

Policy name: **Free Education**Date Presented: **02/11/17**Lapse Date: **May 2026****STUDENT COUNCIL NOTES:**

The higher education sector in Northern Ireland is unsustainably underfunded in comparison to the rest of the UK.

In recent months, additional cuts to Further and Higher Education institution budgets have been proposed, threatening to make education even less accessible to those from lower income backgrounds. Students should not be priced out of achieving their fullest potential.

Education is a human right, not a luxury. An education system that is only accessible to those able to afford it does not promote social mobility or economic development of individuals and communities. Higher education already feels inaccessible to many and if the proposed cuts are implemented, this will only serve to further impact already marginalised groups.

STUDENT COUNCIL BELIEVES:

Education serves a public good and should be free at the point of access to all, regardless of their background, with the ability and willingness to learn. To solve the current crisis which the University is facing, funding should be more readily available to higher education institutions instead of proposals to cut what is already there.

STUDENT COUNCIL RESOLVES:

To mandate Student Executive to lobby the Stormont Executive, in collaboration with NUS-USI for actions towards free or more affordable education and to lobby the university, to adopt a stance advocating for free higher education.

To mandate Student Executive to research best practice for advocating for free and more affordable education (i.e. discussions with NUS Scotland).

Name of Proposer: *Ruth Torney* Name of Seconder: *G Hudson*

Policy renewed on 27th November 2024.