



UNIVERSITY OF DUNDEE

COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Student Executive
RECOMMENDATIONS

Proposed measures to support our students during the national cost of living crisis and beyond

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Overview

This document presents DUSA Executive recommendations for the University of Dundee to consider and implement for the coming academic session of 2022/23. All ongoing and future measures undertaken by DUSA have also been presented. We hope for this proposal paper to be examined by senior University staff, including the University Executive Group (UEG). This document is only one aspect of our wider effort, as a students' association, in tackling the worsening cost of living crisis that impacts our members.

Due to a variety of factors beyond our immediate control, the entire nation is set to experience a significant cost of living crisis. This crisis will see a substantial rise in costs for everyday essentials, which will inevitably affect those on lower incomes to a much greater extent, including the student population. It goes without saying that personal financial difficulties can lead to other struggles as a student, especially a decline in mental health, academic performance and the overall ability to have an enjoyable student experience.

Vast amounts of students, both within Dundee and across the country, have expressed their deep concerns about this emergency, as it will unavoidably impact their financial security and thus their overall university life. Our student community are diverse in various ways, including the range of student economic backgrounds. It has been indicated that this crisis will have a more damaging impact on the most disadvantaged students in our society, but that is not to say that other students, no matter their level of funding or background, won't be impacted throughout this crisis. We are firm in our belief that considerable action is necessary, both by DUSA and the University, in the interest of all students.

Students already face considerable pressure throughout their studies, and many students have to experience the additional difficulty of adjusting to independent life away from home. This crisis will inevitably lead to a far greater number of students seeking recourse to existing resources and financial aid, thus pressuring these services and funds. DUSA and the University should work together purposefully and resolutely to mitigate the impact on our students' wellbeing and attainment. Both organisations already have a strong relationship and we already share a common purpose - to enhance the student experience. This thriving relationship, and the multitude of benefits it presents, will only be made stronger if and when we act in a bold and decisive manner.

The University of Dundee have a strong track record and commitment to ensuring a quality student experience for all. That is why we are confident that the University will consider these proposals in full. If our students feel supported and listened to during these troubling times, there is potential for such feelings to be reflected within our National Student Surveys and will build upon the spirit of One Dundee. If our students are appropriately safeguarded, in whatever way possible, then we as a University community are truly operating with the student experience at the heart of everything we do. The desire for a first-rate student experience is rightly embedded within the institutions strategic plan, but if the University are to ensure sufficient support exists around student learning, security, mental wellbeing, development, employability, participation and external opportunities, then we implore the relevant decision-makers to embrace our calls to action with a sense of compassion, responsibility and permeability.

Cost of Living Impact

The University Executive Group and its senior staff are mindful of this situation and the inevitable struggles for many students in the coming weeks and months, particularly those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Even before this crisis emerged, nationwide campus surveys were consistently exposing the scale of the financial challenges faced by students, many of whom are left with very little funds once rent and utility costs are paid. This is not an uncommon situation. Student poverty is an ongoing problem in itself, but this crisis will dramatically exacerbate the challenges that exist. Being mindful of a crisis is not enough as a University, and if we are to even mitigate the impact on students, bold action is necessary from all stakeholders.

To put it plainly, the cost of everyday items in our city will continue to rise in line with inflation, and we are already beginning to see the increase in prices at our local shops and hospitality venues. Food, transport and energy bills are becoming increasingly expensive, meaning the students who already struggle, will now find themselves in more desperate conditions. The national student population already suffer from deep-seated mental health and motivational challenges, challenges that were worsened by the pandemic, and now threatened further by this crisis. It is not unreasonable for students to look to their University and Student's Association for support in times of serious hardship. Existing support services and sources of financial aid may need considerably more investment in order to protect the wellbeing and performance of our students. National measures are indeed being considered and implemented, but there is no doubt that such measures risk falling short of what is needed, especially for students.

It is often said that University can be the best years of a persons life. That may well be the reality for many, but this will not be the case for students whose livelihoods are at risk as a result of today's crisis. Detrimental consequences are avoidable. Positive institutional actions are achievable. The famous Dundee student experience can be enhanced and protected.

Student Poverty is Nothing New...

"I cannot afford a social life, it's left me totally excluded"

"I need to work over 30 hours a week to survive, so i always fall behind"

"I know the university are not a charity, but is my only option to drop out?"

"I don't receive family support like my friends, I don't have that security"

"I feel ashamed to seek support at Uni, the process seems quite invasive"

"I don't have the headspace to consider my coursework when I'm worried my bills"

"After paying off bills, my loans leave me with pocket change"

"I wish the uni were more understanding of my personal situation"

We face another impending crisis that will dramatically impact on student learning and engagement – the increase in cost of living. Student poverty is not new, but it will greatly exceed previous levels next academic year.

Michelle Morgan

Dean of Students at the University of East London

Students deserve a fulfilling university experience, but this crisis threatens the stability and enjoyment of that experience. We must make every effort to protect our community during these testing times. DUSA are utterly committed to seeing our students through this crisis in whatever way we can. This is DUSAs purpose. This is why we exist.

Nyasha Mutembwa

President of Dundee University Student Association

Cost of Living Impact

In March of this year, the National Union of Students released exclusive research highlighting the financial difficulties facing students. NUS Scotland surveyed over 3,500 students from 34 institutions across Scotland about their finances. The results were profoundly alarming, and we have presented just a snapshot of what was found. We believe this data to be both relevant and insightful, showing us the extent of what students are facing across the nation. While DUSA are conscious that this is not purely Dundee-related data, we still wished to present such findings to set the scene and expose the wider extent of student poverty.

You can access the original report at: www.nus-scotland.org.uk/articles/alarming-research-on-student-poverty.

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96% cutting back as a result of the crisis

A third of students living on less than £50 p/m after paying rent and bills, as the cost of living continues to soar

“
35% consider dropping out over inadequate financial support

60% of students worry or stress about their finances "frequently" or "all the time"

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A devastating impact on wellbeing, with 90% of students reporting an impact on their mental health, and 31% reporting this to be a 'major' impact

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68% of student workers do more than 10 hours per week, meaning less study time and more stress

One in ten are accessing food banks, an increasing number are turning to their savings, credit cards and bank loans, creating additional debt

Students in Scotland are being failed by a broken system which is leaving many without enough money to live. With more than a third of students at risk of dropping out, real action is needed – not words...students are also being met with inflation-busting increases in our rents and a soaring cost of living...It is no wonder students are dependent on foodbanks, working excessive hours on top of their coursework, experiencing homelessness at an alarmingly high rate, and taking on more and more debt
- Matt Crilly NUS Scotland President

Student Voice

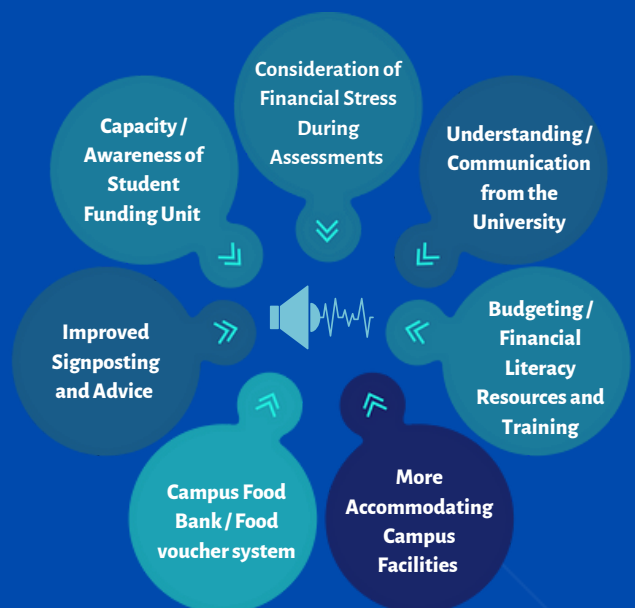
The student voice is fundamental to how we operate as a Students Association. It is the most effective way in which we communicate our concerns to those who are capable of making lasting changes to University life. Our University have a sector-leading commitment to the student voice, which is why we are confident that the information presented below will be taken into account when deciding how to respond to this crisis. We believe that all of our recommendations should come directly from the wider student cohort, which is why we made every effort to consult students in great detail. We have recently reached out to various students to ask them about their opinions and concerns around the cost of living crisis. We also held an informal focus group at the beginning of September, where we sought to capture a broad range of views from students of differing studies, levels and backgrounds. All data presented has been summarised and anonymised. We are happy to share the method in which we sought this feedback, and the integrity of it, with any interested stakeholder.



Can you comment on your concerns about the cost of living crisis as a University of Dundee Student? Can you explain anything regarding your personal situation? What suggestions do you have, if any, that DUSA or the University should consider?

Throughout all of our consultations with various students on the cost of living situation, there was a clear sense of anxiety and stress. All consultees noted that this crisis will cause wider wellbeing issues, particularly mental health struggles, as more students experience harsher living standards. All consultees were very hopeful that DUSA and the University rise to the worsening challenges ahead, but many students did not hesitate to express their pessimism about anything getting done. Due to a variety of factors, a very small fraction of consultees were indifferent to the situation. The vast majority of students we engaged with demonstrated that this crisis was the most pressing concern for them at this time. The diagram below presents our key findings from our in-depth consultations and student interviews. The following pages present more detailed statements.

Can the University really afford another widespread controversy regarding the lack of support for students and staff in times of profound challenge? I would be deeply shocked if the University were to sleep walk through this cost of living crisis. DUSA must also wake up and fulfil their purpose as a student representative body. Both institutions deserve a chance, but time is of the essence. Adequate and compassionate support is critical
- [Anonymised] SRC Councillor (21/22)



There is no doubt that the sample student comments, which can be found on the following pages, effectively encapsulate the wider feelings across the student community. All comments have been anonymised, but DUSA can arrange further meetings with any student consultees, should the University wish to learn more and hear more from students directly. Much of these remarks and experiences have informed our recommendations and measures already underway.



Sample Comments



My concerns for this issue are really genuine. I'm an international student and I have very limited (almost nothing) in terms of funding from the UK government. So I get no loans and student funds for my education here. I pay the international tuition fees with a very minimal amount of scholarship. So the living prices skyrocketing in Scotland really concerns me, especially when I have to completely depend on my family to support me from home. The general living costs and the tuition fees and other extra living expenses for my food alone are quite a lot and now that I've moved to another accommodation, thinking that I could minimize my living costs by paying the bills separately, it only looks like the situation is going to worsen. This problem is really going to determine what my student life would look like here cause it would only compel me to depend more on my family who are paying loads to support me. Apart from current students, I think this issue affects a lot of incoming students who are making their university choices. I wouldn't really want to go somewhere that stresses me out with supporting myself and would only make my experience more difficult because of the increasing prices.

Personally, as someone who has really struggled with both mental and physical illness, the cost of living crisis has been a huge stressor and created immense financial difficulties for me. I think that the university can help students by being aware of the impact this crisis will have on mental well-being and studying. They should also aim to maximise opening hours of the library and campus buildings (which provide a warm, safe and sheltered space for students who, like me, will really struggle with heat and comfort this winter). The introduction of more extensive and better signposted financial guidance (especially for second years and those who are likely to be moving into their first flats/ taking on the role of bill-paying for the first time) should be a priority, helping students with budget management and giving advice on reducing utility costs etc. Also, a communal food bank could be introduced, or a community fridge / freezer, which can be both donated to and taken from without shame.

I may be speaking from a position of stability, but i personally do not see what more a university can do with assisting students through times of difficulty. People know that pursuing a degree is an investment, and it will obviously be financially straining. Most students receive government funding to cover the costs of living, and widening access students rightly receive additional support. Scots students also pay nothing for their tuition, unlike me who pays £9k a year, and take in loans to sustain a semi-decent life at uni. Students almost exclusively eat out and drink the most across society, yet they are fast to demand more money. Folk will need to cut back, just like everyone else. This is sadly the way of life and it should prompt more of us to be financially sensible. For students who need to work, as i do, in order to survive at uni, we deserve the support. I will need to work more to meet inflating costs, i wont be demanding funding or free food, i will work, that's how i get by. I'm not saying that all students should just work more, as not everyone can balance that burden well.

In combination with the increased number of students having attended University post-covid, the cost of living crisis creates unprecedented challenges for students. The rising number of students attending University has sent rent prices through the roof with the additional necessity to still pay for living costs. This makes students, who have maybe left home for the first time in a vulnerable financial position, to navigate life alone. Student living should be challenging but also enjoyable - while there is a cost of living crisis and students cannot form a healthy work-life balance, the stress of living will inevitably transfer over onto their personal studies and harm their potential to learn and become the professionals of tomorrow.

Something that I feel would be useful would be at least some better communication on how to deal with the transition between student housing accommodation and actual housing, considering the difference between simply paying rent and bills is one that completely blindsides and feels quite unfair. I know the uni try to provide a service but they advertise it mainly at the start of the year so you don't know who to properly talk to when you actually decide to pay for the flat you get, so in short terms, they're essentially pointless in that way! I've not got many thoughts, but I think we need to make sure there's some way to at least make this a little more reasonable, since the way it's done right now seems very much like a "this service is available" when you don't really care for it, so when you do care for it you've forgotten where you need to go...and if you end up in a situation where you don't naturally choose to ask your advisor for everything, you are a little screwed. Probably the easiest way to think about it would be to simply get the process of student training in regard to housing started after their exams so that they are in a less stressful environment and can compartmentalise problems in good time.

Cost of living crisis is very nerve racking for students. Many of us cannot just rely on our student loans and our parents aren't in a position to support us through uni so we also have to work part time jobs. Balancing a job and uni work is incredibly stressful and makes studying and achieving good grades that much harder. With the price of electricity, gas, petrol etc continuing to rise students are having to take on more hours simply to get by, and not even to have anything leftover for themselves. This may seriously impact our studies, grades and ultimately our degrees. Whilst everyone is struggling students have the added worries of working enough to afford living while not working too much to the point they fail classes

DUSA need to really focus on mental health again if they want to be of any use in this situation. They throw a lot of money into useless projects and dinners when they could be investing in proper mental wellbeing facilities and counselling? The uni service is sparse, so the union have a chance to actually support students in this way. Help us cope with financial stress and how that will impede our abilities to focus and do well with our studies. They don't really seem to know who or what they are, and this crisis could be a chance for them to step up to the mark i guess. I think one of their biggest downfalls is how they seem so deeply out of touch and tone deaf to the student mood across campus. Lets not forget that students are always going to struggle with something, but on the back of covid, the stresses with international or national disasters and now this cost of living, we are approaching a pretty hefty recession and this will call for further student support networks and measures to mitigate this further blow to our experiences. It isnt that complicated tbh in my mind.

As someone who has zero income except for my student loan, lecturers asking you to have books before saas arrives is ridiculous anyway, let alone in our current climate when people have to choose between eating and heating. We are expected to buy 50 quid books and be prepared by the first lecture, when saas won't have come in yet. I understand that's what SAAS is for and we get a larger payment at first, but that system really doesn't help with the way things are right now. I already feel like I'm going to be behind some of my peers who can afford to buy the books and can do the reading and prep for weeks 1 and 2.

For me, I hate that lectures are spread out the way they are. I find it really frustrating that my timetable requires me to be in every day, but three of those 5 days I am only in for 1 hour. To clarify, I am someone who has struggles/issues with travel and walking. To get to campus I need to get 2 busses which is not that easy or simple for me. (That's without considering the useless bus service in dundee). I often find it much easier to get a taxi directly to where I need to go but obviously that is not an affordable option and even more so these days. I know that some people commute from further away and also have gripes about this. I'm starting to have anxieties about the cost of travelling to campus and home again and it's making me dread the start of uni. I understand that the lectures are likely scheduled this way to aid the timetables of the lecturers but I don't understand how after basically being fully online, we can't continue hybrid teaching for those days we only have an hours lecture. Then it is up to the student if they want to attend in person and spend money on travel costs to be there for an hour, or participate online from home and not have the pressure of paying travel fees.

The cost of living crisis is as worrying for students as anyone across society. I have been at university for three years and i have never been more anxious about my studies, directly because of this new and worrying situation. Doing a degree consumes the vast majority of life, so when a student is facing serious hardship, life can get incredibly difficult. If the university, government, or the student union do nothing around additional student support, i genuinely have no idea what i will do. I do not want to go into detail about my personal financial affairs, but what i can categorically state is that i am not alone in feeling like this. This crisis is not something that is going on in the wider big bad world, or a scary news story, this is real life and this will push so many students into a dark and scary corner. I just know that the uni will wait until the situation becomes desperate before taking any action. Please do not sit back and wait for a damaging news article or protest to do something about this. Solutions are wide-ranging and possible, divert money into student hardship funds, reduce prices for textbooks, give students solid budgeting advice.? At this rate anything is better than nothing. Nothing is where we are at. Our uni are already locally and nationally shamed by staff cuts, pension cuts, school mergers, racism, housing and probably so much more. Lets not add another crisis or scandal to our already long list. There is a lot that can be done with this crisis, it needs to happen now.

Okay so even during school i was always so annoyed by the lack of education and resources around financial planning and general budget skills. In so many cases i think, you come to university and have the security of student housing - without the need to worry about paying bills or energy, that is all covered in the eye-watering fees we pay for accommodation anyway. When you move to private housing, it is such a different kettle of fish. If DUSA could provide insight and skills resources on that type of information, it could make a fair bit of difference. Even if the info was basic and explained what types of appliances used higher levels of energy etc. These are things that are rarely explained to students. Now it is needed especially during this energy emergency. Tax awareness, money saving and budgeting are all crucial life skills that students famously know little to nothing about. A bit of education on it wont hurt.

I do not have the luxury of family support, and I am not unique in this situation. I worked in excess of 40 hours a week during the entirety of my first year. I needed to work this much, regardless of any SAAS provision. I have no savings, i have no trust fund, i have nobody to turn to when i need to purchase £300 worth of textbooks and equipment. My advisor of studies always told me to consider working less, and while I appreciate such an intellectual and caring piece of advice, financial stability must come from somewhere. I was someone who excelled in school, and i often got As in all my exams. During first year, I only managed to scrape a C1 or B3 in any given module. I lost 40 hours of potential study time, I did not have the usual 9-5 library access, I missed every study group session with my peers, i could never attend drop-ins, i could not complete the recommended 100-page reading expectation for three separate modules. Having to work all the time meant i was always behind. Luckily, second year was more affordable, i had cheaper rent, i worked a little less. I won an academic award for two modules, and achieved many As. This drastic change in performance was obviously because i had more time. I now enter my third year, arguably the most significant jump as i begin honours level modules. I recently received a letter from my energy provider, I will go from paying £74 a month to £250. This is just one example of the new financial challenges many of us are facing. I will inevitably have to work more now, and it is going to take me straight back to first year problems. I know that university are restricted to how much they can do in situations like these, but if there was some way for advisors, academic tutors, programme leads or general university staff to appreciate this situation i am in, that so many of us now face, if there was a system in place that gave student workers more support and space to ensure their studies are not hugely impacted by our part time work and long shifts during busy study periods.

University Recommendations

After an extensive examination of all the student data we received, and continue to receive, and in light of wider concerns that currently dominate the student community, we have drafted a set of recommendations for the University to consider and implement. Our student outreach and consultations were limited, particularly due to it being prior to the academic session, but we are confident that these measures are in the interest of the vast majority. The beginning of the academic year is an incredibly busy period, thus we do not expect all of these proposals to be immediately implemented. We also appreciate that some of these requests may be unfeasible in part or in full, but we implore the University to consider each of them with all due regard. DUSA are optimistic and determined to lobby the University further. We intend to advocate for our student community during this crisis and we will make every effort to ensure that these recommendations do not get cast aside. DUSA are hopeful to begin consulting with key University decision-makers, regarding the recommendations, as soon as possible. They have been presented in no particular order of priority.

Establish a Cost of Living Oversight Group

The University should consider setting up an oversight group solely dedicated to the cost of living crisis and the impact on our students. The scale and impact of this crisis simply cannot merely be addressed as an agenda item within a wider committee that balances other priorities. The group should comprise of senior staff, including the Chief Operating Officer, Vice Principal (Education) and the Directors of Student Services. Senior student representatives should also sit on the oversight group, including the President and Vice President of Student Wellbeing. Senior DUSA staff could also sit on the group, alongside DUSA Advice & Support. The oversight group would ideally meet on a frequent basis to address situations that will inevitably unfold during the academic session. The oversight group would ensure responsive leadership and a focussed channel of communication, directly concerning this crisis. This group may take oversight of all the recommendations and actions proposed within this paper.

Review Rules on Mitigating Circumstances

The University should consider the reviewal of mitigating circumstances and academic appeals in relation to students who have *no other choice* but to work during their studies to make ends meet. We appreciate that mitigating circumstances and all surrounding procedures are multifaceted and different across academic schools. That being said, we urge the University to consider students with part-time work in a different light, especially during the cost of living crisis. To summarise our overarching request, should a student have to work a job during their studies to make ends meet, we ask for this to be given a more weighted consideration when determining any extensions, and we ask for it be a key factor in any mitigating circumstance case. However, in order to limit the application of this mitigating factor, and considering the additional burden this may inflict upon staff, we suggest that students be made to *sufficiently demonstrate* they are working additional shifts *more than an average student worker*, and *as a direct result of the rising costs of living*. This recommendation will understandably require extensive discussions between staff, but we do believe that this factor should be given the same level of consideration as COVID-19 mitigation. Financial difficulties can and do hinder academic success, particularly due to students being forced to work many hours in part-time jobs to sustain student life. The cost of living crisis will only make this reality worse, more prevalent and more unjust.

University Recommendations

Further Student Funding Unit Investment

The University should consider further investment into the student funding unit throughout the cost of living crisis. We fully appreciate that the current capacity of the funding unit is restricted, and any additional resources may need to come from government-level bodies. That being said, we urge the University to promptly review funding as things stand, and decide whether they can divert resources from other areas of the University for the time being. If the University are in a position to do so, we also urge them to directly lobby to the government, as an institution, specifically on further student hardship funding. A well-funded hardship unit will hopefully allow the department to grant more money to those most in need. Our funding unit already do incredible work and have always ensured students in hardship receive the assistance they need, but this crisis will inevitably see more and more students turn to them, thereby straining the unit further. No student should ever have to sacrifice a quality experience and live in a way that is short of destitution. All of our experiences differ, and some need funding more than others, but such an action by the University will undoubtedly lift a significant burden off of students and potentially put many students at ease both mentally, physically and academically. At the very least, we urge the University to amplify the promotion and signposting of the funding unit through schools and various student services.

Run a Cost of Living Town Hall Session

The University should consider running a widespread student consultation to fully appreciate the overriding student concerns around this crisis. This town hall session should be made fully accessible to all students and representatives, and should be hosted by members of the UEG, or the proposed Cost of Living Oversight Group. It would also be beneficial to record this session for students to access at a later date. This session could be a vital chance for students to vocalise their concerns, and allow the University to hear from a broader range of students, communicate their intended actions and thereby allow future decisions to be better informed.

Promote and Develop Financial Literacy Training

The University should consider the development of enhanced training for students in light of the cost of living crisis. The training should be focussed around budgeting and ways to conserve the use of energy. There is also an opportunity here to promote wider awareness around taxation, sustainability and managing general affairs as student. Much of this information is rarely communicated to students during secondary school, so such an initiative would prove beneficial to many. The University should consider developing a specific webpage on this topic, and promote this information to all students. The University should also assist DUSA in communicating any of its own resources, sessions and advice around budgeting and financial literacy. Both the University and DUSA could request for student ambassadors, or any willing student, to write advice and insight blogs to give students a better sense of the information and make it more relevant to them. Any potential information or training that is offered to students should be developed in a non-patronising manner and co-designed with students.

University Recommendations

Review Facility Opening Hours

The University should review the opening hours of campus facilities, with a view to potentially opening a "campus heating hub" that some students can use during the winter season. This review should also extend to examining the library opening hours and other buildings on campus. Creating this heating hub, and extending various building opening hours, will benefit students in differing ways. This would provide further study spaces for longer periods of time, thereby accommodating more students who have to work a lot during the week in part-time jobs. This would also provide more space for students to keep warm and safe. We do not yet know the full scale of the cost of living impact, but what is certain is that many students will spend more time on campus and away from their flats to avoid using heating - which is a situation that is becoming increasingly commonplace across other student communities. If there was to be a separate space for students who wish to socialise, relax and keep warm, this would avoid the library becoming overly busy with students who are not there to study.

Establish a Student Campus Fridge

The University should consider developing a campus fridge, similar to that of the community fridge on Perth Road. The campus fridge could be positioned at a central campus area, easy for students to access during the day. How the fridge would be maintained, staffed and stocked will need to be reviewed by the University, should this recommendation be approved. The fridge could also have its own donation system and linked with the DUSA Premier Store. There may also need to be a voucher system in place, meaning only students most in need receive supplies. This fridge could be a hugely supportive service for students who are struggling with funding, particularly those who have been granted hardship funding, but are made to wait for the financial award to be transferred into their accounts. The fridge may need to operate on a more discreet basis, especially to avoid any stigma amongst students who use it.

Support DUSAs Measures

Irrespective of whether any of the above recommendations are approved, we urge the University to support DUSA in all of its endeavours around the cost of living crisis. Namely, facilitating our communications to students, supporting our own campus fridge, food voucher system or any other measure that is detailed below. DUSA have significantly less resources and facilities than the University, meaning any of our actions would have a lesser outreach and impact than an institutional-level action. The University have a strong partnership with DUSA, which is reflected through our various agreements and activities. Strong cooperation and strategic alignment between the University and DUSA will only benefit the student community to a greater extent and ensure bolder, speedier and more tailored actions to address the cost of living crisis and its impact on the students.

DUSA Measures

The DUSA executive have planned a variety of short and long term measures to support and represent students during the cost of living crisis. We formulated our actions based upon extensive student feedback, internal and external research and with our new manifesto commitments in mind. We may be the DUSA executive, but we are students too, and we want nothing more than a thriving and enriching student experience for all. That is why we are taking a step up, putting our words into action and demonstrating that DUSA is of the students and for the students. Presented below are some of our key measures to be taken, they are listed in no particular order of priority.

Develop a Cost of Living Webpage Tool

DUSA will be developing a comprehensive online resource for our webpage - solely dedicated to the cost of living. This page will include general information, advice, student blogs, budgeting tool kits and more.

Promote Financial Literacy

DUSA will be promoting financial skills and literacy wherever and however we can. We intend to work closely with the University to develop training around financial budgeting, with a particular focus on raising awareness around matters like energy usage and inflation.

Stimulate Society and Sport Club Involvement

DUSA will be directing societies and sports clubs to take leading roles in communicating our measures to their society members. We will also encourage them to run their own cost of living/cost-friendly activities. We also want all societies to assist DUSA in terms of signposting and strengthening the student voice.

Upscale Part-time Work Opportunities

DUSA will be promoting and facilitating job opportunities as much as possible. We know that many students struggle to find work during their studies, and we know how important additional income can be. We intend to collaborate with the University to run part-time career events, employability training and share material with students around part time work and all relating matters.

Develop a Food Voucher Scheme

DUSA will be looking at the implementation of a food voucher scheme, with a possible partnership with our Premier store and other organisations. Our Advice and Support team would facilitate this initiative. Students would likely need to apply for a voucher, which could then be digitally sent to students and used through the YoYo system.

Promote and Expand the 'Free Supplies Shop'

DUSA will work to increase the promotion and awareness of the free supplies stall that student services set up at the start of every year. This is a brilliant initiative, but we want more students to utilize it and benefit from it. DUSA will also push for this to be set up on a more frequent basis, giving students greater access to free supplies like kitchen equipment and household appliances and lost property clothing.

Summary

We are acutely aware that student poverty is nothing new, and we are mindful that irrespective of our recommendations and measures, students are going to struggle. That being said, there are an abundance of opportunities that can indeed mitigate the impact on students. A fantastic student experience is something that all students deserve, and we are firmly committed to ensuring no student suffers alone, with nowhere to turn. As your Students' Association, we will not stop at the measures presented, we will continue to advocate and lobby at the highest levels of the University. We will continue to think of effective and innovative measures not just for the cost of living crisis, but for all matters and in every corner of the University. We will continuously ensure that our work has a genuine and lasting impact on student life, and we encourage everyone to be part of this effort.

We are deeply hopeful that the University take notice of the student concerns, consider our recommendations in full and support us in any way they can, thereby allowing us to fulfil our measures. DUSA look forward to productive and thorough cooperation as this crisis approaches, and we look forward to executing our measures and maintaining our purpose as a truly student-centric association. We also hope that any initiative or measure that is made in response to this crisis, has the potential to remain in place beyond this challenging period, should it be appropriate to do so.

DUSA acknowledge that the Scottish Government are implementing a variety of measures that may limit the impact of the cost of living crisis. We are strong in our belief that the University and DUSA still have a core responsibility to ensure that this crisis, however intense, does not hinder student life in the worst of ways.

Food Voucher Scheme **Part-time Work**
Promote and Develop Financial Literacy
Mitigating Circumstances Reviewal Student Campus Fridge
Student Funding Unit Investment
Cost of Living Oversight Group **Cost of Living Townhall Session**
Facility Opening Hours Reviewal Society Involvement
Support DUSAs Measures **Webpage Resource**
Free Supplies Shop

Resources

- <https://wonkhe.com>
- <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/explainers/cost-living-crisis>
- <https://www.nus.org.uk/campaign-hub/cost-of-living-crisis?i=0>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cljev4jz3pjt>
- <https://www.luu.org.uk/campaigns/>
- <https://www.nus-scotland.org.uk/resources/broke-how-scotland-is-failing-its-students>

Your DUSA



Free Impartial Confidential Advice & Support

We are proud to offer free, impartial and confidential advice on any issue you face as a student and if we can't help you; we will put you in contact with someone who can. We can support you with almost anything, academic appeals, private housing, university complaints, family or friendship struggles etc. We will help you explore the issue and help you to understand the options. Only at your request will we act on your behalf. We never want you to struggle as you go through university. Our specialist team do everything they can to make you feel safe, supported and listened to. We understand life gets busy, but there is always time to chat. For as long as DUSA are here, you are not alone. Visit us today at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/advice>



Student Voice

No matter your level or position, your voice is incredibly powerful. You don't just have a right to vote in all elections, your voice has the potential to change things at DUSA, the University and even the wider community. We urge you to use your voice. Whenever you feel like it, lobby your class reps, School President, Student Council and DUSA Exec. We are currently working to elevate our student voice hub on our website to empower your voice in a more accessible and engaging way. Take your ideas straight to the top, submit a proposal, share an opinion or concern, suggest a change to student life, lead the way and have your say. Visit the hub today on our website at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/get-involved/src-online>



Representation

Here at DUSA, we actively encourage all of you to become student leaders from the very start. Be it a class rep, SRC Councillor, School VP/President, or one of our Executive Officers, you have an immensely influential and exciting platform to lead change, represent thousands and develop invaluable skills for life. Do not miss out on these once in a lifetime opportunities. These roles are a challenge and they may be daunting, but we promise that you'll never look back. Don't stand by when you could be making great things happen. Put yourself forward whenever the opportunity arises. We will wait for you, and when you stand up, we will support you in all you do. Check out more information here at <https://www.dusa.co.uk/get-involved/your-src>



Campaigns

We recognise our need to evolve in line with an ever-changing student population. Part of our change will involve giving students the chance to run their own campaigns, initiatives and projects. We recognise this has been a shortcoming of DUSA in the past, but rest assured that we want to facilitate, empower and help drive your ideas forward. We have recently established an exciting Community Action Forum, which will provide oversight for any of your future projects, and it will give you access to activists, third sector organisations and students that are keen to help you pursue your vision. This is all about you and your passions, so stay tuned and look out for our forum and campaign hub - both soon to be launched!



Societies

We facilitate and oversee around 240 societies and 110 of them you can join right now! A society is a group of students sharing the same interests, they are led by students for the students. It can be anything ranging from academic clubs, dancing, politics, veganism and and so much more. There is something for everyone. If none meet your needs, you can start your own society. We are hugely proud of our society network and all they achieve. They truly reflect the creativity, passion and ambition of our student community. If you are a society committee member, rest assured that DUSA are striving to strengthen our partnership with you, empowering your society to be bigger and better. Visit our society homepage at www.dusa.co.uk/societies/a-z



Your Executive



Nyasha Mutembwa
President



Zechariah Laari
VP of Academia



Amarachi Ejim
VP of Student Wellbeing



Obiozor Okoro
VP of Representation



Jazmine Bennett
VP of Community



Zining Li
VP of Student Activities