

1. POLICY TITLE: COST OF LIVING

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Cost-of-Living Policy at UUSU is to ensure that we actively recognise, respond to, and alleviate the financial pressure faced by students. With constantly rising inflation, increased housing costs, unaffordable utility bills, and the additional challenges of limited support from student finance, many students are struggling to afford essentials such as transport, rent, study materials (e.g. laptops/textbooks), and food.

This policy exists to safeguard the accessibility, welfare, and educational experience of all students. Through this policy, UUSU reiterates its commitment to reducing financial barriers, promoting fairness, and ensuring that no student is excluded from fully participating in university life due to financial hardship.

3. DEFINITIONS

N/A

4. POLICY PRINCIPLES / COMMITMENTS

This policy is reinforced by the following principles:

Advocacy & Lobbying –

UUSU will support and represent students' financial needs to Ulster University, local businesses, the Northern Ireland Executive, and the UK government, aiming to secure improved financial support for students.

Student Support –

UUSU will work to provide and promote access to practical support, such as cheaper food options, affordable activities, hardship funds, and financial advice.

Equity and Inclusion –

UUSU will seek to ensure that all students, including international students, students from low-socio-economic backgrounds, and students with caring responsibilities, are supported and represented equitably.

Awareness –

UUSU will actively raise awareness of the specific challenges that students face due to the cost-of-living crisis and invite students to get involved in UUSU campaigns & projects for meaningful change.

5. OBJECTIVES

UUSU aims to:

- Lobby for the reinstatement of the 'Lifestyle Hub' on all 3 campuses.
- Seek out student discounts at local businesses for costs associated with university life.
- Lobby for affordable, safe, and accessible student housing across all campuses.

6. ACTIONS

In order to fulfil this policy, UUSU commits to:

- Lobbying for increased financial support, including increased maintenance loans and grants, more affordable housing, and accessible hardship funds.
- Collecting relevant evidence on the impact of the cost-of-living crisis on students to strengthen lobbying efforts.
- Lobbying and engaging with the university to ensure the eradication of hidden course costs and additional fees that affect students, advocating for all costs to be clearly outlined upfront in course materials.
- Lobbying for, expanding and promoting student support initiatives such as 'Lifestyle Hubs' & free breakfast schemes, where feasible.
- Educating students with information and guidance on financial wellbeing, budgeting, and any internal/external sources of financial support.
- Ensuring that UUSU events and activities remain affordable and accessible to all members.

7. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Policy Owner – UUSU

Policy Lead – VP Coleraine

Policy Support – Governance and Policy Co-Ordinator

8. PARTNERSHIPS AND STAKEHOLDERS

UUSU will work in partnership with Ulster University, NUS-USI, NUS, AMLE and external stakeholders to maximize the impact of work associated with this policy.

UUSU will also seek partnerships with local businesses to provide students with heavily discounted items or services.

9. MONITORING & EVALUATION

- This policy will be annually reviewed by the Student Executive to ensure that it remains relevant and reactive to the current needs of students.

- Progress on the commitments set out in this policy will be reported to Student Council and communicated to our membership.
- Feedback from students will be actively sought out, to navigate any developments of the policy in future.

10. REPORTING & TRANSPARENCY

Student Council

UUSU Trustee Board

UUSU Membership

11. ASSOCIATED POLICIES / DOCUMENTS

N/A

Proposer: **Chris Murray (On Behalf of the Student Executive)**

Seconder: **Laura Collins**

Policy Passed: **26.11.25**

Lapse Date: **May 2027**