

## Should QMSU do more to help the PGR community at QMUL?

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**Proposed by:** Joe Davies

**Seconded by:** Louis Strange

### **What do you want?**

- For QMSU to make a full commitment to provide equitable support to PGR students who are not being adequately supported by QMSU. This should include but is not limited to: assigning an officer to look after communications to all PGR students, and to access the PGR email lists currently held exclusively by the Doctoral College.

- For QMSU to explicitly and publicly support the PGR Pandemic Group's campaign for funded extensions re the pandemic. This should include but is not limited to social media post(s) in support, and continued engagement in meetings with the PGR group.

- For QMSU to explicitly support the national PGR campaign (which is supported by the UCU) for PGRs to be recognized as full members of staff, dropping their student status. This should include but is not limited to: social media post(s) in support, and a commitment to join future joint UCU and PGR campaigns that support this fight.

- For QMSU to pass a Vote of No Confidence in Colin Bailey for: heading a pandemic response that has consistently gone against how the government and other universities are acting, lack of support for students in general and his insistence that campus facilities are fully open when this is demonstrably untrue. This should include but is not limited to: recommitting to and expanding upon the existing mandate to declare No Confidence in Colin Bailey as voted on in May 2020 and to boycott all meetings with Colin Bailey for the foreseeable future.

### **Why do you want it?**

PGRs (Post Graduate Researcher) exist in a kind of limbo. We are not considered full staff members by QMUL, but still are stipulated to be available at specific times, are able to apply to teach classes and be part of pastoral organizing committees in the University. We are not considered full students by QMUL, however we do not have staff contracts which may help us claim sick leave and we do not receive pensions or the usual workplace benefits schemes, such as expenses claims for necessary work (many must raise personal funds to carry out essential field work). We recognise that this makes it difficult for QMSU to represent PGRs but supporting us now as students will help in our campaign to be recognised as full staff members.

Not only this, but we are often brushed off and ignored by groups that are supposed to represent us. SET at QMUL decided policy on face-to-face teaching without consulting those that teach the vast majority of classes (PGRs) and QMSU have consistently neglected to send out surveys or pertinent information to the thousands of PGRs across the University.

PGRs have been forced to continue working as normal throughout the pandemic or face

the possibility of a loss of funding, having visas canceled, or falling behind on a timeline that has been kept rigid. We face the danger of having to teach face-to-face or lose GTA positions that many rely on to pay rent. Undergrads and PGTs (Post Graduate Taught) have the no detriment clause which, because of the unique position we hold as not-quite-student-or-staff we have no access to.

This is why we propose that QMSU explicitly puts its support behind PGRs in our campaign for funded extensions for all PGRs in order to mitigate the damage caused by the pandemic. We wish to feel represented by QMSU. The unwillingness to support us by not supporting the UCU and NUS push for fully online teaching where possible, and the lack of communication from QMSU to the PGR community of QMUL has made us feel as though we are on our own. You represent students at QMUL and so long as we are at least partially recognised as such, you have a duty of care to this group.

The push for recognising us as staff members leads into this duty of care. We do not wish to be considered students, as we do not attend lectures or pay to attend this university. We want to be able to continue aiding in student life, safe in the knowledge that we have job security, rather than the tenuous verbal agreements we have as assurance of a paycheck. Supporting us towards being full staff members would go a long way to solidifying QMSU as a body that does indeed listen to and act on the wants and needs of their student body.

In terms of the wider student body, Colin Bailey's response has been terrible. He pushed forward the advertising of an university experience that he knew would simply not be available and then went on to insist that facilities at the university have been open as normal. Students' accommodation restrictions, online teaching necessity and lack of access to the library services among others have proved this to be false. We propose that a vote of no confidence is passed to show how displeased the student population is with the lies they have been sold.

#### **What impact will this have?**

First and foremost, PGR students will finally feel as though they have an organising body with the student side of their interests at heart. As much as the UCU can support us, without contracts we are unable to claim the same support from them as any other staff member would.

Secondly, it will give solidarity to other union groups at the University and put pressure on SET to open lines of communications with the aim of resolving issues that they have been complicit in propagating. Solidarity is the strongest force we have when it comes to enacting real change.