

NUS UK Antisemitism Action Plan

We are seeking feedback from students, students' unions, and any partners and friends on this Action Plan. If you have any feedback or would like to schedule a meeting please email us at membership@nus.org.uk. The deadline for feedback is Friday 27 January 2023.

Independent KC-led investigation

In May 2022, NUS commissioned Rebecca Tuck KC to lead an independent investigation looking at recent allegations of antisemitism as well as historic matters and broader culture. NUS worked closely with the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) throughout. The investigations have been thorough, fair and conducted within the strictest parameters of policy and law throughout. There is no room for doubt that this process has been as robust as it gets.

The KC's report is a detailed and shocking account of antisemitism within the student movement. It is a truly difficult read for all of us but we welcome the clarity it brings to enable us to act with confidence to tackle antisemitism head on. There is no place for antisemitism within NUS and we are committed to ensuring that Jewish students feel safe and welcome in every corner of our movement. Antisemitism is an attack on our shared values of equality and solidarity. We have a proud history of fighting struggles alongside Jewish students. And we know that Jewish students should not carry the burden of fighting antisemitism alone. We must tackle antisemitism in all its forms with collective responsibility. We are stronger united.

Paying tribute to Jewish students

We pay tribute to current and past Jewish students who have spoken out so that a light may be shone on antisemitism. Their speaking out is an act of service and solidarity to fellow Jewish students – and to the student movement as a whole. We recognise the personal cost to those who have stood up for what is right.

NUS UK and NUS Charity

What is widely known as 'NUS' is actually two separate organisations working in partnership:

- NUS UK is an independent registered company that delivers national student representation and campaigns.
- NUS Charity is an independent registered charity that delivers services to develop strong and healthy students' unions.

Whilst the investigation was commissioned by NUS UK, tackling antisemitism is everyone's responsibility. NUS UK and the NUS Charity will be working shoulder to shoulder to deliver this plan.

What needs to be said

Let us speak plainly – there are some important things that need to be said as we move forward with this Action Plan.

This report cannot be allowed gather dust on a shelf after the noise dies down. NUS must implement this action plan in full and in a sustained way over a long period of time. We are committing to transparency and accountability to ensure that real change takes place.

NUS must now take responsibility for the ways in which we have let Jewish students down. The KC's report highlights many instances where Jewish students were hurt by the very organisation that should be defending them. We are deeply sorry.

If we are to truly make student politics a welcoming space for Jewish students we have to confront the way we relate to Israel and Palestine. Too often Jewish students are harmed when the issue of Israel and Palestine comes up. But it does not need to be this way.

Legitimate discussions about Israel and Palestine do not need to be discriminatory. Campaigning on Palestinian causes is not inherently antisemitic. Defending the right of the state of Israel to exist is not inherently discriminatory.

We must bring about a new culture around this topic in all corners of student politics.

What we collectively do next matters beyond the student movement. We haven't had an ex-NUS officer as Prime Minister (yet) but our alumni have gone onto senior roles in politics, non-profits, business, and public services for a century. What happens in student politics shapes the views and values of society itself.

Principles for Action

- ❖ Transparency and accountability
- ❖ Trust between Jewish students and NUS
- ❖ Knowledge and understanding
- ❖ Representation for Jewish students
- ❖ Long term change
- ❖ A new culture around Israel and Palestine debate within student politics

1. A proud and unwavering commitment to understanding and tackling antisemitism in all its forms

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| a) Full transparency: NUS will publish the number and category of complaints relating to antisemitism on an annual basis. | NUS UK Board
<i>Jan 2024</i> |
| b) Advisory Panel to be set up that includes UJS representation to oversee the implementation of this plan that will meet for a minimum of <u>five years</u> . | NUS UK Board
<i>March 2023</i> |
| c) Training on antisemitism provided to all NUS Staff, Board, Volunteers and Officers. In time this training should be made available to SUs. | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>Jan 2024</i> |
| d) Advanced training on antisemitism provided to key senior leaders within NUS and in key SUs. The result should be a handful of senior staff across NUS and SUs who have very strong knowledge on antisemitism and can act as sector leads on projects, issues, and can support others to develop their knowledge. | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>Jan 2024</i> |
| e) A new section on NUS' website with clear information on how to report incidents that occur either within NUS, a students' union, or on a campus. Support students who report with action either through NUS, through their own SU or institution. | NUS UK Mgmt
<i>March 2023</i> |

2. Jewish representation and voice in NUS within a wider strategy for inclusion and liberation

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| a) Anti-Racism Anti-Fascism (ARAF) Committee: to be reinstated within NUS with a dedicated place for Jewish representation ¹ , recognising UJS as our primary partner in representing Jewish students and tackling antisemitism in all its forms. | NUS UK Board
NUS NSC
<i>July 2023</i> |
| b) Associate Membership: Terms should be updated for national student organisations that wish to work with NUS UK to enable better exchange of concerns and ideas. Membership should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal point of contact and annual review process • Due diligence checks on the organisation applying • The ability to submit complaints | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>July 2023</i> |
| c) Inclusion & Liberation Strategy: Review existing plans, reviews, and research relating to equity, inclusion, and liberation into one single coherent Inclusion and Liberation Strategy for NUS UK. This should include, but not limited to, the IIA Action Plan (this plan), the IRR Race Equity Plan, the research on Jewish Students' Experiences and the research on Muslim Students' Experiences. | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>October 2023</i> |
| d) Annual insight mechanisms through polling, research and feedback that allow NUS UK to measure the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attitudes towards antisemitism within FE and HE • Jewish students' experiences within SUs and NUS • Discuss rates of antisemitism within FE, HE, SUs and NUS with UJS and CST to ensure a joined up approach to tackling it | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>October 2023</i> |

¹ Other groups will have representation on the ARAF Committee. The specific composition will be determined via a Terms of Reference approved by the NUS UK Board and the National Scrutiny Council (NSC).

3. Changing culture through education, practice and dialogue

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| a) Educational materials on constructive dialogue for use within NUS and in SUs. | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>December 2023</i> |
| b) Practical guidance on how to minimise harm in activity relating to Israel and Palestine. Such guidance should be practical, accessible, and linked to NUS' policies and values. | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>December 2024</i> |
| c) Expert facilitators: A bank of individuals - either NUS/SU staff or external - should be identified who can facilitate and support debates and campaigns regarding Israel and Palestine within NUS or SUs. | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>December 2024</i> |
| d) Strengthen community relations around race and faith through the Advisory Panel, ARAF, and through regular informal stakeholder meetings - particular care should be taken to support open dialogue between NUS, UJS and FOSIS | NUS UK Mgmt
<i>December 2025</i> |
| e) Funded interfaith project: Seek new funding to reinstate a program of interfaith activities and resources across NUS and SUs | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>Funding dependent</i> |

4. An enhanced Candidate Preparation Process for NUS elections

The current candidate process for NUS elections includes eligibility checks, optional training, information, regular comms, and a candidate declaration where they are required to confirm that they sign up to NUS' policies.

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| a) Candidate training on NUS' policies, on the role itself, and on the risks and opportunities of being in a public role. Specialist training should be provided on online abuse & safety in particular. | |
| b) Deal with historic conduct: Update existing NUS policies to make clear how NUS manage concerns, issues and complaints relating to historic conduct with express reference to a candidate's 'digital footprint' ² . | |
| c) Candidate declaration: The existing Candidate Declaration should include a new requirement for candidates to declare anything current or historic that could put their or NUS' reputation at risk and/or that could be in breach of NUS' policies ³ . | HR Sub Committee
Returning Officer
<i>July 2024</i> |
| d) Risk assessment and safety plan: Each candidate should be supported with a professional and confidential risk assessment that makes recommendations for a risk reduction and safety plan if needed. | |
| e) Returning Officer linked to HR: The Returning Officer should report to the NUS UK Board via the chair of the HR Sub Committee and should submit the Elections Regulations to the HR Sub Committee annually for ratification. | HR Sub Committee
Returning Officer
<i>July 2023</i> |

² Any such rules and guidance must have regard for candidate's right to express themselves freely within the law and must not override the principles of a free and fair election.

³ The purpose of the self-declaration would be to identify and resolve matters at an early stage and to prepare candidates appropriately for the scrutiny they may face during an election and as an officer. Candidates would have access to support in searching through their digital histories.

5. Strengthen NUS UK's governance

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| a) Review NUS UK and NUS Charity corporate governance since the 2019 reforms and in particular consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The line management of lead staff in NUS UK and NUS Charity• The demarcation between political and operational matters and how we identify if a matter should be dealt with in the democratic space (a political matter) or in the corporate space (a conduct or compliance matter)• The introduction of a referral route where there are significant matters where lead staff and elected officers are not able to agree | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>December 2023</i> |
| b) Introduce an External Speakers Policy for NUS UK events | NUS UK Board
<i>March 2023</i> |
| c) Revise data retention approach to ensure important documents are retained for an appropriately long enough time | NUS UK Board
NUS Charity
<i>April 2023</i> |