**Semester 2 2024/25 Policy Forum Agenda**

Attendees: Martha Mitchell, Shafaq Sajid, Sarah Lahreche, Molly Pemberton, Layla Barrett, Abi Marchant, Ed Robinson, Scott Dawson, Maddie Bebbington, Abbie Cook, Benny Williams

Apologies:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Time | Item | Lead | Resource |
| 9:30 | Introduction to policy forum | ER |  |
| 9:35 | Policy Proposal 1: Additions to harm reduction policy   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | EG | [HSU Policy Forum Proposals 3.2.25](https://sheffieldhallam.sharepoint.com/:b:/r/teams/T000323/Shared%20Documents/Representation/2.%20Democracy/2.%20Decision-making/3.%20Policy%20Forum/Policy%20Forum%20Semester%202%202024-25/HSU%20Policy%20Forum%20Proposals%203.2.25.pdf?csf=1&web=1&e=qhlKnR) |
| 9:45 | Policy Proposal 2: Academic Conduct preliminary concern  meeting as standard.   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | CH | ^ |
| 9:55 | Policy Proposal 3: Fossil Free Careers   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | MM | ^ |
| 10:05 | Policy Proposal 4: Arms Free Careers   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | SL | ^ |
| 10:15 | Policy 5: Ethical Careers & Investments   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | SL & MM | ^ |
| 10:25 | Policy Proposal 6: Liberation Student Support   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | JT | ^ |
| 10:35 | Policy Proposal 7: Disability Training and Accessible Events   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | JT | ^ |
| 10:45 | Policy Proposal 8: Additional Course Costs   * Lead presents issue * Officers vote on if it’s a policy | EW | ^ |
| 10:55 | Officers to give updates on current Priorities | Officers |  |
| 10:55 | Dot Activity   * Each Officer puts dots on the policy that they want to become a priority | ER | Dot stickers or felt tips  Cards of each policy |
| 11:05 | Discussion of results & consensus reaching till priorities are decided. | ER | [Short guide to consensus decision making](https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus) |
| 11:25 | Next steps   * Agree Officer Lead allocation * Agree Career staff support allocation * Confirm next steps | ER |  |

**Minutes**

**Policy Proposals**

**Policy 1: Addition to Harm reduction**

This policy should be updated and not static, harm reduction headlines have cropped up a lot recently in Sheffield, things such as pill abuse, spice found in cannabis vapes that directly affects student population.

**Unanimous vote by HSU Officer team to add this information to the current policy.**

**Policy 2: Mandatory Academic Conduct Preliminary Concern Meeting**

The proposal has been withdrawn, more work required. There are concerns that meetings delay what students are hoping to be a quick process. The submitted form from the student is not clear, which is important as the outcome of the university panel is based on a review of the form that the student submitted. The Students’ Union should update resources so academic misconduct meetings are easier to understand/attend.

**Martha:** For the next policy forum, this policy should be revisited and reviewed.

Consider a rapid amendment with the stance that the proposal should be reviewed. In two weeks, Christine should complete these amendments.

**Unanimous vote by HSU Officer team to pass as policy following amendments.**

**Policy 3: Fossil Free Careers**

Demand that the university's career department don’t have any association with fossil fuel industry, if they do already, they must cut ties. Stops oil, gas and mining companies coming onto campus and promoting careers, usually dead-end jobs that will not be beneficial to students' futures. Have passed policy already but need to pass it again this forum.

**Unanimous vote to pass as policy.**

**Policy 4: Arms Free Careers**

Almost identical to the previous policy but for companies who manufacture arms. Stops them coming into campus and cuts any ties.

**Unanimous vote by HSU Officer team to pass as policy.**

**Policy 5: Ethical Careers and Investments**

Combines both policies 3 and 4 to make those policies more palatable for the university council. Includes arms and fossil-free careers, with the stance that the university should ensure careers offered are sustainable.

**Unanimous vote by HSU Officer team to pass as policy.**

**Policy 6: additional course costs**

The university should make sure additional course costs are up to date, came up in art and design courses where the costs that they were told to complete their course was not accurate and the students were not considered when these costs were calculated. Some had to choose between buying materials for their course and medication that they need to take. The costs should be clearer.

**Martha:** I am happy to see this policy

**Shafaq:** Will there be a minimum amount? Students should report specific, accurate amounts. Current resources right now based on estimations from course reps.

**Sarah:** This policy is applicable to BTE as it’s reflective of the cost of downloading software.

**Molly:** This policy could be useful for tackling course costs.

**Unanimous vote to pass as policy.**

**Policy 7: Disability Training and Accessible Events**

Societies team & Societies are trying to support liberation students but are struggling to engage with them. It’s not clear how societies and HSU can support them, the current support resources are unclear and there are no specific career staff looking after and training liberation groups. There has been funding granted for LGBTQ+ Society, yet it's unclear how this is specific to LGBTQ+ Students and liberation groups as a whole.

General agreement that the proposal was positive.

**Unanimous vote to pass as policy.**

**Policy 8: Additional Course Costs**

There is some disability training when new starters join the organisation however it’s not specific. There is already work in place for the societies team to support students with arranged disabilities, with Janet and Ellen having SEN backgrounds. This policy holds the stance that all staff within the SU should receive detailed disability training, aided by the university disability team. Events should be accessible for students, also accounting for society events.

**Martha:** Though for events specifically, it would be beneficial for all staff.

**Janet:** This policy would promote really good work culture; they will hopefully learn more about each other.

**All except the International Student’s Officer voted to pass this as policy, so it has been passed.**

**Progress on Current Priorities**

**Sarah:** Anti-racist SU. The project group is currently going well, and EDI and Anti-racist training has been created for societies and students. An anti-racist training program has been created for the trustee-board to review. Progress is being made on changing current wording on HSU job applications, so all staff hired will align with anti-racist values.

**Martha:** Is it business as usual? Is there more you want to do with it?

**Sarah:** Given the group exists, it won't be dissolved. I am quite satisfied with where it is.

**Martha for Cost-of-living:** Cost-of-living will never be solved. Hot food vouchers are being put into place for the level 6 granary (to be signed of). Following up from this, support will be targeted to those who signed up for those vouchers. The society constitution requires one free event per semester to help for cost of living. (Martha) is not happy with how much progress has been made in regards with cost of living.

**Layla for Mental Health & Wellbeing:** Wellbeing week was a success and wellbeing business cards and resources have been distributed. Anti-spiking packs have been distributed at campuses and sports centres. Wellbeing workshops are being implemented from today. Some bits of the project are slower than others.

**Molly for Uni communication:** The project's principles are smaller wins due to gradual and responsive corrections being put into place. The priority has three areas with combined policies: Placements, timetabling and information surrounding new builds. The priority highlighted blind spots in comms surrounding the new builds, and was successful in raising information in the student population. The policy assisted post-grad placements. Timetabling has had little to no progress. Overal, the issues with communications will always be an issue and are difficult to resolve completely.

**Abi for Inclusive Measures and Lecture Capture:** We have changed the website wording and have given the disability support team assistance. We have included information in the course representative training and newsletter and have recorded a video that has more information with Sam to signpost.

At this point, communication is covered but currently waiting on feedback from surveys (wait and see).

**Shafaq for Academic misconduct:** Clear policy guidelines, still work to do with AI Guidance, Shafaq does not agree with the current submitted guidelines, still progress to be made.

**Priority Dot Voting**

The Officers were asked to vote for policies to become priorities with 6 dots to represent their decision, the Officers voted for the following policies to become priorities:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Priority Voting | | | | | | |
| Martha's Priorities (President) | Ethical careers | Mental health | Disability training | Additional course costs | Cost of living | Liberation student support |
| Shafaq's Priorities (International Students' Officer) | Ethical careers | Mental health | Disability training | Academic misconduct | Cost of living | Liberation student support |
| Layla's Priorities (Wellbeing, Sport & Physical Activity Officer) | Ethical careers | Mental health | Disability training | Disability training | Drugs + Alcohol harm reduction | Liberation student support |
| Molly's Priorities (Social Sciences & Arts College Officer) | Ethical careers | Ethical careers | mental health | Disability training | Cost of living | Liberation student support |
| Sarah's Priorities (Business, Technology & Engineering College Officer) | Ethical careers | Ethical careers | Mental health | Disability training | Cost of living | Additional course costs |
| Abi's Priorities (Health, Wellbeing & Life Sciences College Officer) | Ethical carees | Mental health | Disability training | Drugs + Alcohol harm reduction | Drugs + Alcohol harm reduction | Liberation student support |

**Discussion after voting**

**Abi: (Mental health and wellbeing)** Eliza said she re submitted because there was a lot of changes, I think we should support so there won’t be a lot of changes next time, there should be a set time where we should put a lot of resources into it.

**Molly:** Does it need to be a priority for the additions to be made to the policy?f

**Martha:** I think it's important, but I didn't vote on it because we don’t know how it effects the students yet. We need to focus on the academic side which is why I chose course costs.

**Molly:** Shafaq, do you want more academic changes?

**Shafaq:** I want more changes; we shouldn’t just leave it. It needs to be taken more seriously because more international students are affected by it. I didn’t vote for the additional course costs.

**Martha:** Mental health and wellbeing is at the top, it links to drug use, we don’t want to combine them, but mental health and wellbeing can lead into the road of drug and alcohol harm reduction.

If anyone were to take one of these, what more would you add to them?

**Abi:** I hadn’t thought about it from that perspective.

**Abi:** I think mental health and drugs and alcohol can be merged and cost of living and course costs.

**Molly:** It depends on what you want to get out of additional course costs, but the aim is to expand it.

**Martha:** I'm not unhappy with merging cost and living and course costs but I think it turns it into a big project.

**Molly:** I don't see how it would work combined.

**Maddie:** If you want more specific projects then it is better to not merge them, but they would work as an overarching policy.

**Martha:** Additional course costs is more academic; do we want to split responsibility rather than it all being on campaigns?

Molly why didn’t you vote for additional course costs?

**Molly:** I’m looking at it from a SSA lens, we’ve already done a lot of work with the institute, it's more of a campaign to me than a priority.

**Martha:** What is the impact of the campaign on students.

**Molly:** There’s a longer-term solution we’re working towards, there are more specific short-term solutions we’re doing like software provisions.

**Layla:** (Disability and accessible events) I think a lot of societies have sports teams and events.

**Abi:** I wouldn’t be suited for cost of living but I'd be happy with any.

**Layla:** The additional course costs effect more students.

**Molly:** When I'm voting on these, I'm aware that students can see what we’re voting for, if we remove wellbeing and cost of living it won’t look very good.

**Martha:** Students are talking about cost of healthcare, and we haven’t done that yet.

**Molly:** I'd be happy to lead on additional course costs or liberation.

**Abi:** For mental health, drugs and alcohol could be a quick fix.

**Martha:** I'm leaning towards removing mental health, we have a wellbeing officer and coordinator so they should be business as usual, it should already be a priority.

**Abi:** We should have a statement on the website that makes it clear that we do care about all the policies even if we haven’t voted for them.

**Molly:** I’d get rid of additional course costs.

If academic misconduct became such a problem, we would have to work on that no matter what.

**Maddie:** For drugs and alcohol, we don't have statistics because students don’t report about it.

**Martha:** I don't think there is anything academic or course focused, it's all holistic but it is not a bad thing.

**Sara:** It's hard to measure what more can be done about mental health and wellbeing – Abi agrees.

A vote was taken and final decisions on priorities and leads were assigned as follows:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Decided Priorities | Officer Lead | Career Staff Support |
| Ethical Careers + Investments | Sarah Lahreche | Maddie Bebbington |
| disability training & accessible events\* | Shafaq Sajid | Trinity Davis |
| Mental health + Wellbeing support | Layla Barrett | Scott Dawson |
| Liberation Student Support | Molly Pemberton | Lucy Webber |
| Cost of living | Martha Mitchell | Ryan Coleflax |
| Drugs + alcohol harm reduction | Abi Marchant | Eliza Groark |

\*After the policy forum, the Officers were made aware of the Accessible events report, outlining work completed so far on the area. They decided that it was still important to have it as a policy, to keep us accountable, but that there was not enough work left to be done for it to remain as a priority.

The Officers then held a vote between the two policies that were otherwise in the running to be a priority:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Officer Votes for Priority | Additional Course Costs | Academic misconduct and University regulations |
| Martha Mitchell |  | Yes |
| Shafaq Sajid |  | Yes |
| Layla Barrett | Yes |  |
| Molly Pemberton |  | Yes |
| Sarah Lahreche |  | Yes |
| Abi Marchant | Yes |  |

The final priorities were then amended to the following:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Decided Priorities | Officer Lead | Career Staff Support |
| Ethical Careers + Investments | Sarah Lahreche | Maddie Bebbington |
| Academic misconduct and University regulations | Shafaq Sajid | Christine Hayden |
| Mental health + Wellbeing support | Layla Barrett | Scott Dawson |
| Liberation Student Support | Molly Pemberton | Lucy Webber |
| Cost of living | Martha Mitchell | Ryan Coleflax |
| Drugs + alcohol harm reduction | Abi Marchant | Eliza Groark |