

Committee Title	Student Voice					
Date of Meeting	6 th December 2021					
Item Number and Title/Subject	Block Grant Increase Motion					
Paper Presenter	Jonnie England, Vice Chair					
Brief Summary of Issues/Topic	<p>The block grant is university funding for the Students' Association (SA). It is the main source of income and hence determines what the SA can undertake for the benefits of students. The Block Grant has failed to increase (and in fact decrease) in 5 years.</p> <p>This motion is calling for Full Time Officers to negotiate a block grant increase to at least the Scottish average per student (as calculated by NUS) in the next fiscal year and to negotiate at least an inflation meeting increase subsequently for the next five years.</p>					
Recommendation(s)	Information		Discussion		Approval	X
	<p><i>Any member can ask a question by raising their voting card and being recognised by the Chair to speak.</i></p> <p>Student Voice is asked to approve the Motion on Block Grant Increase</p>					
Who have you consulted when developing the paper?	Student Voice Team Leader					
Staff/Student Protocol	Yes		No	X	N/A	
Will any decision approved directly affect the work of staff?						
Should the paper be submitted to any other committee following its consideration/approval at this meeting?	Trustee Board					
If yes, please state the committee and proposed date of submission.						

Motion: Year on year increase to the block grant funding to the Students' Association for the next five years minimum.

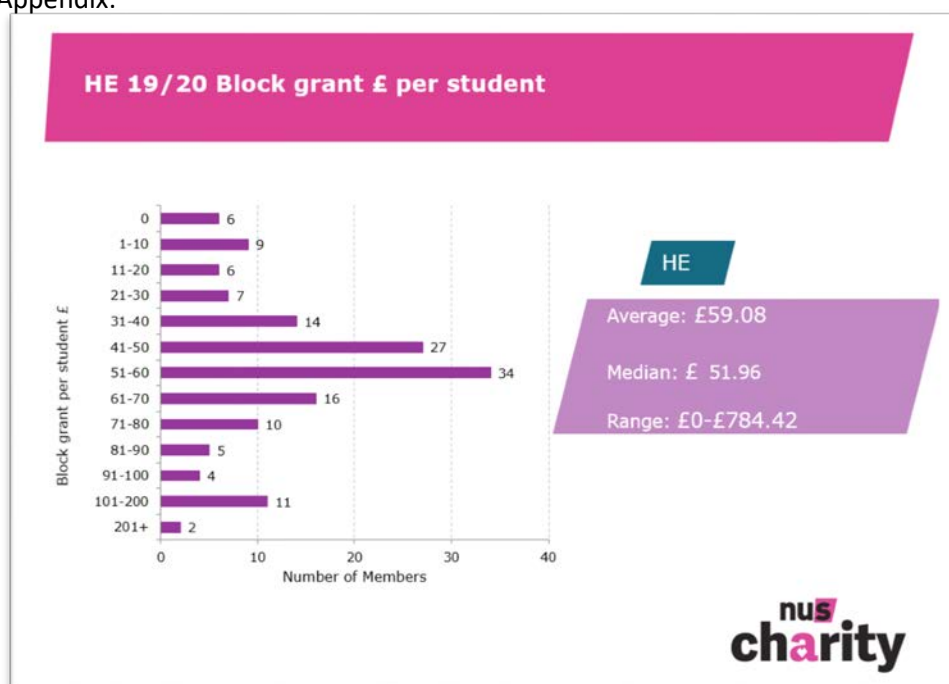
The block grant is university funding for the Students' Association (SA). It is the main source of income and hence determines what the SA can undertake for the benefits of students. From 2020/21 audited accounts, we received £629,000. Compare this to 2016/17 block grant allocation of £643,500 – so in 5 years it has not increased (even for inflation) but in fact decreased. This means in real terms we have to do the same amount of work with less money or cut areas. Since 2016, this has meant that we have lost at least ¼ of our staff – the other staff have had to increase their workload or areas are no longer covered.

This is even more startling when you compare GCU Students' Association block grant to the UK and Scottish average. The UK average is £59.08 per student compared to £35.86 for GCU. Moreover, we are underfunded compared to the Scottish average of £44.16. Even with 20% less funding than the Scottish average and 40% less funding than the UK average, we are still able to hit our KPIs and keep at least an average NSS score despite with the reduction in funding and staffing. This is due to dedication and hard work of the staff and volunteers but the reality is that innovation or going-beyond is difficult as resources are just not available. Further, it's unfair that a Students' Association that is doing well by most metrics is not rewarded or recognised with resources.

So what does this mean to students? It means that there are less staff to undertake work, staff are spread thinner and often cannot pick-up work that emerges and have to focus time on sensitive areas leaving other areas to wilt. It also means that funding for student activities, clubs and societies has decreased overall even if you don't take inflation into account. For example, in 2016 the overall budget given to student engagement activities, fresher's, balls, clubs and societies, sports facilities etc. was £166,616 and in the last non-covid year (2019) it was £149,950 a reduction of over £25,000. That includes over £5000 reduction in money to clubs and societies and a £6000 reduction to other student activities. Not just staff but students and volunteers are doing more with less.

Thus Student Voice mandates the Full Time Officers, and request the Trustee Board, to negotiate a block grant increase to at least the Scottish average per student (as calculated by NUS) in the next fiscal year and to negotiate at least an inflation meeting increase subsequently for the next five years.

Appendix:



19/20 Regional Higher Education Block Grant per student £

Wales

Average: £ 64.19

Median: £ 56.66

Range: £45.89 – £90.73

Scotland

Average: £ 44.16

Median: £ 38.34

Range: £7.17 – £91.35

Northern Ireland

Average: £ 51.84

Median: £ 60.26

Range: £10.60 - £76.22

England

Average: £ 59.75

Median: £ 53.08

Range: £11.78-£364.20

Base: all NUS Charity affiliated members

nus
charity