

1794 Standing up for Students that Stutter

(Passed 19 November 2015)

Proposer: Jo Swo (Welfare, Community & Diversity Officer)

Seconder: Aaron Hood (Students' with Disabilities Officer)

Union notes:

1) That stuttering (which included stammering and will from hereon be included in the term "stuttering") is medically defined as "a speech problem characterised by repetitions, pauses, or drawn out syllables, words, and phrases. Stutterers are different than people experiencing normal fluency problems because a stutterer's disfluency is more severe and consistent than that of people who do not stutter".¹

Union believes:

- 1) 3. No student should feel ashamed or embarrassed about their disability.
- 2) Stuttering can have a negative impact on an individual's academic performance, especially in situations that necessitate them to speak (e.g. seminars, presentations, oral exams etc.)
- 3) There is a significant lack of awareness surrounding stuttering
- 4) Students who stutter are eligible for Disability Allowance and should not be hindered from accessing it
- 5) Stuttering is a disability and therefore, under the Equality Act, has antidiscriminatory rights in respect of employment, services and

education. Being perceived to have a disability can sometimes also give rights; 2

6) Not all students who stutter may wish to self-identify as disabled, as is their right, but this shouldn't hinder students who do stutter from self-identifying as disabled.

Union resolves:

1) To mandate the Undergraduate Education Officer and Postgraduate Education Officer to lobby the University to:

- a) Make seminars more accessible for students that stutter;
- b) Ensure all lecturers and seminar leaders treat students who stutter with respect and patience;
- c) Provide a guide for students who stutter, how to make sure they are not penalised for work that requires oral performance.

2) To mandate the Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer and Students' with Disabilities Officer to:

- a) Hold International Stammering Awareness Day (22nd October) every year;
- b) Encourage students who stutter to come to Students' with Disabilities Caucus;
- c) Spread awareness about and celebrate stuttering during Disability History;

1 <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/stuttering>

2 <http://www.stammeringlaw.org.uk/disability/disab.htm>

d) To organise a seminar, at least once a year, for students who stutter to discuss their experiences at UEA.

3) For UEASU to affiliate with STUC (Stammerers Through University Campaign) and work with them to help improve the lives and quality of education for students who stammer at UEA.