

Does York get a financial benefit from the NUS?

Given the confusion over the figures in recent days, we at Nouse Business, decided to take a look more closely at the figure being so hotly discussed

By [Elliott Banks](#), News Editor (2016/17)

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Image: wfeiden

With the NUS referendum in full swing, the financial benefit of being affiliated to the NUS has come to the forefront of the debate. To help better inform the debate, we at *Nouse* have looked through the figures to provide a comprehensive account of what we know so far.

On the affiliation fees, *Nouse* reported earlier this term that the affiliation fees to the NUS had increased by £5000, making the figure of £47,000. Subsequently, when Nouse asked for further clarification the figure was revised upwards to £50,051. This meant that currently affiliation fees are £50,051. However, a new twist on the cost of affiliation has emerged, it is now reported that the affiliation fees for 2014/5 were £46,000, disputing the two previous figures.

So what's going on here and why are the figures so difficult to pin down? Well the formula for working out the affiliation fees is unsurprisingly, rather complex. The NUS charges a varying percentage rate based on the block grant a students union receives from the University ranging from 4 to 7 per cent. Next, the NUS charges a small fee based on the number of students at the University. Under this system, both undergraduates and postgraduates are counted, with a slight price difference of 3p between full and part time students. The cost for a full time undergraduate is 10p. This completes the formula used for

calculating affiliation fees.

Given the complexity of the system, it is perhaps unsurprising that various figures have suggested. However, with so many figures around it can be hard for students to know the true costs of membership. Indeed, here at Nouse Business, we have been trying to see through the fog for two weeks and are still none the wiser. We have now been informed for this academic year, the figure is £50,051.

Now to net benefit of membership of the NUS, which has been hotly contested. For the 2014/5 academic year, YUSU received a net benefit of £58,000. This is worked out by factoring in the sale of NUS Extra cards to York students, retrospective discounts and a rebate of £10,000. The rebate mechanism ensure if students unions overpay in the past, they receive some money back from the NUS. Furthermore, in 2014/5, YUSU made £22,000 in sales of the NUS Extra card and nearly £26,000 in retrospective discounts made from the NUS's commercial arm.

However, during the recent campaigns, the economic benefit of being in the NUS was placed at £68,000, an £18,000 benefit based on the affiliation figure of £50,051. According to this figure, York students and YUSU get a very good deal from the NUS financially. Unfortunately, this figure has been disputed and on Monday, YUSU admitted that they had gotten the figure wrong. Instead, the actual figure of money received back was £51,000. This is £17,000 less than originally quoted. Also, the affiliation fee has now been reduced from £50,051 to £44,000. According to those figures, there is still a net benefit to remaining in the NUS.

In a statement YUSU said that: "Rebates and savings received by YUSU as a result of the NUS affiliation - In total, YUSU received £51,864 in rebates and savings from its NUS affiliation in the last financial year. The benefits statement originally stated £68,602 was received. Net profit: £6,452 net profit was generated as a result of NUS affiliation, alongside £36,599 of unseen benefit. The benefits statement originally stated that YUSU generated a profit of £18,551 from the affiliation. YUSU's affiliation fee for the financial year 2014/15 was £44,932. For 15/16, the fee was £50,051."

However, given the confusion which has occurred over the last week of campaigning, the finances of the NUS are still in dispute. YUSU's statement does a lot to clarify the situation but concerns will remain in student's minds over which figures are correct and whether the York receives a benefit as being part of the NUS.



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