

NUS calls for student support

✘ NUS Scotland has called for action to improve student support following the [BBC's Graduation Game](#) investigation into higher education in Scotland which aired yesterday. You can still watch it on iPlayer.

The programme outlined that demand for hardship funds in Scotland – funds for the poorest students in financial crisis – had increased by 40% over the last five years. It also pointed to research which showed on average students are £35 less well off at university than if on benefits.

Now that the vast majority of parties have ruled out tuition fees in Scotland, NUS Scotland is calling for action to protect graduate numbers and improve student support.

Liam Burns, President of NUS Scotland, said:-“Tuition fees have dominated the debate for too long. We now know that any funding gap for institutions is manageable without fees, and almost every party has now rightly ruled them out. However, even without fees many of our poorest students are being priced out of education in Scotland due to not having enough money to get by. We must now move on to how we, as a country, can improve help for our poorest students.

“The status quo isn't working. It's simply unacceptable that we allow what amounts to a benefits trap where people would be financially better off on benefits than in studying at university. Now we've ruled out tuition fees we must now move on to how we improve the financial help we offer the poorest Scottish students, bringing them at least up to the poverty line.

“Ahead of the elections in May we'll be calling on every candidate hoping to be elected to commit to not only ruling out fees, but also protecting numbers and improving financial support. Ruling out fees is great, but it is only one step

forward. We must ensure that we don't price out the poorest students through a failing student support system.