken
5. Reduce the current mandatory requirement that specifies the minimum number of employees needed for an employer to recognise a trade union from 21 to 5; and
6. To mandate employers who recognize a trade union to negotiate on the basis of 'pay, terms and conditions' rather than 'pay, hours and holidays' "

This Council Believes that:

- Current labour legislation in Northern Ireland is restrictive and outdated, unable to provide effective enough provisions for the rights of Employees and their Trade Unions. This includes the ability to take effective strike action and the recognition of Trade Unions in smaller businesses.
- Strong workplace representation is crucial to tackling low pay and to creating a more equal society.
- Student Workers are often some of the most vulnerable and taken advantage workers across different employment sectors, and the introduction of this legislation will allow students increased legal protections in their workplaces.
- It is crucial that students have an awareness of their rights as workers, and easy access to information surrounding Trade Union Support.

Council Resolves:

- To fully endorse the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill

Council Instructs:

- The Executive Management Committee to campaign for the introduction of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Bill by the Northern Ireland Government
- The Executive Management Committee to increase awareness amongst the student body of their rights as workers and promote availability of relevant Trade Unions.

Date of Approval: May 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee

8.32. Fossil Free Careers

Policy Title:	Fossil Free Careers		
Policy Reference:	OTH/2022/8/11	Policy Status:	Not Closed

Council Notes:

1. That the operations of the oil, gas and mining industries cause immense environmental harm, by accelerating the climate and ecological crisis, polluting the water and permanently destroying landscapes.
2. That these extractive operations also cause direct social harm, by displacing people from their homes and lands, destroying livelihoods, demolishing sacred indigenous sites, and leaving workers and communities with severe health problems.
3. That the presence of extractive industries in Northern Ireland represents urgent social and ecological concerns.
4. That graduates are increasingly turning away from the oil and gas sector. A 2017 study showed the number of graduates taking jobs in the industry had dropped by 60% in four years.
5. That young people see oil and gas as the most unappealing sector to work in. They associate it with responsibility for the climate crisis and believe there is no future for jobs in the industry.
6. The University Careers Service does not have a publicly accessible policy that excludes the promotion of careers in the oil, gas and mining industry through its website, careers fairs, emails to the student body and other recruitment events.
7. The University has made a public ethical and sustainability commitment, including commitments to “encourage all staff and students to become advocates for change to ensure a sustainable future for all,” as well as to “seek to disinvest from companies involved in the extraction and production of fossil fuels by 2025.”

Council Believes:

1. Inviting oil, gas, and mining companies to advertise with the careers service adds legitimacy to the idea that these companies are an acceptable part of our society and our future.

2. The University Careers Service should ensure that its recruitment activities and events are in line with the university's publicly stated ethical principles of sustainability.
3. The University's careers service has a responsibility to its students to promote jobs with a future.
4. Ending this University's complicity in career pipelines into the oil, gas, and mining industry is an effective method of showing solidarity with communities affected by these companies' operations.

Council Mandates:

To publicly support the Fossil Free Careers campaign, and demands that our University career's department:

1. Refuses all new relationships with oil, gas or mining companies.
2. Declines to renew any current relationships with oil, gas or mining companies after the contractually obligated period ends.
3. Adopts a publicly available Ethical Careers Policy that explicitly excludes oil, gas and mining companies from recruitment opportunities.
4. To mandate the relevant full-time and part-time officer(s) to help set up meetings relating to the Fossil Free Careers campaign with relevant university staff and include student campaigners where relevant.
5. To use relevant SU social media channels to amplify petitions, statements and other calls to action from the Fossil Free Careers campaign.
6. To send out a press release and website statement announcing the passing of this motion and the support of the union for this campaign.
7. To never allow oil, gas, or mining companies access to SU-organised events, or to lend the SU name, logo or endorsement to events which include these companies.
8. To refuse the presence of oil, gas and mining companies in any SU-controlled physical or digital space.

Date of Approval: May 2022

Lapse Date: Mar 2025

Officer responsible: Executive Management Committee