

Vote Nasir Mohammed #1 For NUS VP Higher Education

@votenasir

Higher education is an absolute mess. More students than ever are entering university with hopes of unlocking a brighter future, yet the sector has refused to adapt to the realities of the student population it now serves. Unemployment is now the highest it's been since 2021, costs continue to rise, and students are expected to absorb the risk of a system that no longer guarantees opportunity. At the same time, the National Union of Students has drifted away from the student movement it was created to serve with weakened democratic engagement, delayed responses to worsening student conditions, and growing distance from students on the ground. Eroding trust when decisive leadership is most needed.



I'm Nasir Mohammed, and I'm running for Vice President Higher Education because both higher education and student representation must be rebuilt around real student lives. As a two-term sabb, I've seen students step in where institutions fall short in organising, uplifting one another, and defending their peers when national leadership fails to act. Yet I've also seen how quickly students are silenced or penalised when they challenge power. My campaign is rooted in one principle: students should not have to burn themselves out, go into debt or stay silent just to access education or be represented.

As a law graduate, I've studied the law alongside the UK constitution, not just as theory but as a system of power. Student activism taught me why change is necessary and legal study taught me how change actually happens. If we want to challenge, protect students and hold institutions to account, we need to understand both the political and legal games being played whilst also understanding how to play them better. My approach to activism has always been rooted in strategy as much as principle: knowing when to challenge, when to negotiate, and how to use the rules of the system to force progress rather than be stalled by it.

Pillar one: An Affordable, High-Quality, Career Relevant Education That Fits Around the Busy Lives of Students

Career Relevant by Design, Not Branding

Too often, "employability" is treated as a marketing slogan rather than a responsibility.

I will push universities to embed career pathways into degrees themselves, not just welding them on at the end, by:

- Prioritising paid placements, paid internships and paid research roles
- Challenging reliance on unpaid labour as a route to progression

- Supporting SUs to negotiate fair access to professional opportunities with institutions and local employers
- Lobbying the Government for a focus on employers providing a set minimum of graduate jobs and internships every year for our students

If a university advertises career outcomes, it should be accountable for helping students reach them.

The Working Student Guarantee

Students should not be academically penalised for needing to work.

I will work with Students Unions to establish a national Working Student Guarantee, setting clear expectations universities can be held to, including:

- Predictable and work-friendly timetabling, published in advance
- Lecture capture and hybrid access as standard across the full country where feasible
- Assessment windows and mitigation processes that do not punish shift based workers
- Lobby for Universities to give first preference on hiring their students for site specific roles

Transparency on Time, Cost and Value

Students deserve honesty about what a degree actually demands.

I will support Students Unions to introduce a Student Time & Cost Audit, requiring universities to be transparent about:

- Hidden course costs (materials, travel, placements, equipment)
- Realistic weekly time commitments
- How accessible support is for students who work
- How learning hours translate into progression and outcomes
- (London Specific): I will also push for the Mayor of London to reintroduce rail fare freezes, travel makes up a big amount of our spending.

Pillar two: Protecting Student Activism and Rebuilding a Democratic Student Movement

Protecting Student Activism, Not Policing It

Too many students and leaders face disciplinary action, surveillance or informal intimidation simply for speaking out or organising collectively. Especially in relation to Pro-Palestine activism. Activism is praised in theory but punished in practice.

I will work with Students Unions to:

- Challenge the misuse of disciplinary and conduct processes against student activists
- Share national guidance and case support when students are targeted
- Affirm protest, political expression, and solidarity as protected parts of student life
- Work to make NUS a movement reflective of its members

Ending Silence and Selective Leadership

When students face repression, discrimination, or global injustice, delayed or selective responses from national leadership undermine trust and legitimacy.

I will push for:

- Clear expectations on when and how NUS responds to major student-facing issues
- Transparency around decision-making and delays
- An end to “neutrality” being used as an excuse for inaction when students are being harmed

Rebuilding NUS as a Democratic, Responsive Movement

NUS cannot represent students effectively if it is structurally distant from them. This is about rebuilding trust, participation and ownership within the student movement.

As VPHE, I will work to:

- Strengthen democratic engagement between NUS and member Students Unions
- Support greater transparency in governance and policy formation
- Ensure students and officers can meaningfully influence national positions, not just endorse them

From Symbolic Representation to Real Power

Representation without leverage leaves students exposed.

I will focus on:

- Giving SUs the tools, coordination and backing to challenge institutions collectively
- Turning national positions into pressure that produces outcomes

- Ensuring NUS acts decisively when students are under threat, rather than after the moment has passed
- Lobby for Universities to adopt an ethical investment policy

Pillar three: Standing With Students in Crisis, From Palestine Solidarity to Graduate Reform

Defending Pro-Palestine Activism and the Right to Solidarity

Palestine solidarity activism has become one of the clearest tests of whether universities and national bodies genuinely defend student rights, or selectively enforce them.

I will:

- Defend the right of students to organise, protest, and speak in solidarity with Palestine without fear of punishment
- Challenge the misuse of conduct and security frameworks to silence political expression
- Ensure NUS responds clearly and consistently when students face repression for Palestine activism

Rebuilding Education After Conflict: Gaza and Beyond (NEW)

Education is one of the first casualties of war and one of the most important tools for recovery. In Gaza, every university has been damaged or destroyed. Thousands of students have had their education violently interrupted or erased altogether. Similar realities face students from other conflict-affected and displaced communities.

As VPHE, I will lobby for a coordinated sector-wide response to rebuild access to education through:

- Dedicated scholarship pathways for Palestinian students whose universities have been destroyed
- Expanded conflict and displacement scholarships for students affected by war, occupation, or forced displacement
- Fee waivers, visa support advocacy and pastoral protections for students entering UK HE from crisis contexts
- Partnerships with universities to recognise disrupted learning and provide flexible entry routes

Crisis & Conflict Student Support Framework

When global crises erupt universities are quick to issue statements. Students affected by those crises are often left without meaningful support.

I will work to establish a national Crisis & Conflict Student Support Framework, committing institutions to:

- Emergency academic flexibility and deadline protections
- Hardship funding and accommodation support
- Fee flexibility and compassionate consideration for affected students
- Transparent and consistent criteria so support is not politicised or discretionary

From Graduation to Dignified Work

Graduate unemployment remains high, unpaid labour is normalised and “entry-level” roles increasingly demand years of experience.

As VPHE, I will:

- Challenge universities that over-promise career outcomes without delivering support
- Push for transparency around graduate destinations and exploitative employment pipelines
- Support SUs to advocate for ethical employment partnerships and paid opportunities

Graduates deserve more than debt and false assurances.