

STUDENTS' LIVES BETTER VOICES BOLDER FUTURES BRIGHTER

NUS Strategic Plan, 2011-14



national union of students

The National Voice of Students

NUS is the national voice of 7 million students across the United Kingdom.

Made up of some 600 students' unions, associations and guilds, it exists to **promote**, **defend** and **extend** the rights of students and to **develop** and **champion** strong students' unions.

Our vision is of NUS as a **pioneering**, **innovative** and **powerful** campaigning organisation: the definitive national voice of students. We fight barriers to education, we empower students to shape both a quality learning experience and the world around them, and we support influential, democratic and well-resourced students' unions.

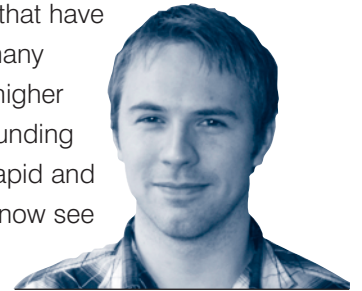
To achieve this, the core values of **democracy**, **equality** and **collectivism** guide our work.

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Better,

The last year has been difficult and turbulent, and the events and decisions that have taken place will resonate for many years to come. In further and higher education, major changes in funding and policy will have a direct, rapid and huge impact on students. We now see before us fees at a level that would have seemed



Liam Burns

National President

unimaginable to previous generations, a surge of new providers coming into higher education with the enthusiastic support of government, the abolition of the education maintenance allowance and the end of enrichment funding in further education. Taken together these things represent a radical overhaul of our entire post-compulsory education system, its structure, its finances, even its purpose and its values. It will be joined by the effects of new policy in areas like schools, health, local government, immigration and welfare reform. We have seen the toughest and tightest national budget since the second world war, reducing the standard of living for many and putting immense pressure on public services.

Against this background, other changes gather pace. Few could have predicted the explosion of social networking and the power of today's digital media. We have seen a strong

bolder, brighter

reinvigoration of interest in democracy, accountability and trust, as a result of expenses scandals, coalition government and a debate on the way we vote. Further devolution in Wales and the election of an unprecedented majority government in Scotland may radically alter the shape of Britain itself in years to come. The way people want to learn is more complex and dynamic than ever before.

The student movement has to respond to these challenges, and NUS must support that response. This is the aim of our new strategic plan, which we present here. We have set ourselves twenty key goals to achieve by summer 2014, crossing themes of funding and participation, improving education, the role and rights of students in society, the way lives are transformed through activities and development, and the strength and power of students' unions.

To deliver on those goals, we will work with and bring together officers and staff in students' unions, and work with external partners in politics, education and civil society. We will fundamentally change the way we work by forming a group including NUS, NUS Services and a new charitable organisation to drive improvement in the way our members are supported. We will reach out to and work to understand the experiences of non-traditional learners inside and outside the classroom. We will concentrate on campaigning

effectiveness and focus our resources on action to gain the most impact. We will put NUS and students' unions on a sure financial footing at a time when money is tight, and we will ensure the student movement is at the forefront of the ongoing digital revolution. We will support the NUS nations to develop their own strategies to complement and build on the main strategic plan.

These are extraordinary times, presenting us with immense threats to be countered and immense opportunities to be seized. This plan is about how we will do both of these things, to secure a brighter future for the people we support and represent.



Matt Hyde
Chief Executive

Our Twenty Key Strategic Goals, 2011-14

Winning on Funding and Participation	Making Education Better	Securing a Fairer Society	Transforming Students through Activities and Development	Building Strong Students' Unions
A majority of candidates at the next UK general election will have committed to support funding policies consistent with those of NUS	We will develop and promote combined policies on learning and teaching in both FE and HE, and systems to measure the impact of student engagement	Student interests will be at the centre of local housing, environmental and community relations policy, especially in the most challenging areas and situations	We will launch online programmes and networks to support student activities, and pilot an activities accreditation scheme	The way we guide improvement and assure quality in students' unions will be transformed and made more accessible
Student financial support will be fairer and simpler across higher and further education, with more support for people who need more help	Students' unions will have the capability to respond to diverse learning experiences including part-time students, apprentices and other work-based learners	We will ensure student support services are fit for purpose, by providing students' unions with the means to assess their delivery and impact	Students' unions will be at the centre of the employability agenda, and initiatives on employability will be driven by the student voice	We will deliver a talent management programme for students' unions, to attract, retain, develop and diversify our people
Students' unions and NUS will be central to access regulation and will do more work themselves to help widen participation	Students' unions will be equal partners in quality improvement and assurance, in terms of ownership, governance, policy and practice	We will expand our research programme to explore welfare issues facing non-traditional students and learners, and develop programmes to respond to them	Support for sabbatical officers will be transformed by improving induction and training, to maximise societal impact and personal progression	Students' unions will be stable and financially secure, with high-quality support for tackling major strategic problems
Across the UK, student activists will be inspired and trained, through students' unions, ready to campaign effectively	Institutions will give clear commitments to students, backed by quicker and stronger systems for dealing with student complaints	We will secure change based on evidence gathered on Black, LGBT, disabled, and women's student experiences, faith issues, and hate crime	We will lead a major programme of events and initiatives around sport, volunteering and community, linked with the Olympic and Commonwealth Games	The students' unions governance code and guidance on the strategic relationship with institutions will be in widespread use, and its impact will be recognised

In this document, we give examples of key priorities towards each goal; they are not exhaustive, but will illustrate the work we will do.

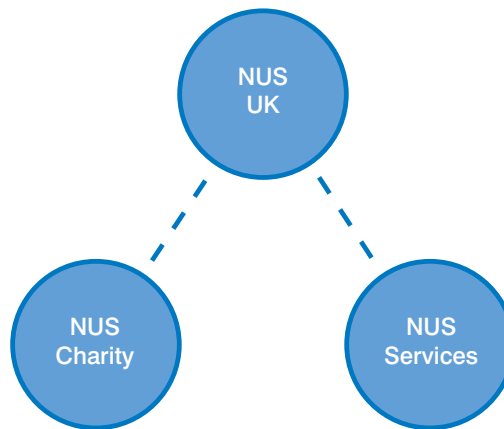
Structure and Strategy

To achieve our strategic goals, we will adopt a new group structure with three core components:

NUS UK

(a company limited by guarantee)

Will focus on campaigns and campaigning effectiveness, educational and social policy and projects, and governance and democracy in NUS and students' unions



NUS Charitable Services

(a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity)

Will focus on developing students' unions as organisations, including students' union quality improvement and assurance, officer and staff development, and ethical and environmental work

NUS Services

(a company limited by shares; 75% students' unions, 25% NUS)

Will focus on income generation, bulk purchasing for students' unions, commercial development support, and back-office functions for the NUS group

Within this structure, we will implement a set of ‘enabling strategies’ over the next three years:

We will be a strong family of organisations that deliver benefits to students and students’ unions...	...putting our values into practice through the way we work...	...and well run, effectively resourced, with excellent customer service.
<p>Our strategies for membership and marketing and communications will ensure we retain a strong membership base and deliver clear benefits to our members.</p> <p>We will help generate £3.75m a year for students’ unions, transform the way we use the NUS brand, and launch a new digital platform for our members. We will reduce NUS’ dependence on affiliation fees as an income source, and make the affiliation system fairer and inclusive to non-traditional groups of learners.</p>	<p>We will develop a cross-cutting liberation strategy to ensure this dimension is represented in all of our work, and integrate this over three years with an equality and diversity strategy, making E&D central to our leadership, services and political culture.</p> <p>Through our ethical and environmental strategy, we will work with SUs to green their institutions and communities, generating new income, and we will ensure our people work in a sustainable way.</p>	<p>Through our strategies for governance, finance and resources, people, and customer service we will build an NUS Group capable of delivering our vision.</p> <p>We will complete the process of securing the right legal vehicles for the NUS group, and establish a group planning cycle. We will reduce our reliance on affiliation fees, achieve the Investors in People Gold award, and secure a permanent home for NUS Headquarters in London.</p>

Further details of these enabling strategies can be read later in this document.

Winning on Funding and Participation

Strategic Goal	In the next year, we will concentrate on...	In future years, we will go further by...
<p>A majority of candidates at the next UK general election will have committed to support funding policies consistent with those of NUS</p>	<p>Monitoring and modelling the initial effects of the new HE funding system to establish a case to change direction</p> <p>Influencing the Labour Party to adopt definitive HE funding proposals along lines consistent with NUS policy</p>	<p>Re-establishing the case for our HE funding principles and reviewing our policy to respond to new circumstances</p> <p>Establishing and leading a coalition of politicians, campaigning organisations and other partners to ensure a strong platform for our policy before the next general election</p>
<p>Student financial support will be fairer and simpler across higher and further education, with more support for people who need more help</p>	<p>Establishing a task force to lead a programme of research and policy development, culminating in the publication of a comprehensive report on student financial support reform</p>	<p>Lobbying and campaigning on the basis of evidence and policy as developed, to secure major change to the way student financial support is planned and delivered</p>
<p>Students' unions and NUS will be central to access regulation and will do more work themselves to help widen participation</p>	<p>Developing a team of WP Champions in students' unions to support students unions' WP engagement</p> <p>Producing an online hub of resources helping students' unions to effectively engage with WP activities such as outreach, including case studies</p>	<p>Securing a formal role for students' unions in new structures and processes for scrutinising HEIs on their participation and access performance</p> <p>Embedding widening participation principles in the established students' unions quality model</p>
<p>Across the UK, student activists will be inspired and trained, through students' unions, ready to campaign effectively</p>	<p>Carrying out a comprehensive research exercise to map student activism and students' union support for activism across the UK</p> <p>Inviting bids for up to ten consortia of students' unions to run activist development projects</p>	<p>Developing and maintaining a central hub for student activism – to support student led campaigning in all its forms</p> <p>Training and supporting a network of change agents from students' unions and beyond, to inspire activists from schools, youth groups, colleges, and universities</p>

Making Education Better

Strategic Goal	In the next year, we will concentrate on...	In future years, we will go further by...
<p>We will develop and promote combined policies on learning and teaching in both FE and HE, and systems to measure the impact of student engagement</p>	<p>Developing new HE Charters on ICT and Academic Support, and starting to develop a comprehensive policy on the future of further education</p> <p>Reviewing the model Learner Involvement Strategy for FE, to build in a tool for monitoring and recording impact</p>	<p>Developing a benchmarking tool on the impact of student engagement</p> <p>Undertaking horizon-scanning research to identify future trends and developments in teaching and learning to help shape the agenda, leading to the publication of overarching NUS policies on further and higher education</p>
<p>Students' unions will have a comprehensive understanding of diverse learning experiences including part-time students, apprentices and other work-based learners</p>	<p>Working with groups of students' unions to develop case studies on engaging postgraduates, HE in FE, placement students, part-time and distance learners</p> <p>Developing a programme of resources to support FE students' unions to engage with adult learners</p>	<p>Supporting students' unions to analyse their NSS, PRES and PTES surveys and embed an evidence-based approach to policy development</p> <p>Bringing FE students' unions closer to the apprentice agenda by linking apprenticeship frameworks with the sabbatical officer role</p>
<p>Students' unions will be equal partners in quality improvement and assurance, in terms of ownership, governance, policy and practice</p>	<p>Working with the QAA to deliver a Quality Matters Conference, and launching the NUS Student Led Teaching Awards</p> <p>Piloting a new Student Governor Support Programme for FE</p>	<p>Supporting students' unions to redevelop their course representative and other engagement systems, to win change on policy and practice in learning and teaching</p> <p>Developing strategies to ensure that FE students are able to influence the design of qualifications and curriculum</p>
<p>Institutions will give clear commitments to students, backed by quicker and stronger systems for dealing with student complaints</p>	<p>Developing a student bill of rights on student expectations of a high quality learning experience in HE, and embed those principles through the implementation of new student charters</p> <p>Lobbying for a national complaints system for FE</p>	<p>Ensuring that HEIs publish clear information about the student experience and they will held to account for the accuracy, completeness and usefulness of this information</p> <p>Working to ensure that student charters become an essential element in the quality system, with HEIs appraised on the clarity of their commitments</p>

Securing a Fairer Society

Strategic Goal	In the next year, we will concentrate on...	In future years, we will go further by...
<p>Student interests will be at the centre of local housing, environmental and community relations policy, especially in the most challenging areas and situations</p>	<p>Supporting students' unions challenging discriminatory local planning decisions and providing guidance on community relations strategies</p> <p>Expanding student involvement in our Green Impact environmental programme</p>	<p>Ensuring every students' union has the tools to develop its own community strategy</p> <p>Securing better regulation of letting agents to protect students' interests as both tenants and local citizens</p>
<p>We will ensure student support services are fit for purpose, by providing students' unions with the means to assess their delivery and impact</p>	<p>Using our Measuring Welfare research to develop key trends, concerns and different approaches to student services</p>	<p>In partnership with AMoSSHE and NAMSS, developing tools for students' unions to assess the value and impact of student services</p> <p>Leading a programme to identify how students' union advice services can develop and add further value</p>
<p>We will expand our research programme to explore welfare issues facing non-traditional students and learners, and develop programmes to respond to them</p>	<p>Involving members and other stakeholders in designing new research on gaps in knowledge about welfare and its relationship with diversity</p> <p>Building an online library of relevant research reports conducted by NUS and external organisations</p>	<p>Bringing the major research piece to a successful conclusion, identifying further opportunities and supporting students' unions to secure change based on the evidence gathered</p>
<p>We will secure change based on evidence gathered on Black, LGBT, disabled, and women's student experiences, faith issues, and hate crime</p>	<p>Defining local, sectoral and national objectives from the evidence and providing resources for students' unions to use in their own campaigns</p>	<p>Incorporating new research into our campaign work and evaluating the impact of the changes we secure</p>

Transforming Students through Activities and Development

Strategic Goal	In the next year, we will concentrate on...	In future years, we will go further by...
<p>We will launch online programmes and networks to support student activities, and pilot an activities accreditation scheme</p>	<p>Holding a series of webinars to network student activities officers around common interests</p> <p>Working with students' unions and leading employers to design the accreditation scheme</p>	<p>Rolling out the accreditation scheme across the UK and in time shift the focus to skills enhancement</p> <p>Involving external organisations with expertise in specific activity areas in the delivery of our work</p>
<p>Students' unions will be at the centre of the employability agenda, and initiatives on employability will be driven by the student voice</p>	<p>Launching a student facing resource to demonstrate the value in participating in students' union activities</p> <p>Linking our work on employability with the green workforce and volunteering agendas</p>	<p>Undertaking research with students' union alumni to look at the impact of students' union involvement on their careers</p> <p>Involving enterprise based organisations in encouraging students' union participants to create their own businesses</p>
<p>Support for sabbatical officers will be transformed by improving induction and training, to maximise societal impact and personal progression</p>	<p>Launching an online sabbatical induction hub packed with the tools needed for them to succeed in their year in office</p> <p>Improving support for departing sabbatical officers, to include help with career development and route-finding into roles in wider society</p>	<p>Launching a sabbatical training programme which will lead to a formal qualification or accreditation</p> <p>Piloting a mentoring scheme for sabbatical officers, using student movement alumni</p>
<p>We will lead a major programme of events and initiatives around sport, volunteering and community, linked with the Olympic and Commonwealth Games</p>	<p>Working with 100 students' Unions to create an ambassador programme to initiate projects around the Olympic and Paralympic games</p> <p>Accrediting students' unions engagement with the Games through a bronze, silver and gold award scheme</p>	<p>Being the gateway for legacy activities being initiated by LOCOG to ensure students' unions benefit from the 2012 Olympics</p> <p>Engaging with the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow to provide volunteering opportunities to students.</p>

Building Strong Students' Unions

Strategic Goal	In the next year, we will concentrate on...	In future years, we will go further by...
<p>The way we guide improvement and assure quality in students' unions will be transformed and made more accessible</p>	<p>Developing a new quality model to advance on the Students' Union Evaluation Initiative (SUEI), which will be suitable for HE and FE unions</p> <p>Instigating a major project to evaluate and articulate the impact of students' unions</p>	<p>Increasing the number of unions participating in the established quality framework</p> <p>Developing tools to assess and demonstrate the impact of students' unions, on the basis of comprehensive and credible research</p>
<p>We will deliver a talent management programme for students' unions, to attract, retain, develop and diversify our people</p>	<p>Developing a students' union staff competency framework</p> <p>Raising the quality and diversity of our leaders by launching senior managers and future leaders development programmes</p>	<p>Launching a student movement graduate recruitment scheme.</p> <p>Recruiting the first student movement apprentices</p>
<p>Students' unions will be stable and financially secure, with high-quality support for tackling major strategic problems</p>	<p>Launching a strategic support unit, providing unions with organisational diagnosis and solutions</p> <p>Providing a range of high quality services to students' unions to support their development and help them address strategic challenges</p>	<p>Identifying and supporting collaborations and mergers of union functions where appropriate</p> <p>Piloting a range of shared services accessible to students' unions</p>
<p>The students' unions governance code and guidance on the strategic relationship with institutions will be in widespread use, and its impact will be recognised</p>	<p>Supporting students' unions to implement the governance code and develop relationship agreements with their institutions</p> <p>Supporting students' unions to recruit high quality trustees</p>	<p>Providing board performance audit solutions</p> <p>Integrating the good governance code into the established quality model</p>

Enabling Strategies – Vision and Key Targets

Membership and Affiliation	Marketing and Communications	Governance	Finance and Resources
We will ensure that NUS gives value for money, with clarity about the benefits of membership, and we will maintain a strong membership	We will achieve and secure new income, brand power, and member intelligence; NUS will be widely recognised as a badge of pride	Our democracy will be effective, with wider participation; our strategy will be achieved through strong governance	Our finances, resources and assets will be optimised to enable the NUS group to function efficiently and effectively
Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – affiliation fees model for non-traditional groups (eg apprentices, work-based learners) – new CRM system captures interactions, intelligence and member benefits 	Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – NUSSL to generate £3.75m to students' unions; a 50% increase – Extra grows to 750k card sales – brand review enables us to communicate better with students and stakeholders – value NUS clear to its members – NUS digital launched to grow income and connectivity 	Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – complete Charity establishment – incorporate NUS UK – establish group planning cycle – student participation in NUS democratic structures will become measurably more diverse 	Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – secure a London-based freehold property for HQ – new NUS Group telecoms system in place – affiliation fees less than 40% net income for NUS reducing our dependency on fees – deliver financial and HR services for SUs

People	Liberation, Equality and Diversity	Ethical and Environmental	Events, Customer Services and Administration
All our people will be well trained, developed, rewarded and will demonstrate our values through the way they work	LED will be central to our leadership, service and political culture, fully embedded in the way we work, and monitored effectively	We will work with SUs to green their institutions and communities, generating new income, and we will ensure our people work in a sustainable way	We will provide high quality and efficient events and customer services for our members and others, and internally
Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – secure IIP Gold through by improving induction, performance management, and by reviewing and harmonising terms and conditions – develop shared group values and embed them in our culture 	Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – achieve Investors in Diversity through initiatives including training, equality impact auditing – deliver programmes to build liberation interests into all of our work 	Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Sustained growth of Green Impact SUs and Green Impact Universities/Colleges – Roll Green Impact out into the community via SUs – Generate £75k per year to SUs 	Key targets: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – central customer services contact centre established for NUS Group – establish Group Events calendar and move to new NUS conference venue

Comprehensive versions of our enabling strategies are available online through NUS Connect



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