

Strath Union Standing Policies

Updated 26.08.2026

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Mandatory deadlines for opening all MyPlace pages

Passed 27.11.2023 and will lapse at the end of the 26-27 academic year unless retained.

Policy Summary

Strathclyde Student's Union should support a mandatory deadline for university staff to open all MyPlace pages for class modules by to support students with their preparation for the semester ahead.

Student Parliament notes

1. There is currently no fixed deadline for MyPlace course pages to be opened by.
2. There is a similar fixed deadline for return of marks which should act as a guideline for this policy.
3. There are many students throughout the university who have caring responsibilities.
4. The student population includes 8% of those with disabilities who seek the support of the university's disability and wellbeing services, according to the Student Equality Monitoring Report (2022).

Student Parliament believes

1. That Strathclyde Student's Union should support students having adequate preparation time for their studies during week 0 (induction week) of the semester.
2. That Strathclyde Student's Union should encourage staff to endorse this policy.
3. That the University of Strathclyde should make a deadline of the first working day of induction week(s), by 1700 hrs to have all MyPlace pages opened by.

Student Parliament instructs

1. Strath Union should conduct further research and surveys into responsibilities outside of university that may impact a student's learning experience.
2. The executive to lobby the university to make this deadline mandatory across all four teaching schools by September 2023.
3. Strathclyde Students Union to work with students impacted by this in a working group to further explore the impact that late MyPlace page openings have on a students life.
4. Strathclyde Student's Union to work cooperatively with the disability and wellbeing services to ensure that the proposed deadline would ensure students are able to access and book the support they require ahead of classes starting.
5. The executive to encourage the Student Equality Monitoring Report to include information on student's with external working commitments and those with caring responsibilities (both dependants and other).

Support for Palestine

First passed: 27/11/2023	Duration: 3 years
Lapsing: End of 26-27 academic year	Ownership: President

WHEREAS:

Israel has engaged in systematic oppression and domination of Palestinians in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT) amounting to apartheid and persecution.¹

Strath Union stands in support of freedom and liberation for all peoples. We encourage individuals to participate and empower others to speak their truth. Strath Union notes that ‘there are often attempts to silence critics of Israel by conflating legitimate criticism with antisemitism.’²

The ‘IHRA working definition of antisemitism’ adopted by many UK universities has been criticised by recognised experts on antisemitism, Jewish history, and related subjects as unsuitable for universities.³ This definition and its illustrative examples ‘conflate criticisms of Israel, its illegal policies, practices and the political ideology on which the state was founded, with antisemitism’ and has been used at UK universities, including in Glasgow, to restrict pro-Palestine academic events.⁴

Boycott, divestment, and sanctions of the Israeli state is ‘the most effective grassroots means for applying nonviolent pressure to change Israeli policies.’⁵

Israeli academic institutions participate in Israel’s occupation mechanisms by way of weapons technology development, military recruitment, and legal support.⁶

¹ Amnesty International. 2022. Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity. Report, London: Amnesty International Ltd.

² Jewish Voice for Peace. 2023. *Frequently Asked Questions*. 10 11. <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/faq/>.

³ 2023. Freedom of Speech and Academic Freedom in UK Higher Education: The Adverse Impact of the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism. European Legal Support Center, British Society for Middle Eastern Studies.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Jewish Voice for Peace. 2023. *Frequently Asked Questions*. 10 11. <https://www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org/faq/>.

⁶ Kogan, Yaniv. 2022. “Academia, weapons and occupation: this is how Tel Aviv University serves the interests of the military and the defense industry.” *Zo HaDarekh*. 07 04. Accessed 11 14, 2023. <https://zoha.org.il/111858/>.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the Palestinian state and its right to self-determination. Strath Union supports an end to the occupation of Palestinian territory by the Israeli state.

Strathclyde Students' Union opposes the IHRA working definition of antisemitism and rejects the false conflation of anti-Zionism with antisemitism. Strath Union calls on all appropriate bodies including, but not limited to, Strathclyde University, the NUS, and the Office for Students not to use the IHRA working definition to assess antisemitism in relation to complaints raised.

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the right of free expression on campus, including the display of symbols of support for Palestine. Strath Union stands by students and academics calling for a free Palestine and supports the right to criticise the Israeli state.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT:

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the Palestinian civil society call for boycott, divestment, and sanctions of companies with ties to the Israeli government. As an organisation, Strath Union will endeavour to sever all commercial and political ties with Israeli-affiliated groups and corporations and encourage the same of partners, including Strathclyde University.

Strathclyde Students' Union supports a boycott of collaborations with Israeli academic institutions until Israel ends its war on Gaza as well as its occupation and apartheid rule in Israel/Palestine, noting that this boycott does not preclude collaboration with individual Israeli scholars.

Motion: **BE IT RESOLVED THAT** (moved President, seconded Vice President Inclusion) that the Union adopt the 'Support for Palestine' policy as presented,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Strath Union support and advocate for: an immediate ceasefire in Gaza; the restoration of water, food, fuel, medical supplies, and humanitarian aid; the immediate protection of medical facilities; and the facilitation of safe passage for casualties and critically ill individuals in need of medical treatment,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT Strath Union's Trustee Board conduct a review of the Union's commercial and political ties to Israel in order to move toward boycott, divestment, and sanctions of the state of Israel and report back to Student Parliament by the end of its 2023-2024 session.

Data Collection of Names, Gender, and Titles

First passed: 27/11/2023	Duration: 3 years
Lapsing: End of 26-27 academic year	Ownership: VP Inclusion

WHEREAS:

Non-binary and genderfluid identities fall under the protected characteristic of gender reassignment in the Equality Act 2010.¹ As a socially progressive institution, it is advisable that non-binary, intersex, gender diverse, and genderqueer are all protected to ensure Strathclyde is safe for all.

Many gender-diverse students are eager to see a gender option in Strathclyde University's student registration and information system (hereinafter 'Pegasus') in which they can accurately register their gender, which may differ from the data held in the 'sex' field. The 'known as' or 'preferred name' field can prevent trans students from being revealed inadvertently by system limitations. It is vital to build a gender question that can accurately reflect the diverse gender in our community.

Registration system improvements on name (including 'known as' or 'preferred' name), title field, and gender field will also benefit many student groups, such as international students who use shortened names or English names that differ from the names recorded on their visa. Pegasus allows UK students (and those not subject to UKVI rules) to change their registered name without making it their 'legal name.' This system is inaccessible to some student groups. For instance, students bound to UKVI rules (e.g., international students) will not be able to go through the same procedure as UK students (and those not subject to UKVI rules). It also creates a barrier for students who cannot change their names due to external and social factors.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the following changes to Strathclyde University's data collection protocols:

The recording of two sets of data for each student:

- Set 1 – for legal purposes (e.g., HESA and UKVI), which record a student's legal name and sex.
- Set 2 – for on-campus use, which records a student's 'known as' or 'preferred' name and gender.

¹ *Taylor v Jaguar Land Rover Ltd.* 2020. 1304471/2018 (Employment Tribunal, 14 09).

Although student data will be auto-filled from information provided upon admission, students can change their Set 2 data on Pegasus to reflect their identities. Students will be informed that they can change their 'known as' or 'preferred' name on a self-service basis with limited times, as it will be used to generate their email address. However, they can change their gender data for unlimited time.

The legal name will still be registered, but the 'known as' or 'preferred name' (Set 2) will be how the University and the Union refer to the students daily and across all platforms and systems, which includes, but is not limited to, teaching activities, Strath App, Pegasus, MyPlace, email addresses, Strath Union website. It is essential to communicate to students that the collection of their Set 1 data (which is part of HESA requirements, with three options – female, male and other / prefer not to say) will not be used as the sex/gender registered on their student record.

Strathclyde University should clearly communicate why the data is being collected and recorded and how each data set will be used so that students can answer accordingly, including asking the name students would like to be referred to if the communication will likely be seen by individuals other than the student referred to (e.g., physical mail sent to their home address) to prevent trans students' identity from being revealed unwillingly as this may cause safety issues for those students.

The standard title options, including 'Mx', should be permitted on the system.

There should also be a 'no title' option, as many people do not use a title.

Digital learning materials

WHEREAS:

First passed: 27/11/2023	Duration: 3 years
Lapsing: End of 26-27 academic year	Ownership: VP Education

Textbook inflation since 1977 is 1,041 percent – nearly four times the overall rate of inflation – with university books and equipment costing an average UK student between £450 and £1070 per year.¹ Nearly a quarter (23%) of students report not being able to afford necessary course textbooks² with seven in ten (70%) of students skipping buying necessary textbooks and learning materials.³

In-person and full-time learners with physical access to campus are able to borrow many required learning materials from the University of Strathclyde’s library, saving on textbook and learning material costs. Part-time and distance learners without physical access to the library rely on digital learning resources, including textbooks in electronic format.

According to the Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL): ‘Economic and technological changes in the current publishing market have led to libraries being increasingly excluded from, or priced out of, providing e-books and e-textbooks for students and library users. Many of the models and fees charged by publishers have either become prohibitively expensive, or libraries are no longer permitted to purchase these titles at all, creating an unsustainable situation.’⁴

Open Educational Resources – openly licenced materials that can be accessed, edited, and shared without cost or restriction⁵ – have been shown to reduce price barriers to higher

¹ University of Essex. 2016. “£630 per student: the cost of paper textbooks.” *University of Essex Online*. 18 March. Accessed November 17, 2023. <https://online.essex.ac.uk/blog/630-per-student-the-cost-of-paper-textbooks/>.

² Jenkins, Richard. 2022. “Almost a quarter of UK University students can't afford to buy textbooks.” *The Scotsman*. 25 May. Accessed 11 20, 2023. <https://www.scotsman.com/read-this/almost-a-quarter-of-uk-university-students-cant-afford-to-buy-textbooks-3708989>.

³ BibliU/Censuswide. 2021. “Press Release: 70% of UK students have skipped buying course-required textbooks.” *BibliU*. 18 November. Accessed November 17, 2023. <https://bibliu.com/in-the-news/uk-students-skipped-buying-textbooks>.

⁴ Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL). 2021. *Joint statement on access to e-book and e-textbook content*. 06 October. Accessed 11 20, 2023. <https://www.sconul.ac.uk/page/joint-statement-on-access-to-e-book-and-e-textbook-content>.

⁵ William & Flora Hewlett Foundation. 2017. *Open Education*. Accessed 11 20, 2023. <https://hewlett.org/strategy/open-education/>.

education, increase participation among underrepresented groups, and bring more socially just practices into higher education.¹

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

Strathclyde Students' Union supports the ready and equitable availability of digital learning resources including, but not limited to, e-textbooks. The University of Strathclyde should be responsible for making digital course materials accessible as they do with physical copies via the library. Strathclyde Students' Union supports the use of Open Educational Resources and will advocate at all levels for the increased availability of free and accessible educational resources and learning materials.

All departments offering part-time and online degrees should ensure the availability of e-textbooks and e-books reflects the needs of part-time and distance learners. In the development of course syllabi and required materials, lecturers should ensure there are sufficient digital copies of required course materials at the University library.

In order to ensure the availability of digital learning resources, libraries must be permitted to purchase all titles in electronic format from a publisher's catalogue that are otherwise available for individuals to purchase. Pricing models for e-textbooks and e-books from publishers to university libraries should be based on estimated usage and negotiated in partnership with libraries.

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¹ Jenkins, J. Jacob, Luis A Sanchez, Megan A. K. Schraedley, Jaime Hannans, Nitzan Navick, and Jade Young. 2020. "Textbook Broke: Textbook Affordability as a Social Justice Issue." *Journal of Interactive Media in Education* 1-13. doi:10.5334/jime.549.

¹ Society of College, National and University Libraries (SCONUL). 2021. "Position paper: E-book and e-textbook." October. Accessed November 17, 2023.
<https://www.sconul.ac.uk/sites/default/files/documents/SCONUL%20e-book%20and%20e-textbook%20Sustainability%20Position%20paper%20October%202021.pdf>.