

Should QMSU publicly support QMUCU in the current industrial dispute?

Proposed by: Sebastian Mylly

Seconded by: Tia Debenham

What do you want?

1. That the Executive Officers release a statement in support of UCU's industrial action over pay and pensions and of the joint unions' claim for better pay and conditions for all staff, and that they publish this statement on their website and social media accounts.
2. That the Students' Union will, where relevant, work with QMUCU to communicate information about industrial action to students so as to ensure that students have access to accurate and up-to-date information, resources, and support.
3. That in the event pay deductions for strike days are made, the SU requests QMUL SET that deductions are donated to the Student Hardship Fund.

Why do you want it?

It is in students' interest to prevent or minimise disruption to our education, and the most sensible way to pursue this goal is by supporting staff in their campaign: past experience both at QMUL and other institutions has shown that attempts to ignore industrial action or to crack down on it have only produced more disruption. Students' opinions carry a lot of weight to university management: if students voice their support for the union, we can help make sure that further disruption won't happen. Successful industrial action would repair the conditions that drive staff to taking industrial action in the first place, and hence further disruption would not have to take place.

Conversely, lack of student support has previously been weaponised as an intimidation tactic against UCU members, which has again failed to resolve the dispute and has actually boomeranged into having negative impacts on us students. Silence and lack of communication benefits neither staff nor students. We are all members of the academic community that makes up the university, and can only stand to gain from open dialogue and cooperation for better working and learning conditions.

What impact will this have?

In order to ensure that students are adequately informed and prepared for industrial action, it is vital that the SU and the UCU branch work together to provide students with information, resources and support. This will allow the SU to be a place of support for students who may experience knock-on effects from the disruption and for the SU to join the ranks of SUs in other institutions that have voiced their support to the UCU, such as Cardiff, Goldsmiths, and Roehampton.

Furthermore, if we make it clear that we want employers to negotiate with the union, we also stand to win improvements on our own learning conditions. If our lecturers have fair pay, stable contracts, and reasonable workloads, they can teach us better. If we want the 'world-class' education that we have been promised by this Russell Group institution, it is only reasonable that we demand that, instead of being taught by overworked staff who have no time for students due to being overloaded by admin work, we are taught by people who are paid fairly and treated fairly by their employers. The union's goal is to build universities that work for both staff and students, and opposing that is also counterproductive to students.