

Welcome to the **UNISON student newsletter**, produced for all students, whatever your course and wherever you are studying. So, if you are returning to studying, or about to embark on a new career UNISON, the UK's leading trade union, will be with you every step of the way.

# UNISON student

Autumn 2014 [unison.org.uk](http://unison.org.uk)

## UNISON calls for a living bursary

UNISON's new Living Bursary campaign launches soon – watch out for it on our website and social media. Be part of it – join UNISON now at [joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org).

UNISON believes that being a healthcare student is tough. Unlike other students you don't have long set holidays or work in placements from Monday to Friday. When other students are off on holiday you can be found on one of your many clinical placements. When they finish their study day at university and go home, you often go onto a placement.

You don't fit the stereotype of a student out partying all of the time. You are often on an early shift in your placement and are helping to care for seriously unwell patients. When your friends text you, to see if you are up for a night out, you often have to say no as you may be working a night shift.

UNISON believes that these differences mean you should receive a living bursary. You work the same hours, take the same risks and are exposed to the same hazards as NHS staff when you are on placements. We know that you are in a no win situation. It's almost impossible to survive financially on your NHS bursary and if you work it can have a negative impact on your studies. This, coupled with the fact that universities discourage students from working, results in you building up increasing levels of debt during your studies. Debts, which you will take in to your first job and which could be hanging over your head for years.

Our living bursary campaign will be our key student campaign in the run up to the general election. In previous student campaigns we won maternity and

paternity rights for students and we are as determined to win this. Many will say it's unaffordable but that's simply not the case, investing in you now will save money later down the line. Others will say it will mean students will lose their supernumerary status, this simply isn't the case. Working alongside you right now are students who are seconded on to their training. They do exactly the same as you; the only difference is that they are taking home a wage rather than a bursary each month.

Gail Adams, Head of Nursing said: "It

is ridiculous to expect healthcare students to survive on the current level of financial support. UNISON has argued for some time that students should be employed and receive a salary; this continues to be our policy. However in the meantime, we want to secure a living bursary for all of our hard working healthcare students.

"I trained as a nurse 30 years ago and I was better off in 1984 than a student is in 2014. If we condemn students to years of debt why would they want to work in the NHS?."

### Fact #1

If students had continued to be salaried when training was moved to higher education and it has kept pace with NHS pay increases their annual wage in their first year would now be £14,500 today.

### Fact #2

If the bursary was brought in line with the living wage, healthcare students would receive £13,300 a year in London and £11,475 outside.

### Fact #3

The average age of a student now is 28, the vast majority are women and almost 50% of them have children or carer responsibilities. That's why we want you to join in our campaign, look at our web site for more information, join us on UNISON nursing facebook page or follow us on twitter @unisonnurses @unisonournhs

### Bursary rates

These are the rates for 2014; they don't include other allowances such as childcare

Country	Bursary non means tested	Bursary means tested	Loan
Cymru/Wales	£1,000	£4,395	£3,583
England	£1,000	£2,444	£2,324
Scotland	£6,578	n/a	n/a

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## Be safe when using social media

In the workplace, a good rule of thumb is 'don't post anything you wouldn't be happy for your boss to see' – this applies to your placements and universities.

UNISON has represented a significant number of students over social media posting in the last year – don't be caught out follow these golden rules.

We all like to use social media to update our friends on what we've been doing. But if you don't use it responsibly, you can find yourself in hot water! Always remember everyone can see these pages and even if you change your settings to private there's no guarantee that a throw away comment made in jest won't come back to haunt you. It's always better to be safe than sorry, so be extra careful with what you post – including images.

Nowadays most universities and employers (where you are on placement) have social media policies in place to remind students and members of staff that they should be responsible and respectful of one another when using these sites. In fact, some employers even state that the content that you post on social media sites can be 'relevant to your employment'. Prospective employers may search on social media including LinkedIn to check information.

No matter how stressful your shift or placement is, it's never a good idea to post your frustrations on Facebook or Twitter. It's more productive, and far safer, for you to pick up the phone and talk through your issues with a colleague, friend or family member.

So be safe when using social media! Only go on Facebook or Twitter during your breaks, get familiar with your social media policies (they can differ from placement to placement) and think twice before pressing enter because even though you can hit the delete button, it might just be too late.

1. Do use social media its a great communication tool
2. Don't talk about patients or put information about them on sites
3. Don't criticise your university or placement on social media
4. Don't upload images from clinical placements onto facebook
5. Don't upload photos of you doing funny or naughty things in your uniform



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## NHS pay dispute – why it matters to students

You may have heard in the news that UNISON along with the Royal College of Midwives and others are balloting their members in light of this year's pay dispute.

Even though you are a student this is important to you because it's about ensuring that when you qualify you receive a fair wage. In the early 1980s nurses took industrial action and part of the outcome of that dispute was that the government introduced an independent pay review body. This year the secretary of state Jeremy Hunt has chosen to ignore the decision of the pay review body and as a result 60% of health staff in England will get no pay rise this year and probably the same will be true next year as well. And this is on top of a three year pay freeze.

Now health workers are saying enough is enough. We want students to be involved in the campaign and play a part in ensuring fair pay. We believe NHS staff are worth it.

You can find out more about our campaign and steps you can take at [unison.org.uk/at-work/health-care/key-issues/nhs-pay/home](https://unison.org.uk/at-work/health-care/key-issues/nhs-pay/home)

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## Review of allowances

The Department of Health (England) is currently undertaking a review of the allowances available to healthcare students. UNISON has argued that this is long overdue. The review will look at childcare, carers and dependants allowances.

UNISON head of nursing Gail Adams is keen to hear from you about the benefits and challenges of the scheme. Please email her at [gail.adams@unison.co.uk](mailto:gail.adams@unison.co.uk) to find out more information and to share your experiences.

### Preparing for your first placement? Here are five handy tips to help you survive...

1. Check out where it is – do a dummy run so you can work out the best way to travel there
2. If you can, visit and say hello before you start as this can make a really good impression
3. Be neat and tidy
4. Be on time – whatever happens don't be late on your first day
5. Introduce yourself to everyone you meet.



## UNISON and Nursing Times in partnership

Keeping your knowledge and skills up to date will be forever part of your working life. The Nursing Times is the largest independent nursing publication. By using your UNISON membership you can access all research articles, keep up to date on news and opinions and have a hard copy delivered to your door for 20% less. The beauty of this isn't just the discount – which is a bargain – it means that no matter where you are on placement or sitting at home you will only ever be two clicks away from up-to-date information. It beats having to stay late at the library.

## Why should you CoppaFeel?

The inspirational CoppaFeel! Charity is on a mission to stamp out late detection of breast cancer.

How? By ensuring that you know the signs and symptoms of breast cancer, know what your boobs look and feel like normally, check your boobs regularly throughout your lifetime and have the confidence to see a doctor if you notice anything that doesn't feel right for you. Early detection is the best form of defence when treating breast cancer so the sooner you know what's normal for you the better.

You may spot the CoppaFeel! team at your university. If you do have a chat about becoming an official uni boob team leader. The scheme will equip you with the tools to get the CoppaFeel! message that knowing your boobs could save your life out to your fellow students.

To find out more information about the CoppaFeel! campaign, visit [coppafeel.org](http://coppafeel.org)

UNISON supports many cancer charities and we like Coppafeel's commitment to normalise talking about cancer with school age children and the reality is that the earlier cancer is detected the better someone's chances are.



**Young members**  
If you are under 27 why not sign up to receive information about our young members events and campaigns. Find out more at [unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/member-groups/young-members/](http://unison.org.uk/about/our-organisation/member-groups/young-members/)

## UNISON BOOK Club

Brought to you in partnership with Oxford University Press

There will be some books you glance at but some you will use throughout your career. UNISON has developed a partnership with Oxford University Press and as a UNISON member **you can get up to 20% discount** off hundreds of their publications.

Look at their catalogue and to find out more including how to order, go to [oup.com/uk/sale/unison](http://oup.com/uk/sale/unison)

### When you qualify

Don't forget to tell UNISON when you complete your training and become fully qualified; we can update your membership to ensure that you are a 'full' member. If you don't, you may find yourself in a situation where we can't help you when you need us most.

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## GREAT DEALS FOR UNISON MEMBERS

**As a member of UNISON you get help at work when you need it most, but our support doesn't end when you leave work.**

Every member, wherever you work, receives our full range of member benefits and services. We have negotiated a range of exclusive deals and discounts with a number of reputable companies to add real value to your UNISON membership.

So go to our website, check out our range of deals and start saving today. Call free on 0800 0 857 857 or visit [unison.org.uk/for-members](http://unison.org.uk/for-members)

  
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## UNISON working with the National Union of Students

Every university and college in the country has its own students' union (SU) and you are automatically a member of the SU, unless you choose to opt out. The vast majority of SUs are members of the National Union of Students (NUS), who represent students at a national level.

Your SU should be able to offer advice, referral or representation on general issues around your education and welfare, including funding, housing and academic appeals. This may be provided in conjunction with your UNISON rep for certain matters like fitness to practice. They will also offer a variety of student activities, and can help you get in touch with your local union's society – or set one up if it doesn't yet exist. Talk to them about the NUS Extra discount card.

You can get more details about NUS and contacts for your local SU at [nus.org.uk](http://nus.org.uk)

**Three simple ways to join UNISON today  
and get essential cover wherever you work**



Join online at  
[joinunison.org](http://joinunison.org)



Call us on  
**0800 171 2193**



Ask your UNISON rep  
for an application form