

# Strath Union Standing Policies

Updated 18.09.2024

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## **Access to exam transcripts and average marks**

*This policy was retained at Student Parliament on 11.4.2022. This policy will lapse in the academic year 2024-25 and **cannot** be retained again.*

### **Submitting Forum: Student Parliament**

**Proposer: Tariq Mir**

#### **Student Parliament Notes:**

1. Students at Strathclyde do not currently receive information on how their marks from assessments compare to the class average.
2. The data showing the spread of marks for assessments should be easily available.
3. There is no system in place for all students to see their transcript after an exam. Giving students access to exam transcripts following a request, is currently at the discretion of each department.

#### **Student Parliament Believes:**

1. Giving students access to the spread of marks for assessments that contribute to the final mark for the course, would encourage those who need support to seek it, give students doing well a confidence boost and
2. Providing this information could also be used to highlight problems in course delivery if the average mark was very low.
3. Any information provided to students should be anonymous.
4. Having access to exam transcripts will allow students to reflect and plan their studying, enhancing their ability to progress through their course.

#### **Student Parliament Resolves:**

1. The Executive to lobby the University to implement a system that shows students the spread of marks and average mark, for every assessment that contributes to the final grade for a course.

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2. The Executive to lobby the University to make individual exam transcripts available to all students, on request.

## **More Ethical and Environmental Provision of Water in The Union and Across Campus**

*This policy was retained at Student Parliament on 11.4.2022. This policy will lapse in the academic year 2024-25 and **cannot** be retained again.*

Submitting Forum: Clubs & Societies General Meeting

Proposer: Liam McCabe, VPVD

### **Student Parliament Notes:**

1. That a majority of plastic bottles end up never being recycled, and when incinerated produce toxic fumes.
2. That it takes a huge amount of fossil fuel powered energy to create plastic bottles in the first place, and produces over a million tons of waste a year and several million tons of carbon dioxide<sup>1</sup>.
3. That there is a huge impact upon wildlife, particularly marine<sup>2</sup>, with birds and sea life in particular often consuming lethal volumes of plastic waste or an item which they cannot process, leading to death.
4. That according to the UN Human Rights Council (Resolution A/HRC/RES/15/9), access to clean drinking water is a human right<sup>3</sup>.

### **Student Parliament Believes:**

1. It is incumbent upon us to reduce our impact on the environment, as part of our guiding principle of environmentalism and in line with our Environmental Policy.
2. That it is necessary for us to provide clean, safe drinking water to our students and this should be as accessible as possible, with cost and location in mind.

### **Student Parliament Resolves:**

1. To prohibit the sale of bottled water in The Union, and campaign for a similar ban across outlets on campus.
2. To replace bottled water with a combination of water fountains in The Union (with free, recyclable cups provided) and access to low cost water bottles for long-term use.
3. To continue to advocate for the proliferation of water fountains across campus, in line with legislation on workers' rights, and the provision of cups that said legislation entails for the use of students and staff alike.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hydratelife.org/?p=767>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.onegreenplanet.org/animalsandnature/whats-the-problem-with-plastic-bottles/>

<sup>3</sup> [http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage\\_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/15/9](http://ap.ohchr.org/documents/dpage_e.aspx?si=A/HRC/RES/15/9)

2019/20

## **Banning Negative Marking**

*This policy was retained by Student Parliament on 24/01/2023. This policy will lapse at the end of the 2025/26 academic year and cannot be retained again.*

### **Student Parliament Notes**

1. Negative marking is used in some departments in assessments where a correct answer is +1 mark but an incorrect answer is -1 mark. Therefore, if you had sat a quiz and answered 15/20 questions correctly instead of receiving 75% as you would with regular marking schemes you receive 50% due to the deduction of marks for incorrect answers.
2. Negative marking is counterproductive and discourages students.
3. It has no constructive value and instead leaves students feeling bad about their studies.
4. In a poll 35 students had stated that they did not support the negative marking and 0 stated that they supported it.
5. In this poll, Students have given their opinion on negative marking below:
  - "Seems a bit pointless"
  - "It's really quite unfair. It's all good doing weekly assessments but it is punishing us for trying our best and not quite getting the answer right. It puts us at a disadvantage to other disciplines who don't have negative marking. You answer 8 right and 8 wrong and you get 0, totally pointless."
  - "If your presentation got a really good mark the quiz pulls you down from a first to a second due to the negative marking"
  - "It's counterproductive – shouldn't be punished for not knowing something"

### **Student Parliament Believes**

1. That the University of Strathclyde should be supporting students and encouraging a positive learning environment.
2. Negative marking policies do not contribute to a positive learning environment
3. Students should be rewarded for their good work and not be penalised when they don't know the answers.

### **Student Parliament Resolves**

1. All members of student parliament should support the motion to ban negative marking at University of Strathclyde.
2. All Faculty Reps should raise the issue of negative marking at relevant committee meetings.
3. The VP Education shall research into the use of negative marking in Strathclyde University.
4. The Executive Committee should lobby the university to implement a policy which bans negative marking across all faculties.

## **Lecture recordings for all**

*This policy was retained by Student Parliament on 24/01/2023. This policy will lapse at the end of the 2025/26 academic year and cannot be retained again.*

### **Student Parliament Notes**

1. Audio recording of lectures have been used by many other Scottish universities such as University of Glasgow, Herriot-Watt and University of Sterling.
2. Audio recordings allow students to revise content delivered in lectures.
3. Pilot studies of lecture capturing have been done in some departments.

### **Student Parliament Believes**

1. Disabled students, chronically ill students, carers and parents may not always be able to attend due to circumstances without their control and they lose out on valuable information.
2. There is a negative stigma around lecture content perpetuated by lecturers who believe that if you are unable to attend then you aren't entitled to the information. Nobody should be denied access to knowledge and this removes barriers to learning.
3. International students, whose first language isn't English, will be able to listen back to what lecturers said even if they missed it in class. This removes language barriers in education.
4. In extreme circumstances, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, rely on the use of online learning. We would have a much easier transition to online based learning if staff were already used to using interactive technology.

### **Student Parliament Instructs**

1. The Union should ask the university to invest in the equipment and software needed to improve the online learning environment for students.
2. Department and Faculty Reps should hold discussions with their department/faculty regarding the introduction of lecture recordings.
3. All new facilities built moving forward should be fully equip with lecture capture technology.

## **Sustainable Futures**

*This policy was retained by Student Parliament on 24/01/2023. This policy will lapse at the end of the 2025/26 academic year and cannot be retained again.*

### **Student Parliament Notes:**

1. In 2018-19 Strath Union achieved “Excellent” in NUS’s Green Impact Award which involves meeting sustainable procurement criteria including Fairtrade standards.
2. Strath Union currently serve Fairtrade tea, coffee, and snacks in both Recharge and in meetings, and supply Fairtrade clothing for staff and campaigns.
3. The current policy ‘Nestle Products in the USSA’ calls for the stocking of Fairtrade products in the association.
4. The current policy ‘Association Ethical Clothing’ calls for ‘USSA clothing to be sourced from Fairtrade ethical and local suppliers’.
5. Strath Union previously had a Fairtrade policy, Fairtrade Future, which has since lapsed.
6. As our awareness of our global impact has increased, so have the options for sustainable, ethical, and locally sourced products – meaning Fairtrade is no longer the only “good” option.
7. Locally sourced products can have a massive positive impact due to supporting local businesses and having a reduced carbon footprint.

### **Student Parliament Believes:**

1. Fairtrade Programmes have successfully raised people out of poverty worldwide and have a genuine impact on the lives of people and their communities in the developing world.
2. In order to mitigate our impact on the planet we should be ensuring wherever possible that our purchases should be as ethical and sustainable as possible.
3. That with each purchase made by Strath Union, its environmental and social impact should be considered.
4. By Strath Union ensuring that they only purchase and supply ethical products they are also making it easier for students to do so and therefore encouraging this throughout society.

### **Student Parliament Resolves:**

1. To ensure Fairtrade/ethical options are available in all cafes, bars, and for Union campaigns and activities and increase their availability.
2. To support clubs, societies and sports clubs that wish to use ethical products and encourage this where possible.
3. To continue to maintain the Fairtrade Status for the Union.
4. To continue to improve the sustainability of Strath Union by engaging with NUS initiatives such as the Green Impact Awards, but also by their own initiatives.
5. To lobby the University to increase their ethical and sustainable considerations regarding products they sell, but also the way in which they carry out university business.
6. To run at least one campaign each year to increase awareness, understanding and usage of sustainable, ethical, and Fairtrade options.
7. To embark on the journey of going net carbon zero in the most sustainable and ethical way possible in Strath Union.



## Strath Union Cares

*This policy was retained by Student Parliament on 24/01/2023. This policy will lapse at the end of the 2025/26 academic year and cannot be retained again.*

*This policy was put forward through the Executive Committee for consideration at Student Parliament*

### Student Parliament Notes:

1. Strathclyde was the first university in Scotland to sign up as an “official friend” of Who Cares? Scotland
2. Care Experienced children are **less likely to be in positive destinations nine months after leaving school**. Figures from 2017/18 show that 76% of children in care for the full year and 69% of children in care for part of the year, were in positive destinations. This is compared to 93% of all school leavers<sup>1</sup>
3. The overall **retention** rate for Scottish domiciled full-time first degree entrants completing year 1 and remaining in higher education was 92.5% in 2017-18. Meanwhile, 87.2% of entrants with care-experienced backgrounds remained in higher education.<sup>2</sup>
4. A dedicated landing page for all Widening Access students has been developed on the Strath Union website and will continue to be a site of resource for all our Widening Access students, including those who identify as Care Experienced.
5. Strath Union now has a dedicated “Access and Participation Coordinator” who’s role includes supporting students from widening access backgrounds

### Student Parliament Believes:

1. Strath Union has a role to play in supporting **all** of students through their university experience.
2. Engaging with other charities in our community such as Who Cares? Scotland can be massively beneficial to our students who require specific support.
3. Strath Union should provide support for and raise awareness of care leavers in higher education.

### Student Parliament Resolves:

1. For Strath Union to work with Student Reps, Student Execs and the Care Experienced Society to remain responsive to the needs of our Care Experienced students.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/who-we-are/media-centre/statistics/> (Scottish Government, 2019\*, cited from Who Cares? Scotland, 2020).

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/statisticalpublications\\_sfscst072019/Report\\_on\\_Widening\\_Access\\_2017-18\\_Executive\\_Summary.pdf](http://www.sfc.ac.uk/web/FILES/statisticalpublications_sfscst072019/Report_on_Widening_Access_2017-18_Executive_Summary.pdf) (SFC, 2019, p. 3)

2. To actively engage with, support and grow the Care Experienced Society, as necessary.
3. To retain its connection with Who Cares? Scotland and lobby the university to ensure it does the same.

### **Additional Information**

1. The term “care experienced” refers to anyone who has been, or is currently in care. This care may have been provided in many different settings, such as:
  - Kinship care – living with a relative who is not your mum or dad.
  - Looked after at home – with the help of social work.
  - Residential care – living in a residential unit or school.
  - Foster care – living with foster carers.
  - Secure care – living in a secure unit.
  - Adoption

(Who Cares? Scotland, 2020)

2021/22

## **Climate Crisis – Strath Union’s Areas of Focus**

*This document was submitted on behalf of the Climate Emergency Action Group. These state Strath Union’s positions on the climate crisis and the areas the Union will focus on to combat the climate crisis*

### **1. An end to gestures of greenwashing throughout the university.**

Strath Union believes that Strathclyde University must halt any further greenwashing actions that hinder the response to the climate crisis. This should apply to both policy and on campus actions. The response of the university must match the severity of the crisis according to climate science and the IPCC.

### **2. A formal student assembly to evaluate and participate in the University’s response to the climate crisis while encouraging democracy in the University.**

Addressing the climate crisis must be done through democracy and discussion. Nations of the world will come together in discussion at COP26. Strath Union must encourage democratic and participatory principals and work alongside the university to ensure collaboration in evaluating policies and provide discussion to strengthen our collective response to the climate crisis at the university. We must ask for formal student participatory assemblies that take part in Strathclyde Universities sustainable development.

### **3. A commitment from the university to actively lead Scottish universities on an innovative and active response to the climate crisis.**

Strathclyde University is an international, world known University of innovation. Its principal of useful learning is key its success. Strath Union believes that Strathclyde University is in a unique and key position to lead Scottish universities and inspire institutions around the world on its potential for a democratic and innovative response to the climate crisis and should adopt frameworks and take actions to do so.

### **4. An adoption of CEKO and further climate education programs into the curriculum**

Strath Union will lobby the University to formally educate students on the climate crisis; this is vital not only for solving the crisis but also in preparing students with useful learning which will inform them of what the world will be like in the years after they graduate. This is long overdue and must be swiftly adopted into the curriculum as a mandatory part of every course.

## **Inclusive Language Policy**

*This policy was passed at Student Parliament on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2022.*

### **Policy Statement:**

This policy is to outline Strath Union's commitment to the widespread implementation and use of inclusive language within Strath Union, and the wider Strathclyde community.

### **Student Parliament Notes:**

1. Inclusive language refers to language that avoids the use of certain expressions or words that might be considered to exclude particular groups of people, especially gender-specific words and pronouns.
2. Strathclyde has a diverse student population including women; transgender, non-binary, and gender-non-conforming people; estranged students, and students from any other relevant group.
3. Failing to appreciate and use inclusive language can alienate students from these groups, and limit their ability to engage in university life in a way that feels safe and authentic.

### **Student Parliament Believes:**

1. That students shouldn't be made to feel excluded by the language used on campus.
2. That Strath Union should be conscious of and promote wider acceptance and sensitivity towards these groups.
3. That individuals have the right to self-define, and that this should be respected and reflected in common parlance.

### **Student Parliament Instructs:**

1. Strath Union as a whole to adopt inclusive language into all communications - both internal and external - such as information shared within the organisation, to students, and with external organisations. Some examples of this include, but are not limited to;
  1. All members of Union staff including elected representatives should include their pronouns in their email signatures
  2. All members of Union staff including elected representatives should endeavour to ask students for their pronouns when interacting with them
  3. All public communications should avoid using gender specific terms ("his or hers/he or she") and instead use a gender neutral alternative ("they/theirs")
  4. All public communications should avoid using family specific terms ("your mum or dad") where possible and instead use an inclusive term ("loved ones/supporters")
2. Members of Parliament and all other faces of Strath Union should champion the sentiment of this policy.
3. Strath Union Executive shall lobby the University to also adopt a policy of inclusive language that covers all communications, including course material.



## **Strathclyde Students Demand Better Student Housing (2022)**

*This policy was passed at Student Parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2022*

### **Student Parliament Notes:**

1. The right to adequate accommodation is a universal human right, and has been for over 70 years<sup>1</sup>.
2. Year-on-year, Strathclyde students face a number of issues regarding housing including scams, overpriced rents, illegal landlord practices, and homelessness.
3. The Academic Year 2021-2022 has been no different, with specific issues appearing this year including a city wide housing crisis for students, rent prices skyrocketing, and Purpose Built Student Accommodation (PBSA) providers taking advantage of students worse than we have ever seen before<sup>2</sup>.
4. International students studying at Strathclyde are acutely affected by some of these issues including scams, and issues with providing a UK-based guarantor.
5. This year presents a wealth of opportunities to make a difference in the area of student housing, including the initial stages of the redevelopment of the Student Village, appetite within the University for change, and a number of opportunities for Strath Union to influence policy within the Scottish Government.
6. Housing issues are not only impacting the lives of students studying at Strathclyde, but all across Glasgow and Scotland.

### **Student Parliament Believes:**

It is clear that housing is a pressing issue facing Strathclyde students, and that now is the time to take action on this:

1. Students should not be asked to come to study at the University of Strathclyde without the University first considering their ability to secure stable accommodation in Glasgow - the University has a duty of care and responsibility to protect these students' wellbeing and not force them into a precarious living situation just to engage with their studies.
2. Strathclyde University must return to being a key provider of suitable, accessible, and affordable accommodation for its' students and must do all it can to develop and maintain this position in the future - with Strath Union being a key part of delivering the non-academic elements of these students' experience at Strathclyde.
3. Strathclyde University has an emphasised responsibility in caring for its' international student population and must endeavour to intervene with issues that face a majority of these students - issues that can greatly impact these students wellbeing, safety, and ability to engage with their studies.
4. Strathclyde students deserve to have easy access to the information and support they require to find a place to live, to fight back against their housing providers when they need to, and to come together to affect change collectively.
5. Strath Union has the capacity and scope to position itself in the decision making process at a local and national level to influence policy to better provide for Strathclyde students in terms of housing, and should endeavour to do so wherever possible.

6. Strath Union should actively engage with and support any upcoming local and/or national campaigns from its partners around student housing to tackle these issues together as a united front.

**Student Parliament Instructs:**

1. Strath Union will launch a campaign on student housing that will aim to raise awareness of housing issues within the student body, provide students the skills and education they need to affect change on housing issues, and work towards securing demands for change in student housing.
2. The demands of this campaign will be as follows:
  1. The University of Strathclyde must commit to creating Housing Impact Assessments in line with Recruitment Targets - ensuring that all students' living situations are considered before asking them to attend their studies at Strathclyde.
  2. The ongoing redevelopment proposals and discussions for the Strathclyde Student Village (and other Strathclyde owned accommodation) should include as much, be as affordable, and be as accessible as it can be. Strath Union should have a clear presence within newly created spaces ( be these offices, social spaces, and/or commercial offerings).
  3. Strath Union should work in partnership with the University of Strathclyde to begin the creation of an (International) Student Guarantor Scheme at Strathclyde - providing students the necessary lifeline some need to secure a safe place to live during their studies.
  4. Strath Union will develop and publish a 'Resource Hub', collecting housing advice and publishing this on the Strath Union on website, with information broken into sections based on individual issues/cases - allowing students facing housing issues an easy and accessible means of accessing the support they need, and providing them with the tools they need to fight back.
  5. Strath Union will seek to petition local government for more secure, accessible, and affordable accommodation for students – including accommodation suitable for students with atypical needs (such as students with families, pets, and accessibility needs).
  6. Strath Union will pledge to engage with and support any eligible upcoming campaigns on Student Housing from our partner organisations (such as NUS, the Glasgow Student Forum, or any other relevant organisation).
3. Upon the conclusion of this campaign, Strath Union will continue to keep housing as a key priority in its work moving forward - ensuring that the Union is doing all that it can to tackle housing issues and influence housing policy to improve the lives and experience of Strathclyde Students.

2022/23

## **HEAR We Go**

*This policy was passed at Student Parliament on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022.*

### **Student Parliament Notes**

- That the Higher Education Attainment Record (HEAR) is the sector standard for recording the extracurricular activities of students throughout their time at University<sup>1</sup>.
- That this parliament has a long history of advocating for the implementation of HEAR within the institution, dating back to 2012 before being renewed in 2018.
- That the Vice President Education has submitted a proposal to Student Experience Committee with a view to implementing HEAR within Strathclyde.
- That Strathclyde students are involved with a wide range of extracurricular activities including, but not limited to, volunteering with Strath Union's many societies, representing the University within their sport or activity with the Centre for Sustainability or Strathclyde Inspire.

### **Student Parliament Believes**

- That as the 'Place of Useful Learning', it is in the interests of students to have official recognition of these extracurricular activities within their academic transcripts.
- That HEAR would effectively bring together extracurricular activities from across the institution into one succinct reporting function.
- That the University of Strathclyde should implement the HEAR before the lapse of this policy in 2025.

### **Student Parliament Instructs**

- That the Strath Union advocates for the implementation of HEAR within the committee structure.
- That the VP Education will continue to work with relevant stakeholders to begin scoping a business case for the implementation of HEAR.
- That this policy will replaced existing policy on HEAR

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.hear.ac.uk/about>



### **Make the consent module mandatory for all students**

*This policy was submitted via Changelt and was passed at Student Parliament on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023.*

The Introduction to Gender-Based Violence module, which covers consent, is available for students on MyPlace.

Students are encouraged to complete this - however it is currently voluntary. This module should be a mandatory part of induction across all courses at Strathclyde University.

If this proposal passes, the Union will lobby the University to make this module mandatory for all students by the start of next academic year (2023/24).

This idea was submitted by Eva Curran, Women's Rep at Strathclyde.

## **Calling for the Support of the Strath Union for the Strathclyde Climate Assembly Agenda**

*This policy was passed at Student Parliament on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2023.*

### **Context:**

The climate crisis refers to the rapidly worsening state of the Earth's climate due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and agriculture, which release large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. These gases trap heat from the sun and cause the planet's average temperature to rise, leading to numerous impacts such as melting of polar ice caps, rising sea levels, more frequent and intense natural disasters, and altered weather patterns.

Climate change is not a new concept, but more than ever now the climate of our earth is reaching its crisis stage. As written in an article about the latest report from the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) from the National Geography published in February 2022; stated that "If warming is not halted soon, and it continues, as many as half the species living on land could become extinct, malnutrition in parts of the world will likely become widespread, and extreme weather events will become increasingly common."

People from all over the world are already suffering the short- and long-term effects of climate change where even phrases such as climate refugees are becoming increasingly common. In an article from the ENHCR wrote about how climate change is having significant and disastrous effects on vulnerable communities already; "The impacts of climate change are numerous and may both trigger displacement and worsen living conditions or hamper return for those who have already been displaced. Limited natural resources, such as drinking water, are becoming even scarcer in many parts of the world that host refugees. Crops and livestock struggle to survive where conditions become too hot and dry, or too cold and wet, threatening livelihoods. In such conditions, climate change can act as a threat multiplier, exacerbating existing tensions and adding to the potential for conflicts".

The consequences of the climate crisis threaten not only the environment, but also human societies and economies, and it is considered one of the biggest challenges facing humanity today. The scientific consensus is that immediate and sustained action is needed to mitigate the severity of the crisis and prevent the worst outcomes.

### **Climate Assemblies**

Climate assemblies are deliberative democratic forums where members of the public come together to discuss, learn about, and make recommendations on climate change and its solutions. They are designed to be inclusive, representative, and collaborative, and aim to give voice to the concerns and perspectives of citizens, who are often underrepresented in climate policy discussions.

There are several reasons why climate assemblies have been seen as effective in addressing the climate crisis:

- **Representation:** Climate assemblies bring together a diverse and representative group of citizens, ensuring that a wide range of perspectives and ideas are heard and considered.
- **Inclusivity:** Climate assemblies foster inclusive and respectful dialogue, where all participants are encouraged to express their opinions and ideas.
- **Evidence-based recommendations:** Climate assemblies provide a space for citizens to learn about the latest climate science and policy options and make recommendations based on the best available evidence.
- **Public engagement:** Climate assemblies help to engage the public in the decision-making process, increasing awareness and understanding of climate change and its solutions.
- **Legitimacy:** Climate assemblies can help to build public trust and legitimacy for climate policies by demonstrating that decision-makers have taken the time to listen to the concerns and perspectives of citizens.

### **Scottish Climate Assembly**

The Scottish Climate Assembly was established in 2020 by the Scottish Government to engage citizens in the development of Scotland's climate policy. The assembly brought together a diverse and representative group of citizens from across Scotland to discuss and make recommendations on the country's future climate goals and policies.

The Scottish Climate Assembly had several key objectives:

1. To provide a platform for citizens to learn about and engage with the science and policy of climate change.
2. To ensure that the public's views and perspectives are considered when developing Scotland's climate policy.
3. To build public support for climate action and increase public understanding of the challenges and solutions to the climate crisis.

The Scottish Climate Assembly was designed to be inclusive, transparent, and collaborative, and its recommendations were based on the latest climate science and evidence. The recommendations of the assembly were presented to the Scottish Government in early 2021 and are being used to inform the development of Scotland's new Climate Change Plan.

### **Climate Assemblies in UK Universities**

**Cambridge University:** In 2019, Cambridge University held a climate assembly to engage students, staff, and alumni in discussions about the university's role in addressing the

climate crisis. The assembly was an opportunity for members of the university community to learn about the latest climate science and policy options and make recommendations for how the university can reduce its carbon footprint and support wider climate action.

University of Manchester: In 2021, the University of Manchester held a climate assembly to engage students and staff in discussions about the university's climate policies and initiatives. The assembly provided a platform for members of the university community to learn about the latest climate science and policy options and make recommendations for how the university can reduce its carbon footprint and support wider climate action.

These examples demonstrate how universities can use climate assemblies to engage students, staff, and other members of the university community in discussions about the climate crisis and the role that universities can play in addressing it. Climate assemblies can help to build support for university climate initiatives, increase public understanding of the challenges and solutions to the climate crisis, and ensure that university climate policies are informed by the best available evidence and the perspectives of the university community.

### **Strath Union Believes:**

In the creation of the Strathclyde Climate Assembly, which calls for:

- An **accessible place** for staff and students to come together, discuss and propose **climate policies and sustainability** in the university.
- **Championing the voices of every staff and student** with an ambition to better their University.
- Participation in a form of **direct democracy**.
- Creating a more **sustainable and environmentally friendly community** for the future.
- Implementing structural change for the **betterment of the staff, students, and planet**.

The Strath Union's position should be in support of this manifesto and should recognise the validity of this process when it comes into effect.

### **Student Parliament Instructs:**

The Union (specifically the Executive Committee) to actively assist Strathclyde Climate Emergency Action Group to achieve a formal agreement with the University of Strathclyde, Sustainable Strathclyde, the Union and the SCEAG on the validity of the Climate Assembly, and to support its implementation.

Below outlines the full responsibilities that Student Parliament instructs of Strath Union:

- The **creation** of a Strathclyde Climate Assembly and **implementation** into the University's governance structure.
- Policies discussed within the existing governance structure are to be discussed in **parallel** with the climate assembly. The Union will aim to have the assembly as a **fundamental part of the governance structure** at Strathclyde.
- To ensure that the Strathclyde Climate Assembly will provide a regular platform where proposals can be presented to the student and staff population to be presented directly to the university Executive Team (Appendix 1).
- To liaise with the university Executive Team and necessary governance parties to achieve ongoing formal agreement with the University of Strathclyde, Sustainable Strathclyde, the Union and the SCEAG on the **validity of the Assemblies**.
- To be responsible for the dissemination of knowledge and information about the Assemblies among staff members and students.
- To be responsible for assistance in arranging the room booking, materials, promotion, and information gathering, and general facilitating of the Assemblies (Appendix 2).
- To fully **respect the democratic validity** and champion the conclusions of the Assemblies.
- To hold the University to account as outlined in their duties within this proposal.

Strath Union will support the Climate Assembly to uphold:

- **Autonomous and transparent communications** at all stages of the items being discussed and the conclusions being made in the assembly.
- **Complete and open publishing** of the Conclusions by the assembly.
- Accountability of the University to account through open publication of the University's **action plan, results and updates** with what was implemented within specified time frames. And/or publication of valid **justification for lack of implementation** or progress.
- A process that allows the people to add amendments to successful proposals in response to the University's actions.

- A process that allows revisions to the procedures and structure of the Assembly based on democratic demand.

Any questions or suggestions about the proposal and its appendices may be emailed to [ceag.strath@gmail.com](mailto:ceag.strath@gmail.com).

## Appendices

### Appendix 1

#### Procedure of the Assembly Proposals (subject to change following review)

- Proposals can be made by students and staff.
- After the Proposal is presented and discussed, it will be published to the population for 14 days.
- The Proposal will result in one of two conclusions:
  - The Proposal does not achieve 100 backers within 14 days
    - The Proposal will then be dismissed by the Assembly and either dissolved, or present to the proposer to offer amendments for re-submission
  - The Proposal achieves 100 backers within 14 days
    - The Proposal is therefore passed and presented to the University Executive Team.
- In the case of a passed Proposal, The Assembly would require **receipt of the proposal** from the University Executive Team within 10 working days.
- In the case of a passed Proposal; After receiving receipt; the Assembly would require action from the University Executive Team in one of two options within 15 working days:
  - Publishing a **satisfactory justification** as to why the Proposal is not to be implemented based on **Ethical, Financial, Social, and Environmental reasoning**.
  - Publishing a **commitment of implementation** from the responsible person(s) and an **Action plan** to implement the Proposal into University Governance, including a **one month, and 6-month review**.

## Appendix 2

### Provisional structure of the Assembly (subject to change following review)

1. During the assembly, relevant information on the topic will be presented with a focus on collaborative learning & discussion:
  - a. Looking at boards, visual and audio media with information about the topic at hand.
  - b. Having designated 'information givers'.
  - c. 1 or 2 main presentations about the topic.
  - d. Breakout discussions where people share their thoughts.
  - e. Medium for virtual voting & attendance.
2. At the end a decision is made for or against with recommendations for the proposal
  - a. the recommendations made within the assembly will not be illegal or "impossible" that the University/Union cannot fulfil; however recommendations that the Assembly creates may require the university/union to take alternative measures.
  - b. where the University/Union cannot perform these recommendations made by the Assembly, the University/Union must;
    - i. provide a document outlining the reasons as to why the university/union is unable to meet the recommendations within the specified timeframe;
    - ii. provide a document with the reasonable alternative measure/action that the University/Union will complete, clearly stating a reasonable timeframe;
    - iii. The University/Union will continue to provide up to date emails every two weeks until the alternative recommendations are in practice to the Strathclyde Climate Action Group.
3. This is made into an official document which will be sent to a point of contact with the Exec team of the University with the power to implement the change (Appendix 1).

4. If no action is made within a reasonable deadline decided by the Climate Assembly, and the university gives an unsatisfactory response for the lack of implementation, then alternative action by students and staff is justified.
5. The University/Strath Union/Sustainable Strathclyde would be responsible for arranging the room booking, materials, promotion, and information gathering, and general facilitating.
6. The Strathclyde Climate Emergency Action Group would aid with information gathering, proposals for the assembly, engaging students, and helping to facilitate.
7. All stakeholders (the Union, the Action Group, the University, Sustainable Strathclyde) will come to a formal agreement on partnership to work on the Climate Assemblies and validate their outcomes (including all of the above).



2023/24

## **Transition campus catering to 100% plant-based**

*As this proposal has financial and reputational repercussions, it will also require approval from Strath Union's Trustee Board.*

*Passed 16.10.2023*

### **Student Parliament notes:**

We are currently in a climate and ecological emergency. If significant change is not made, we will far exceed the 1.5 degree global warming limit set out in the Paris Agreement. Animal farming and fishing combined use up to 76% more land space than plant-based farming and is responsible for at least 14.5% of greenhouse gas emissions.

A plant-based food system has massive regenerative potential - it can provide more food, with fewer emissions, whilst also increasing carbon drawdown. Transitioning to a plant-based food system will free up land equivalent to the size of Europe, Australia, the US and China combined. The UK has the potential to be carbon negative if we have a plant-based food system and rewild the freed up land.

Strath Union has proven to be open to plant-based change:

- Passing the increasing vegan awareness policy which deemed to educate students about the negative impact of animal farming and to promote plant-based food on campus
- During COP26/COY16, Strath Union was the first Union to endorse the plant-based treaty, promoting a transition away from animal farming and onto more sustainable alternative protein

The Plant-Based University campaign has results that show that students want to move towards a plant-based catering system:

- the University of Stirling Student Union has signed a policy motion to transition to plant-based catering by 2025
- University College London now has default plant milk at all their campus outlets, Bournemouth University has lowered the prices of plant-based alternatives
- Cambridge University student Union has signed a motion to support the transition to a 100% plant based catering menu

Also a recent YouGov has shown that 55% of students in the UK would like to see more plant-based options on university campuses.

### **Student Parliament believes:**

Due to the facts stated above, we believe that Strath Union should be taking more action towards being a sustainable union. The Plant-Based Universities campaign is already in line with the Union's current plant forward approach and the increasing vegan awareness policy. Acting on the research that shows we should be moving towards a plant-based future is an opportunity for our university to demonstrate a true commitment to environmental sustainability and to align with its sustainability commitments.

**Student Parliament instructs:**

- Strath Union should support the transition to 100% plant-based catering
- For Strath Union owned outlets to be 100% plant-based by 2025
- For Strath Union event catering to be 100% plant-based by 2025
- For these changes to be in writing and embedded within the university climate strategy
- Strath Union should lobby the University of Strathclyde to facilitate a necessary plant-based transition.
- Strath Union should the Plant-Based Universities campaign professional support to ensure a smooth transition. This includes support from three catering and nutritional organisations to ensure changes are swift and easy - ProVeg facilitates menu innovation, which is overseen by Plant-Based Health Professionals to ensure nutritional adequacy of the food provided, and Forward Food offer training to catering staff as well as climate footprint calculations.

Transitioning to plant-based should include:

- To develop alternative, more nutritious, cheap and tasty plant-based menus
- Test the menu and listen to student/staff feedback to improve the menu offering the most popular plant-based meals
- Provide climate footprint calculations for menus which can be advertised on products

# **Mandatory deadlines for opening all MyPlace pages**

*Passed 27.11.2023*

## **Policy Summary**

Strathclyde Student's Union should support a mandatory deadline for university staff to open all MyPlace pages for class modules by to support students with their preparation for the semester ahead.

## **Student Parliament notes**

1. There is currently no fixed deadline for MyPlace course pages to be opened by.
2. There is a similar fixed deadline for return of marks which should act as a guideline for this policy.
3. There are many students throughout the university who have caring responsibilities.
4. The student population includes 8% of those with disabilities who seek the support of the university's disability and wellbeing services, according to the Student Equality Monitoring Report (2022).

## **Student Parliament believes**

1. That Strathclyde Student's Union should support students having adequate preparation time for their studies during week 0 (induction week) of the semester.
2. That Strathclyde Student's Union should encourage staff to endorse this policy.
3. That the University of Strathclyde should make a deadline of the first working day of induction week(s), by 1700 hrs to have all MyPlace pages opened by.

## **Student Parliament instructs**

1. Strath Union should conduct further research and surveys into responsibilities outside of university that may impact a student's learning experience.
2. The executive to lobby the university to make this deadline mandatory across all four teaching schools by September 2023.
3. Strathclyde Students Union to work with students impacted by this in a working group to further explore the impact that late MyPlace page openings have on a students life.
4. Strathclyde Student's Union to work cooperatively with the disability and wellbeing services to ensure that the proposed deadline would ensure students are able to access and book the support they require ahead of classes starting.
5. The executive to encourage the Student Equality Monitoring Report to include information on student's with external working commitments and those with caring responsibilities (both dependants and other).

## Support for Palestine

First passed: 27/11/2023	Duration: 3 years
Lapsing: 27/11/2026	Ownership: President

### WHEREAS:

Israel has engaged in systematic oppression and domination of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) amounting to apartheid and persecution.<sup>1</sup>

Strath Union stands in support of freedom and liberation for all peoples. We encourage individuals to participate and empower others to speak their truth. Strath Union notes that ‘there are often attempts to silence critics of Israel by conflating legitimate criticism with antisemitism.’<sup>2</sup>

The ‘IHRA working definition of antisemitism’ adopted by many UK universities has been criticised by recognised experts on antisemitism, Jewish history, and related subjects as unsuitable for universities.<sup>3</sup> This definition and its illustrative examples ‘conflate criticisms of Israel, its illegal policies, practices and the political ideology on which the state was founded, with antisemitism’ and has been used at UK universities, including in Glasgow, to restrict pro-Palestine academic events.<sup>4</sup>

Boycott, divestment, and sanctions of the Israeli state is ‘the most effective grassroots means for applying nonviolent pressure to change Israeli policies.’<sup>5</sup>

Israeli academic institutions participate in Israel’s occupation mechanisms by way of weapons technology development, military recruitment, and legal support.<sup>6</sup>

### BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Strathclyde Students’ Union supports the Palestinian state and its right to self-determination. Strath Union supports an end to the occupation of Palestinian territory by the Israeli state.

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<sup>1</sup> Amnesty International. 2022. *Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity*. Report, London: Amnesty International Ltd.

<sup>2</sup> Jewish Voice for Peace. 2023. *Frequently Asked Questions*. 10 11. <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/faq/>.

<sup>3</sup> 2023. *Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in UK Higher Education: The Adverse Impact of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism*. European Legal Support Center, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>5</sup> Jewish Voice for Peace. 2023. *Frequently Asked Questions*. 10 11. <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/faq/>.

<sup>6</sup> Kogan, Yaniv. 2022. “Academia, weapons and occupation: this is how Tel Aviv University serves the interests of the military and the defense industry.” *Zo HaDarekh*. 07 04. Accessed 11 14, 2023. <https://zoha.org.il/111858/>.

Strathclyde Students' Union opposes the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and rejects the false conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism. Strath Union calls on all appropriate bodies including, but not limited to, Strathclyde University, the NUS, and the Office for Students not to use the IHRA working definition to assess antisemitism in relation to complaints raised.

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the right of free expression on campus, including the display of symbols of support for Palestine. Strath Union stands by students and academics calling for a free Palestine and supports the right to criticise the Israeli state.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:**

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions of companies with ties to the Israeli government. As an organisation, Strath Union will endeavour to sever all commercial and political ties with Israeli-affiliated groups and corporations and encourage the same of partners, including Strathclyde University.

Strathclyde Students' Union supports a boycott of collaborations with Israeli academic institutions until Israel ends its war on Gaza as well as its occupation and apartheid rule in Israel/Palestine, noting that this boycott does not preclude collaboration with individual Israeli scholars.

*Motion: **BE IT RESOLVED THAT** (moved President, seconded Vice President Inclusion) that the Union adopt the 'Support for Palestine' policy as presented,  
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Strath Union support and advocate for: an immediate ceasefire in Gaza; the restoration of water, food, fuel, medical supplies, and humanitarian aid; the immediate protection of medical facilities; and the facilitation of safe passage for casualties and critically ill individuals in need of medical treatment,  
**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT** Strath Union's Trustee Board conduct a review of the Union's commercial and political ties to Israel in order to move toward boycott, divestment, and sanctions of the state of Israel and report back to Student Parliament by the end of its 2023-2024 session.*

## Data Collection of Names, Gender, and Titles

First passed: 27/11/2023	Duration: 3 years
Lapsing: 27/11/2026	Ownership: VP Inclusion

### WHEREAS:

Non-binary and genderfluid identities fall under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment in the Equality Act 2010.<sup>1</sup> As a socially progressive institution, it is advisable that non-binary, intersex, gender diverse, and genderqueer are all protected to ensure Strathclyde is safe for all.

Many gender-diverse students are eager to see a gender option in Strathclyde University's student registration and information system (hereinafter 'Pegasus') in which they can accurately register their gender, which may differ from the data held in the 'sex' field. The 'known as' or 'preferred name' field can prevent trans students from being revealed inadvertently by system limitations. It is vital to build a gender question that can accurately reflect the diverse gender in our community.

Registration system improvements on name (including 'known as' or 'preferred' name), title field, and gender field will also benefit many student groups, such as international students who use shortened names or English names that differ from the names recorded on their visa. Pegasus allows UK students (and those not subject to UKVI rules) to change their registered name without making it their 'legal name.' This system is inaccessible to some student groups. For instance, students bound to UKVI rules (e.g., international students) will not be able to go through the same procedure as UK students (and those not subject to UKVI rules). It also creates a barrier for students who cannot change their names due to external and social factors.

### BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the following changes to Strathclyde University's data collection protocols:

The recording of two sets of data for each student:

- Set 1 – for legal purposes (e.g., HESA and UKVI), which record a student's legal name and sex.
- Set 2 – for on-campus use, which records a student's 'known as' or 'preferred' name and gender.

Although student data will be auto-filled from information provided upon admission, students can change their Set 2 data on Pegasus to reflect their identities. Students will be informed that they can change their 'known as' or 'preferred' name on a self-service basis with limited times, as it will be used to generate their email address. However, they can change their gender data for unlimited time.

The legal name will still be registered, but the 'known as' or 'preferred name' (Set 2) will be how the University and the Union refer to the students daily and across all platforms and systems, which

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<sup>1</sup> *Taylor v Jaguar Land Rover Ltd.* 2020. 1304471/2018 (Employment Tribunal, 14 09).

includes, but is not limited to, teaching activities, Strath App, Pegasus, MyPlace, email addresses, Strath Union website. It is essential to communicate to students that the collection of their Set 1 data (which is part of HESA requirements, with three options – female, male and other / prefer not to say) will not be used as the sex/gender registered on their student record.

Strathclyde University should clearly communicate why the data is being collected and recorded and how each data set will be used so that students can answer accordingly, including asking the name students would like to be referred to if the communication will likely be seen by individuals other than the student referred to (e.g., physical mail sent to their home address) to prevent trans students' identity from being revealed unwillingly as this may cause safety issues for those students.

The standard title options, including 'Mx', should be permitted on the system.

There should also be a 'no title' option, as many people do not use a title.

## Digital learning materials

First passed: 27/11/2023	Duration: 3 years
Lapsing: 27/11/2026	Ownership: VP Education

### WHEREAS:

Textbook inflation since 1977 is 1,041 percent – nearly four times the overall rate of inflation – with university books and equipment costing an average UK student between £450 and £1070 per year.<sup>1</sup> Nearly a quarter (23%) of students report not being able to afford necessary course textbooks<sup>2</sup> with seven in ten (70%) of students skipping buying necessary textbooks and learning materials.<sup>3</sup>

In-person and full-time learners with physical access to campus are able to borrow many required learning materials from the University of Strathclyde’s library, saving on textbook and learning material costs. Part-time and distance learners without physical access to the library rely on digital learning resources, including textbooks in electronic format.

According to the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL): ‘Economic and technological changes in the current publishing market have led to libraries being increasingly excluded from, or priced out of, providing e-books and e-textbooks for students and library users. Many of the models and fees charged by publishers have either become prohibitively expensive, or libraries are no longer permitted to purchase these titles at all, creating an unsustainable situation.’<sup>4</sup>

Open Educational Resources – openly licenced materials that can be accessed, edited, and shared without cost or restriction<sup>5</sup> – have been shown to reduce price barriers to higher education, increase participation among underrepresented groups, and bring more socially just practices into higher education.<sup>6</sup>

### BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

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<sup>1</sup> University of Essex. 2016. “£630 per student: the cost of paper textbooks.” *University of Essex Online*. 18 March. Accessed November 17, 2023. <https://online.essex.ac.uk/blog/630-per-student-the-cost-of-paper-textbooks/>.

<sup>2</sup> Jenkins, Richard. 2022. “Almost a quarter of UK University students can’t afford to buy textbooks.” *The Scotsman*. 25 May. Accessed 11 20, 2023. <https://www.scotsman.com/read-this/almost-a-quarter-of-uk-university-students-cant-afford-to-buy-textbooks-3708989>.

<sup>3</sup> BibliU/Censuswide. 2021. “Press Release: 70% of UK students have skipped buying course-required textbooks.” *BibliU*. 18 November. Accessed November 17, 2023. <https://bibliu.com/in-the-news/uk-students-skipped-buying-textbooks>.

<sup>4</sup> Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL). 2021. *Joint statement on access to e-book and e-textbook content*. 06 October. Accessed 11 20, 2023. <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/joint-statement-on-access-to-e-book-and-e-textbook-content>.

<sup>5</sup> William & Flora Hewlett Foundation. 2017. *Open Education*. Accessed 11 20, 2023. <https://hewlett.org/strategy/open-education/>.

<sup>6</sup> Jenkins, J. Jacob, Luis A Sanchez, Megan A. K. Schraedley, Jaime Hannans, Nitzan Navick, and Jade Young. 2020. “Textbook Broke: Textbook Affordability as a Social Justice Issue.” *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* 1-13. doi:10.5334/jime.549.



Strathclyde Students' Union supports the ready and equitable availability of digital learning resources including, but not limited to, e-textbooks. The University of Strathclyde should be responsible for making digital course materials accessible as they do with physical copies via the library. Strathclyde Students' Union supports the use of Open Educational Resources and will advocate at all levels for the increased availability of free and accessible educational resources and learning materials.

All departments offering part-time and online degrees should ensure the availability of e-textbooks and e-books reflects the needs of part-time and distance learners. In the development of course syllabi and required materials, lecturers should ensure there are sufficient digital copies of required course materials at the University library.

In order to ensure the availability of digital learning resources, libraries must be permitted to purchase all titles in electronic format from a publisher's catalogue that are otherwise available for individuals to purchase. Pricing models for e-textbooks and e-books from publishers to university libraries should be based on estimated usage and negotiated in partnership with libraries.

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<sup>1</sup> Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL). 2021. "Position paper: E-book and e-textbook." October. Accessed November 17, 2023.  
<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SCONUL%20e-book%20and%20e-textbook%20Sustainability%20Position%20paper%20October%202021.pdf>.

