

Passed Student Ideas

Last updated: February 2026

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Welcome!

Welcome to the Arts SU policy book, which contains the full versions of policies (ideas) that have been submitted and passed by UAL students (like you!).

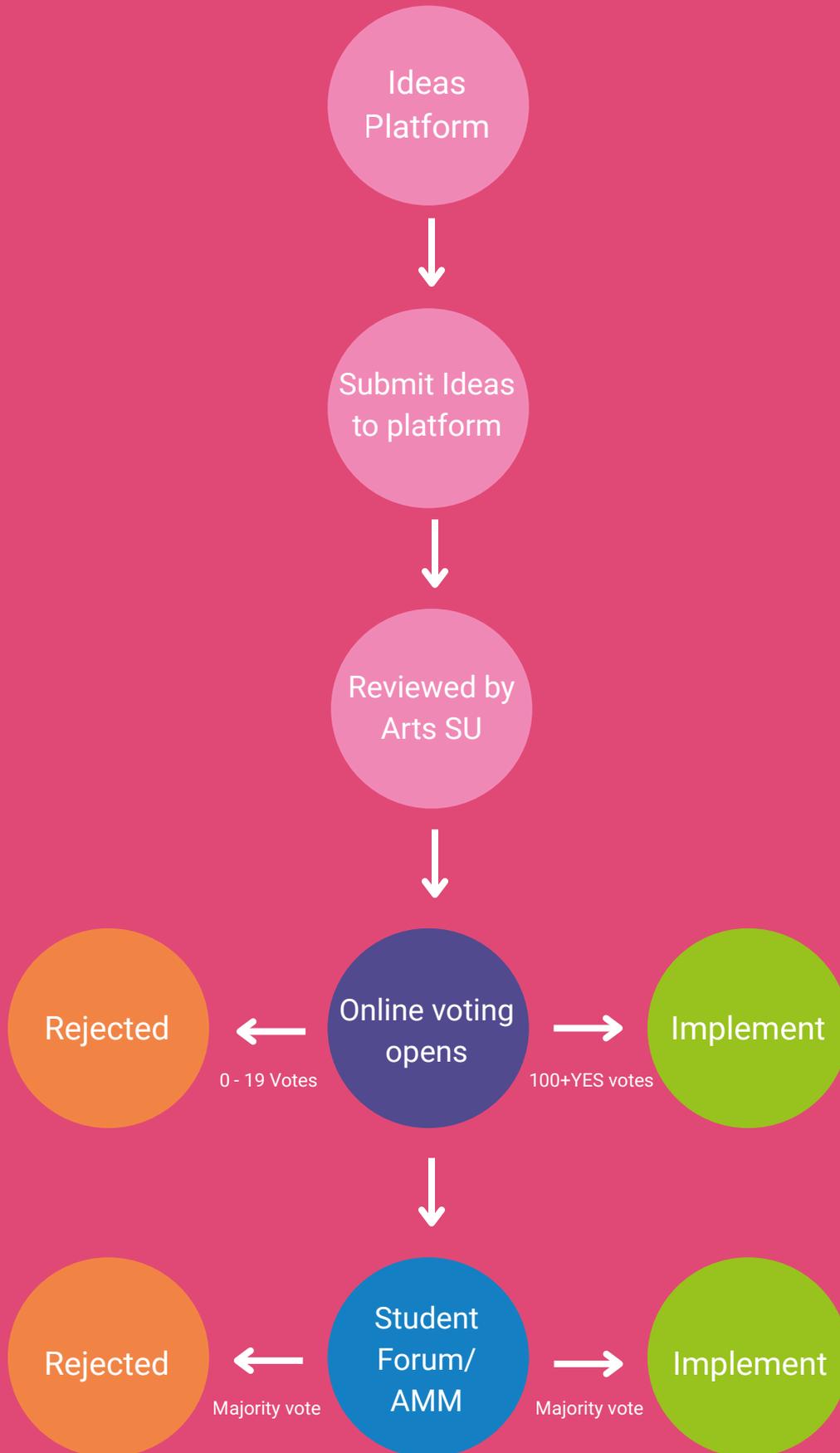
At Arts SU, our student policies shape the work we do to improve the student experience. Policy can be submitted as Ideas through the “Your Ideas” platform!

Passed ideas, either via the Ideas Platform (Your Ideas) or via one of our All-Student Meetings are referred to as SU Policy. This means that it is an objective we must focus on at the SU as mandated by our members (UAL students!). Ideas that are passed will be official SU policy for 3 years. This policy book will only contain currently active policies (passed student ideas that have not yet expired).

You can see how our ideas platform works, and how your idea can turn into official policy for change below!

If you would like more information about getting involved visit arts-su.com/ideas

Decision-making at Arts



Fees & Funding

Passed at Ideas Platform

Votes Received: 108

Expires March 2028

What is the current situation? (Background)

UAL's policies on hardship and funding need to be changed. There are several issues with the programs and how they fail to support students from mixed / International backgrounds and financially disadvantaged situations.

1: Financial Hardship:

- Student Finance England: Student Finance England (SFE) seems to employ different systems for students whose parents are not both British, requiring additional steps to achieve the same results as their fully British peers. This disproportionately affects students from mixed backgrounds and adds unnecessary delays and stress to an already challenging process, especially since Brexit. Additionally, certain students coming from these mixed backgrounds aren't eligible for SFE loans in the first place.
- UAL's reliance on SFE: Because UAL's funding team relies heavily on SFE documentation, they exclude or overlook students from mixed or international backgrounds who face unique challenges in proving their financial standing. Next to that, they also seem to be unwilling to take any other proof, even if it's the same exact documents that SFE asks for. It appears that the focus is less on the actual financial background of a student and more on what SFE states or fails to state. UAL could easily reach the same conclusions by directly reviewing the same documentation and proof that SFE requires. Ultimately, it shouldn't matter who reviews the documents, as the evidence provided should accurately reflect a student's financial situation, regardless of whether it's assessed by UAL or SFE.
- Inaccurate Reflection of Financial Need: on the same note, it is important to mention that even if a student has been means tested, SFE's loan calculations often fail to provide a realistic view of a student's true financial circumstances. It fails to account for many significant factors that could make someone "poor", even if SFE says they are "rich" and vice-versa. SFE does not account for unpaid debts/loans, living costs, part-time vs temporary job incomes, unforeseen medical expenses, personal or family emergencies such as a death, education-related supplies, support for siblings and family members other than the student, savings and assets, etc. This means students in severe financial need, are often deprioritized or excluded from accessing critical scholarships and funding opportunities because on paper they are "rich", while others are categorized as "poor", when they are not, , exploiting the system.
- Ripple Effect of Exclusion: Students unable to access scholarships or hardship funds are further excluded from or are simply not prioritised to participate in programs like mentorships or development initiatives, as these also rely on the same flawed system. This creates a cycle of disadvantage for the students who need support the most. Furthermore, while there are many valuable opportunities and services available to all, it's important to recognize that only those who are financially secure have the luxury of fully engaging with them. For students who are struggling financially, even free opportunities become out of reach, as their focus is consumed with the constant worry of basic survival—like ensuring they have enough money for food, let alone time to participate in additional activities.

(Continued)

2: Academic Work

- **Disparity in Project Resources:** Students facing financial hardship cannot afford to invest the same amount of money or time into their projects as their more financially secure peers.
- **Lack of Access to Equipment:** Limited financial resources mean that struggling students cannot purchase the same equipment or materials as their classmates, which directly impacts the quality and the outcome of their work.
- **Cost of Living Crisis:** Students facing severe financial struggles are often forced to choose between prioritizing their degrees or working to cover basic living costs. Many skip classes to save on public transport fares or wait hours to travel home at a cheaper rate. This financial strain not only impact their ability to attend university but also limits the time and resources they can dedicate to their academic work, further widening the gap between them and their more financially stable peers. Additionally, these students often are forced into industries that have nothing to do with their career, meaning that none of the work that they did is or will be considered “valuable” when it comes to the assessment of scholarships/funds or future job prospects. They also don’t have the option of taking (often unpaid) internships in their relevant fields.
- **The cost of living crisis also results in many of those students being unable to afford rent closer to University, resulting in them having to commute 2+ hours every day, which considering everything is not an ideal position to be in.**
- **Impact on Portfolios and Future Prospects:** The disparity in project quality results in weaker portfolios, leaving financially disadvantaged students at a significant disadvantage when applying for UAL scholarships/funds as well as seeking opportunities post-graduation. I have spoken with multiple students who didn’t even apply for any of the scholarships because they know that they cannot compete, although they really need the help.
- **Students coming from less-advantaged countries:** Students from less-advantaged countries often face additional academic challenges due to the limitations they experienced growing up. These students may not have had access to the same opportunities, resources, or funding as their peers from more developed countries. How can we expect someone to be good with using the Adobe Suite for example if they come from a country where the schools and universities can’t even afford a laptop or a PC that can even run the program? Without access to these resources during their previous education, it’s unrealistic to expect them to compete on the same level as students who have had these tools readily available. These disparities create a significant barrier, as their academic journey is not starting from an equal playing field.
- **These students’ mental health and general wellbeing is severely impacted because of their financial situation with many struggling with anxiety, depression, and other conditions, which then gets further reinforced when they are met with more hurdles and challenges coming their way that privileged peers may never have to experience.**

(Continued)

What will be the impact of your idea? (Why)

The current approach to scholarships and funding prioritizes academic merit in ways that inherently favour students who are not burdened by financial hardship, while the financial criteria fail to capture the full spectrum of students in need. This creates a system that rewards privilege rather than addressing inequality, ultimately defeating the purpose of having scholarships and funds in the first place. The system favours those who already have resources and opportunities, rather than those who need the support the most. This results in a cycle where financial hardship and lack of resources prevent deserving students from competing for the very scholarships designed to help them. The current framework, therefore, disproportionately benefits middle and upper-middle-class students, while excluding those from lower-income and disadvantaged backgrounds, including students from mixed backgrounds, less-developed countries and students from regions outside London.

By campaigning to change these systems, we can create a more equitable support system for UAL students. UAL should undertake these changes to ensure their commitment to Access, Participation, and Inclusion.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

1. Join the national movement to change the education funding system (e.g, working with other Students' Unions, or the NUS).
2. Raise these issues with UAL directly through the elected Sabbatical Officers.
3. Work with / lobby UAL to review their funding and scholarship policies. Working to reduce or eliminate reliance on the SFE system, and implement alternative methods of assessing financial need to ensure accuracy, equity, and fairness (especially in situations where the system employed further disadvantages students who are already coming from a place of disadvantage). To ensure equitable access to resources, opportunities, and programs.
4. Increased awareness of intersectionality and the additional challenges faced by students from mixed backgrounds or with non-British parents, including Eastern-European ethnic minorities. Some students have been disqualified from scholarships because UAL failed to recognize and denied that they are an ethnic minority. (Eastern Europeans are often overlooked as minorities, as they are grouped under the broader "Europe" label. However, they do not share the same privileges as Western Europeans like the British, French, or Germans.)
5. Increased awareness of intersectionality when it comes to 'Home' students also. Relying on SFE's system places students from London and students from other regions of the UK under the same umbrella, which fails to acknowledge the different levels of access to resources and privileges. Just because both groups are classified as "British" does not mean they have the same access to opportunities or financial support. Students from outside London often face higher living costs, fewer local resources, and additional financial burdens, yet they are assessed in the same way as their London counterparts, who likely have additional support and who may not even have to pay any rent or work at all. This oversight exacerbates existing inequalities and further disadvantages students from outside of London who may already be struggling with the financial implications of their education. While the system acknowledges these students, it doesn't necessarily prioritise them.
6. Increased support for 'International' students who pay increasingly huge fees. International students who choose to study in the UK and at UAL are being ultimately exploited for their money, and Arts SU should lobby UAL to change the funding system.

Studio Access over breaks

Passed at Online Ideas Platform

Votes Received: 149

Expires March 2028

What is the current situation? (Background)

Students across CCW have been raising concerns about their limited access to studios during the holidays and university closure periods. Students have created petitions to gain UAL's attention, hoping that they will amend their "firm stance" on this policy.

For example, the UAL website states that Camberwell will be open from the dates 21st of March - to 13th of April, creating a false sense of hope that this would also include our studios, as both have never been described as separate entities. Other Universities do manage to keep their campus open for the same fees.

Arts SU has recently launched its report on Access and Studio Spaces, highlighting similar concerns and listing five recommendations. This idea submission aims to facilitate the formalisation of the union and UAL's efforts towards long-term policy solutions.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

As students, we pay a significant amount of money to attend university. We trust that the University will provide us with access to a creative education that we would not be able to achieve on our own. With this understanding, it is not a fair decision to expect students to complete work to the best of their ability if their space is taken away from them. Studio closure disproportionately affects students of low income who cannot afford external studios whilst also taking away the very minimal number of accessible studios for students who are disabled.

Students have been referred to the hardship fund and other UAL bursaries for support. Though this is a valid form of support for some students, it marginalises those who are in difficult positions but do not fit the criteria for one reason or another. The standard should be full access for all students. If students use their hardship fund to gain access to spaces and equipment to complete their work, it takes away from the fund that supports their other basic needs, such as food, travel, and accommodation, amidst a cost of living crisis. This is a cycle that perpetuates the widening attainment gap but can be easily mitigated with adequate UAL involvement and willingness to adapt existing policies.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

1. Release a statement from the Sabbatical Officers acknowledging the issue and outlining their plans to support students, as well as providing updates and developments.
2. Utilize the recommendations in the Access & Studios report to advocate for improved access.
3. Lobby UAL to review access to studio spaces and related policies, ensuring access to studios during breaks between terms.
4. Lobby UAL to reassess how they use spaces during term closures, e.g. the canteens can be used as an extension of the Learning Zones. Request that UAL create a list of practices that are welcome in each of these extended learning spaces.
5. Lobby UAL to review assessment deadlines to ensure that students have sufficient time and space to meet course requirements.
6. Lobby UAL to review how a lack of studio access contributes to the attainment gap and ensure all reasonable changes are made to reduce this gap.
7. Collaborate with UAL Communications to update the UAL Website with information pages for the reading weeks and the Spring and Summer, similar to what is done for Winter Breaks. This would benefit both undergraduate and graduate students to plan their academic year and coursework better.

Keep High Holborn Open Until 10PM

Passed at Online Ideas Platform (Your Ideas)

Votes Received: 140

Expires August 2027

What is the current situation? (Background)

Arts Dance uses the Activities Studio Monday- Friday for our classes and rehearsals ending at 9p.m. We have just been informed that the building will close at 8pm as a way for UAL to save money. I am writing to keep the building open until 10pm so we can continue our class and rehearsal schedule as normal. If the building were to close at 8pm we would require extra funding from the university to rent out a suitable studio space.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

Arts Dance is not the only society this change impacts. Taekwondo Society, Chinese Society, Hong Kong Society, and Life Drawing Society also use the Activities Studio. Closing the building early will negatively impact hundreds of students who rely on High Holborn for meetings. Through the Student Union, Arts Dance also has contracts with several dance teachers whom we rely on for lessons. Closing the building early would negatively impact the reputation of Arts Dance and the university for our teachers.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

I am asking the Student Union to advocate for the 598 members of Arts Dance and other UAL

Sports Clubs/ Societies who rely on High Holborn to remain open until 10pm so we can continue to use the space as scheduled.

24 Hours OR Extended opening library times before hand-in Passed at Online Ideas Platform (Your Ideas)

Votes Received: 100
Expires August 2027

Note from Arts Students' Union: We received multiple submissions around the topic of extending UAL Library times up to 24 hours. These submissions were combined into this idea.

What is the current situation? (Background)

LCF students don't have access to eastbank's library after 10 pm. The library prides itself for having good resources however the limitations makes it hard for students to fully utilise them.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

Although CSM is open for 24 hours, it is inconvenient to go from stratford to kings cross, that travel time could be used more efficiently if eastbank's library is open 24 hr daily, or at least for certain period of time such as coming deadlines. Some students home aren't a suitable environment for doing work, going to a cafe to work would be expensive or they might lack the required resources/facility to complete and produce quality work. Therefore having a 24hr library would be beneficial.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Arts SU could suggest solutions or help students compromise with UAL. if 24-h-library daily is not possible. It could maybe be just 2 weeks or 3 weeks long before the hand-in. Furthermore, considering that final year students have different hand-in time, they could extend the library opening time in May for final year students. If any of that is still not possible. The last possible option is to open for longer hours instead

Petition for full-time students to be able to claim means-tested benefits ***Passed at Student Forum – February 2024***

Votes Received: 21

Expires August 2027

Note from Arts Students' Union: This passed idea was submitted to the National Union of Students Conference and was passed by NUS Conference. Which you can read more about here: <https://www.nus.org.uk/conference-2024-policies>

What is the current situation? (Background)

Most full-time students are excluded from claiming means-tested benefits, such as Universal Credit, Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Carers Allowance, and more, with very few exceptions. This means that students who are receiving those benefits usually lose them when entering full-time study, which is very often detrimental to them and their living situations. For undergraduate students who may be eligible for some benefits, the majority of any Student Finance England Student Loan for Maintenance that they are entitled to is counted as part of their income, even if they choose not to take out the loan. This also applies to bursaries that are not related to their course costs. For postgraduate students, the Student Finance England Masters' Loan and Doctoral Loan are both treated as a contribution towards costs rather than a loan exclusively for tuition fees or living costs. 30% of the maximum Master's or Doctoral Loan is taken into account as income when assessing entitlement to means-tested benefits and this will reduce the amount payable. This is still used as income if they are eligible for a Postgraduate loan even if they choose not to take out the loan. Students who are on these benefits are eligible for them before they study for good reason, and their becoming full-time students does not necessarily reflect an actual change in their circumstances - for example, a student receiving Carer's Allowance due to caring for a family member could continue their caring duties throughout their studies with even less time due to studying to be able to earn an income and no benefit aiding them financially during their time at university. This means that becoming a full-time student is becoming less and less accessible for those on benefits, especially with the increasing cost of living. Those who are in circumstances that have led to them being on benefits should not be prevented from being able to financially access Higher Education by losing those benefits, especially when studying could aid in improving their prospects of leaving those circumstances after graduation.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

If full-time students were able to remain eligible for their benefits during their time at university, there would be more students able to afford full-time study, as part-time study means a delay in receiving their final awards and improving their job prospects for their futures. There would be the potential for an increase of students in those circumstances applying to study at university, as they would not be put off by worrying about the loss of potentially life-saving benefits. It would also reduce financial stress and worry for those who are affected by this. It would open more doors for people on means-tested benefits.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Arts SU can submit this for the NUS National Conference for the NUS to take forward to lobby the government for change to the means-tested benefits system and students. Arts SU can also lobby for change as an organisation.

Gender Affirming Care Fund

Passed at Student Forum – February 2024

Votes Received 26

Expires August 2027

What is the current situation? (Background)

I am submitting this on behalf of a former UAL student Viktor Mikołajczyk with their permission. UAL has many trans, non binary and gender non conforming students, many of whom are in the process of transition while undertaking their studies, whether this is socially, medically or both. While the University doesn't have jurisdiction to provide healthcare to students, many would argue the University has a duty of care to their students, stretching beyond the pastoral care it already provides.

Some SUs around the country have recently been able to introduce a fund where students who are experiencing gender dysphoria can apply to receive either money to support their own transitions, or be provided with clothing, accessories and cosmetics to help them ease their feelings of dysphoria in day to day life as a University student. I propose the same at UAL and Arts SU. The money could also be used for travel costs for students getting to gender identity clinics in London and beyond.

One example of where this has been happening is Keele SU, where the fund has been financed in collaboration with the SU and the University there. I propose a similar partnership for this fund.

What will be the impact of your idea? (Why)

I believe the impact could be significant and positive to users of the fund- all students have the right to feel safe and comfortable in their learning environments at UAL but this is often difficult for students experiencing gender dysphoria, which can often be in conjunction with mental health difficulties. This fund proposal isn't to fund a students' medical transition, but rather provide them with materials and tools to help them in other ways. The emphasis in the title about care is really important here.

I believe there will many students at UAL interested in this fund, especially in these difficult times in terms of cost of living. Items like make up, wigs, gender affirming underwear etc are not cheap, and at a time when some students are choosing between paying for meals or art materials, these gender-related items may be unaffordable yet essential to those students. Similarly, travelling to NHS or private clinics for gender related health appointments can be expensive and time consuming and a fund to help cover some of these costs would be a great relief for many students at UAL.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Firstly, conduct some research to see how many students may be interested in the fund and how many would sign up to be users- this will help shape up the scale of the project. For other SUs, they usually give out up to £100 worth of items or monies to individual students and this would be a good model to follow.

Next, the University needs to be approached to see what financial support they could contribute to the fund, or if it could be considered in the SU annual block grant money.

Then it would be a case of working out the logistics of the fund by contacting other SUs to share best practice and then finding staff and resources to sort out the financial and practical questions of setting the fund up. Collecting student feedback from the users of the fund could help ensure its longevity and continuation.

I'd like to thank Viktor for letting me put this forward.

Continued access to University facilities and services after graduating

Passed at Online Ideas Platform (Your Ideas)

Votes Received 103

Expires April 2026

What is the current situation? (Background)

The sudden three national lockdowns due to the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has made a huge impact on students' studies and academic performances, and it remains a factor in reduced and diminished technical skills after graduation; during the entire period of lockdown, students were unable to access to University facilities and proper services, although students had paid full tuition fees.

In addition, due to the economic recession and strikes, many students are unable to find careers related to their field of study, in particular, international students who received 2-years graduate visa might spend their 2-year period with an unprofitable and unproductive time after graduation.

As a consequence, the University should provide graduated students with sufficient services during the two years.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

Students will be able to work on their future careers throughout by building up their portfolio, developing individual skills and experimentations for future professional application. In addition to this, there will be enhanced possibilities for interaction between current students and graduated students, which is helpful for both students and their further development. It is true that students will receive a diploma from University of the Arts London and continue to socialize with the academic background of UAL. However, if there are insufficient skills after graduation and if students do not meet standard technical skills that industries expect (due to the impact of Covid-19), it might be an act that devalues the status of the University as industries increasingly expect more from students of a leading creative-fashion university.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Arts SU could develop this idea further through implementing a systematic, clear, and fair system for graduated students that does not conflict with current students' activities. The University could provide a balance in direction for both groups of students, fulfilling one of their primary strategic goals: 'To give our students the education they need to flourish in a changing world.'

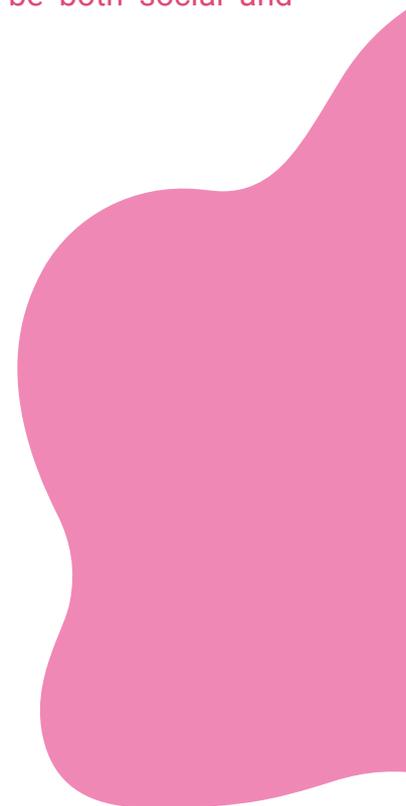
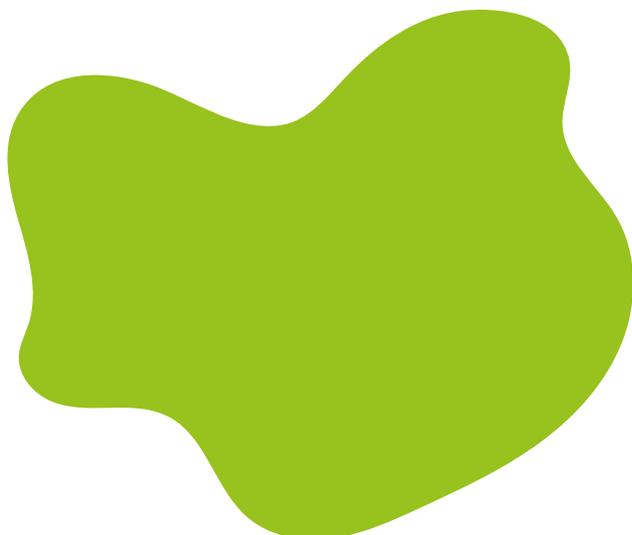
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The following University facilities and services could be included (These are just suggestions and some of lists can be changed in the future):

- Library services (including loan)
- E-library & Online Educational Institutions/Databases (WGSN, JSTOR, WWD, etc.)
- DLL (Digital Learning Labs)
- ORB (Online Resources Booking)
- Open access (Space & Technical Machines)
- Computing, Photocopying, Printing
- Language Development & Academic Support Online
- Clubs
- Extending UAL account for 2 years

The following resolution provides examples of alternatives in order to balance the supports for both of current students and graduated students and to not disturb on current students' study (These are just suggestions and some of lists can be changed in the future);

- Encourages graduated students to have bookings for workshops, open access and equipment, but ensures that they can be cancelled before the day, if there is a current student who wants to book (or be on a waiting list).
- If current students wish to loan books which graduated students already loan, they need to return within a certain period.
- The MyUAL application could also be utilized to find and collaborate with students from other courses, such as cross-college or cross-courses exchange learning, and this could be used to also share skills, techniques, and learning. Functions could be both social and academic, and this would also be of benefit for graduating students.



Have the SU run merchandise competitions

Passed at Student Forum – April 2023

Votes Received 23

Expires April 2026

What is the current situation? (Background)

The UAL merchandising is super boring and sad, especially given it's an Arts Uni. I'd like students to have the opportunity to design something based off a theme which could then run for the year and people could leave with cool merch they actually want to wear. Made in Brunel do something where every year they have a theme and the design centres around that. Could be cool <https://www.madeinbrunel.com/>

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

Students will have keepsakes unique to their year but also still represent their time at UAL.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Work to produce a platform/campaign which facilitates this.



Keep Police Off UAL Campuses

Passed at Student Forum – April 2023

Votes Received: 50

Expires April 2026

What is the current situation? (Background)

We don't believe that the culture of The Metropolitan Police Service aligns with the university's principles for racial and social justice.

In September, Sabbatical Officers were made aware of "Safe and Secure Workshops" on UAL campuses, being led by plain-clothes Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) from the Safer Neighborhood Team - which is a part of The Metropolitan Police Service. There is ongoing press coverage and widespread public attention to The Metropolitan Police Service given recent cases of racism, misogyny, violence, homophobia, and victim blaming. These are long term, historic issues within the Met Police.

We recognized that some students would not be comfortable or feel safe with police presence, and we were concerned about police officers with arresting powers being invited onto campus to interact with our students.

Arts SU received numerous messages of concern from students regarding the workshops, and subsequently 217 responses to a secure petition stating that no cops should be on UAL campuses.

Due to this response UAL made the decision to withdraw The Metropolitan Police Service from the workshops, however, they also informed us that they will "continue to work with the police to support the safety and security of our students".

We don't believe this statement from UAL acknowledges our concerns with The Metropolitan Police Service or acknowledges students wishes against working with them.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

Considering the Safe and Secure Workshops and the statement that followed, we worry that UAL does not recognize the dissonance in allowing law enforcement powers to deliver safety advice during ongoing misconduct cases and allegations that currently stand against The Metropolitan Police Service, its officers, its powers, and its culture.

Students at UAL do wish to maintain a safe environment for everyone who works and studies here, and promote the best available guidance on safety, but for many, powers such as The Metropolitan Police represent monopoly on violence, systemic racism, criminalization, and a compromise to the safety of marginalized and vulnerable people and communities.

(Continued)

While we understand that Community Support Officers are working to develop a better relationship between The Metropolitan Police Service and the public, university spaces are not an appropriate platform for this work - particularly as UAL buildings are learning environments - and places of safety - where students should never feel intimidated by external visitors.

No matter the intentions or motivations of individual officers or departments, they represent a police organization that we, students, and the public have lost trust in. As we cannot ascertain how every individual student is affected by the presence of The Metropolitan Police Service, and we cannot be certain how individual officers will behave towards students, we feel the need to take this stance.

While utilizing the police as an emergency service should remain the right of all staff & students both on and off campus, UAL should no longer seek or enter collaboration or affiliation with The Metropolitan Police Service, especially regarding the education of students. Support in safeguarding student spaces from The Metropolitan Police Service will show a willingness from UAL to respond to our concerns and a commitment to protect students and their education. Students and staff should be leading the development of a safer educational environment. We believe that there are appropriate agencies who can deliver the external safety expertise and guidance that UAL may seek, and we will work together with UAL to find a suitable third party when necessary.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Arts Students' Union should lobby UAL to develop student-guided policy on university engagement with The Metropolitan Police Service.

- UAL should not welcome any representative, individual, department, or group belonging to The Metropolitan Police Service onsite at any UAL college campus or accommodation building under non-emergency circumstances without advance consent from students & Arts SU.

Policy should state that any wishes that UAL may have to utilize, advocate, research, collaborate, or otherwise affiliate with The Metropolitan Police Service should be fully disclosed and circulated among students before making any agreements or offers to The Metropolitan Police Service. Activity should not be approved by any member of UAL staff including Executive Board, unless formally consented to by students: with objections heard at counsel with the Dean of Students, and a written response by Arts SU.

- UAL should not offer representatives, individuals, departments, or groups belonging to The Metropolitan Police Service any educational platform at UAL.

The Students' Union, in collaboration with students, sabbatical officers, and relevant UAL staff teams, should work to create and/or host an accessible and diverse selection of alternative student safety materials that are ethical and non-patronizing or victim-blaming, and should further develop the existing resources and policies on student safety and criminality.

Guarantor Scheme

Passed at Student Forum - April 2023

Votes Received: 55

Expires April 2026

What is the current situation? (Background)

Personally I have struggled to find a suitable house this year because I am from a working class background and I do not have a guarantor who earns enough to help me secure a decent room. Other universities, such as University of London, have a guarantor scheme for their students. If UAL wants to diversify their cohort, and invite students from underprivileged backgrounds to study in London, then a guarantor scheme is a must to help those who are struggling and are discriminated against because of their socio economic status. I know that halls are an option, but for example this year there were more students applying than there were rooms available. Halls are also very expensive.

Here are 3 different universities that provide support when it comes to guarantors in 3 completely different ways. Manchester SU has a renters union society, that works with the wider General Tenants Union in Manchester, although there is no mention of a guarantor scheme there. I would definitely think that an actual guarantor scheme would be more useful than just a housing society. A society could help with lobbying and campaigning however. UCL acts as a guarantor in the way that if the student fails to pay rent, they become a debtor to UCL instead of facing legal action and eviction from the landlord. Goldsmiths uses a reliable external company Housing Hand to provide a guarantor scheme at a discounted fee rate for their students, and this is the solution that I see as the easiest to implement by management at UAL.

What will be the impact of your Idea? (Why)

Students from working class backgrounds will find it a lot easier to secure decent housing while they are studying.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Speak to UAL about this, perhaps we could start a petition so they see that students want this. I know for sure I am not the only UAL student in this situation.

(Continued)

This will produce more food, with fewer emissions, whilst also increasing carbon drawdown through natural systems regeneration and diverse species flourishing, as well as reducing food costs for students in the cost of living crisis. Achieving UAL net-zero and sustainability goals will be faster and more impactful. UAL can move away from current organic animal farming practices that, regardless of the benefits, are more land and resource hungry, produce the same, or worse, emissions [1] [2] [3], and pollute our water cycles with animal manure [4] [5] and other surplus wastes.

UAL can pair its prestigious status in arts, and design with tackling the climate and ecological crises beyond CO2 emissions, and support an exciting and creative community of farmers, chefs, innovators, scientists and activists that are demonstrating the environmental, economic and social benefits of plants, mushrooms and algae food and material systems.

UAL can also pioneer a cultural transformation, including the next generation of artists and designers to shift their practices away from detrimental and colonial systems both in the way we eat and make art and design.

It would be beneficial to trial this idea at Central Saint Martin's, and evaluate the trial so that it can be implemented to all UAL campuses.

³ Regenerative: Regenerative powers or processes cause something to heal or become active again after it has been damaged or inactive. Some examples are soils, water, and human cultures.

⁴ Net Zero: Cutting human-made greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible, with any remaining emissions re-absorbed by earth systems such as oceans and forests.

What action could Arts SU take to develop your idea? (How)

Arts SU can help deliver our campaign that is divided in two parts:

1. Awareness & action, and engagement & inclusion. The former aims at informing people of the current impacts of animal agriculture and the fishing industries
2. Engage students and staff in conversation and practice around delicious and ecologically restoring food with the aim to culturally transform the institution.

In order to do this, we need support with:

- Outreach volunteers to help with the campaign (from planning to execution)
- Research such as surveys and focus groups on food perceptions and needs at UAL
- Formulate ways to change the bakery, snacks and drinks across SU cafes and food areas to have more sustainable and affordable plant-based options
- Calculate the impact beyond carbon emissions of current products and meals served at the canteen, and compare these with the impacts and benefits of plant, mushrooms and algae ones. (we have been politely hindered when we requested current food information and believe that SU Arts can help us with the task.)
- Assistance in case we need to submit a Policy Motion and lobby UAL to transition UAL suppliers to responsible and sustainable plants, mushrooms and algae ones
- Help organising events such as talks, panels, workshops and students assemblies, through contacts, digital communication, production and program organisation.
- Funds to engage students and staff, such as material support to offer workshops that, for instance, introduce people to plant-based foods, or to make bakery goods to engage people in conversation.

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