

Press release

## Concern about university cost on the rise

***New [The Student Room](#) research finds worry about student debt has doubled in past two years***

Concern about the cost of university debt and living expenses is on the rise amongst students, according to the latest Options report from the world's largest online student community, The Student Room.

The annual Options survey of 5000 UK students found the percentage of students who are seriously worried about the affordability of university tuition fees is growing steadily – from 10% in 2013 to 19% in 2015.

The cost of living is also a significant factor shaping students' university choices, with three quarters of students now labelling it as a major issue. More than half of students (53%) said they now need to work part time to support themselves, while 36% will choose specific universities that offer bursaries or other financial support.

The recent government decision to scrap maintenance grants has contributed significantly to the high levels of worry about student debt.

The survey was conducted just before the government announced plans to scrap the maintenance grant, and more than half of respondents said the announcement would force them to seriously consider whether they could afford to go to university. A further fifth of students said university is now out of the question entirely.

Of the survey respondents who have opted out of university, financial concerns are the single biggest factor driving students to enter the world of work, with two thirds (66%) citing expense and level of debt as their strongest motivation.

Jack Wallington, Community Director of The Student Room, said, "Sustained year-on-year decline in confidence about university debt demonstrates students are not immune to the pinch of rising UK living costs.

"Options 2015 clearly shows students originally felt pragmatic about student debt when tuition fees were first introduced, and it's of great concern that they are taking a step backward. It has never been more essential for HE to provide students with an accurate cost-of-living league table to help with their decisions.

“Our message to students remains the same. Potential applicants should not be put off of a higher education when student loans will cover fees and primary bills, only being paid back in later life on a good salary.

"However, now more than ever, it is crucial for students to research their university choices in as much depth as they can to get make the most of the financial investment they're making in their education.”

One student commented: "My maintenance loan will not cover the cost of halls alone in my first year and I will have to rely on a part time job and additional funding from my parents.

“I think that something needs to be done for those who will struggle the most. I want to go to uni to enhance my career opportunities, but the financial stress that lies ahead of me is worrying me before I've even found out my A-Level results.”

*\* The survey by The Student Room polled 5,722 UK students between 26 June and 10 July 2015. This is the third wave of the annual student HE decision making research showing trends from 2013 – 2015.*

### **About The Student Room**

[thestudentroom.co.uk](http://thestudentroom.co.uk)

Founded in 2001, The Student Room is the world's largest online student community and the UK's no.1 education website according to ComScore data. The Student Room has over 3 million registered members, primarily aged between 14-24 and attracts over 8 million visitors a month. It provides student-to-student advice on studying, educational career choice and lifestyle issues. The Student Room works directly with most UK universities as well as a wide range of leading brands and companies. 24/7 honest, realistic advice and support.

### **For more information, images and interviews, please contact:**

Alice Johnson / Vicki Hughes

Fugu PR

T: 01273 327 514

M: 07969475376

E: [Alice@fugupr.com](mailto:Alice@fugupr.com) / [Vicki@fugupr.com](mailto:Vicki@fugupr.com)