

Lancaster University Students' Union AGM 2026

Motion 1

Title: *Referendum on disaffiliation to NUS UK*

Proposer: *Sam Burgess*

The Students' Union notes:

1. Twelve SU's across the country have held referendums on their membership of NUS UK and 10 have voted to disaffiliate since 2025, including Cambridge, York, LSE and Liverpool Guild.
2. Since October 2023, at least 62,614 Palestinians have been killed by Israel's continued indiscriminate violence.¹ The UN, the International Court of Justice², leading humanitarian organisations³, legal scholars and genocide experts⁴ have recognised Israel's actions in Gaza as genocide, as defined under the Genocide Convention.
3. In June 2024, LUSU demanded Lancaster University release a letter standing "unequivocally on the side of Palestine" after a petition with 429 signatures and a debate at Union Assembly⁵.
4. An open letter to the NUS Board of Directors, published in 2025, condemns NUS UK's failures to speak out against the genocide in Palestine and to support student protestors. The letter has been signed by 210+ student officers, societies and groups across 55+ campuses⁶.
5. NUS UK have threatened to ban SU officers who signed the open letter from their events⁷ and silenced an elected SU officer at the 2024 National Conference for wearing a keffiyeh, a traditional scarf.

¹ <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/longform/2023/10/9/israel-hamas-war-in-maps-and-charts-live-tracker>

² <https://opiniojuris.org/2024/04/05/the-icjs-findings-on-plausible-genocide-in-gaza-and-its-implications-for-the-international-criminal-court/>

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/amnesty-international-concludes-israel-is-committing-genocide-against-palestinians-in-gaza/>

⁴ <https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/top-genocide-scholars-unanimous-israel-committing-genocide-gaza-investigation-finds>

⁵ https://assets.prod.unioncloud-internal.com/document/documents/118670/694bcb00c2415a1cc7e904827dadd4f1/Lancaster_Palestine_Solidarity_Encampment_Policy_June_2024.pdf

⁶ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1okG6sJf1vHGMsH0SWXB7y0NldDOWFV_8-RakuJxopgY/edit?tab=t.0

⁷ <https://www.gaudie.co.uk/wpress/index.php/news/2025/07/24/nus-threatens-to-ban-pro-palestine-student-officers-from-training-conference/>

6. It costs up to £30,700 a year to affiliate to NUS UK. Lancaster is paying £28,537 as of 2025.⁸
7. NUS UK is a separate organisation to NUS Charity, who provides admin and operational support to students' unions, and disaffiliating from NUS UK will not mean disaffiliation from NUS Charity.
8. The government suspended engagement with the NUS in 2022 due to allegations of systematic antisemitism.⁹
9. NUS UK's own independent investigation into antisemitism, the Tuck Report, revealed ingrained bigotry against Jewish staff, students and stakeholders¹⁰.

The Students' Union believes:

1. NUS UK has failed to act on the motion passed at its highest decision-making level to campaign against the genocide in Palestine.
2. NUS UK has failed to support students who have been targeted for opposing the genocide in Palestine.
3. The IHRA definition of antisemitism, which has been adopted by NUS UK, conflates antisemitism and Zionism¹¹, and has been weaponised to silence criticism of Israel.¹²
4. NUS UK's failure to oppose the genocide in Palestine and support student protestors is not aligned with LUSU's values.
5. NUS UK is undemocratic in its treatment and silencing of elected SU officers and its lack of communication with and accountability to the student body at Lancaster and elsewhere.
6. By voting to disaffiliate, several other SUs have decided that the benefits of NUS UK membership are not worth the annual cost. This should be decided by LUSU members.

⁸ https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search?p_p_id=uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet&p_p_lifecycle=2&p_p_state=maximized&p_p_mode=view&p_p_resource_id=%2Faccounts-resource&p_p_cacheability=cacheLevelPage&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_objectiveId=A17839748&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_priv_r_p_mvcRenderCommandName=%2Faccounts-and-annual-returns&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_priv_r_p_organisationNumber=5094299&_uk_gov_ccew_onereg_charitydetails_web_portlet_CharityDetailsPortlet_priv_r_p_organisationNumber=5094299

⁹ <https://www.thetimes.com/uk/religion/article/government-severs-ties-with-nus-over-antisemitic-rot-at-its-heart-m28gqsgd5>; <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-suspends-engagement-with-the-nus-over-antisemitism>

¹⁰ https://assets.nationbuilder.com/nus/pages/108/attachments/original/1673471780/Independent_Investigation_into_Antisemitism_Report_NUS_12_January_2023.pdf

¹¹ <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/19436149.2024.2330821>

¹² <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/files/documents/Freedom%20of%20Speech%20and%20Academic%20Freedom%20in%20UK%20Higher%20Education-BRISMES-ELSC.pdf>; <https://www.brismes.ac.uk/news/the-abuse-of-risk-assessments-to-curtailed-academic-freedom-freedom-of-expression-and-freedom-of-assembly>

The Students' Union resolves:

1. To hold an all-student referendum in the Michaelmas term of the 2026-27 academic year, asking the question "Should Lancaster University SU disaffiliate from the National Union of Students UK (NUS UK)?" This referendum will be held separately to any LUSU Officer elections happening that term.
2. To publicise and promote this referendum to the best of its ability, to ensure that voter turn-out is sufficiently high to reach quorum and be representative of the student body.
3. To ensure to the best of its ability that all students are informed of the benefits and disadvantages of disaffiliation before voting.
4. To designate a member of staff to ensure the fulfilment of this motion.