

# Into Teaching

The magazine for EIS student members

eis

The Educational  
Institute of Scotland



**STAND UP**  
FOR QUALITY EDUCATION



Equality **10**



Campaigns **8**



**nus** scotland  
national union of students

**18**

[www.eis.org.uk/join](http://www.eis.org.uk/join)

# FREE & FREE Student Membership Probationer Membership



Scotland's  
largest  
education  
trade union

## Join the Union



[www.eis.org.uk/join](http://www.eis.org.uk/join)

### As a member you can:

- Access advice & assistance from a local EIS Rep while you're on placement
- Be active in EIS campaigns
- Learn about Professional Learning opportunities with EIS Learning Reps
- Be part of an EIS student group in your university

#### Reasons to Join



4

#### Get Involved



6

#### EIS Campaigns



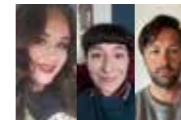
8

#### EIS Equality



10

#### Student Voices



12

#### Looking After Your Health and Wellbeing



15

#### Your Employment Rights



16

#### Living Rent



17

#### NUS Scotland



18

#### What to Expect While on Placement



20

#### EIS Networks



22

#### EIS Reps



23

## Welcome to the EIS Student Magazine

It is designed specifically for student teachers to give you some advice on matters that will be important to you such as: going on placement, your employment rights as a student worker and how you can get involved with your union and contribute to shaping Scottish education for future teachers and learners.

### Contact Us

#### EIS Organisers

##### Edinburgh

**Eilidh Gittus**  
[egittus@eis.org.uk](mailto:egittus@eis.org.uk)  
0131 225 6244

**Rob Henthorn**  
[rhenthorn@eis.org.uk](mailto:rhenthorn@eis.org.uk)  
0131 225 6244

**Ruth Winters**  
[rwinters@eis.org.uk](mailto:rwinters@eis.org.uk)  
0131 225 6244

##### Dundee

**Dan Thompson**  
[dthompson@eis.org.uk](mailto:dthompson@eis.org.uk)  
0138 245 8270

##### Glasgow

**Craig Carson**  
[ccarson@eis.org.uk](mailto:ccarson@eis.org.uk)  
0141 353 3595

**Dee Matthew**  
[dmatthew@eis.org.uk](mailto:dmatthew@eis.org.uk)  
0141 353 3595

**Liam McCabe**  
[lmccabe@eis.org.uk](mailto:lmccabe@eis.org.uk)  
0141 353 3595

**Suki Sangha**  
[ssangha@eis.org.uk](mailto:ssangha@eis.org.uk)  
0141 353 3595

**X & Facebook:** @EISUnion

**Instagram:** eis\_union

**Website:** [www.eis.org.uk](http://www.eis.org.uk)

Printed and published by  
The Educational Institute of Scotland  
46 Moray Place,  
Edinburgh EH3 6BH

2024



# 10 Reasons **Join** the Union

## BIGGEST IN SCOTLAND

The EIS is the largest teacher trade union representing over 80% of Scotland's teachers (8 out of 10 teachers and lecturers in Scotland are members of the EIS).

## SCOTLAND'S MOST AFFORDABLE TEACHING UNION

The EIS is a well-resourced Scottish union, with a large number of Scotland-based staff with affordable membership fees. The EIS is free for all student members and remains free throughout your probation year and beyond.

## IMPROVING YOUR PAY AND CONDITIONS

The EIS campaigns actively to secure and maintain professional salaries and improve conditions of service for all its members. The EIS has the overwhelming majority of members on the Scottish Negotiating Committee for Teachers (SNCT) where your pay and conditions are negotiated with government and employers.

## SUPPORTING YOUR CAREER DEVELOPMENT

As a professional organisation the EIS is committed to promoting opportunities for quality professional learning (PL) for ALL teachers throughout their careers. The EIS has a wide network of fully trained Learning Representatives who support members with their PL.

## HIGH QUALITY LEGAL AND PROFESSIONAL ADVICE

Our solicitors and our network of EIS Representatives, Local Association Secretaries, Organisers and Area Officers are available to provide the highest quality support and advice when it is needed. We also provide EIS members with FREE legal advice on non-employment matters through our dedicated EIS legal helpline staffed by qualified lawyers, open 8am – 7pm 5 days a week.

## INSURANCE COVERING ALL EIS MEMBERS

The EIS provides four insurance policies to all members covering: Personal Effects, Malicious Damage to Motor Vehicles, Third Party Insurance and Personal Accident Insurance.

## PROFESSIONAL FINANCIAL ADVICE

EIS Financial Services provides independent financial advice, a comprehensive range of insurance and other financial planning products exclusively to EIS members. [www.eisfs.co.uk](http://www.eisfs.co.uk)

## LEADING ON THE KEY ISSUES FOR EDUCATION

A commitment to promoting **quality** and **equality** across our education service – for teachers and for learners – is a hallmark of the EIS and its work in developing and influencing policy covering: education, the equality agenda, workload and wellbeing, pay and Conditions of Service and all other areas of trade union work.

## CAMPAIGNING ON THE THINGS THAT MATTER TO YOU

The EIS is a campaigning organisation that takes a lead on the big issues for education and teachers. The EIS runs major campaigns to protect education, deliver better, more equitable opportunities and outcomes for learners, and defend the pay and conditions of teachers.

## STUDENT SPONSORSHIP

The EIS allocates part of its annual budget to student sponsorship for each Teacher Education Institution in Scotland. We invite funding requests from student members and student societies. In the past, this sponsorship has been used for events including training workshops, graduation balls and final year conferences.



EIS Student Membership provides you with important benefits. While on placement you can join in with union organised events, campaigns and become active in the organisation.

# Get Involved

## Here's how:

### Establish an EIS Student Group

Meet regularly with other students to discuss local and national education issues, identify student teacher concerns, get to know other teachers who want to make a difference and develop campaigns with other students to make real change.

If you'd like to organise a student group or get move involved with EIS events or campaigns, contact your EIS organiser.

### Get Involved with the Student Teacher Society

Every Students' Association encourages students to set up a society on an issue or subject that is important to them. The EIS has supported the formation of Student Teacher Societies and provided funding and speakers for events they have organised. Contact your Student Teacher Society to find out what events they are running over the coming months and get involved.

### Get Involved Locally

Every student who joins is encouraged to get involved in the union. You automatically become a member of the EIS Local Association in your University area and are welcome to attend its meetings and events. This will give you a chance to learn about what's happening in schools in your area and the contribution the union makes to the big issues for education and teachers.

**Edinburgh Napier University:** Edinburgh Local Association

**Queen Margaret University:** East Lothian Local Association

**Royal Conservatoire:** Glasgow Local Association

**University of Aberdeen:** Aberdeen City Local Association

**University of Dundee:** Dundee Local Association

**University of Edinburgh:** Edinburgh Local Association

**University of Glasgow:** (depending on where you are studying) Glasgow or Dumfries and Galloway Local Association

**University of Stirling:** Stirling Local Association

**University of Strathclyde:** Glasgow Local Association

**University of the Highlands and Islands:** (depending on where you are studying) Highland, Orkney Islands, Shetland Islands, Moray, Argyll and Bute or Western Isles Local Association

**University of the West of Scotland:** South Ayrshire Local Association

### Find out about the EIS Local Association, its events and campaigns

You can find the contact details of your Local Association Secretary, as well as a link to their website containing information on local agreements and newsletters at: [www.eis.org.uk/Contacts/LocalAssociation](http://www.eis.org.uk/Contacts/LocalAssociation)

## Support for Student Teacher Education Societies & Events

Your Teacher Education Institution (TEI) may have an existing Student Education Society so contact your Student Association to find out. If you are interested in setting up a Student Education Society, becoming a Student Contact for your year group or course then please contact your EIS Organiser.

### EIS Organisers



**Eilidh Gittus**  
[egittus@eis.org.uk](mailto:egittus@eis.org.uk)

- Edinburgh Napier



**Dee Matthew**  
[dmatthew@eis.org.uk](mailto:dmatthew@eis.org.uk)

- Strathclyde
- RCS



**Robert Henthorn**  
[rhenthorn@eis.org.uk](mailto:rhenthorn@eis.org.uk)

- Dundee
- Edinburgh
- UHI



**Ruth Winters**  
[rwinters@eis.org.uk](mailto:rwinters@eis.org.uk)

- Glasgow Crichton campus
- QMU



**Dan Thompson**  
[dthompson@eis.org.uk](mailto:dthompson@eis.org.uk)

- Aberdeen



**Suki Sangha**  
[ssangha@eis.org.uk](mailto:ssangha@eis.org.uk)

- UWS



**Liam McCabe**  
[lmccabe@eis.org.uk](mailto:lmccabe@eis.org.uk)



**Craig Carson**  
[ccarson@eis.org.uk](mailto:ccarson@eis.org.uk)

- Glasgow
- Stirling

EIS website: [www.eis.org.uk](http://www.eis.org.uk) / Follow us on X & Facebook: @EISUnion / Instagram: eis\_union

If you want to know more about any of the ways you can get involved contact the EIS Organisers

# EIS Campaigns



Andrea Bradley, EIS General Secretary

The EIS is a campaigning union where we engage members in our campaigns to not only improve their working conditions but to improve Scottish education as a whole.

Since launching our campaign at EIS AGM in June 2023, the EIS has been engaging with all stakeholders on our Stand Up for Quality Education campaign. The aim of the campaign is to significantly improve teachers’ working conditions, and health, safety and wellbeing at work and by so doing, the quality of learning experiences for learners. We want to make teaching a profession where teachers feel supported and our young people receive the quality education they have been promised.

The EIS continues to campaign on teacher workload and wellbeing, class sizes, vital ASN provision and for the resources that are needed to reduce the poverty-related achievement gap. We are clear that teachers’ working conditions are inextricably linked to young people’s learning conditions. Quality education that has equity at the heart of it, needs both teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ learning conditions to be good.

As the largest teacher trade union in Scotland, with over 60,000 members, the EIS has a strong track record of delivering for its members and for the children and young people that they teach. Representing 80% of the country’s teaching professionals, gives the EIS the strength to defend Scottish education and protect the interests of its learners and teachers.

Regardless of the sector in which you work once you qualify, EIS campaigning is relevant to you.

Although we have no party-political affiliation, the EIS is a highly active member-led organisation which campaigns vigorously across the issues that are critically important to our members working in Early Years, Primary, Secondary and FE and HE, at all stages of their careers. We make our voice heard on key campaigning priorities, for example, on equality and social justice issues, on climate education, on curriculum and assessment matters.

### A Message from the General Secretary

Whether you’re new to the EIS or you’ve been a member for a while, the Union is delighted to have you within our membership!

We believe that every teacher, no matter where they are on their career journey, has an important role to play in providing and standing up together for, quality education for our young people. We believe that every teacher has a role to play in helping shape Scottish Education now and in the future.

And we believe every EIS member should have a part to play in shaping our Union too. All voices are welcome.

With this in mind, as a student member, you’re most welcome and very much encouraged, to get involved in our campaigning. Stand up for Quality Education aims to persuade national and local government to invest more money in Education for the benefit of young people and the teachers and other school staff who work with them. Check out the ‘Get Involved’ section of our website to find out how.

If you’re aged 27 or under, you may also be interested in joining our Young Members’ Network. The Network is open to any member in the age category, including student members, and is a forum to discuss experiences, connect with colleagues, and have your voices heard within the Union. You can register your interest here: [equality@eis.org.uk](mailto:equality@eis.org.uk) and one of our colleagues will be in touch with further information.

In the meantime, I’d like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best as you study within your ITE course, and for your future career in teaching. It’s a noble path that you’ve chosen though not without its challenges. EIS members working together as part of our Stand Up for Quality Education campaign can help us deal with those challenges, so that Scotland’s schools have more of the resources they need to make even more of a positive difference in the lives of children and young people wherever they are in Scotland. I hope you’ll get involved in the campaign!

### The EIS is a Campaigning Union

**The EIS campaigns for the advancement of education and teachers. It also campaigns on issues affecting wider society. In the past year, our Stand Up for Quality Education campaign has brought attention to our three main themes of pupil behaviour, ASN and workload. Members across Scotland have been completing surveys, discussing issues at branch meetings, raising concerns with school management, influencing local authorities and ultimately affecting positive change in their workplaces. You will hear about this campaign on school placements - so get involved! The EIS also campaigns on issues relating to a reduction in class sizes, reducing teachers’ maximum class contact time and an end to zero-hours supply lists.”**



## Additional Support for Learning (ASL)

Additional Support for Learning (ASL) provision has been the subject of intense scrutiny in Scotland in recent years. With the publication of the Additional Support for Learning Review and the impact of the pandemic on children and young people, this scrutiny is likely to be sustained in the years to come. Increased complexity of needs among the learning population, against a backdrop of underinvested public services and a reduction of 20% in the number of ASN teachers since 2010, is undoubtedly impacting on educational provision. There is a well-evidenced gap between theories of inclusion, the law on children’s rights, and daily practice in our schools; a gap which stems from massive under provision of the sources of support children require. The EIS remains firmly

committed to inclusive education in principle. We believe that education is a human right and that inclusive education, i.e. schools and classes comprising a diverse mix of learners, is the foundation of a more just society. The presumption that, when appropriate, children will be educated alongside their peers in their local school is sound. The serious concerns our members have voiced repeatedly are about implementation of well-intentioned policies, and the gap between promise and practice. Scotland’s children, and Scotland’s teachers, deserve a system where promise meets practice, not mainstreaming on the cheap. For more information on the EIS contribution to this debate and the work of the ASN Network, visit our website.



## Instrumental Music Charter

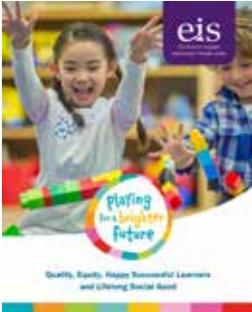
The Charter for Instrumental Music, launched in 2011 and updated in 2018, was a landmark publication for the EIS asserting, as it did, the right of every child to learn to play a musical instrument and/or to develop their ability to sing. This publication put the spotlight firmly on the swinging cuts affecting provision and renewed our calls to provide free tuition for all. Whilst we welcome the Scottish Government’s Manifesto commitments to abolish instrumental music tuition fees and mainstream provision, we have yet to see the required investment or development of a long-term funding model to implement these promises in practice. The EIS will continue this campaign to ensure that our vision for free instrumental music tuition for all young people who wish it, becomes a reality. For more information on the Institute’s work in this area and to find out about our IMT Network, visit:



[www.eis.org.uk/networks/instrumental-music-teachers](http://www.eis.org.uk/networks/instrumental-music-teachers)

## ‘Sustain the Ambition’ and ‘Playing for a Brighter Future’

As part of the campaign to arrest and reverse the decline in the number of qualified nursery teachers employed within Early Years establishments, the EIS funded research by the Child’s Curriculum Group into the contribution of qualified teachers to nursery education. EIS Local Associations and EIS nationally continue to campaign against and oppose cuts to nursery teacher posts across the country. Building on this work, we have published a companion publication to the 2020 OECD Report on Early Years Education. ‘Playing for a Brighter Future’ highlights the importance of qualified teachers in supporting the holistic development of our youngest learners and shines a light on the 54% decline in nursery teacher numbers since 2010. It also offers practical advice about how to support the EIS campaign, both locally and nationally. Additionally, the EIS national body has established a network of Early Years practitioners to inform the advancement of EIS policy in this area and to provide a forum in which the professional identity and experiences of nursery teachers can be explored and promoted. The Network also comes together for a variety of professional learning activities. If you are interested in learning more about Early Years practice, why not come along to one of our webinars and take part in the conversation? Information on previous and up-coming Early Years events can be found on our website.



[www.eis.org.uk/Research/Sustain-The-Ambition](http://www.eis.org.uk/Research/Sustain-The-Ambition)  
[www.eis.org.uk/in-education/playingbrighter](http://www.eis.org.uk/in-education/playingbrighter)

# EIS and Equality

The EIS has a strong commitment to equality. We continue to offer training for members, produce useful guidance on a range of equality issues and maintain a strong network of trained Equality representatives. More information can be found on the EIS website [www.eis.org.uk/equality](http://www.eis.org.uk/equality)

## New Young Members Network

This is a new network for EIS members 27 or under, to connect and share their experiences. We are currently taking interest from interested members and planning our first get-together! To find out more, email Ayumi Christoph, [achristoph@eis.org.uk](mailto:achristoph@eis.org.uk).

## LGBT+ Inclusion

The EIS supports the commitment to the provision of LGBT+ Inclusive education in Scottish schools. We are committed to challenging homophobia and advancing the rights of LGBT+ people in Scotland and beyond. The work of the Equality Committee is informed by the LGBT Sub-Committee and the EIS have a growing informal network of LGBT+ members. Resources include:

- LGBT+ guidelines to support LGBT+ members
- Guidance for members on the Gender Recognition Act
- Advice on Challenging Homophobia in Schools
- Advice on supporting Transgender and Non-Binary learners

More information can be found on our website: [www.eis.org.uk/Equality/LGBT](http://www.eis.org.uk/Equality/LGBT)



## Anti-racism

The EIS supports national anti-racist campaigns and have and produces resources to support members around anti-racist education. The work of the Equality Committee in these areas is guided by the Anti-Racist Sub-Committee. We continue to lobby for an anti-racist curriculum and involve our members in a range of CPD on this issue. The national EIS BAME Network is open to all Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic members. Resources include:

- Briefing for members to advocate for anti-racist education and challenging anti-Muslim prejudice
- Guidance and online videos on Mobilising for Anti-Racism in the workplace
- The Tale o’ the Glasgow girls, a narrative poem resource to teach about refugee rights
- Welcome Pack for Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrant Children

More information can be found on our website: [www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Anti-Racism](http://www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Anti-Racism)



## Gender Equality

The EIS is involved in a range of efforts to promote gender inequality and end discrimination, through our campaigning, training and advice to members. We are involved in a range of national bodies dedicated to gender equality. The work on the EIS Equality Committee on gender issues is guided by the Gender Equality Sub-Committee. Resources include:

- Advice on trade union activity for women’s equality
- Advice on Violence Against Women, and Tackling Sexual Harassment in Educational Establishments
- Advice on challenging misogynistic attitudes among children and young people: Get it Right for Girls
- Good Practice Guidance on Distributing Period Products in Schools

More information can be found on our website [www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Gender](http://www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Gender)



## Disability Equality

The EIS is committed to supporting our disabled members, ensuring their rights and legal protections are upheld throughout their employment. Our Disabled Members Network is open to anyone who identify as disabled, and for members who would be entitled to reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act (2010), which includes neurodivergent members.

Resources include:

- Disability History Month films made by disabled educators
- Guidance for EIS Members and Workplace Representatives regarding reasonable adjustments in the workplace
- Information about Disability and the Law.

More information can be found on our website [www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Disability-Equality](http://www.eis.org.uk/Equality/Disability-Equality)



## Child Poverty

Poverty continues to blight the lives of hundreds of thousands of people in Scotland. Low wages, precarious work and insufficient social security provision, coupled with high costs of housing, food, childcare, transport and energy, continue to conspire with the result that a quarter of a million (almost one in four) children in Scotland live in poverty.

It’s a matter of huge concern for teachers because poverty can have a devastating impact on the educational outcomes and life-chances of the children and young people who experience it. For some time now, the EIS Equality Committee has been campaigning to highlight the causes of poverty and the educational disadvantages and inequalities of outcome that it leads to.

The Equality Committee has produced a number of resources to support teachers in addressing the impact of poverty and to mitigate its negative impact, in their own settings. The resources can be accessed here: [www.eis.org.uk/Campaigns/Child-Poverty](http://www.eis.org.uk/Campaigns/Child-Poverty)

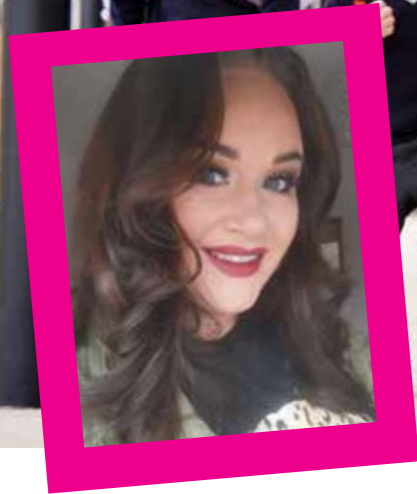


The PACT Programme offers research-based professional learning opportunities for all teachers and schools focused on policy, practice and pedagogy, in order to minimise the damage that poverty can do in the classroom, in the playground and beyond. PACT is rooted in social justice principles, takes a human rights approach to poverty, and is designed to further support and deepen the development of a whole-school anti-poverty culture.

The EIS is currently updating our PACT materials and will soon be offering a refreshed PACT programme. To learn more about PACT

visit: [www.eis.org.uk/professional-learning/pact](http://www.eis.org.uk/professional-learning/pact)

## Student Voices



### Martine O'Kane

PGDE Primary at UWS

#### How would you describe your PGDE year in three words?

Exciting, challenging, wonderful

#### Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Education was always an area I wanted to work in. I love learning myself and helping/coaching others in my previous career was the part of my job I thrived in. Once I had a family of my own and saw the importance of helping my own children flourish, I knew I really had to start to make steps to become a teacher.

#### Who was your favourite teacher at school and why?

My favourite teacher in primary school was Mrs Langan. She was my primary 6 and primary 7 teacher. She was strict but warm and comforting and I always remember, feeling like I was listened to. In high school it was Miss Farrell, my chemistry teacher, she was my teacher from S1 to S4. She got to know all of her students exceptionally well. I wanted to do well in her class, I had the right level of challenge, encouragement and support. She seen what her students were capable of before they knew themselves.

#### What's the one thing you'd like to change about teaching?

I think the main thing I'd change about teaching is the job opportunities just now and perhaps the recruitment process.

#### Why do you think it's important to be an active member of a trade union?

Being a member of a trade union for me is imperative as it gives me the opportunity to have a bigger support system/bigger voice if I ever have any queries or issues I need support with in my career. It is all about peace of mind for me.

#### Any embarrassing teaching moments?

So far, not many thankfully! Watch this space, now I've said that, they'll come rolling in, I'll keep you posted.

#### What advice would you give to a student starting their teaching course?

It is one big rollercoaster of a learning journey.

Take everything one step at a time.

There will be bumps on the road along the way but don't panic.

Be organized with your time and your planning.

Being a member of a trade union for me is imperative as it gives me the opportunity to have a bigger support system/bigger voice

Take every piece of feedback (good and bad) as you can, every suggestion made to you will make you a better teacher.

Be a sponge! Ask as many questions as you can.

You can't have enough notebooks, pens, blue tac, highlighters and caffeine!

You'll meet friends for life on the course that you spend more time with than your family, but it will be the single most fantastic thing you have ever done!

Enjoy every moment!

#### What's the most important lesson you've learned about teaching so far?

You can teach someone how to teach. You can't teach passion, commitment, dedication, kindness, and warmth. Teaching has taught me that this profession is the most wonderfully colourful profession in the world, it allows you to potentially be one of the teachers your students will remember 30 years from now. It has taught me that for some children, their teachers are the only consistent thing in their lives, and for me, that is incredibly important and a main driver for the type of teacher I want to be.

## Student Voices



### Jess Galloway

PGDE Primary - UWS

#### How would you describe your PGDE year in three words?

Rewarding, absorbing and a whirlwind

#### Why did you decide to become a teacher?

Having worked in politics for quite a while, I felt incredibly burnt out by the unhealthy work environment and constant sense that nothing I did seemed to be making a difference. The one part of my work I did always enjoy, though, was giving trainings. The final push I needed was when my niece was born. Spending time with her always gave me so much energy and a sense of purpose, and it helped me to see a whole different side to myself. I am incredibly grateful to now have a job where I can see so clearly how I am making a difference every day, and there is so much joy in being able to share in the awe and wonder with which children approach their world.

#### Who was your favourite teacher at school and why?

Miss Wood – we were her first class and she had us for three different years throughout primary school which built a great connection. She always encouraged us to be ourselves and to see the value in our idiosyncrasies, and she truly made you feel seen. I often think about the Dr Seuss quote “Today you are you, that is truer than true...” and she really lived that in her approach to teaching and interacting with us.

#### What's the one thing you'd like to change about teaching?

As in so many sectors nowadays, the precarity and casualisation of contracts is a real worry. Yes, there's the guarantee

of a job for one year through the teacher induction scheme, but after that being on the supply bank seems to be normalised. Building meaningful and lasting relationships with your learners is at the heart of the job, and it really concerns me that both children and teachers alike really suffer when there is that instability and worry hanging over you.

#### Why do you think it's important to be an active member of a trade union?

If it wasn't for being in a trade union, I don't think I would have ended up in teaching myself. My first foot in the door was doing my college qualification in Education and Training which was organised and funded by the STUC, and the professional development programs offered by unions are such a valuable part of their work. More than that, though, in today's society it is so important to be part of something bigger than yourself. EIS has been fighting the cost-of-living crisis with their campaign to extend free school meals and by pushing for better pay for their members. Moreover, their latest campaign, Stand Up For Quality Education, is set to tackle the biggest challenges facing teachers at the moment. Being part of the union means you get to be part of setting that agenda and making the real changes we need to see in our sector.

#### Any embarrassing teaching moments?

On my first placement, a girl came in with no coat and I couldn't let her out to break without one as it was too cold. I had no idea where to find her a spare one so, long story short, a miscommunication later and I accidentally sent her out with another teacher's coat (it's not my fault it looked like a child's coat!). Any new school I go to now, first place I want directed to is lost property – I'm not making that mistake again!

Being intentional about having a positive moment with each child every day makes such a difference to the way they respond

#### What advice would you give to a student starting their teaching course?

Be open to what you can learn from everyone you encounter – and yes, that very much includes the children! You'll likely hear this a lot but being willing to reflect on and adapt your practice is so important. My final assessed lesson went disastrously but, by being able to demonstrate to my tutor that I understood where it had gone wrong and what I would do differently next time, I still somehow passed. Take risks and push yourself out of your comfort zone (just not necessarily for your assessed lessons!) because that is how you will learn most quickly what works best for you. In amongst all the conflicting advice you will receive during your course, sometimes you just have to stop and trust yourself because only you know what kind of teacher you truly want to be.

#### What's the most important lesson you've learned about teaching so far?

Make time to focus on the positives. On one of my placements in particular, there was a lot of very challenging behaviour and I found that nearly all of my time was taken up firefighting with a handful of pupils. My biggest regret when I left that class was that I had not given enough time to celebrating the positive behaviour and achievements that also went on in that room of children. Managing your time is admittedly a learning curve, but I have found that being intentional about having a positive moment with each child every day makes such a difference to the way they respond, but also to your own mental health and the energy you come home with at the end of the day. Very best of luck!



Without trade unions teachers across Scotland would have struggled to make the recent pay increase gains that they have achieved

## Andrew Wyllie

PGDE Primary at Strathclyde

### How would you describe your PGDE year in three words?

Rollercoaster. Tough. Rewarding.

### Why did you decide to become a teacher?

It is something I toyed with for a long time before committing to it. I spent a fair bit of time volunteering to really get a feel for the role. I truly believe that teachers can make a difference. We can be someone's consistent role model, the person who makes them feel safe and inspired.

### Who was your favourite teacher at school and why?

My primary 7 teacher, Miss Stewart. She was such a warm and happy person. Everyone was important to Miss Stewart and you really felt like she cared. It was a happy place to be, Miss Stewart was a large part of that. We recently had the

opportunity to reconnect over Facebook. She had not changed, she was still as kind as I remembered. She even sent my newborn a gift!

### What's the one thing you'd like to change about teaching?

Paperwork! I think that would be most people's answers. Paperwork, of course, has its place however, pointless or paperwork for the sake of paperwork is the bane of existence. The paperwork load for the postgraduate course is very, very heavy.

### Why do you think it's important to be an active member of a trade union?

Trade unions protect the rights of the worker. They arm us with support and advice when we require it. Without trade unions teachers across Scotland would have struggled to make the recent pay increase gains that they have achieved. That's why it's so vital that we support our trade unions, without them we would be isolated and voiceless.

### Any embarrassing teaching moments?

Ah, far too many! Every child is a fashionista, always with a comment to make regarding clothing, hair and any other area they feel free to comment on! If I had to pick, I would probably say falling off the obstacle course!

### What advice would you give to a student starting their teaching course?

Make time for yourself! The course is intense, it's a lot of hard work, late nights and hours of wondering if you really have it in you. Making space for yourself is a must. I'd recommend putting the hours in through the week, take the weekends for yourself. It's also just so rewarding, the good moments outweigh the bad. The universities and the staff at school want you to succeed. You've got this!!

### What's the most important lesson you've learned about teaching so far?

So many! Start each day fresh. Don't carry the bad bits forward, park them in the past and keep moving forward.

# Looking After Your Health and Wellbeing



Being mindful of health and wellbeing is important throughout your studying life and beyond. The EIS hosts an online resource to support the health and wellbeing of everyone involved in education:

[www.eis.org.uk/member-support/hwresource](http://www.eis.org.uk/member-support/hwresource)

The following are highlights from the resource:

**NHS 24** can be contacted by phone and digitally (including app) for urgent care, as well as advice and service details: [www.nhs24.scot](http://www.nhs24.scot)

**The NUS and student unions** can provide information on the support available whilst at university: [thinkpositive.scot/explore-the-hub-student-mental-health-support-scotland](http://thinkpositive.scot/explore-the-hub-student-mental-health-support-scotland)

**Education Support** is a UK wide charity supporting people working in education, and offer a free helpline, staffed by counsellors: [www.educationsupport.org.uk](http://www.educationsupport.org.uk)

**Breathing Space** is a confidential phoneline for anyone in Scotland over the age of 16, feeling low, anxious or depressed: [www.breathingspace.scot/about-us/who-we-are/](http://www.breathingspace.scot/about-us/who-we-are/)

**Samaritans** is a free, confidential service for anyone experiencing mental health issues. The service also provides resources specifically for those working with young people: [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**The Health and Safety Executive (HSE)** offers a variety of resources aimed at improving health and wellbeing in the workplace: [www.hse.gov.uk](http://www.hse.gov.uk)

**Mind to Mind** is from NHS Inform and offers ways to improve mental wellbeing by hearing what others have found helpful: [www.nhsinform.scot/mind-to-mind](http://www.nhsinform.scot/mind-to-mind)

**The Mental Health Foundation** offers practical resources around self-help and supporting others: [www.mentalhealth.org.uk/scotland](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/scotland)

**Scottish Association for Mental Health (SAMH)** has resources to improve mental health, including information about mental health and the Equality Act 2010: [www.samh.org.uk](http://www.samh.org.uk)

**YoungMinds** hosts a range of resources to support the mental health of children and young people: [www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)



# Working While You Study

## Know Your Employment Rights

The University experience for some students is clouded by employers who take advantage of their lack of workplace knowledge. Some employers try to impose working practices on students that more experienced staff would not accept. As Scotland's fourth largest trade union, the EIS works with the NUS and the STUC to campaign for better terms and conditions for young workers.

Here is a brief guide to employment law so that you can be aware of your rights at work.

The legal minimum requirement, under the Working Time Directive, is for a 20 minute rest break if you are expected to work for more than 6 hours

### Pay, Tax and National Insurance

Both full and part-time workers in the UK are entitled to earn the national minimum wage (under 21) or the national living wage (21 or over), and this must not include any tips, gratuities or service charges.

From the 1st April 2024 wage levels have been set at:

- £11.44 National Living Wage
- £8.60 for 18-20 year olds
- £6.40 for 16-17 year olds
- £6.40 for an apprentice

### Holidays and Annual Leave

There is a minimum right to paid holidays. Some employers will offer more than the legal minimum of 28 days per year if you work 5 days a week. Part-time staff are entitled to the same holidays as full-time staff on a pro rata basis. The facts to remember are:

- You start to accrue leave as soon as your employment commences.
- While on leave you will receive your normal rate of pay.
- Public and bank holidays can be included in your minimum holiday entitlement.
- On leaving an employer, you must be paid for any leave you have not taken.

### Working Hours

Adult workers cannot be forced to work more than an average of 48 hours a week over a 17 week period. If you are 18 years of age or over and wish to work more than 48 hours a week, you can opt out of the 48 hour limit. This must be voluntary and be put in writing and this must not form part of an agreement with the whole workforce.

### Breaks

Most employers have their own policy on breaks, so it is best to ask your manager or colleagues what these are before you start work. The legal minimum requirement, under the Working Time Directive, is for a 20 minute rest break if you are expected to work for more than 6 hours. This time can comprise of a lunch or coffee break and your employer can specify when you take it.

### Trade Union Membership

As well as being a member of NUS and a student teacher member of the EIS you have a legal right to join an appropriate union for your part-time employment. Some unions have special reduced rates for student members or for part-timers.

For more information on your Employment Rights as a student part-time worker check out [www.worksmart.org.uk](http://www.worksmart.org.uk) and use their union finder to find the most appropriate union for you.

Part-time staff are entitled to the same holidays as full-time staff on a pro rata basis



Living Rent is Scotland's tenants and community union. We organise collectively to build the power to secure material improvements to our daily lives and put power back into the hands of ordinary people. We fight for better rights and better protections against rent increases, evictions, lack of public services, high energy bills, pollution or poor-quality housing.

#### How we work:

##### Members organise at different levels:

**Locally:** We support each other against evictions, rent increases, stolen deposits... We build up our collective confidence to stand up for our rights and address the housing crisis. Have an issue? Get in touch!

**Locally:** Our members organise in local neighbourhood branches to fight on campaigns in their communities. In the last year, members have won campaigns to get the council to install street lighting in both Edinburgh and Glasgow, won a commitment of £18m from the council to retrofit blocks in Lochend in Edinburgh and successfully pushed for tighter restrictions to short term lets in Edinburgh, to name just a few.

**City wide:** Alongside neighbourhood issues, we organise at the city level to put back homes into use, to get better public services and to ensure that our cities work for the people who live in them!

**Nationally:** Our neighbourhood activities inform our national work, where we fight for structural legislative change. We know that our housing has been 'in crisis' for some time, but this was brought into sharp focus during Covid-19 and even more so during the cost of living crisis. Faced with rising energy bills, increased inflation and rising food prices, we are now facing a perfect storm of economic insecurity for too many of us.

Rents in Scotland have been completely unaffordable for years and too many landlords have failed to improve our housing stock, whether in the private or social and public rented sector. To bring about real change in Scotland's housing, we are pushing for rent controls that tie the quality of the home to the amount the landlord is able to charge to bring down rents and increase the quality of our housing.

**Next steps:** We know the current political system is failing ordinary people and we refuse to wait for politicians. or charities to change things for the better.

Our fights and successes are testament to the fact that community organising works. Through coming together, we have been able to force landlords to give members compensation, halt rent hikes and evictions and do repairs and on a national level - force the government to introduce eviction bans and rent freezes.

But we are only as strong as our membership. If you believe in organised communities and that everyone should have access to safe, secure, affordable housing, get in touch on [contact@livingrent.org](mailto:contact@livingrent.org). Join as a member and get involved in your local branch.

[www.livingrent.org](http://www.livingrent.org)  
Twitter: @Living\_Rent

# Welcome

**nus**scotland  
national union of students



## Introducing NUS Scotland's President, Sai Shraddha Suresh Viswanathan

Sai Shraddha Suresh Viswanathan served as Vice President for Welfare at Aberdeen University Students' Union in the 2022-2024 term, and began her tenure as President of NUS Scotland in July 2024. She is the first international student to be elected to the position and will serve for a two-year term.

Sai was elected on a manifesto that outlined some of her priorities for NUS Scotland during her term including building a strong and accessible student movement; protecting vital education funding; and fostering a culture which is representative and supportive of the diversity of Scotland's student, recognising all students - college and university, international and domestic, and apprentices. She is keen that NUS Scotland continue in its tradition of building positive working relationships with Trade Unions and looks forward to working collaboratively with EIS during her term.

## Who we are

NUS Scotland is the national campaigning organisation for students - we represent over 500,000 students at college and university. With over 30 member students' associations, NUS represents every college student association in Scotland. We promote, defend and extend the rights of students, and work to develop and champion strong students' associations. Whether it's a local campaign that your students' association is fighting on campus, or a national campaign in partnership with our sister unions to make students' lives better, NUS Scotland is the collective movement that makes change happen.

## What has NUS Scotland won for you?

Over recent years, NUS Scotland has achieved some big wins for students

- £3.2 million fund for mental health counsellors
- £2,400 increase in student finance from 2024/25
- Increased the student loan repayment threshold
- Free bus travel for under-22s and peak rail fares scrapped

## What we're working on now

Earlier this year NUS Scotland published our Broken System series of reports, examining five key pillars of Scotland's tertiary education system: the funding model, student finance, housing, transport, and mental health. The series examined the current challenges in education and set out

why the existing system is broken, then explored examples of solutions and best practices from other countries, and finally set out a roadmap to building a new better system for all.

Using these reports as a guide over the coming year NUS Scotland will be campaigning hard for a move away from the status quo of our education system being geared towards profit making and instead towards a system that focuses on student and staff experience, wellbeing, and outcomes.

Students have been bounced from crisis to crisis over the last few years so we know that now is not the time for fiddling around the edges, but for transformation - and the student movement is determined to lead the way. Here's how:

## Housing

Every student deserves a safe, affordable, and secure home but across Scotland, student housing has reached crisis point - a shocking 12% of students have experienced homelessness, and rents remain unaffordable and rising.

NUS Scotland is leading the campaign to fix this, making sure student experiences of housing are at the forefront of politician's minds and working to ensure that the Scottish Government introduces rent controls that fully include student accommodation and bring rents down to affordable levels.

## The General Election

Earlier this year we published Manifesto for Our Future our manifesto for the 2024 general election.

The manifesto sets out a bold future in which International Students have access to the same support and opportunities as home students, workers aren't denied support because of their student status, apprentices are paid a fair wage on which they can not just survive, but thrive, and everyone has the right to vote in UK elections on the same basis as they can in Scottish Elections.

All of this is possible, but we need MPs willing to work with students towards these goals. Before, during, and after this year's general election NUS Scotland will be working hard to make this vision a reality.

## Mental health

In previous years NUS Scotland has successfully won a commitment from the Scottish Government to set up a Student Mental Health Action Plan and working group to deliver it. However, government progress on this has stalled and funding hasn't been extended long term. This year we'll be working to ensure that the action plan is delivered, and that it includes long-term funding for student mental health; greater equity between services in colleges and universities; and better joint working between institutions and the NHS.

Our Think Positive project will also continue to work with institutions and students' associations to deliver better mental health support on campus.

## How to get involved

We can't deliver all of these campaigns as individuals; we need to be working together with students from across Scotland. You can keep track of the work that NUS

Scotland is doing by following us on social media or signing up as a supporter on our website.

Your local students' association has a tremendous amount of influence meaning they can have a really positive impact on the experience of students like you. Make sure to get involved with the campaigns that your students' association is working on, or get directly involved yourself and become a course representative or run for a position in your students' association's elections.

It can be intense balancing course work and your placement, but it's important to do more than just study whilst at university. University is a great opportunity to meet lots of other people from a wide range of backgrounds, take that opportunity by getting involved with clubs and societies. Your students' association will offer a wide range of opportunities from one day events, or to weekly volunteering commitments, make sure you check out what else you can do whilst at university and make the most of your time.

Just remember that you are now part of a union - and that means there will always be someone to stand up for you, and always someone for you to stand up with.

## How to get involved

We can't deliver all of these campaigns as individuals, we need to be working together with students from across Scotland. You can keep track of the work that NUS Scotland is doing by liking our page on Facebook or by following us on Twitter.

Your local students' association has a tremendous amount of influence meaning they can have a really positive impact on the experience of students like you. Make sure to get involved with the campaigns that your students' association is working on, or get directly involved yourself and become a course representative or run for a position in your students' association's elections.

It can be intense balancing course work and your placement, but it's important to do more than just study whilst at university. University is a great opportunity to meet lots of other people from a wide range of backgrounds, take that opportunity by getting involved with clubs and societies. Your students' association will offer a wide range of opportunities from one day events, or to weekly volunteering commitments, make sure you check out what else you can do whilst at university and make the most of your time.

Just remember that you are now part of a union - and that means there will always be someone to stand up for you, and always someone for you to stand up with.

[www.facebook.com/nusScotland](https://www.facebook.com/nusScotland)

@nusscotland



# What to Expect While on Placement

**Your first school placement can seem daunting, but it can also be a lot of fun. Placement gives you the opportunity to put into practice all the skills that you have learned so far and ‘find your feet’ in the classroom.**

**The wellbeing of everyone in the school community is a fundamental prerequisite for productive teaching and learning**

## Before you Begin

- **Research** your school and find out as much about it as you can. School website/X/Facebook pages are often useful sources of information and news.
- **Talk** to other students, lecturers and your Student Education Society to build up a picture of what to expect.
- **Visit** the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS) website. It also contains advice for student teachers and can be found at [www.gtcs.org.uk](http://www.gtcs.org.uk)
- **Request** login details for the school's computer network.
- **Get** a copy of the school's staff handbook and behaviour policy.
- **Find** out how long it takes to travel to the school and what the best route to get there is.
- **Arrange**, with your mentor and Headteacher, a time to visit the school prior to commencing your placement. Use the opportunity to find out which classes you will teach, levels, any significant

information about individual pupils that you should be aware of (medical, behavioural etc) as well as the policies and protocols of the school.

## First Day

- **First impressions count** so make sure that you arrive in plenty of time and have school and mentor contact details with you in case of an emergency.
- **Dress appropriately** as you should look smart but stay practical because you need to feel comfortable when you are working with children.
- **Smile and introduce yourself** to your new colleagues. This may seem difficult if you are nervous but remember, they have all been through the same thing before and will be happy to help you settle in.
- **Try to learn your pupils' names quickly**; one good way to help remember them is to create a seating plan.

# Throughout your Placement

## Your health and wellbeing are important

Teaching can be a stressful and exhausting profession so taking care of your own health is very important. Support should be available in school or through your university so please talk to someone if you need to. The wellbeing of everyone in a school community is a fundamental pre-requisite for productive teaching and learning.

## Always ask questions

If you are unsure about where to find something, how to set up equipment or how you should deal with a particular issue, your colleagues and your mentor should be able to help.

## Be professional

If you find yourself socialising in a place where pupils or parents from your school may be, then remember to behave appropriately. Social media platforms like X, Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram are now part of personal and professional life. It is important to think carefully about your privacy settings on personal accounts and devices and familiarise yourself with the school's social media use policy for any professional accounts and devices.

## Regularly update your school experience file

If you keep this organised, then you will avoid trying to remember experiences and writing last minute updates.

## If you become ill

You should inform your school as well as your university tutor immediately.

**Look out for EIS drop-in clinics at your university for advice on placements**



**Introduce yourself to the School EIS Rep while you're on placement and be part of union activities in school.**

It's a good idea to find out who the EIS Rep is at the start of your school placement and make sure the rep knows that you are a student member. You may want to ask for advice or information. Take the opportunity to attend any school EIS meetings held during your placement.

If a school EIS Rep is not available, then please contact the appropriate Organiser for your TEI. Details can be found here:  
[www.eis.org.uk/Contacts/Organisers](http://www.eis.org.uk/Contacts/Organisers)

# EIS Networks

The EIS has a number of networks you can get involved in. Find out more online in our 'Get Involved' section: [www.eis.org.uk](http://www.eis.org.uk)



Promote the work of ASN teachers in the wider educational community.



Connect with members of the Instrumental Music Teachers network.



Connect with BAME members, access relevant opportunities and advise the EIS' anti-racism agenda.



Connect with disabled members, access relevant opportunities and advise the EIS' disability equality work.



Open to any member 27 or younger, this is a new network for EIS members to connect and share their experiences.



Connect with members who identify as LGBT+ and advise the union on LGBT+ issues.



Early Years Network - Brings together Nursery teachers to share experiences, discuss common challenges and promote their distinct professional identity and contribution to learning and teaching.

# EIS Representatives

EIS representatives are fundamental to the operation of this union and play a vital role for the members in the workplace. All EIS representatives are volunteers and carry out a number of duties on behalf of the Educational Institute of Scotland and for their colleagues and fellow members. School Reps can support you while you are on placement so find out who they are as soon as you arrive in school.



## Professional Learning

The EIS are committed to providing all members with high-quality professional learning opportunities that support career-long professional development. As a student member, any of the various training courses and professional learning seminars organised by the EIS are open to you. Details of courses and events are available through the EIS website.



### What does an EIS Rep do?

- Gets TUC accredited training
- Keeps members up-to-date with the latest EIS news and action
- Provides support and advice on workplace issues
- Represents the collective interests of members in workplace negotiations
- Promotes the benefits of EIS membership and ways to become involved



### What does an EIS Health & Safety Rep do?

- Gets TUC accredited training
- Promotes safe working practices in educational establishments
- Identifies health and safety issues
- Investigates potential hazards at work
- Supports employees with complaints about health, safety or welfare at work
- Inspects workplaces to identify hazards



### What does an EIS Learning Rep do?

- Undertakes high level training at postgraduate level
- Provides guidance and support to colleagues on Professional Learning (PL) opportunities
- Helps to organise events and seminars
- Raises the profile of Professional Learning through work with partners



### What does an EIS Equality Rep do?

- Gets TUC accredited training
- Advises Local Associations and branches on equality issues
- Supports individual members
- Promotes equality and social justice in the workplace
- Helps develop local equality strategies
- Supports local equality initiatives

**FREE**  
**Student**  
**Membership**

**&**

**FREE**  
**Probationer**  
**Membership**



**Join**  
*the Union*



[www.eis.org.uk/join](http://www.eis.org.uk/join)