

1874 Hidden course costs are still a problem

Proposer: Cameron Mellows (Non-Portfolio Officer)

Seconder: Connor Rand (Undergraduate Education Officer)

Union notes:

1. Policy 1859 It's Time to Talk about Costs on Campus.
2. The Union's 'The Real Costs of Study' report which highlighted concerns around major costs on courses that students were unlikely to know of or budget for.
3. The previous Union policy on hidden course costs has now lapsed.
4. That many students still incur major costs on their course, for instance Health Sciences students.
5. That some of these costs are now listed on the University's website at <https://www.uea.ac.uk/about/legalstatements/finance-and-fees/additional-course-fees>
6. These additional costs include reassessment fees; Disclosure and Barring Service checks (for Counselling, Physical Education, Medicine, PGCE, Pharmacy and Social Work students); membership of relevant professional bodies (required for Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and Speech and Language Therapy Students, as well as BSc Midwifery students); field trips and courses; placement costs; textbooks; printing coursework assignments and a UEA branded PE kit for Physical Education students.
7. Student feedback consistently shows concerns with costs and financial matters.
8. Hidden course costs has been part of the Union's 'Cost of Living' priority campaign and the National Union of Students' 'Cut the Costs' campaign.
9. Last year the University agreed to provide free lab coats and safety goggles for all new first year SCI students.

Union believes:

1. Students remain extremely concerned about financial costs and some are struggling to make ends meet.
2. Students should not be expected to pay for compulsory course costs – the University should fund these costs.
3. Putting course costs on an obscure part of the website should not be seen as a solution to tackling hidden course costs.
4. These costs remain largely unknown about by students until the cost is incurred. Therefore they are difficult to budget for and hit students from poorer backgrounds hardest, damaging access, widening participation and student retention.

5. Lobbying the University on financial costs and hidden course costs should remain a UEA SU priority in the future.

Union resolves:

1. To continue to raise the issue of hidden course costs with the University at all relevant meetings and committees including Learning and Teaching Committee, Student Experience Committee and Faculty Learning Teaching Quality Committees.

2. To make clear our view to the University that all compulsory costs should be covered by the institution.

3. To include a section on hidden course costs in any 'Costs on Campus' report.