

SRC Policies 2018/2019

This document contains Student Policies that were passed by the Student Representative Councils in academic year 18/19. These policies are no longer in force, and are provided for reference purposes only. Unless they have been reiterated.

In line with Schedule 3: Student Representative Council:

- These Policies automatically lapsed at the first Student Representative Council meeting in their succeeding academic year.
- The process of how policies can be created is set out in the Student Voice handbook.

The following policies were reiterated at the first SRC for 2019/2020:

- Students Against Universal Credit
- Student Housing and Poverty: Cap the Rent
- Fair Deal for Hospitality Workers
- Abertay SA Against Unethical Investments

Motion #1

Students Against Universal Credit

Proposer: REDACTED

Seconder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

1. Universal Credit has been introduced in various regions of the U.K as a new benefit system to streamline the access to benefits.
2. Universal credit has proved controversial almost from the beginning, with reports of IT issues, massive overspends and administrative problems.
3. The government have themselves admitted that the roll out of universal credit has led to an increase in the use of foodbanks across the U.K.
4. There are further issues in regards to the effects that universal credit is having on students (e.g. loan income is seen as non taxed income)

SRC Believes:

1. That a we need a benefit system that supports people rather than punishes them.
2. Universal Credit is only further exacerbating the problem of student poverty (<https://tinyurl.com/y6hywqno>).
3. That student poverty is on the rise with more and more students reliant upon exploitative, precarious work (<https://tinyurl.com/yxjpw4n4>)

SRC Resolves:

1. To support the 'Students Against Universal Credit Campaign' and share information through the Students Associations channels of engagement.
2. To support the Unite Community call to halt and reverse the roll out of Universal Credit.
3. To support work being done to highlight the issues of Universal Credit and help provide space on campus for those engaging in this work.
4. To try and gather information to best inform students how to maneuver universal credit.
5. To encourage the coordination of action against different universities against Universal Credit.

Abertay SRC

Motion #1

Opposition to Abertay Course Cuts

Proposer: REDACTED

Secunder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- Abertay University's decision to progressively cut eight courses from its portfolio, as well as its suggestion to cut a further four.
- That a lot of weight has been given to the NSS and intake data when taking the decision to close these courses.
- The University's position that ongoing students on the affected courses will not be affected by these closures overlooks many issues, many of which will certainly affect students who have yet to graduate on these courses.
- The decision to close these courses went so far under the radar that some of them were still being advertised on promotional material for the university's open day on Saturday 6th October.

SRC Believes:

- The academic portfolio review has not been conducted with sufficient inclusion of staff, students and the students' association, and that it was almost hidden to all of the former.
- That any future discussions and decisions regarding closure or reduction of courses should involve in-depth discussion with staff, students, student representatives and the students' association.
- That other courses of action have not been explored with regards to these courses being cut.
- The decision has been taken primarily with NSS scores and university league tables in mind, with no thought given on how to expand the university's offer going forward.

SRC Resolves:

- SRC resolves to oppose the cuts of all the below courses:
 - BA (Hons) Management and the Games Industry, BA (Hons) Sound and Music for Games, BSc (Hons) Psychology and Forensic Biology, BSc (Hons) Psychology and Human Resource Management, BSc (Hons) Sport and Psychology, MSc/PGDip Food and Drink Innovation, MSc/PGDip Mental Health Nursing & MSc/PGDip Mental Health, MSc/PGDip Psychology
- SRC resolves to oppose the suggested cuts and changes to the following courses still under review:
 - MEng/BEng (Hons) Civil and Environmental Engineering, BSc (Hons) Environmental Science and Technology, BSc (Hons) Forensic Sciences, MSc/PGDip International Human Resource Management
- SRC resolves to stand in solidarity with all Abertay lecturers, academics and staff who will be affected by the course cuts.

Abertay SRC

Motion #2

Student Housing and Poverty: Cap The Rent!

Proposer: REDACTED

Secunder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- The average SAAS allowance is £450. While this is barely enough to survive each month, this sum is not even available for to every student (including EU and International Students).
- The average rent for a single room in Abertay's Student Halls is £414.
- It is, on average, cheaper to rent to from a private agency than it is to live in Abertay's student halls, despite the lack of space this offers and the fact that this is often easier for freshers and/or students coming from outside of the United Kingdom.
- After paying their rent, many students do not have enough money left to live decently.
- Abertay does not hold any specific policy to accommodate homeless students even though student poverty is a rapidly growing issue.

SRC Believes:

- The University should not use student housing as a way of making money and therefore, students should have cheap rent.
- In order to fully focus on their studies and wellbeing, students should not have money-related worries in the core of their life whilst they are studying.
- It should not be cheaper to rent to a private agency while the University is owning students Halls. The rent should be adapted accordingly.

SRC Resolves:

- The Student Association should back the 'Socialist Society Abertay' campaign "Cap the Rent" and/or engage in a campaign which looks at resolving the issues of expensive student accommodation, the lack of accommodations for homeless students and renting issues across Dundee.
- The Student Association should lobby the university to cap the rent of their accommodations, create special policies to help homeless students and address more efficiently the issue of student poverty.

Motion #1

Boycott The NSS

Proposer: REDACTED

Seconder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

1. Over the past couple of years, the U.K. government introduced a series of reforms to higher education. [1]
2. At their heart is the Teaching Excellence Framework which ranks universities Bronze, Silver and Gold according to a set of metrics including the National Student Survey (NSS) and graduate earnings. [2]
3. The HE reforms and TEF are already causing job cuts in multiple universities, for example in Manchester where over 100 redundancies have been announced, explicitly citing changes to HE policy as a reason. Previous moves towards marketisation since 2010 have also contributed towards recent job cuts. [3]
4. The NSS survey is issued to all final year students at Abertay University
5. In 2016, NUS National Conference passed a policy to boycott the NSS until the TEF is scrapped and the HE reforms are withdrawn. [4]
6. In at least 12 institutions, NSS response rates dropped below 50% as a result of the boycott, making the results unusable. In many others, response rates have also fallen significantly. [5]
7. The boycott was widely reported in the media and mentioned in parliamentary debates around the Higher Education and Research Act. [6]
8. In 2017, Theresa May announced that tuition fees in England for the following academic year would not go up. However, there has been no guarantee that the freeze will continue for future years or that TEF and fees will be delinked. [7]
9. *Education is not free in Scotland; there are many circumstances in which students have to pay for their education here at Abertay such as; international, rest of UK, postgraduate, returning and some mature students. While home students are subject to loans instead of grants*
10. The NSS itself has been discredited as a measure of teaching quality, including by the Royal Statistical Society. Its results have also been proven to reflect gender and racial bias. [8][9]

SRC Believes:

1. TEF not only does not adequately measure teaching quality, it is a threat to higher education as we know it and needs to be resisted by any means available to us.
2. TEF means universities are chasing metrics and not meaningfully improving standards for students or staff.

3. Successful NSS boycott campaigns at multiple universities forced TEF and wider higher education policy onto the national agenda.
4. The NSS boycott contributed towards the government temporarily severing the link between TEF and tuition fees in England.
5. The government's efforts to limit the effects of the boycott, by halving the weight of NSS as a metric and using data from previous years in institutions where response rates fall below 50%, are meant to discourage students from boycotting the survey. This shows that the leverage is effective and the student movement cannot afford to give up.
6. The government and university managers need NSS results not only to implement the TEF, but to manage the already-existing marketisation of the university system. By refusing to fill it out, we can therefore disrupt their business and gain leverage that helps students push them to concede to our campaign.
7. NSS turnout or results should never be tied to SA/SU funding. We need to stand in solidarity with any SA/SU that receives threats of funding cuts because of participating in the national campaign. Such blackmail from some universities is a despicable attack on union autonomy.
8. To keep up the pressure on the government, the NSS boycott needs to continue, as part of a wider campaign against TEF, the HE reforms and marketisation.

SRC Resolves:

1. To promote a boycott of NSS 2019 and in future years until the reforms are withdrawn. This may include:
 1. Refusing to promote the NSS or have any pro-NSS material with the SU logo on;
 2. Working with UCU to discourage NSS promotion by academics and encourage academics to actively provide information about the boycott to students;
 3. Promoting the boycott through posters, leafleting, door-knocking and social media, before the survey is released and throughout the time when it's open;
 4. Taking part in national and local actions and demonstrations linked to the NSS boycott and the campaign against TEF, the Tory HE reforms and marketisation
2. To call on other students' unions and associations to join the boycott – the bigger it grows, the stronger we are.
3. To campaign against any link between NSS and SA/SU block grants and actively support any union which receives threats from its university due to participation in the boycott.

NOTES:

[1] <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/highereducationandresearch.html>

[2] <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/it/tef/>

[3]

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/may/10/university-of-manchester-to-axe-171-staff-a-mid-brex-it-concerns>

[4]

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/apr/20/students-vote-to-sabotage-plans-to-rate-teaching-in-universities>

[5] <http://wonkhe.com/blogs/nss-boycott-2017/>

[6]

<https://hansard.parliament.uk/Lords/2017-03-06/debates/1417811C-0D3C-4193-AB3E-C14687EB6D64/HigherEducationAndResearchBill>

[7]

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/student-finance-reforms-raise-questions-over-sector-funding-and-tef>

[8]

<https://www.rss.org.uk/Images/PDF/influencing-change/2016/RSS-response-to-BIS-Technical-Consultation-on-Teaching-Excellence-Framework-year-2.pdf>

[9]

<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/biased-students-give-bme-academics-lower-nss-scores-says-study>

Abertay SRC

Motion #4

Fair Deal for Hospitality Workers

Proposer: REDACTED

Seconder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- That a recent study ([Appendix 1](#)) by 'Research in Hospitality Management' found that 40% of student workers worked in the hospitality industry.
- That hospitality workers remain some of the most exploited workers in the Scottish economy with 70% earning less than the living wage and 25% on zero hour contracts.
- Unite Scotland's Fair Hospitality campaign ([Appendix 2](#)) looks to improve working conditions within the hospitality industry by providing workers with the legal knowledge, the organising skills and collective confidence to transform their workplace and ultimately re-build a collective bargaining framework for the industry
- And that recent victories against the G1 Group as well as support from Edinburgh City Council and Summerhall will see improvements for thousands of hospitality workers across the country.

SRC Believes:

- That the ten campaign points laid out in the 'Fair Hospitality Charter' ([Appendix 3](#)) should be considered a fundamental right for those working in the hospitality sector.
- That as a local representative body, it is important that we acknowledge the importance of the rights of workers in the venues in which we host events and the university in which we study.
- That we are currently in a crisis situation in regards to the rights of workers in the hospitality industry, and that as the industry continues to grow (particularly in areas like Dundee, where the hospitality sector is growing on the back of government-backed 'regeneration' without guarantees for the lowest-paid workers) now is the necessary time to engage with the Unite Hospitality campaign and fight for the rights of hospitality workers.

SRC Resolves:

- To lobby the university to adopt the terms of the 'Fair Hospitality Charter' in the Student Centre.
- To seek to host future events (where possible) in 'Fair Hospitality' Venues.
- To congratulate NUS Scotland on their recent decision to back the Fair Hospitality Charter.
- To build stronger links with Unite Staff Trade Union on campus and encourage staff in the student centre to join.
- To back the recent creation of the Unite Hospitality Branch in Dundee.

Abertay SRC

Working Group Proposal #1

Democracy review

Presenter: REDACTED

Seconded: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- That the Students' Association's Democracy Review is due.
- That the Student Leadership Team and the SA's Democracy & Class Rep Coordinator is currently planning how this process is going to take place in its own meetings.
- That SRC is a key stakeholder in the Democracy Review.

SRC Believes:

- That Class Representative involvement is vital to the process of the democracy review.
- SRC should be part of discussions, regarding the shape of the Students' Association's democracy.

SRC Resolves:

- To create a working group, involving Class Representatives (at least 2 from each school if possible), SA Sabbaticals and Executive Officers and the SA's Democracy & Class Representative Coordinator, to further discuss planning the Democracy Review.
- To ask the Student Leadership Team and the above working group to report progress on the Democracy Review at each SRC.
- To have a portion of the next SRC meeting dedicated to discussion and views on the future of the SA's democracy, with particular regards to the Class Representative system, but also other relevant topics.

Abertay SRC

Working Group Proposal #2

Mental Health Campaign Working Group

Proposer: REDACTED

Secunder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- That we are in the midst of a mental health crisis in our society.
- That students are subject to massive amounts of pressure and that this can have a detrimental impact on their mental health.
- That the Student Leadership Team are currently engaging with the topic of mental health.

SRC Believes:

- That more work needs to be done around mental health.
- That having a specific working group would make for more efficient and effective campaigns.
- That having a Mental Health Agreement between the SA and the University would be beneficial for our students.

SRC Resolves:

- To create a working group, involving all those interested, the SA's Advice Coordinator and Abertay's Mental Health Adviser, to further discuss planning any campaigns on Mental Health.
- To use the Mental Health working group to coordinate all campaigns and engagement surrounding Mental Health within the SA.
- To ask the Student Leadership Team and the above working group to report progress on any Mental Health campaigns at each SRC.
- To use the Mental Health working group to create a Mental Health Agreement between the SA and the University.

Abertay SRC

Motion #3

There is Power In The Union

Proposer: REDACTED

Seconder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- AbertaySA is an autonomous organisation
- AbertaySA works on a number of areas together with the lecturers union - UCU
- A partnership agreement exist between the university management and AbertaySA that gives the university the right to run the class rep system if they wanted to.
- That the university management group has previously provided their vision of the class rep system and indicated that they would like the class rep system to provide them with data that could be used for creating league tables.
- There is no current partnership agreement between AbertaySA and the UCU

SRC Believes:

- There is power in the union
- AbertaySA and UCU have worked in partnership numerous of times and share a number of goals and values
- AbertaySA and UCU would both benefit from a Union Agreement
- If the relationship between AbertaySA and University Management would worsen, AbertaySA should be protected from a potential take over of the class rep system by the university. An Union Agreement between the student and lecturer union could stop such a new class rep system being created.

SRC Resolves:

- By having AbertaySA to reach out to UCU to create a Union Agreement that would look at protecting the current class rep system; prevent course cuts; as well as finding other common goals to campaign on.

Abertay SA against Unethical Investments

Proposer: REDACTED

Secunder: REDACTED

SRC Notes:

- That previously, Abertay SA has had policy on the divestment of Fossil Fuels, which we are looking to reaffirm and reinforce.
- That more than half of university institutions in the UK have fully divested from the fossil fuels industry.
- Abertay University currently has no investments in companies that trade or invest in fossil fuel industries or the arms and military industries.
- That although some parts of the fossil fuel industry are transitioning to clean energy, still too many have direct ties with other fossil fuel companies or continue to pursue investments and trading in fossil fuels besides that.

SRC Believes:

- That climate change and global warming are real, growing threats to our planet and our communities, both at home and abroad.
- That arms and military industries are profiting off conflicts and wars, which destroy the lives of millions across the world.
- That educational institutions should not be investing, thus promoting the use of fossil fuels, arms or military industries through investments into those industries.
- That Abertay University should maintain a policy of complete and absolute divestment from any company making any profit from in fossil fuels and any unethical investments.

SRC Resolves:

- To oppose any Abertay University investment in any external body trading or investing in fossil fuels and other sources of energy responsible for climate change, no matter how small the trading or investment.
- To oppose any Abertay University investment in any external body trading or investing in the arms and military industries, no matter how small the trading or investment.
- To task the Student Leadership Team to lobby Abertay University to continue investing in and working with clean energy companies and bodies.

Abertay SRC

Motion #5

Students in Charge of Democracy

Proposer: REDACTED

Seconder: REDACTED

The Student Representative Council notes that:

- AbertaySA is run by students for students.
- AbertaySA is conducting a Democracy Review that looks at all aspects of AbertaySA's democratic structures. From class rep system to elections, to AbertaySA's very own constitution.

The Student Representative Council believes that:

- AbertaySA is an autonomous organisations.

The Student Representative Council Further Believes that:

- Students Democracy means, that Students are in charge of the democratic processes in their Students' Association.

The Student Representative Council Resolves to:

- Exclude the University's Management Group and its members from any involvement in AbertaySA's Democracy Review.
- Have Class Reps and other students involved in the Democracy Review committee.
- Give a vote to students on all major decisions the Democracy Review Committee makes at a platform all students can participate in.