

Hello everyone, my name is Kaynat Ahmad, and I currently serve as the President of Dudley College Students' Union. I have dedicated 3 years to FE Students and advancing our often-overlooked movement. I am excited to be standing as a candidate for NUS Vice President for Further Education.

As your Vice President of Further Education, I will be fully committed to fighting for the interests of further education students and campaigning tirelessly on behalf of our members across the nation. I will ensure that FE students are heard, represented, and supported at a national level, and that their voices drive real change within the NUS and beyond.

Further Education deserves the representation it has long been denied. FE students face unique and complex challenges, and without a strong national voice, we remain at a disadvantage when it comes to securing the funding, resources, and support our sector urgently needs.

This lack of representation continues to widen the gap between Further and Higher Education, leaving FE students behind and negatively impacting our overall student experience. I believe this must change. FE students deserve to be valued, listened to, and supported just as much as any other student and I am committed to making sure our voices are heard at the highest level.

Education should be accessible to everyone, without barriers. To make this a reality, we need an NUS that truly understands and values the issues facing FE students. Too often, NUS has felt disconnected and inaccessible to FE members, and we need to change that.

Together, we can challenge these barriers, build strong regional and national connections, and ensure that Further Education has a powerful voice that cannot be ignored or sidelined.

Student Union Track Record

- **SU President of the award-winning** Dudley Students' Union, leading strategic initiatives to enhance the student experience.
- Represented a diverse student population across the West Midlands, including mature, adult, and Higher Education learners, ensuring every voice is heard, valued, and reflected in decision-making.
- Served as a **Student Governor** at my college, placing the student voice at the heart of institutional governance and influencing decisions at senior leadership level.

- Transformed the Students' Union into a more welcoming and inclusive space by organising engaging events and activities that encouraged participation and built student confidence.
- Led and organised a **West Midlands Transport Campaign Day**, successfully advocating for fairer and more affordable travel for students during the cost-of-living crisis.
- Actively lobbied government representatives and key stakeholders on transport issues, pushing for discounted or free student travel to reduce financial barriers to education.
- Took initiative to support and contribute to any opportunity that improved the Further Education (FE) experience, ensuring no opportunity was missed to benefit students.
- Built a reputation as an approachable, proactive, and student-focused leader committed to creating

My First Priority: Rebuilding the Connection Between NUS and Further Education

As a Further Education student, I observed a clear gap between NUS and FEs. FE students often miss out on updates about NUS events, campaigns, and opportunities, which creates a sense of disconnection from the wider student movement.

Through working with other colleges, I saw that this issue exists across England, with many FE colleges lacking strong links to NUS. As Vice President for Further Education, I will focus on rebuilding these connections, improving communication, and ensuring FE students feel informed, engaged, and represented.

If I Elected

If you vote for me, I will fight to ensure FE voices are heard by:

- **Strengthening communication from NUS:** Ensuring FE Students' Unions receive clear, regular updates on campaigns, why they matter, and how students can get involved. No one should feel left out or unsure about what's happening.
- **Informing and involving FE students:** Making sure every FE student understands how to contribute, share their ideas, and take part in national campaigns. When FE students are informed and engaged, their voices are stronger and more confident.

- **Amplifying FE voices:** Ensuring FE concerns are taken seriously and not overshadowed by HE priorities, so FE students are heard clearly in national discussions and decision-making.
- **Building trust through transparency:** Open communication encourages students to speak up, knowing their opinions matter and will influence real change.
- **Promoting unity and equality:** Bringing FE and HE students together, while prioritizing inclusion, to fight collectively for fair representation, respect, and a stronger student movement.
- **Creating a culture of participation:** Encouraging FE students to feel empowered, involved, and represented in NUS campaigns, events, and conferences so no FE voice is left behind.

My Second Priority: Further Education Reflection

As an FE student, I've noticed there are far fewer campaigns that focus on FE students compared to HE students. It often feels like our voices are overlooked or ignored. FE students face challenges that are different from HE students from limited funding for resources, fewer apprenticeships, and less local support, to a lack of awareness about what opportunities are available through NUS. Many FE students also feel isolated because national campaigns and events are designed mainly with, HE students in mind. On top of that, some FE colleges don't have fully independent student unions, which makes it harder for students to have a say or get involved. All of this can leave FE students feeling disconnected, unheard, and unsure if anyone is fighting for their needs

If I Elected

If elected, I will focus on the real issues FE students face and run campaigns that address them directly. FE students face some of the toughest financial pressures in the UK. As VP FE, I will fight to:

- **Expand bursaries, travel funds, and hardship support** for all FE learners to help ease financial stress.
- **Push for free or subsidised meals**, particularly for low-income students and apprentices.
- **Campaign for affordable transport**, including discounted bus, train, and tram passes for FE students.
- **Ensure access to essential learning resources**, such as equipment, uniforms, digital devices, and course materials.

FE students also face long waiting lists and underfunded support services. I will work to secure:

- **Free, prompt, and culturally competent mental health support** in every college.
- **Specialist services for care-experienced students, disabled learners, LGBTQ+ students, and international students.**
- **Trauma-informed safeguarding practices** across all FE institutions to ensure safe and supportive learning environments.

My Third Priority: More Representation for Apprentices

In the FE sector, apprentices are often underrepresented. Too often, no one speaks up for them, and many feel their voices are ignored. NAOs and other apprenticeship groups face their own battles, yet their struggles go largely unnoticed. While apprentices have recently won the minimum wage, many still face financial pressures, lack of support, and challenging working conditions.

Access to apprenticeships is uneven some regions and industries have far fewer opportunities, making it hard for young people to find roles near them. Apprenticeships are also less promoted than university pathways in schools, meaning many young people aren't aware that apprenticeships are a viable and valuable career option. FE students need recognition for these challenges, and we must make sure apprentices are included in conversations about FE issues and priorities.

If I Elected

Apprentices are a vital part of our workforce and the future economy, yet many face limited support and unequal access to opportunities. As a student union, we are committed to ensuring that every apprentice has the guidance, tools, and fair treatment they deserve. Apprentices are both workers and learners they deserve dignity and proper representation.

I will campaign for:

- **Guaranteed access to off-the-job training**, ensuring apprentices gain the skills they need rather than being treated solely as cheap labour.
- **Stronger protections** against workplace discrimination, harassment, and unsafe conditions.
- **Better pathways for progression** into employment or higher education.
- **Increased awareness of apprenticeship pathways** through schools and careers services, with clear guidance on where apprenticeships are available and how to apply.
- **Equal protections and representation rights** for apprentices, similar to students at colleges and universities.

- **Initiatives to encourage participation from underrepresented groups,** ensuring all young people have access to apprenticeship opportunities.

If I elected as Vice President for Further Education, I promise to serve you with dedication and passion. I will lead with transparency, and I will be visible, approachable, and present whenever you need me. It's time to address the challenges in our education system and work together for meaningful change. Nothing happens without you your voice, your ideas, and your support matter. I can't do this alone, and I need you alongside me to help make that change happen. If you have any questions or want to talk, please feel free to email me at Kaynat.ahmad@dudleycol.ac.uk or follow my Instagram Account [kaynatahmad4vpfe](#)

Vote for Kaynat for next VPFE. Don't ghost your vote.