

Suggested conference proposals

Policy area
What is the issue conference is looking at?
De-colonisation Campaign
Which Students' Unions have been involved in proposing?
Liverpool John Moores Students' Union, Cardiff University Students' Union
What's the issue and how does it affect students? Decolonisation is impacting all aspects of our education, whether we are aware of it or not; it is deeply ingrained within our institutions. In academia, the term 'decolonising' cannot stand alone; it cannot simply be 'Decolonisation 101'. Academics lack training, and students often do not receive the necessary guidance from their degree programmes because academics feel uncomfortable discussing decolonisation. This, in turn, hinders open conversations about the issues associated with decolonisation and the valuable discussions on the topic. Decolonisation is a transformative shift of personal and collective ideology, professional practice, policy focus, investment, and regulations alike. It requires change not only within individual programmes but also at a higher level to be truly effective. The persistent lack of understanding of decolonisation in 2024 highlights the need for an evolved campaign to implement change across our campuses. Furthermore, there is a lack of education across our school system that leaves young people unprepared to engage in this type of discussion once they reach university. Enabling unions to understand the difference between Decolonisation and Diversity can be an important first step. While decolonisation entails dismantling colonial forms of knowledge, including practices that racialise and categorise, diversity is a policy discourse that advocates for adding different sorts of people to reading lists and the staff and student body.
What changes would we like to see in society to change this? NUS need to update the membership on work surrounding their decolonise education campaign. If they want to continue to promote their work in this area, using the topic at events then they need to develop and refresh the campaign. There is a need for transparency of work they have already done, what they are currently working on and next steps. Their needs to be a campaign plan, objectives and milestones, with the development of the NUS Liberation Collective this is an opportunity for NUS to refresh this important campaign. We hope that with the development of the NUS Liberation.
Debate guide
What are the distinct areas that conference will need to debate specifically and vote on as amendments?

Refreshment of the decolonisation campaign as well as an update of focus and understanding

DeCol is more than BAME issues, whilst still vital and important, other areas can be considered as well:

- LGBTQ+ Issues such as the 3rd genders being removed in south Asian countries
- The patriarchy being installed over women
- The treatment of people with disabilities as a generic group rather than addressing individual needs.
- Different demographics and experiences of 'UK' students who are classed as home such as Northern Irish and Irish students.
- Understanding of different types of decolonisation, Britain's influence will affect students here but there are other colonisers and neo-colonisers

The use of a truly intersectional lens whilst looking at this area of focus is important to allow this work to continue, evolve and provide a truly equitable learning experience across institutions.

What action can NUS, Student and SU's take?

We want NUS to take a pledge to continue their work in decolonising education, with achievable aims that the membership can reflect at local level.

By doing this they could share ideas of best practice and resources. Furthermore, a review and update of terminology used by NUS.

The aim of this is to create a clear accountability loop between NUS and SUs as there will be a clear point of reference

Amendment area 1 proposed by Cardiff University Students' Union

For the avoidance of doubt, 'healthcare education' in this policy will refer to Medicine, Dentistry, Nursing, Midwifery, and all Allied Health Professions (AHPs).

No matter their background or community, everyone should have equal access to healthcare – at present we have a national issue of health inequity in the UK, spanning across a wide range of demographics. Flaws in healthcare education perpetuate the problem, and education needs serious reform to combat it, such as:

- An inclusive curriculum that aims to dismantle biases and stereotypes, preparing students to provide equitable care to all patients.
- Medical textbooks, case studies, and visual aids that accurately depict individuals from diverse backgrounds.
- A culture of lifelong learning, empowering healthcare professionals to support an ever-changing and diverse patient population through postgraduate study.

Actions

- Students' Unions should drive changes to healthcare education in their partner institution, reforming the curriculum and programmes.
- NUS should support SUs in making these changes, including by championing good practice and encouraging collaboration between institutions on this issue.
- NUS should coordinate a national campaign to raise awareness about the relevant flaws in the current healthcare education system
- NUS should lobby policymakers to ensure these changes across the sector.

Additional Information

The following documents provide examples of healthcare students organising to make a difference on this issue at a local level within Cardiff University:

- [ACMA Advisory Document.pdf](#).
- [HEAL Society Statement.pdf](#)

Amendment 2 etc etc

DPC recommendation

State whether DPC think this looks to be one area or perhaps will need splitting by conference into separate proposals

Impact Assessment

How does it impact FE students / Apprentices?

Decolonising education applies to all members of NUS including FE and Apprentices.

How does it impact on International Students, Postgraduate Students, Part Time and Mature Students?

Decolonising education applies to all members of NUS. These reforms must consider the needs of students who do not conform to the stereotypical post 18 student that is often the focus of the FE/HE sector.

How does it impact on black¹, disabled, LGBT+, trans and women students?

Decolonising education applies to all members of NUS. The issues and changes discussed in this policy consider the needs of women, LGBTQ+, BAME and disabled students, as these groups are particularly affected by all inequities specifically including health. NUS should recognise this and use an intersectional lens when enacting this policy.

Does this apply across the UK or specifically in England, Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland?

¹ 1. NUS uses 'Black' as an inclusive term to refer to people of African, Arab, Asian and Caribbean descent and those who self-define as Black. Work to propose an alternative at Liberation Conference 2024 is currently underway.

Is the response needed different in different parts of the UK

Decolonising education applies to all members of NUS. As both education and healthcare are devolved to some extent, the aims of this policy will likely require tailored approaches in the different nations. However, as an issue that spans the UK, a cross-nation approach would be beneficial.