

# NUS Motion Submission

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A motion is a proposed policy. It states what we believe about an issue, and the action we will take. Any students' union that is affiliated to NUS can submit a motion or amendment to National Conference.

The motion is discussed and debated by King's students at AGM, and if it passes, it is sent to NUS National Conference. There, it will be discussed and voted on again, and if it passes, will become NUS policy, so will set out NUS' political stance and work for the year ahead.

## Motion to Affirm (NUS) Conference's Commitment to Freedom of Speech

### Conference believes:

- 1) Free speech is defined as the freedom to express any views or opinions, without censorship or restraint, which do not contravene existing UK law. [1]
- 2) This year, King's College, London Students Union employed a "Safe Space" policy during a student led event with a democratically elected Member of Parliament. [2]
- 3) The Chancellor of Oxford University decried as "fascistic behaviour" the trend of certain Students Unions to censor or ban controversial speakers, labelling "Safe Spaces" and "No-Platforming" as "fundamentally offensive". [3]
- 4) Professor Dennis Hayes, of Derby University, noted in June 2017 that a "climate of censorious attitudes" has left academics at British Universities "in fear of their jobs". [4]
- 5) The President of Sussex Students Union, Frida Gustafsson, was threatened with a No-Confidence Vote for taking a picture with a democratically elected Member of Parliament. [5]
- 6) The government have deemed it necessary to create the new Office for Students with powers to fine, suspend, or deregister universities that do not protect free speech under law. [6]

### Conference further believes:

- 1) Universities should be places where different points of view are aired, debated and rigorously interrogated.
- 2) In order to foster comprehensive and rigorous debate, students, academics, and guests of student societies should feel free to voice controversial opinions that do not contravene UK law.
- 3) The censorship of democratically elected Members of Parliament, outside of what is already regulated by UK law, is antithetical to liberal democratic principles of freedom, and is regrettable.
- 4) The trend within UK universities, and their student unions, to stifle or ban controversial speakers through safe spaces and no-platforming, beyond what is already legislated for under UK law, is regrettable, and must be reversed.

### Conference resolves:

- 1) To call for all student unions to drop their safe space and no-platform policies.



## Citations

[1] [https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/freedom\\_of\\_speech](https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/freedom_of_speech)

[2] <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/kings-college-slammed-for-patronising-and-problematic-safe-space-marshals-paid-12-an-hour-to-police-a3669151.html>

[3] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/2017/11/04/safe-spaces-universities-fundamentally-offensive-says-oxford/>

[4] <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/university-safe-spaces-academics-professors-fear-lose-jobs-students-free-speech-political-correct-pc-a7815991.html>

[5] <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/frida-gustafsson-sussex-university-rees-mogg-picture-protest-withdrawn-9qvz3fhnd>

[6] <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-universities-regulator-comes-into-force>

## KCLSU Point of Information

KCLSU has a Safe Space policy which can be found [on our website](#). KCLSU does not have a no-platform policy.

KCLSU and KCL have recognised the challenges in balancing our commitments to freedom of expression, with appropriate safeguards of freedom from harm, and have agreed to take part in a joint external review of the Union's and University's policies and procedures relating to these areas. This work has commenced with the support of consultancy agency.

KCLSU is consulting members on a joint KCLSU/KCL [Freedom of Expression Statement](#), which will form the basis for the policy and procedure decisions to be taken.

KCLSU has recently considered a student idea to [remove safe space marshals](#). The idea was proposed and was discussed and decided by a KCLSU Union Development Committee (elected student representatives). The Committee did not approve the idea to remove safe space marshals.