

YUSU hit out at 'scary' cut in student scholarship funding

By [Neil Johnston](#), News Editor (2012/13)

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Business Secretary Vince Cable, who praised the National Scholarship Programme last month.

Photo Credit: bisgovuk

YUSU President Kallum Taylor has expressed his concern over recent changes to higher education funding, the 'slashing' of the National Scholarship Programme, and the privatisation of the Students Loans Company.

Nouse can also reveal that 65 recent York students are in arrears with the Student Loans Company, and the proposed changes to the loans could potentially lead to those overdue on payments defaulting or going into bankruptcy.

However it is the cuts to the National Scholarship Programme which are of more concern to YUSU. Plans were announced in the government's Spending Review to cut the National Scholarship Programme from £150m to £50m in 2015-16.

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) says that the scholarship scheme is not being scrapped but funding will now only go to postgraduate students.

Taylor said: "Whilst we at long last have the government getting the message on the massive gap in financial provision for less advantaged UK postgrads, this should not be done at the expense of funding for undergrads of a similar background. Behind the rhetoric this is turning one against the other and it's not healthy for the long term state of Higher Education in the UK."

He added: "Further, what's even more astounding is that they're slashing one of the key, key points given out by the government to appease those who were on the fence about £9k fees... Many MPs, for instance. Combined with the proposed privatisation of the Student Loans company, the new fees regime could be as scary as some predicted. A student scholarship programme in England created in response to fears about the impact of higher tuition fees is to have its budget heavily cut."

Earlier in the week the National Union of Students said the decision to cut the National Scholarship Programme "effectively cancelled the National Scholarship Programme", which was giving "small bursaries for the poorest undergraduates in higher education".

However the Department for BIS says the programme will “support postgraduate students from disadvantaged backgrounds”.

The National Scholarship Programme was announced by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg in February 2011.

The programme had been launched as a response to concerns of poorer students being excluded from University after the raising of tuition fees, and Clegg promised that 50,000 students from poorer backgrounds would receive funding.

The scholarship programme offered fee waivers and cash bursaries of up to £1,000 per year and was commended last month by Business Secretary Vince Cable for its achievements in its first year of funding students.



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