

## Policy Proposal: Tackle Discrimination of Mature Students

To be discussed at: Welfare and Community Zone

What would you like the Union to do?

I would like the Union to lobby UCL on offering financial support such as scholarships and bursaries to students over 60, to make up for the potential hardship that the difference in loans that the Student's Loan Company denies them. Currently, students over 60 are able to apply for a Maintenance Loan of up to £3983, only. This is significantly lower than the maximum Maintenance Loan offered to students under 60; up to £10,539 and in some cases more. The cost of living in London according to the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine is around £16,700.21, for a student, per year. This does not include the costs of tuition, travel, or university supplies. The average basic State Pension is £134.25 per week, about £7000 per year. For some pensioners, this amount is taxable too. This significant lack of support for those over 60, and blatant discrimination over funding at a national level means that getting an education for many becomes almost impossible.

Why would you like to do this?

I would like UCL to implement this policy in order to take a stand against ageism and discrimination in the student finance system. The legislation over funding for over 60's is determined by the Department of Education. As such, I have written to my local parliamentary representative. However, I believe that UCL should not depend on governmental change to take a stand against ageism, and that the Union should be lobbying them to take the lead in creating a culture that stands for equality and facilitates progress. UCL achieved this in June 1868, becoming the world's first university to accept women as students. UCL, through the Union, should achieve this in 2020 by implementing this policy and admitting students, no matter the age, to access education without letting funding get in the way. I believe that life does not end at 60, but in many ways begins at 60. I would like UCL to honour those who have contributed greatly towards building the foundations of our country and to the liberties we know of today. Implementing this policy would offer a facilitative academic institution at UCL with the ability to offer equality of opportunity for all.

How will this affect students?

Implementing this policy would make the lives of current students over 60 easier, as well as potential students over 60, by making education accessible. It would also encourage potential mature students of all ages to apply to UCL, knowing that as a university it would support them in all areas by standing against ageism. Finally, this policy would help tackle class differences in accessing equality of opportunity too, by offering over 60's with low pensions and a working-class background from achieving academic success.