

## **The real cost of being a student**

**Proposer** Jenna Chapman (Undergraduate Education Officer)

**Seconded** Sophie Atherton (Campaigns and Democracy Officer)

### **Summary**

This motion is to mandate the officers to work to reduce the costs of being a student at UEA including:

Reassessment fees; printing; DBS checks and placement fees; sports costs and laundrette costs.

### **Council Notes**

#### *Reassessment fees*

1. UEA currently charges £70 to re-sit an assessment and £110 to re-sit an exam if it is a second sit and you have no extenuating circumstances (ECs).
2. This is one of the highest in the sector, with many Universities letting students re-sit for free and some charging under £50

#### *Printing*

3. Many Universities offer a printing allowance for students which ranges from £1 a year to £20 a year. UEA cut theirs in 2014/15 due to environmental reasons
4. There has been a rise in the number of e-books rather than physical copies in the library, so more students are able to access them
5. Some students find reading and learning from a screen difficult and so have to print
6. Some academics will print out copies of lecture slides for all students
7. Even though the University is moving towards online marking, this is a long-term project and students still have to print assessments to hand in and so is a compulsory course cost, especially with dissertations in final year

#### *DBS checks and placement fees*

8. There are many courses at UEA that require an enhanced DBS check which costs £44 and has to be paid for by the student, therefore is a compulsory cost

9. Some Universities cover this cost as it is required for the students to complete their placements (e.g. Oxford Brookes)
10. UEA pays for DBS checks for student ambassadors but not for student's courses
11. HSC students have to pay for any travel and accommodation costs for their placements upfront, then get them reimbursed which can cost hundreds of pounds, some other universities pay the students upfront so they're not out of pocket

#### *Other course costs*

12. Module outlines are supposed to include additional costs associated to the module however these are rarely filled out and are rarely in any useful detail
13. Some Widening Participation (WP) students currently receive a bursary from the university, however there is growing scrutiny in the sector on the impact these have
14. The final cost to students is at graduation where you are required to pay for gown hire which is £45. Other Universities cover this to ensure all students can attend, and instead charge for guest tickets

#### *Sport costs*

14. The cost of SAM is £50 and is raised in both University and Union surveys as one of the main barriers to joining a sports club
15. The University makes around £100,000 from SAM each year
16. The money goes back into clubs by paying for things like (but not limited to) competition fees, sport spark fees and insurance
17. The university has significantly increased the money spent on sport in the past couple of years but hasn't removed SAM
18. The University doesn't offer a monthly membership to students, just staff and the community
19. The University has a discounted, but upfront annual membership for students but there are no membership options for students to attend peak group classes
20. This therefore unfairly restricts access to sport for students on placement and PG students

#### *Other costs on campus*

21. The launderette costs around £5 per wash and dry on campus accommodation after having to buy a card for £3
22. This affects HSC and MED students the most as they are required to wash their uniforms more often
23. Costs on students are increasing, but not in line with the rate that student loan is increasing

### **Council Believes**

1. Students should not be expected to pay for additional costs after beginning their course
2. Students should be able to participate in extra curriculums without being restricted by money
3. Students' wellbeing should not be affected by living costs

### **Council Resolves**

1. To mandate the Education Officers to:
  - a. Lobby and campaign for the University to remove or significantly reduce the £70 and £110 reassessment fees
  - b. Lobby and campaign for the University to introduce a printing allowance for all students and for the University to reduce the cost per item printed
  - c. Lobby and campaign for the University to pay for all DBS checks for students where it is compulsory for the course
  - d. Lobby and campaign for students on placements to be given a travel allowance upfront for travel and accommodation costs
  - e. Lobby and campaign for additional module costs to be made clear on module outlines, including but not limited to; trip costs (an estimate or rough cost of the trip last year), compulsory texts that have to be purchased
  - f. Lobby and campaign to ensure WP student bursaries are kept
  - g. Lobby and campaign for the University to cover the cost of gown hire so every student is able to graduate for free.
  
2. To mandate the Activities and Opportunities Officer to:

- a. Lobby and actively campaign for the removal or significant reduction of the cost of SAM, ensuring the burden is not just moved to the individual club prices and the university covers the majority of the extra cost.
- b. If this is not successful, to campaign for there to be an option for SAM to be paid semesterly for the equivalent cost of the year
- c. To investigate the hidden and additional costs associated with joining individual sports clubs and societies and for these to be clear and transparent on their webpages when joining
- d. To work with clubs to reduce the additional compulsory costs required
- e. To lobby and campaign for the Sportspark to introduce a discounted monthly direct debit payment option for student gym membership, similar to the discounted bronze, silver and gold membership available to staff. They should ensure there are 6-month options for international students who are only here for the semester
- f. To lobby for students to have access to peak time exercise classes
- g. To lobby for the Sportspark to never put a limit on student usage of the Sportspark and to instead reduce community usage and to see the Sportspark as an important service for the UEA community

3. To mandate the Campaigns and Democracy and Welfare, Community and Diversity Officer to:

- a. Ensure the additional costs at University don't unfairly affect disadvantaged students and to continuously investigate and highlight additional costs of being a student
- b. Ensure any rise of prices of soft drinks in the bar and value drinks are not increased by a percentage more than alcoholic drinks
- c. Lobby and campaign for cheaper launderette services on campus and for a free card and allowance to be included