

News Release



Southampton University
Students' Union

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grantsnotfees

Mass student protest at Southampton city centre (Hoglands Park)

Students from all over the south east of England will be converging on **Southampton city centre** tomorrow (Thursday November 22nd) to *protest against increasing student debt*. Students will be converging on **South Front – Hoglands Park** at **2:30pm** with the march leaving at **3pm**.

Student debt currently stands at over **£5 billion** – the same as the national debt of Zambia, Mozambique and Madagascar combined. This is a huge burden on all students, especially those from lower income backgrounds who do not receive support from home. A vast amount of students have to work the longest hours in paid work to make ends meet and as a result, struggle to maintain their grades. As a result of financial struggle and debt, many students from poorer backgrounds are being put off from going to university.

Stephen Edwards - Southampton University Students' Union President said:

“The national student debt is spiralling out of control with students leaving university with crippling debts. Many students are working long hours in part time jobs and are having to sacrifice the time they should be spending on their studies in order to pay their way through University. With the announcement of a Government review of student funding this is now a crucial time for students ensure that money is put into Higher Education. **This rally is a message to this government that students, and indeed the Higher Education sector as a whole, must be funded properly.**”

NUS National Executive Committee said:

“The government is currently reviewing the system of student finance after pressure from students, parents and the media. Now is the time to urge the government to make the right changes, which encourage young people to continue in education, not put them off from fear of debt. NUS' key messages include **an end to tuition fees**, the return of grants for the poorest students and the extension of the social security benefits system for all students who need it.”

Notes to editors

1. Southampton students are available for interview by contacting the Southampton University Students' Union Vice-President (Communications).
2. The NUS President (Owain James) and Southampton University Students' Union President (Stephen Edwards) will be available for interview on the day of the rally.
3. There will be a press photo opportunity at Southampton University Students' Union at 1pm on 23rd November where the power of a fork-lift truck will be used to ease the burden of student debt.