

University urged to 'Plug the Gap'

By [Rosie Shields](#) and [Neil Johnston](#)

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YUSU and students have launched a campaign urging the University to 'plug the gap' in bursary funding.

This comes after the Government [cut funding to the National Scholarship Programme](#), lowering the minimum award available to students from £3,000 to £2,000.

There are also plans to stop the Scholarship completely for undergraduates by 2015-16, instead making it a postgraduate scheme.

The programme's website states that 'no funding for undergraduates will be allocated beyond this point'.

The scheme was set up alongside the new fees system to support those students applying for higher education with household incomes of £25,000 or less.

At the University of York, 171 Scholarships worth £4,500 each were taken up in 2012/2013 and 303 this academic year. This will be greatly cut under the new measures.

In response, students have launched an online campaign, backed by YUSU asking the University to provide the money themselves - having turned over a £9m surplus this for the 2012/13 academic year.

Kallum Taylor, YUSU President, explained: "York has a massive record surplus... So why aren't they stepping up? We're saying, plug the gap for one year to do the next intake of students justice, and give ourselves time to work on a better, smarter long term solution to this cut."

Josiah Mortimer, a politics student at the University of York, told *Nouse*: "I'm not sure I would have been able to come to York without the full bursary - it's meant I have gone through uni without significant financial worry or stress. Cutting it would be a disaster for students like me who's parents can't afford to support them financially. The university would be cutting itself off from working-class people altogether were it to slash the support funding. I hope they think really clearly about what effect it would have in turning York into a bastion of privilege instead of an open and pluralistic campus."

[#plugthegap](#)

Taylor added that the funds have been "ripped away from students who have applied to York for the next academic year. The University now has 'a moral obligation to plug this financial gap for this year's intake.'"

He continued: "We often hear about their commitment to supporting those more in need, and they have a

great opportunity here to back that up. Many other institutions are doing so; lots of which are competitors of ours."

George Offer, Welfare and Community Officer, said: "York need to step up and make the commitment, as many other uni's have, to students already applying to study here next year". He went on to say that it "means that many students who would otherwise not be able to afford to study at York can."

The campaign has received widespread support on Twitter and those involved are urged to email any member of the senior management group [here](#).

This year the University turned over a surplus of of £8.7m, slightly ahead of the institution's targets.

The University also claim that their £150m debt is "easily manageable" allowing them to invest in buildings and facilities and the deficit is forecast to tumble over the next four years.

Despite calls to 'plug the gap' in funding for bursaries, last week *Nouse* revealed that the University faced criticism for choosing to spend [money on more six figure salaries instead](#).

The news came as lecturers went on strike over pay and conditions and were described by Taylor as 'Uncomfortably top heavy.'

The University plans to make an official statement about its actions on Monday. Taylor has written [this open letter](#) to the senior management team.



4 comments

Anonymous

13 Dec '13 at 10:53 am

Without the National Scholarship Award I would have likely had to forgo my dreams of university as my parents are unable to support themselves at the moment, let alone my school fees as well. I find the bursary extremely useful for funding travel to hospital appointments I have to attend due to a continuing health problem and the fact that I can be self-sufficient relieves me of a tremendous amount of stress considering my other family members' financial troubles.

I work hard at university and my degree is essential to my chosen career path. I hope to work in the health sector but without my qualifications I would not have the knowledge or correct paperwork that would enable me to do so.

There are many people in similar situations to myself that the government are screwing over. I'm tired of fat-cats only worrying about their own pockets rather than the good of society as a whole. Stop throwing hissy fits because you didn't get a raise this year and think about how you might actually be able to use your time, and your money, for the greater good.

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Tru student

13 Dec '13 at 5:15 pm

If I hadn't got the bursary, I wouldn't have been able to look after my ill divorced polyamorous immobile parents who have an addiction to mars bars. Nor would I have been able to fly my OCD sister out to the congo for witch-doctor surgery, nor would I have been able to pay for essential medical for my sun tan.

Get over it. Don't come here if they aren't offering you the bursary. It's called the market.

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Get a job

13 Dec '13 at 9:22 pm

This is what student loans exist for... can't afford to go out drinking 6 nights a week on your student loan? Get a part time job in a shop/pub/bar while you are at uni. If you have a lifestyle you can't fund with your student loan then consider if you should be getting a part time job to fund that lifestyle!

[Report](#)

@Get a job

14 Dec '13 at 4:07 pm

Yes, because obviously it is not used for medical care as one of the tweets above shows. Often it is not that simple and there is no reason that in a society with social mobility as low as it is that the university should not do its bit to help plug the gap and help students from poor backgrounds get into the university of their choice, rather than being relegated to a lesser one

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