

**From:** NUS Scotland **On Behalf Of** Robin Parker  
**Sent:** 22 August 2012 14:29  
**To:**  
**Subject:** Student Support Announcement - Great news!

Hi everyone,

### **Student Support- Well done!**

[Really good news today](#), with the [Scottish Government announcing](#) **big improvements in the financial support** of Scottish Higher Education students in colleges and universities. This is something that we have been campaigning for for over 5 years now, and is the result of the hard work and campaigning of hundreds of students over the last few years. And at the same time today's announcement **removes tuition fees for the poorest part-time students** - removing an anomaly that we have frequently highlighted the unfairness of.

Back in 2007, NUS Scotland came up with the idea of a '£7,000 minimum income guarantee', to reflect the fact that students were being forced to drop-out, struggle by or simply never start in education because of the **lack of money in their pockets**. In 2010 we launched what is still one of the biggest student surveys to ever take place in Scotland, and that resulted in NUS Scotland's [Still in the Red](#) report. That report showed really clearly just how much of a financial struggle it is for many students to make ends meet through their studies - forced to work part-time, borrow commercially or to even drop out of their education. It also highlighted that tuition fees were really a big & unfair barrier for part-time students.

There was then a real push from students & students' associations up and down the country to draw attention to the issue, and to try and get political attention, ahead of the Scottish Parliamentary elections in 2011. Indeed, I remember from my time as President of Aberdeen University Students' Association, days of action and sending students' signed Christmas cards to the principal and there were many similar actions from students around the country. Throughout this campaign **the actions of student campaigners up and down the country has been crucial** to bringing about this achievement.

With our [Reclaim Your Voice](#) campaign in the run-up to the 2011 elections **our campaigning was successful in signing up 87% of the elected MSPs** to our commitment to not only protect places and rule out tuition fees, but, crucially, to improve student support as well. In addition, we'd successfully secured in the SNP's manifesto a commitment to implement our idea of a £7,000 minimum income guarantee. From there, as our top priority, we managed to secure extra money set aside for student support in the government's first spending review after the election.

Today's announcement is the culmination of our work, but also, far more fundamentally, the result of campaigning up and down the country by several generations of student representatives and student campaigners in Scotland. **You and your predecessors should be very proud of that result, and this very simple wee table:**

	Young Students (Aged under 25 at start of course)			Independent Students (25 or older, married or self supporting at start of course)		
Family income	Bursary	Loan	Total	Bursary	Loan	Total
< £17k	£1.75k	£5.5k	<b>£7.25k</b>	£750	£6.5k	<b>£7.25k</b>
£17k to £24k	£1k	£5.5k	<b>£6.5k</b>	£0	£6.5k	<b>£6.5k</b>

£24k to £34k	£500	£5.5k	<b>£6k</b>	£0	£6k	<b>£6k</b>
> £34k	£0	£4.5k	<b>£4.5k</b>	£0	£4.5k	<b>£4.5k</b>

These financial increases will come on line from September 2013, and will benefit every Scottish student studying a higher education course in a university or college, that could be **over 120,000 of our members**, every single year. And it won't just benefit every new student, it will benefit every single student continuing in higher education through September 2013.

**And if all that wasn't enough**, we've also managed to remove the injustice of tuition fees for part-time students with a household income of less than £25,000 per year. Access based on ability and potential, not the ability to pay and personal circumstances, should be a core principle of education in Scotland, regardless of what mode of study students choose to take.

**But it doesn't all stop here.** There is still more to do on financial support in Scotland, we especially need to continue to look at the FE bursary system and campaign for that to be an entitlement, so that older FE students have the same kind of security that Scottish HE students now have.

And, long-term, student support will always be a core issue to us, one that we will always return too. There is always the potential for us to argue to get more money into students pockets, and for more of this money to come in the form of non-repayable grants.

But, looking ahead, we've more importantly **laid the foundations for making access to education fairer**. With tuition fees out of the way for Scottish students, these big increases in living cost support and the protection of the EMA and college places, the **excuses are running out for university principals**. We're presented with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to create a leap forward in closing the gap in educational access. That's where [our responsibilities now lie](#), and with the evidence in *Unlocking Scotland's Potential* to back it up, we'll soon be ready to take the campaign to University principals.

Take some time today **to celebrate and reflect** on what a huge win this is, one that will fundamentally change the lives of so many of our members. But also on what is the culmination of daring to think big, to think the impossible, as a student movement - and then to come together to campaign tirelessly and across generations of student leaders to make that a reality. **Today is a great day for the student movement in Scotland**, so take some time to savour it.

In unity,

Robin

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