

# NATHAN AKEHURST

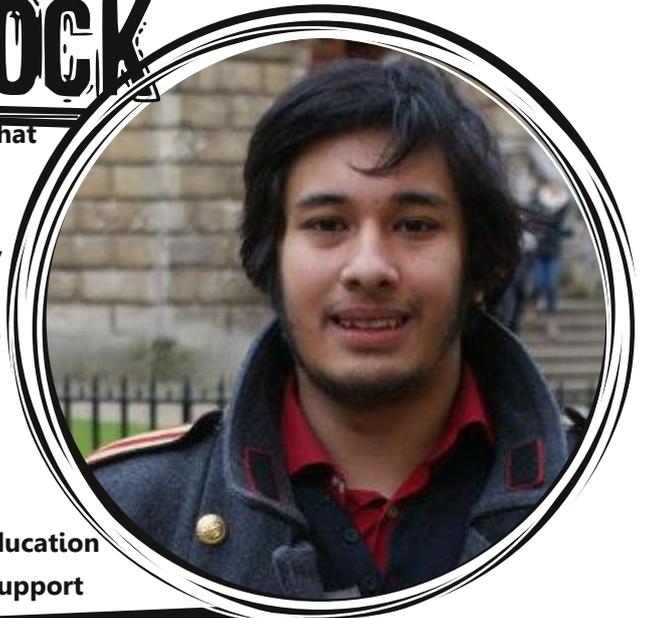
## #1 FOR BLOCK

**A democratic, campaigning and transparent national union that integrates liberation with all its work is something students need now more than ever- and that's why I'm running for Block.**

Since becoming involved in student politics, I've been inspired by the incredible people and campaigns I've come across- but I've also seen a disappointing amount of bureaucracy, careerism and clique politics. I want to be a part of tackling the negative culture of student politics, and opening up our national union to all its members.

**I'm standing because.**

- **Demystifying elections and policymaking for a more democratic and relevant NUS**
- **Vigorously defending accessible, public and democratic education**
- **Protecting students against victimisation, and providing support networks**



### Democracy and engagement

Most students on my campus have **no idea what NUS is or does**- other than a discount card for discounts we usually get with our university cards anyway.

**NUS needs to actively engage** with the millions it supposedly represents, **not just those who attend Conference**. I'm involved in student politics and have been to Conference before, and I had to find out how to run for elections from friends and blogs.

This affects marginalised groups more- NUS has voted down gender quotas for delegates twice on the grounds that more women should be encouraged to stand.

**Outside the liberation campaigns, this hasn't happened.**

If elected I would work towards **publicising and demystifying elections** and, ultimately, giving every student a chance to vote for the union's leadership. If the NUS can't inspire its members, it will become irrelevant.

### A resource for every student

In the last months students have been violently assaulted by police, suspended from their courses and victimised **simply for protesting** (something I have experienced personally).

Police, university managements and **sometimes even our own unions** have colluded in this. The NUS should be there as a **place of advice and guidance and backing for all students that have been isolated and intimidated for their activism**.

In light of institutional racism and discrimination still prevalent in the police, there are intersectional reasons for providing such support. This should be part of a **national strategy for NUS** that concentrates on linking students with the support they need at any given time- whether that's **legal aid, access to welfare services or advice on dealing with rogue landlords and letting agents**.

### Defending education

It's obvious by now that **education is being attacked on an unprecedented scale**, from course and place cuts to falling staff pay, from the sale of student loans to the victimisation of international students.

In accepting graduate taxes and offering only piecemeal resistance to loan privatisation (that has led to spiralling debts when implemented in Australia) with no mandate, **NUS leadership has let students down**.

As the national representative body of students' interests, NUS should be **working with campaigners and unions to lead the struggle** - not just against the cuts, but for an education sector run in the spirit of **learning, democracy and accessibility**.

NUS need to fight to ensure **background and living costs are never a barrier** for those who want to study, and encouraging those who otherwise might not consider it to enter education.

### My record

**In my third term as student union rep for my college**

Helped establish a tenants' union to fight soaring rents and defend students and residents

**Organised the 'Support Our Staff' campaign to coordinate student backing for staff pay disputes**

Involved in the Oxford Activist Network, which brings together a broad range of campaigning students from the three higher education institutions in Oxford and beyond

**Pushed for an accountable and democratic university and student union as a student journalist**

Have been heavily active in education and anti-cuts activism locally and nationally since the movement against tuition fees in 2010

**Involved in campaigns to pressure Oxford to divest from sweatshops and the fossil fuel industry**

I'm a final year History and Politics student at Oxford and planning on applying for an MA in history. I am an **independent candidate and unaffiliated to a political party or faction**. Feel free to contact me to find out more at [nathan.akehurst@lincoln.ox.ac.uk](mailto:nathan.akehurst@lincoln.ox.ac.uk), or find my campaign at [facebook.com/nathanforblock](https://facebook.com/nathanforblock)