

A little shout-out to lecturers



By [George Wood](#), Deputy Muse Editor (2012/13)
Sunday 6 January 2013

Much furore was made about Professor Halsall's VLE announcement to second-year history students regarding the lack of attendance in his lectures. Some students were offended by the scathing nature of his comments; others were irritated by the fact that Halsall had to apologise pointing out a genuine issue amongst students. One commenter on [the original Nouse article](#) succinctly worded the problem: "If you can't handle going to Willow on a Monday night and then making it to a 9.15 the next day, then don't."

Approaching this issue requires a bit of hypocrisy on my part. Pass the humble pie – I have missed lectures, and yes, one absence was indeed the result of a Willow Monday night outing. But Guy Halsall is right, missing lectures is just burning money, and it's the epitome of student laziness. Perhaps he was wrong to present his point so critically, perhaps he was wrong to misuse the VLE to post this point, but both just go to show the frustration towards students that the lack of attendance causes for lecturers that have spent so long preparing courses for.

Unfortunately, and especially with the rise of tuition fees, students now see their places at university as commodities. Given how much money, work and time we may have poured into earning our place here, we have the right to do our degrees in the ways we see fit. What's the problem in missing a lecture here or there? We're paying for it. At the end of the day, it's our degrees that are going to suffer if we choose not to work. We're not schoolchildren; we should be free to live our university lifestyles as we like.

Well, not exactly. University is an ecosystem, and regular lack of attendance in lectures not only harms the students, but also the lecturers, the tutors and the establishment itself. Think – lecturers are human too. If they bring their years of experience and lengthy preparation to classes only to find half the hall empty, or worse, half the students asleep, why should they bother putting any work into their courses?

I always find it slightly disheartening when students synchronously pack up their things before the lecture ends while the lecturer's still talking. A lecture today may not be directly beneficial to you, but attentiveness acts a sign of respect for both the course itself and the ones teaching it. Despite its expense, being a university student doesn't stop education being a privilege, and not a right.

And again, I'm no saint here. I, like others, am subject to the pains of Willow hangovers and the allurements of regular weekday lie-ins. But Halsall's comments were a wake-up call to the social student bubble that we sometimes and quite selfishly put ourselves in. I'm not calling for anything imposing to be implemented to enforce student attendance, but just a little respect for the people we work with at university.



2 comments

Fliss Turner

6 Jan '13 at 10:55 am

Fabulous comment, partner in crime of mine!

[Report](#)

Guy Halsall

9 Jan '13 at 11:16 pm

Thank you. I appreciate these thoughtful words - which is not to defend my own dumb-assery.

[Report](#)

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