

## **Purpose of this document**

This document contains all the policy currently in effect for the Mature and Part-Time Students Campaign. This is the policy that the Mature and Part-Time Students Officers and the Mature and Part-Time Students Committee are responsible for implementing and is sometime known as 'Live Policy'.

## **Policy Lapse**

### **Policy Lapses in 2 circumstances:**

1. If a subsequent policy over-rides it.
2. After 3 years unless Mature and Part-Time Students Conference votes to renew it.

Policy passed at Mature and Part-Time Students Conference 2016 will lapse at the end of Mature and Part-Time Students Conference 2019.

## **What you need to do**

If you are considering submitting policy to Mature and Part-Time Students Conference, you should first check whether any policy is currently 'live' for that issue and whether you need to change the National Union's current stance on that area of work.

If you require this document in an alternative format, please contact [democracy@nus.org.uk](mailto:democracy@nus.org.uk).

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# Policy passed at Mature and Part Time Students Conference 2016

## Motion 1: Reasonable Adjustments for Student Parents

### **NUS believes**

1. Many mature and part –time students study alongside full time employment and/or additional caring responsibilities.
2. Many institutions do not have policy on student parents and do not have provisions for reasonable adjustments to be made for students with children regarding assessments and placements.

### **NUS further believes**

1. Students who have parenting responsibilities should be supported by their Universities and Students' Unions the same way as they would be if they were an employee.
2. That childcare can be costly, particularly if University hours or placements have been rearranged or cancelled.
3. That student parents who are breastfeeding should give provision and support so they can maintain breastfeeding whilst returning to studies such as time to express milk.
4. That student parents should have allowances for when their children are sick.

### **NUS resolves**

1. To campaign and lobby to ensure Universities and Students' Unions support and implement reasonable adjustments for student parents.
2. To campaign for provisions on campuses for breastfeeding mums.
3. To maximise the flexibility for student parents.
4. To provide resources and materials to support students' unions to work with universities to develop student parent and care giver policies.

## Motion 2: Great Expectations

### **Conference believes**

1. That very often an institution's expectations of students and the work they submit can be unclear.
2. Notes one example as the use of Harvard referencing, which whilst a component of some public examinations, is not a component of all and is unlikely to have been a component of examinations sat by students who have been out of education for a number of years.

### **Conference further believes**

1. It should be considered best practice for institutions to signpost and clearly explain what is expected of students, whether covering in lectures, tutorials, handouts or virtual learning environments.

### **Conference resolves**

1. To instruct the mature and part-time students' campaign to further such best practice.

### **Motion 3: Part-time students and their health**

#### **NUS believes**

1. That for students who have health problems, institutions can advise or offer to transfer them from full-time to part-time study.

#### **NUS further believes**

1. That while the flexibility of study is important, simply offering this option is not the end of an institutions responsibility.
2. That institutions should be ensuring that if students choose to switch to part-time study they should be following up with those students to ensure that the appropriate support is being given

#### **NUS resolves**

1. To give guidance to Students' Unions on what support their institutions should offer
2. To help Students' Unions work with their institutions to ensure flexibility is available, particularly for those with health concerns

### **Motion 4: Better Childcare**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That the level of government childcare funding available has decreased in recent years.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. That childcare provided by institutions is often unsuitable to the needs of student parents.
2. That other teaching environments, such as schools, have far more suitable childcare provision.
3. That often university reading weeks and half terms do not align, so childcare should also be available during half terms for students who have to attend university.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For NUS to support students' unions in lobbying universities for more adequate childcare provision.
2. For NUS to lobby the government for increased childcare funding available for student parents.

### **Motion 5: RESPECT Motion (Resources, Equity, Sensitivity, Pastoral care, Engagement, Child care, Time flexible)**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That Colleges and Universities should take measures to raise awareness and increase sensitivity and understanding of the concerns of mature students.

2. We intend to accomplish this goal through education to
3. Raising awareness and increase sensitivity for the concerns and needs of Mature and Part-time students
4. Challenge stereotypes and taboos concerning Mature and Part-time students
5. Provide friendly, open, and supportive spaces for Mature and Part-time students interact and have their concerns addressed.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Each College and University in the UK should provide a budget for the execution of Mature and Part-time pastoral needs and/or activities
2. Each College and University in the UK should engage in a minimum of one Mature and Part-time student awareness campaign per year.
3. Universities should encourage flexible academic time schedules to accommodate the needs of Mature and Part-time students as much as is feasibly and reasonably possible.
4. Each College and University in the UK should make subsidized child care available for Mature and Part-time Students who are in need of these services. Child care provisions should also be available to Mature and Part-time Students during school holidays.
5. Each College and University in the UK should conduct a survey of Mature and Part-time students
6. Each College and University in the UK should provide ample opportunities for meeting and addressing issues of intersectionality among students who are Mature and Part-time, women, ethnic minorities, international, and LGBTQIA+
7. Each College and University in the UK should ensure that student welfare services are equipped to accommodate the concerns of Mature and Part-time students

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS will provide a tool kit for student unions to lobby for increased funding for Mature and Part-time student activities. The tool kit should have information on how to provide child care services, make academic time schedules more flexible, conduct a Mature and Part-time student survey and staff student welfare services
2. NUS will encourage consideration of Mature and Part-time student concerns in future mental health welfare provisions
3. NUS will encourage student unions to have adequate support resources for Mature and Part-time student activities

## **Motion 6: Working 9 to 5, then I can't get to the Library**

### **NUS believes**

1. Many mature and part-time students study alongside full time employment and/or additional caring responsibilities.

2. Universities are still geared to 18-24 year old undergraduates with no additional caring responsibilities.
3. The opening hours of computer rooms and libraries and lack of online resources are demonstrative of the fact that Universities aren't designed for students who aren't the 'traditional' student.
4. The price of core textbooks is a prohibitive barrier to some MPT student's achievement in higher and further education.
5. The core textbooks are often not available in our institution libraries.
6. That student achievement increases when students are granted unlimited access to digital or physical versions of all core texts.
7. Mature and part-time students need year round access to both facilities and services.
8. Limited access is detrimental to student productivity and achievement.

### **NUS further believes**

1. That more online resources would allow mature and part-time students to access education
2. More flexible and longer opening hours of academic services would ensure that students could access resources around their needs and timetables.
3. Core textbooks are a hidden course cost that many students are unprepared for.
4. These additional costs are unacceptable.
5. Access facilitates the inclusion of Mature and Part-time Students within the University community.
6. Mature and Part-time students are more likely to need to access services around other people's schedules (spouses, children, bosses, etc.)
7. If services are open year round it will provide more employability options for students.

### **NUS resolves**

1. To provide resources for Students' Unions to make the case for extended and more flexible provision of educational resources.
2. For NUS to campaign for access to core texts be an inclusive or at least transparent element of student fees.
3. NUS should campaign for 24 hour physical & digital library access year round.
4. NUS should campaign for year round access to all support services, which should be provided around the clock.

## **Motion 7: Adult Learning budgets – cutting FE harms HE**

### **NUS believes**

1. That since 2010 there has been a 40% cut to adult learning budgets in further education.
2. That since 2010 there has been a steep decline in mature students attending higher education.

### **NUS further believes**

1. That FE adult learning should be protected regardless of the effects on HE as a commitment to the value of lifelong and adult learning.
2. That cutting adult learning budgets in FE will only further damage mature students participation in Higher education.

### **NUS resolves**

1. To ensure that the case for adult learning is made.
2. For the FE and HE zone to work with the MPT committee to tell the stories of what lifelong learning means.
3. That NUS creates a consistent narrative through further and Higher education zones to protect adult learning throughout tertiary education.

### **Motion 8: Mature & Part Time Inductions**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That many mature & part-time students report that they are facing difficulty integrating into student communities.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. That induction weeks are not accessible for mature & part time students.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. For NUS to produce a toolkit for students' union to create induction weeks which are inclusive for mature & part-time students.
2. For NUS to facilitate student unions sharing best practice on mature & part time inductions.
3. For NUS to initiate an evidence gathering exercise on what mature & part-time students expect from academic and non-academic inductions.

### **Motion 9: SFE shouldn't place Mums (& Dads) in Poverty**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That Student Finance should exercise a duty of care when processing mature student finance applications.
2. Mature students often have greater financial responsibilities, such as dependents and households to fund.
3. Currently finance applications are processed in the same way as the usual demographic of students, 18 – 21 year olds, this is with a 6 week turnaround for evidence to support their claim to be processed. This delay can be extended for each piece of evidence. This is unacceptable for mature students with different financial responsibilities to the usual student cohort.
4. This can create unacceptable barriers to learning for Mature Students. This can create household bill problems for mature students and difficulties with paying rent or mortgages.

5. Children would not be allowed to be put in this financial situation by any other government body and should not be put in this situation because their parent or parents are mature students.

### **Conference further believes**

1. Student Finance to process mature student finance applications with a duty of care.
2. Duty of care should change the way these applications are processed.
3. Duty of care should speed up the turnaround for the processing of evidence.
4. Duty of care should allow new avenues of communication between applicants and Student Finance assessors, to speed up this process.
5. Duty of care to students with dependents should mean a 3 week turn around on all applications.
6. Duty of care to students with mortgages should mean a 3 week turn around on all applications.

### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS should lobby for SFE to show duty of care to students with dependents.
2. NUS should lobby for SFE to show duty of care to students with mortgages.
3. NUS MPT NEC places must work with the VP Welfare to ensure that these points are raised during the 2016 – 2017 policy cycle.

## **Motion 10: Practice makes perfect**

### **Conference believes**

1. Competent teachers who are flexible and supportive to the needs of mature and part time students has a positive impact on the learning experiences of these groups.
2. Timely feedback is essential to the learning and development of all students.
3. Mature and part time students can't always be available to access tutor office hours if hours are set and not flexible.
4. There is often an expectation on mature and part time students to be able to deliver more and be more knowledgeable, which often puts these students at a disadvantage.

### **Conference resolves**

1. Produce resources for students' unions to lobby for PhD students who teach to be trained and supported adequately to teach by the institution, specifically concentrating on assessment and feedback.
2. Produce guidance for institutions on what timely, good and descriptive feedback should be.
3. To support students' unions to lobby for accessible office hours policies for mature and part time students to access their tutors.
4. Support students' unions to lobby for anonymous marking on exams and course work where possible.

5. Produce a best practice guide on lecture and seminar capture so lecture notes are accessible to mature and part time students when they can't access class.

### **Motion 11: MPT Students are people too!**

#### **NUS believes**

1. Students' Union activities are mainly aimed at 18-21 undergraduate students.
2. Having an active social student community is essential to a successful student experience.

#### **NUS further believes**

1. Students' Union should actively include all students in its activities, events and opportunities.
2. Students' Unions should view activities as 'suitable for' and 'not suitable for' families.
3. Students' Unions should 'flip the question' and ask why events aren't suitable for families.

#### **NUS resolves**

1. Lobby Students' Union to consider MPT students in all of their activities, events and opportunities.
2. Lobby Students' Union to provide more inclusive events.
3. Lobby Students' Unions to provide specific funding for these student activities, events and opportunities.

### **Motion 12: Best Practice for MPT Students**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Representation of MPT students is currently patchy or non-existent at many students unions.
2. Many students unions are unclear as to how to relate to their MPT student community, and may not have had sufficient guidance from the NUS.
3. Some unions are strongly oriented towards younger full time students in terms of their budgets and activities, despite representing large MPT student communities.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. All students unions should elect a mature and part time students officer with a seat on the student council. This role should only be open to mature and part time students.
2. The NUS should create a briefing for students unions laying out best practice in relation to mature students. This should include:
  - a. Mature and part time students should be given additional flexibility on timetabling to help them work around work, caring and childcare commitments
  - b. At least one academic advisor / personal tutor in each department should be designated to mature and part-time students, and given specific training on supporting their needs
  - c. Standard training given to sabbatical officers in students unions should incorporate material on the issues facing mature and part time students

### **Motion 13: PLACING MPT STUDENTS AT THE HEART OF NUS**

### **Conference Notes**

1. NUS is undertaking a governance review at present
2. This is code named Project 100

### **Conference believes**

1. That the MPT campaign is seriously under resourced.
2. That a committee of volunteers may not be the best way to organise MPT students.
3. That any governance review should acknowledge and implement previous policy passed by the MPT conference in relation to governance, including a full time MPT Officer.

### **Conference resolves**

1. That the question of a full time section officer for the MPT campaign be included in the NUS governance review.
2. That alternative models may be considered to make MPT campaign more effective
3. That MPT student's campaign be placed at the core of the governance review, reflecting the diversity and intersectionality of the campaign.
4. That the consultation on changes introduced by the governance review be consulted far and wide, including at least 100 MPT students in direct consultation.
5. That the governance review incorporates.

### **Motion 14: Where do you want to go?**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Mature and Part time students have more complex transport needs.
2. Mature and Part Time students need better transport facilities.
3. Rail cards and bus passes are often time prohibited.
4. Park and ride and parking services are insufficient for the demand.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. Mature and part time students are likely to have busier schedules and require more flexible transport facilities.
2. Current facilities are insufficient and often overpriced.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS to lobby universities to provide more plentiful and affordable parking spaces.
2. NUS to lobby universities to work with local authority public transport for better services.
3. NUS to encourage universities to develop and fund care sharing schemes.
4. NUS to lobby universities to provide connected campuses to ensure safe viable routes around campus.

### **Motion 15: Fossil fuels**

### **Conference believes**

1. That university divestment from fossil fuel companies is crucial in the fight for climate justice. To grossly underestimate the power of symbolism in positive rhetoric regarding divestment from fossil fuel companies by an organisation of the size and stature of the NUS would be a tragedy.

### **Conference resolves**

1. The NUS should actively encourage individual student unions to use their powers to lobby their Universities to divest from fossil fuel companies.
2. Motion 16: It's Time for a Full time Mature & Part-time Students' Officer
3. Submitted by: NUS Mature & Part-Time Students' Committee
4. It's Time for Full Time Mature & Part-Time Students' Officer
5. Submitted by: NUS Mature & Part-time Students' Officer

### **Motion 16: It's Time for a Full-Time Mature & Part-time Students' Officer**

#### **Conference believes**

1. There is a disparity, both nationally and locally between how different groups of students are represented.
2. Mature and Part-time Students collectively make up one of the largest student demographics in the UK.
3. Many Unions in HE focus purely on the 18-21 year old demographic, targeting their marketing efforts solely at this group.
4. NUS needs to consider its Mature and Part-time Students as it develops policy, just as it considers the liberation campaigns.

#### **Conference further believes**

1. This image should be challenged.
2. The issues faced by mature and Part-Time students' need proper handling at a national level.
3. Mature and Part-Time Students', being such a large demographic, need full time representation.
4. This image should be challenged.
5. The issues faced by mature and Part-Time students' need proper handling at a national level.
6. Mature and Part-Time Students', being such a large demographic, need full time representation.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To submit the following text to NUS National Conference 2016:

#### ***Conference believes***

1. *There is a disparity, both nationally and locally between how different groups of students are represented.*

2. *Mature and Part-time Students collectively make up one of the largest student demographics in the UK.*
3. *Many Unions in HE focus purely on the 18-21 year old demographic, targeting their marketing efforts solely at this group.*
4. *NUS needs to consider its Mature and Part-time Students as it develops policy, just as it considers the liberation campaigns.*

#### **Conference resolves**

1. *Amend 924 to read "In the case of the Mature and Part Time Students committee, the Mature and Part-time Students' Officer."*
2. *Insert 928 "The Mature & Part-time Students' Officer shall be a Full Time Officer."*
3. *Amend 934 "The Mature and Part Time Students Conference shall annually elect a Mature and Part-time Students' Officer whose terms of office shall be approved by National Conference and the committee shall then select from its own number an additional member of the National Executive Council. In the event that the Officer is a Mature Student the additional National Executive Council member must be Part-time and vice-versa."*
4. *These positions shall be elected at the first available opportunity which shall be the 2016 Sections Conference.*

#### **Motion 17: Better Representation for Sections at NUS National Conference**

##### **Conference believes**

1. That at the 2014 National Conference policy was passed mandating constituent members to have 50% of their delegations comprised as women.
2. Mature and Part-Time Students make up a vast number of the membership.
3. Mature and Part-Time Students are often underrepresented in constituent member's delegations at national conference.
4. Postgraduate Students make up a large portion of the membership.
5. Postgraduate Students are often underrepresented in constituent member's delegations at national conference.

##### **Conference further believes**

1. Mature and Part-Time Students should be properly represented and present at the National Conference.
2. Postgraduate Students should be properly represented and present at the National Conference.
3. Recommendations on delegation composition is fair and valid.

##### **Conference resolves**

1. To submit the below text to NUS National Conference 2016:

*Better Representation for Sections in this Room Submitted By: NUS Mature and Part-Time Students' Committee*

**Conference believes**

1. *That at the 2014 National Conference policy was passed mandating constituent members to have 50% of their delegations comprised as women.*
2. *Mature and Part-Time Students make up a vast number of the membership.*
3. *Mature and Part-Time Students are often underrepresented in constituent member's delegations at national conference.*
4. *Postgraduate Students make up a large portion of the membership.*
5. *Postgraduate Students are often underrepresented in constituent member's delegations at national conference.*

**Conference further believes**

1. *Mature and Part-Time Students should be properly represented and present at the National Conference.*
2. *Postgraduate Students should be properly represented and present at the National Conference.*
3. *Recommendations on delegation composition is fair and valid.*

**Conference resolves**

1. *The equality monitoring forms at all NUS Conferences shall include an option for indicating a student's status as being either: Mature, Part-Time or Postgraduate.*
2. *Insert 334 "All delegations to National Conference must include at least one student who is either a mature student, a part-time student, or a postgraduate student. This does not apply if a union only has one delegate."*

## Policy Lapse

### MPT2 Housing for mature students with dependents

**Conference believes**

1. When mature students move to study they may need to bring dependents and maintain a family home.
2. Education institutions and local authorities do not take sufficient account of this matter and offer no support to mature students maintaining a family home.
3. Situations like these may have implications for bedroom tax liability.

**Conference resolves**

1. To continue the work to make available accommodation for students with dependents.
2. To take a more aggressive approach to lobbying institutions and local authorities to make appropriate accommodation provision for students with dependents who need to maintain a family home.

### **MPT3 Financial support for mature students**

#### **Conference believes**

1. That bursaries and grants are being offered to students in the form of tuition fee waivers or accommodation waivers.
2. Often bursaries and grants are not given at the start of the year.
3. For students who live off-campus and/or have caring responsibilities, this is problematic.
4. Use of POLAR2 as an indicator of deprivation does not always capture individual circumstances of economic need.
5. Applying for Access to Learning funds is bureaucratic and complicated.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. Gather examples of best practice in the distribution of discretionary financial support to support unions to make the arguments for fairer distribution of financial support at institutional level.
2. Lobby HEFCE, OFFA and like bodies in the Nations to reform guidance and regulation around disbursement of discretionary financial support.

### **MPT4 Induction**

#### **Conference believes**

1. HE and FE institutions usually hold inductions during the traditional work week when mature and part-time students are less likely and available to attend.
2. Institutions often fail to fully communicate the available support service to mature and part-time students.
3. NUS is coordinating research into induction including on the experience of mature and part-time students of induction.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. To lobby institutions to make hard copy and e-copy accessible information about support services especially having to do with liberation and caring responsibilities available well prior to the start of the course.
2. To use the NUS research to develop and lobby on best practice for the induction of mature and part-time students and students with caring responsibilities.

### **MPT6 Fairness in Council Tax**

#### **Conference believes**

1. It is democratically unfair that part-time students (including postgraduates) are still liable for council tax.

2. That all students should be treated equally regardless of level of study or length of study.  
That council tax implications are not communicated effectively to postgraduate and part-time students.
3. This causes greater financial outlay for these students.
4. There are several definitions of part time students this should be clarified in relation to council tax.

#### **Conference resolves**

1. NUS to lobby for part-time (inc postgraduate) council tax exemption.
2. NUS to look into sourcing of funding regarding the payment of council tax.
3. NUS to produce a report on the impact paying council tax has on part time (inc postgrad) students and their ability to succeed in study.
4. For Part Time & Mature sections committee to collaborate with Postgraduate sections committee to ensure both groups of students are supported on the issue around council tax.

### **MPT9 Access to institutional services for PT and Mature Students**

#### **Conference believes**

1. Universities do not provide sufficient support services for PT and mature students
2. Current support services at most universities are geared towards FT students
3. Access to most students' union services are geared to FT students
4. Most inductions are inappropriate for PT and mature study
5. It is difficult for many students' unions to access data on their mature and PT members

#### **Conference resolves**

1. Produce guidance for officer training on the issues for MPT students, to be made available to students' unions.
2. To lobby for NUS to include information on issues for MPT students in its officer training programme.
3. Support students' unions to gain access to data on their MPT students and to provide greater information about the services available to MPT students.
4. Work with NEC to encourage students' unions to identify opportunities for extended access outside of 9-5 hours and to otherwise realign services to be more appropriate for MPT students.
5. To produce a communications model to help students' unions identify different student groups and the communication styles that are most appropriate for them.

### **MPT12 'Building an MPT officers' knowledge network'**

#### **Conference believes**

1. The NUS Section Conferences are an extraordinary enabling opportunity for officers to share information with one another.
2. That officers are at their best when operating as part of a connected, dynamic network.

3. That officers do not currently utilize fully the opportunity to connect, communicate and share existing institutional information and practice.
4. That the MPT Conference would benefit from a source of wider information and practice sharing all year round.
5. MPT students are underrepresented within student unions and universities
6. Student union rep training is mainly undergraduate focused and therefore is useless for MPTs who deal with very different issues
7. MPT students often are considered as being an extension of Undergraduates and are not recognised for having a unique student experiences.
8. The majority of sabbatical officers are undergraduates and this means that it is a challenging for effective representation of MPT due to a gap in knowledge
9. Due this, and the fact that students' unions are mainly focused on UGs, they can often fail to prioritise MPT issues fairly
10. Many students' unions don't feel equipped to deal with MPT issues effectively.
11. One consequence of this is that volunteer MPT officers are either not effectively supported or not in existence.

### **Conference resolves**

1. For the NUS MPT Executive Committee to create an MPT officers' Virtual Information Sharing Space (VISS) facilitating the sharing of information and best (and worst) practice from within institutions.
2. To encourage and support MPT officers and students' unions to use the VISS proactively.
3. To provide key information generated from the delegates in advance of future MPT.
4. To facilitate one-to-one delegate-NEC sessions in conference and other workshops to raise, and seek advice on, specific issues from within delegates' individual institutions.
5. That NUS develop a toolkit for MPT students' representation within institutions.
6. That NUS works with rep trainers to develop a training tool unique for MPT students.
7. That SUs should develop policy MPT representation.
8. That Student Unions should develop policy for MPT representation.
9. That students' unions should have MPT officers where possible.
10. To support students' unions to develop ways to be more relevant activities to MPT students.
11. That NUS develop and promote practical tools for students' unions to gather information that will better help students' unions to serve their MPT community.
12. To develop training tools for students' unions to train their MPT representatives.
13. To facilitate MPT students and their representatives to share practice and the impact of that practice on engaging postgraduates and effective campaigning.
14. To support and encourage students' unions to develop different ways of continuing activities beyond the undergraduate academic calendar