


nus
**SECTIONS
CONFERENCE**

Sections Conference 2019
29 – 31 January

Resolutions

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Contents

Mature and Part Time Students.....	3
Motion 101: Support for a National Education Service	3
Motion 103: For Student Unions to facilitate a Family Friendly Study Space in their Academia.	4
Postgraduate Students	5
Motion 101: A fair deal for Postgraduates Who Teach.....	5
Motion 102: LGBT+ students as co-researchers, not subjects.....	6
Motion 201: Building on National Conference 2018 ‘UD105 – National Postgraduate Representation’: A Practical Implementation.....	7
Motion 301: Hardship Funding for Postgraduate Students.....	9
Motion 302: Developing Staff-Student Sexual Misconduct Policy.....	10
Motion 303: Fair pay and contracts for postgraduate students employed by universities	11
International Students	12
Motion 1: International Students Working and Living Rights	12
Motion 2: Defund not Defund	13
Motion Three: Deliver “introduction to multi-cultural society” at the beginning of each academic year as part of induction (e.g. the contents could include equality and diversity training; unconscious bias training etc)	14
Motion Four: EU Citizens Rights after Brexit.....	14
Motion Five: Post Study Work Visas Now	15





Mature and Part Time Students

Motion 101: Support for a National Education Service

Conference Believes

1. The current system of marketised education in the UK does a massive disservice to mature and part-time students. The rise in fees makes further and higher education a poor “investment”, which can put off mature students who often must make difficult choices about their education and vocational future.
2. Since 2010, the funding of public education has become a lot more difficult for mature and part-time students, which has led to a fall in the number of mature and part-time students in further and higher education.
3. Part-time education should be better supported not just by student finance organisations, but also by universities and colleges. It is often the best format of studying for disabled students and students with caring responsibilities.
4. In 2017, the Labour Party announced a vision of a National Education Service. This vision was of public education as a cradle to grave system of equipping people to advance their own futures and develop personally.

Conference Further Believes

1. The marketing of “the student experience” as overwhelmingly youth-oriented and as a step to get a career is negative to approaching education as a lifelong endeavor which people should be able to access at any age and in different modes of study.
2. A National Education Service-style format of public education would be much more inclusive of mature and part-time learners than the current system. It should be possible for students to study at a variety of levels alongside work, caring responsibilities etc.

Conference Resolves

1. To support the concept of cradle-to-grave public education, free at the point of delivery, funded by taxation.
 2. To oppose cuts to adult education, with a focus on defending access for working class people.
 3. To encourage mature and part-time student groups to discuss radical models of funding lifelong education.
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Motion 103: For Student Unions to facilitate a Family Friendly Study Space in their Academia.

Conference Believes

1. There are currently 1.3 million mature students in the UK.
2. The majority of mature students are parent students and this number is increasing as we see more non-traditional students attending university.
3. Even with this increase, Universities have not been able to increase their support of the nontraditional students and university libraries and study spaces are not child friendly environments (Nuffield Foundation , 2018).
4. A report conducted in 2012 stated that some students were un able to bring children into the library which limited their time and encouraged the feeling of "not-belonging" to the academia (Moreau & Kerner, 2012).
5. Students with parental responsibilities are less likely to graduate than their childless counterparts (Petit, 2014).
6. Family Friendly study spaces have been introduced in colleges across America, such as Portland State (Petit, 2014), Bingham Young University (BYU Library , 2018) and Long Beach State (Kiley, 2018), and have been a success with the parent students.

Conference Further Believes

1. Parents are inevitably put at a disadvantage as they do not have the same access to educational facilities as the standard school leaver.
2. Family friendly study spaces will improve the student experience for parent students and make them feel included.
3. This family friendly study space will give parents more freedom in accessing the library and resources after school and in the weekends.
4. This will increase their access to resources, study environments, and overall student experience, making parent students feel valued and apart of the academia.

Conference Resolves

1. To encourage all Students' Unions to facilitate a family friendly study space for parent students who attend their University





Postgraduate Students

Motion 101: A fair deal for Postgraduates Who Teach

Conference Believes

1. Many postgraduates are engaged in the teaching of undergraduate and some postgraduate taught students, and the marking of their assignments within their institutions.
2. In 2012-13, NUS conducted a survey and associated report of postgraduates engaged in teaching ("Postgraduates Who Teach") to examine their perception of their conditions.
3. National Conference 2018 saw the passing of motion 'HE104 – Quality of Teaching' which, though focused on provision for undergraduates, resolved to "develop more effective support mechanisms for postgraduate students engaged in teaching activity".
4. How such teachers are trained in preparation for delivering teaching varies wildly between institutions, and often within institutions.
5. These postgraduates are often some of the most dedicated teachers at their institution, working hours long beyond those they are paid for.
6. Such postgraduates are frequently contracted on casual terms and lower rates of pay than other members of University staff delivering the same level of educational experience and of a similar level of expertise.
7. Income from teaching may make up a vital element of financial support for some postgraduates, in particular during long research degree programmes.
8. Whilst the University and Colleges Union (UCU) currently extends free membership to postgraduates who teach, union negotiations regarding their pay and conditions often fall outside of the scope of national pay bargaining.
9. That several universities and research councils offer PhD studentships that require that students teach a compulsory number of hours.
10. The number of teaching hours required by these studentships varies wildly between and within universities.
11. That these studentships are usually expected to be completed within a strict three-year limit, without taking into account the time lost to compulsory teaching.
12. That as pay for these teaching hours are included in the overall stipend, it is not clear how much students are actually paid for teaching and whether this is equivalent to the remuneration received by other staff.
13. That students undertaking one of these studentships are often unclear about their employment rights and do not receive a contract of employment.

Conference Further Believes

1. We know there are national and local issues with the pay and conditions of postgraduate teachers, but information on the scale of the problem is disparate.
 2. The report created by NUS in 2012-13 and associated recommendations are helpful, but did not go far enough in critically examining case studies of practice at various institutions to see where best practice can be shared and problematic practices identified.
 3. Access to opportunities for postgraduates to be able to teach are an important experiential element that can supplement a research degree programme, preparing the student to be an effective future academic and delivering unique personal development, in addition to being a sometimes vital income stream.
 4. The practice of allowing postgraduates to teach should be lauded, but support for them improved in the interests both of the postgraduate and the students they teach (in keeping with motion HE104), and careful consideration made so as teaching does not to compromise the postgraduate's academic prowess.
 5. UCU currently campaigns nationally on Anti-Casualisation in Universities, with the potential for direct impact to improve conditions for postgraduates who teach and are contracted for casual work – there is strength in collaboration with sector allies in this area.
 6. That all work undertaken by postgraduate students, whether as part of a studentship or not, should be fully and fairly remunerated.
 7. That as a union, it is the responsibility of NUS to campaign for the employment rights and working conditions of postgraduate students.
 8. Postgraduate students should be free to choose whether they teach or not during their studentship.
 9. That very little is known about the frequency and scope of these studentships.
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Conference Resolves

1. To commission a national report into the pay and conditions of postgraduates who teach within Higher Education institutions, including in-depth case studies of practice at a diverse set of institutions, with specific focus on:
 - Rates of pay compared across institutions and to employed academic staff delivering equivalent provision;
 - Mechanisms for reviewing these rates of pay;
 - The contractual conditions on which postgraduates are engaged to teach;
 - The benefits and drawbacks to students and institutions in utilising postgraduate students in undergraduate teaching;
 - The use and appropriateness of studentships where funding is conditional on postgraduates being required to teach;
 - Training, development and support provided to postgraduate students engaged in teaching;
 - Mode of employment, whether outsourced or within the institution
 - Unpaid labour in preparation and marking time; and
 - Any discrepancies in how relevant policies are applied within a given institution.
2. To use the outputs from this investigation to identify best practice to be encouraged across the sector and the most appropriate methods of doing so, and to identify institutions where conditions for postgraduates who teach are particularly poor in the sector, for the purposes of NUS explicitly supporting the Students' Unions at these institutions to lobby for improved conditions.
3. To recommend Students' Unions collaborate with UCU on local implementation of their Anti-Casualisation campaign to secure better pay and stronger contractual conditions for postgraduates who teach in their institution.
 1. To campaign against universities introducing compulsory teaching as part of PhD studentships.
 2. To campaign for all work undertaken by postgraduate students as part of a studentship to be fully and fairly remunerated.

Motion 102: LGBT+ students as co-researchers, not subjects

Conference Believes

1. Many postgraduate students undertake research with student populations as part of their study or research.
2. LGBT+ students have become a "research fatigued" community in recent years, who are used to students and academics asking for their participation in studies.
3. This is especially the case for transgender students. As a result of the increased media scrutiny on trans people, they have become a keenly observed population while often having little input into the research process.

Conference Further Believes

1. That the pattern of researching marginalised communities, asking for their time and labour and then leaving them and benefiting from their (often unpaid) efforts has become increasingly criticised by sociologists.
2. Research on LGBT+ communities and individuals by often cisgender and/or heterosexual researchers often fails to treat LGBT+ people with respect and agency. This reinforces the framing of the experiences of marginalised communities as for the academic consumption of The Academy.
3. Ideally, research done on LGBT+ communities should be co-authored and co-produced by members of those communities. Collecting knowledge about and developing perspectives on LGBT+ communities should play a part in liberating LGBT+ people from oppressive power structures.

Conference Resolves

To work with the NUS LGBT+ and NUS Trans Campaigns to create a guide on the co-production of knowledge about LGBT+ people, and to distribute this to postgraduate groups, LGBT+ groups and education officers in students' unions





Motion 201: Building on National Conference 2018 'UD105 – National Postgraduate Representation': A Practical Implementation

Conference Believes

1. There has been a trend amongst Students' Unions to introduce Officers dedicated to improving the postgraduate student experience, whether on a full-time, part-time or voluntary basis.
2. Postgraduate students make up approximately 23.8% of students studying in Higher Education (HESA data, AY16/17), yet issues affecting them are not represented by NUS in a proportion reflective of this.
3. The NUS Postgraduate Campaign has regrettably not produced significant outputs or wins for postgraduate students for some time, and the quality of the administration of conference varies annually.
4. The above issues have largely been noted in policy 'UD105 – 'National Postgraduate Representation' passed at National Conference 2018, which resolved to review NUS' postgraduate representation, as well as its governance and funding.
5. The current problems with NUS' resourcing cannot be ignored – we must be pragmatic in setting policy and organising our structures to provide the most benefit to postgraduate students with the scant resource available.

Conference Further Believes

1. The best, most realistic hope of building an effective national Postgraduate Campaign with limited NUS resource is in the expansion of Postgraduate Officer positions in member Students' Unions, and building networks between them with NUS acting as a hub.
2. The lack of wins from the campaign is due in part to the lack of resource historically allocated to the campaign, both directly and through the de-prioritisation of postgraduate issues by relevant NUS officers.
3. To lose further resource, permit an ineffective Postgraduate Committee or similar forum for discussion of postgraduate issues, or remove Postgraduate NEC places, would send an unacceptable signal – given the significant size of the postgraduate student body – that the NUS has no interest in campaigning on postgraduate issues.
4. NUS has a duty to encourage Students' Unions to do more to represent the interests of and engage their postgraduate constituents, to forge links between Students' Unions and staff who deal with postgraduates in their parent institutions, and support any of their initiatives in these areas.

Conference Resolves

1. To commission a national report into postgraduate representation within Students' Unions, in particular the trend towards full-time Postgraduate Officer positions and case studies into these, with specific focus on:
 - the remits of postgraduate representatives, in particular full-time officers;
 - the interaction of representatives of postgraduates with committees and bodies within their parent institution;
 - the impact of the introduction of representatives of postgraduates on postgraduate engagement within institutions and on improvements to the postgraduate experience;
 - issues arising at Students' Unions and institutions as a result of and since the creation of representatives of postgraduates, and lessons learnt from such;
 - current methods of collaboration between representatives of postgraduates within and between Students' Unions, and the effectiveness of such; and
 - candidate nomination, conduct of elections and voting eligibility for representatives of postgraduates.
 2. To use the outputs from this investigation to identify best practice to be encouraged across the sector, as regards postgraduate representation within Students' Unions, and the most appropriate methods of doing so.
 3. To recommend Students' Unions consider whether creating a full-time officer position dedicated to representing postgraduates within their Union is appropriate in their context.
 4. To demand the continuation of representative positions for Postgraduate Taught and Postgraduate Research students on the highest NUS political decision-making body in whatever format.
 5. To demand the protection of the level of resourcing currently allocated to addressing issues affecting postgraduates and the possibility of providing an increase to the level of resourcing to be genuinely considered in the NUS' Turnaround activities.
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6. To set a deadline for the resolutions of Policy UD105 to be completed by NUS, expecting that these are completed as part of the NUS Turnaround Strategy, of 1 year from the date of the passing of the policy in which this clause is contained. The VP Higher Education or a successor position following any restructure of NUS shall be responsible for ensuring this.
 7. To require the NEC Postgraduate Representatives to maintain some mechanism for full- and part-time Postgraduate Officers at Students' Union members of NUS to regularly collaborate on addressing the issues of postgraduates nationally, and receive updates on progress on policy implementation for the Postgraduate Campaign, particularly throughout the duration of any review or restructure of the governance of NUS' Postgraduate Campaign.
 8. To create resources to encourage and assist Student Unions to address local issues affecting postgraduates within their parent institutions that are suitable for use by those Students' Unions with postgraduate members but no specific representatives of postgraduates.





Motion 301: Hardship Funding for Postgraduate Students

Conference Believes

1. Currently, Postgraduate students are being put-off from applying for hardship funding (also known as access to learning funds).
2. Universities, in their criteria for postgraduate students applying for hardship funds, are placing restrictive language and criteria to discourage postgraduate students from applying, a few examples of this are:
 - o Northumbria University placing a £9,000 income requirement on any postgraduate wishing to apply for the hardship fund.
 - o University of Warwick intending the fund to be for final-year PhDs, or master's students in the final three months of their degree.
 - o University of Essex students needing to show they have £5,000 to cover living costs, on top of the money they need to pay their fees.
3. This criteria is set to deliberately discourage postgraduate students from applying for their institutions hardship fund.

Conference Further Believes

1. With the introduction of the postgraduate loan, postgraduates have had access to government funding to help pay for their postgraduate degrees.
2. However, since the introduction of the loan, universities have seen this as an opportunity to up their postgraduate tuition fees, with some fees even going above the £10,690 provided by the loan.
3. With the increase in fees not being accommodated by the loan, this increases the risk of postgraduate students ending up in financial hardship, increasing the need for access to university hardship funds.

Conference Resolves

1. To push universities to make their eligibility criteria fair for all students and to ensure there is no criteria set that discourages postgraduate students from applying.
 2. To ensure that selection processes for hardship funding are fair and not biased based on level of study.
 3. To push the Vice President Higher Education to review existing recommendations to universities by governmental and non-governmental sources when it comes to setting hardship funding criteria.
 4. For NUS to publish its own recommendations to universities around the hardship fund, based on existing information around cost of living for students, the increase in postgraduate tuition fees and the current postgraduate loan pay-out.
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Motion 302: Developing Staff-Student Sexual Misconduct Policy

Conference Believes

1. That postgraduate students are particularly vulnerable to issues of staff-student sexual misconduct in universities, evidence for which has been reported in research conducted by the 1752 Group and NUS Women's Campaign.
2. That postgraduate research students who are employed as Graduate/Postgraduate Teaching Assistants are classed as both staff and students by their universities, leading to further confusion about their rights and ability to access help.
3. That the majority of UK universities do not have adequate policy in place to deal with staff-student sexual misconduct, which leads to postgraduate students being unable to access help.
4. That all universities should have clear and explicit policy regarding staff-student sexual misconduct and that the process should be accessible, inclusive and clear.
5. That any university policy regarding staff-student sexual misconduct should specifically account for the power dynamics of the relationship(s) between postgraduate students, their supervisors and other departmental staff.

Conference Resolves

1. To work with the Women's Campaign to develop model guidelines for university policy regarding staff-student sexual misconduct.
 2. To develop resources and campaign materials around staff-student sexual misconduct to help postgraduate students who are campaigning to develop or change policy at their universities.
 3. To lobby universities to introduce, or develop existing, policy around staff-student sexual misconduct.
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Motion 303: Fair pay and contracts for postgraduate students employed by universities

Conference Believes

1. That NUS is a union, and therefore the working conditions and employment rights of students should be a central part of the work that the Postgraduate Committee undertakes.
2. That Graduate/Postgraduate Teaching Assistants, or postgraduate students otherwise employed by their universities to undertake teaching and/or research work, provide invaluable labour without which many university courses would be unable to run.
3. That postgraduate students employed in this capacity are predominantly employed on temporary or insecure contracts, with very few (if any) employment rights.
4. That postgraduate students also undertake a significant volume of unpaid labour, which is too often encouraged by universities.
5. That postgraduate students employed in this capacity should receive a full and proper contract and should be paid for all of the labour that they undertake.
6. That postgraduate students employed in this capacity should receive the same rights and working conditions as any other member of staff, including annual leave, sick leave and pay, payment for any compulsory training and induction, and regular and accurate pay.
7. That postgraduate students employed in this capacity should be included in the union recognition agreements between their union and the university, and should therefore be entitled to full union representation (both individually and collectively).

Conference Resolves

1. To provide support for postgraduate students employed in this capacity by developing resources around what postgraduate employees' contracts and working conditions should look like.
 2. To support postgraduate students engaged in disputes and/or negotiations at their universities regarding employment rights and contracts.
 3. To work with the UCU Anti-Casualisation Committee, and other relevant trade unions, to lobby universities to develop and introduce suitable contracts and employment rights for postgraduate students who are employed by universities.
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International Students

Motion 1: International Students Working and Living Rights

Conference believes

1. That international students should be given more education and preparation concerning their rights, all tuition costs, living rights, and working rights.

Conference further believes

1. That university necessities such as textbooks and course materials should clearly be represented in tuition costs. Regarding living rights, universities should act as guarantors for international students whether or not they have UK guarantors, lastly regarding working rights, volunteering and placement hours should not count towards working hours and students should get help and support with getting a National Insurance Number.

Conference resolves

1. To implement this policy into all affiliated unions.





Motion 2: Defund not Defund

NUS International Campaign believes:

1. There are 442,375 international students in the UK, including 312,660 non-EU international students.
2. The international student community contributes £20.3 billion to the UK economy annually, and additionally bring cultural diversity, global outlook, and internationally relevant skills to the UK
3. The current hostile environment policy makes international students feel unwelcome in the UK, and 19% of non-EU students would not recommend the UK as a place to study for a friend or relative (this is as high as 34%, 36% and 38% for students from India, Nigeria, and Pakistan respectively).
4. The number of non-EU international students finding employment after graduation has fallen by seven and a half times since the UK scrapped post-study work visas in 2012. At the same time UK based industries are complaining that they cannot find skilled workers.
5. The NUS Turnaround board has defunded the NUS International Students' Campaign for 2019/20 and has not presented the membership with the option to keep an International Students' Officer in its proposed reformed structures.
6. The NUS Turnaround board has proposed to defund the International Students' Officer position
7. At the International Students' Conference, all the delegates have expressed serious concerns around the decision of the turnaround board to defund the International Students' Officer Full-time role
8. With Brexit in picture, rise in xenophobia, persisting deportations and racist immigration rules, there is an urgent and mandatory need for the role of an International Students' Officer to be full-time
9. During the discussion regarding the future of NUS, all delegates were certain to campaign and fight for the Full-time International Students' Officer role
10. The outcome of the discussion was that if the International Students' campaign finds funding for the role, the turnaround/trustee board can look into refunding the role
11. In accordance to the discussion, if the national conference overturns the decision of the Turnaround board, the International Students' campaign needs to source funding in order to convince the turnaround board
12. The international student activists have therefore come up with the number of proposals to find alternative funding for the campaign:
13. Reallocating the NUS budget to fund the full-time ISO role
14. Seek alternative funds from Unions, Universities, crowdfunding etc. to fund the full-time ISO role

NUS International Campaign further believes:

1. It is a disgrace that international graduates are being deported or otherwise forced to leave the UK.
2. The issues international students face in terms of welfare and education are specific to international students, requiring a dedicated international student representative on the NUS

NUS International Students Campaign conference resolves:

1. To campaign for a full-time International Students' Officer.
 2. To mandate the current International Students' Officer to explore possibilities for funding the full-time International Students' Officer role that do not rely on institutions which exploit international students
 3. To support student activists campaigning against cuts to the International Students' Campaign as well as Liberation Campaigns, including through disruption and other forms of protest.
 4. In the absence of a full-time International Students' Officer, the non-EU International Students' Campaign NEC Place should be supported through immigration processes as if they were a full-time officer
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Motion Three: Deliver “introduction to multi-cultural society” at the beginning of each academic year as part of induction (e.g. the contents could include equality and diversity training; unconscious bias training etc)

Conference believes

1. Not all of the universities have incorporated equality and diversity training to their induction week; which might bypass students with racist encounters in the future
2. All kinds of racism and xenophobic statements/ comments/ actions should not be tolerated

Conference further believes

1. University should be a society accommodating students from all backgrounds (nationality, culture, religion and ethnicity)
2. All students should be aware of the different cultures they encounter during they study while in the UK

Conference resolves

1. NUS to lobby with the Students’ Unions to the universities to prepare and deliver the materials/ inductions to the students at the beginning of each academic year (as part of the induction week)

Motion Four: EU Citizens Rights after Brexit

Conference believes.

1. BREXIT brings uncertainty in the lives of EU students and Staff
2. With the current conservative government, the possibility of ‘No Deal’ BREXIT is still on the
3. table
4. NUS has a policy of fighting for ‘ Peoples’ Vote’, but not one defending the rights of International students and staff in post-BREXIT UK.
5. BREXIT already have negative impact on the lives of EU citizens.

Conference Further Believes.

1. NUS should be at the forefront, defending EU citizens right to work, study and stay in the UK in any post-BREXIT scenario.
2. That EU citizens are a essential part of the British society
3. EU staff and students have a major positive contribution to many sectors of the British society, inc. Education, Economy, etc.
4. Any BREXIT outcome should not affect the rights that EU citizens enjoy in the United Kingdom

Conference Resolves.

1. NUS International representatives to lobby MPs defending EU citizens right to work, study and stay in the UK in any post-BREXIT scenario.
 2. NUS to put resources behind the International Students campaign to fight for the rights of EU students and Staff in the United Kingdom.
 3. The international Students campaign to create a toolkit for Unions, how to create a BREXIT panel including University staff, management and students, which will focus on lobbying local
 4. authorities.
 5. NUS to lobby Universities to submit data on the impact of international EU student and Staff on
 6. the sector and local economy.
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Motion Five: Post Study Work Visas Now

NUS International Student Campaign believes:

1. There are 442,375 international students in the UK, including 312,660 non-EU international students.
2. The post-study work visa scheme was an idea initially born and championed in Scotland, under the name Fresh Talent Scheme in 2005. It was soon integrated into a UK wide system from 2008.
3. International students pay staggering amounts of money in tuition fees, visa costs, and NHS bills – they are being treated like cash cows.
4. The international student community contributes £20.3 billion to the UK economy annually - never mind the cultural diversity, global outlook, and internationally relevant skills they bring to the UK.
5. The current hostile environment policy makes international students feel unwelcome in the UK, and 19% of non-EU students would not recommend the UK as a place to study for a friend or relative (this is as high as 34%, 36% and 38% for students from India, Nigeria, and Pakistan respectively).
6. The number of non-EU international students finding employment after graduation has fallen by seven and a half times since the UK scrapped post-study work visas in 2012.
7. Over the years, and beyond its abolishment in 2012, the Scottish Government has continuously supported post-study work visa schemes and highlighted the need for a specific post-study work pathway for international students in Scotland.
8. During International Student Day 2018, PostStudyWorkVisaNow launched in Scotland at the University of Edinburgh with various politicians and students.
9. Fighting to bring back the post study work visa is active NUS Scotland policy, having been passed by the SEC in August 2018.

NUS International Student Campaign further believes:

1. Most of these students are being forced to go home unjustly despite having built their lives in their city of study, and despite making the UK culturally, socially, intellectually and financially stronger. It is a disgrace that international graduates are being deported or otherwise forced to leave.
2. International students are fed up with the long wait and empty promises that have constituted the conversation about re-establishing the post-study work visa in the UK – this should be a tangible campaign outcome, not a buzzword or unfulfilled manifesto pledge.
3. There has been a lot of chat about post study work visa at first but not a firm campaign that all international can come behind and continue rather than reinventing wheels!
4. PostStudyWorkVisaNow will be independent campaign that focuses on PostStudyWorkVisaNow throughout the year whilst working with students at the Students' Association and across the UK, including Scotland, England, Northern Ireland and Wales – to bring a united campaign to Westminster so international students can stay in the UK after graduation.

NUS international conference resolves:

1. By endorsing the PostStudyWorkVisaNow campaign and making PostStudyWorkVisaNow as one of its main campaign and working with them.
 2. By using NUS international campaigns venues to host meetings and events + allocating budgets to support this campaign.
 3. To support PostStudyWorkVisaNow by signing and campaigning for their petition, which demands:
 - a. Government to reintroduce a post-study work visa that allows graduates to work in the UK for at least two years after graduation.
 - b. A lower, regional salary threshold.
 - c. No restrictions - a post-study work visa should be offered to anyone who graduates from an FE or HE programme that lasts for 11 + months in the UK.
 - d. Healthy ecosystem – the government must support FE and HE institutions in offering opportunities to enhance employability, build capacity and engage with the job market while in education.
 - e. FE & HE institutions to include employability and local as well as overseas job opportunities in their internationalization strategy.
 - f. Students to be removed from the net migration target.
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