

Better Forums Feedback– May 2026

Idea 1: Childcare Needs

For/Against Idea	Feedback
Yes	It hasn't applied to me, but I know several PhD students who have become parents during their studies and if the university can provide more childcare support so that their research is less disrupted, that is something I can't disagree with
Yes	Being a parent is very difficult. All the help we can get
Yes	yes, better access to education for those with children if great
Yes	Reducing barriers for PGRs
Yes	Great idea!
Yes	Students should be able to dedicate time to their work without distraction and needing to multitask
Yes	Will probably be small usage but will be helpful for those that do need it
Yes	The university claims to care and accommodate students who are parents, but in reality still expects the same from those students as others without the same responsibilities and burdens. Childcare support for PGRs would help alleviate some of the stress those students experience so they can work on their research.
Yes	I totally agree and vote for this idea. This policy ensures that the parents are considered and that the child is well taken care of. It all ensures that the parent or a trusted carer is still part of the child's life at any point, and this creates emotional stability for both parties.
Yes	Great idea and a very marginalised community. The ideas are great and best as a Better University idea as the University has the most they can do on this. Playgroup on campus idea great but might not be complete by 2026/7 as 3 year policy!
Unsure	I believe there are bigger priorities impacting students at university currently
Unsure	I think there definitely needs to be a reduction in childcare costs at the University; they are simply too high considering PhD funding rates. I am less convinced about increasing the stipend amounts exclusively for parents, as some PhDs are also in substantial financial straits even without children. So maybe this could be a little unfair?
Unsure	Obviously, we should do this, but how? This isn't a policy.
No	NA

Idea 2: PGR Eye Tests

For/Against Idea	Feedback
Yes	I am not sure of this but I heard the cost of getting corrective eyeglasses is high (especially for low-income students) so giving a diagnosis when treatment is not accessible does not make much sense to me. Keep in mind ldk the cost of an eye test or how long it is to get an appointment.
Yes	It seems silly for this not to be extended to PGRs when many of us are also staff through teaching work, and our screen time likely matches that of staff.
Yes	Currently there is an imbalance between demonstrators who are entitled to this and PGRs who aren't.
Yes	Anecdotally, my eye sight has deteriorated during my PhD (I never had issues before) with a likely contributing factor being the large screen time associated with the job. Had eye tests been free for us, I would have seen an optician much sooner (instead of having to factor a visit in with the calculus of financial planning)
Yes	My eyes have def changed since I've been here
Yes	yes, PGRs are often overlooked as valuable contributions for the university
Yes	PGRs are treated as staff but without staff benefits - this should be amended
Yes	Great idea!
Yes	Screens are a big part of PGR day-to-day life, and free eye tests would ensure better eye health
Yes	Great idea - I think a lot of PhDs are at the age where they maybe are starting to notice their eyesight is starting to get worse. Looking at screens and reading for prolonged periods without glasses when needed can cause headaches.
Yes	I'd like to see this
Yes	I think fairness this a good idea and phd students are going to be the least well off of staff so makes sense for their eye tests to be covered. One of my concerns is why the University is covering eye tests costs at all for staff when there is so much that students are paying for but don't see the benefits from such as eye tests!!
Yes	N/A
Unsure	I am not sure of this but I heard the cost of getting corrective eyeglasses is high (especially for low-income students) so giving a diagnosis when treatment is not accessible does not make much sense to me. Keep in mind ldk the cost of an eye test or how long it is to get an appointment.
No	Again, not a priority for university students in my opinion.

Idea 3: Tuition Fees

For/Against Idea	Feedback
Yes	Would help with the cost of living most students struggle with.
Yes	Makes sense if you want to include working or low-income students
Yes	I think there definitely needs to be more flexible options for how tuition fees are paid. My concern is whether monthly payments could be too much to manage/control?
Yes	Spreading out payments — no fees! No interest! — helps with saving up. As a non-funded international student, £10500 is a lot to cough up at once
Yes	yep, easier access for education is only positive
Yes	reducing barriers to lower income folk
Yes	Great idea!
Yes	With the cost of living crisis, this would be really helpful especially for working class students where it is not feasible to pay large sums of money in one go
Yes	I'd like to see this
Yes	Love this idea! Might just want a bit of information on which students can't access Student Finance England as this is was my only question. I assume it mainly affects international students so might be worth mentioning that. Are there examples of this at other universities worth looking at?
Yes	NA
Unsure	Not sure what form this would take
Unsure	N/a, I haven't given this much thought
No	Transferring debt to the university rather than recognised loan providers is a terrible idea for university solvency.