

Message from Queen Mary Senior Executive Team: update on industrial action

Dear colleague,

We hope this email finds you well, and that the first week of Semester 2 went well.

We are very sorry to tell you that, following the trade union UCU's reballoting of its members in relation to the USS pension scheme and in relation to pay and working conditions, UCU now has a mandate for industrial action at Queen Mary. The mandates held by UCU for both pay and pensions disputes cover strike action and action short of strike (ASOS). Roughly 400 of our staff voted for strike action at Queen Mary in each ballot, which is less than 10% of our workforce. We are in a minority of 39 universities facing industrial action over both issues.

The outcome of these reballots is extremely disappointing, considering the impact on students and the financial commitment already made by the sector to resolve these issues. Our students have endured so much disruption as a result of the pandemic, in addition to the impact of previous industrial action at Queen Mary in 2018, 2019 and 2020. Our first priority will always be to protect our students' education and experience at our University, above all other activities.

UCU has now contacted the University to issue notice of industrial action in relation to each ballot, and confirmed [a number of strike days](#), and also that from 7 February 2022 UCU members will be induced to take action short of a strike (ASOS).

The mandates for industrial action, including strike days and ASOS, are effective for six months from 14 January 2022. During this time the University may receive notifications of further industrial action.

Offering a world-leading education is a fundamental part of our mission as a university, and hence we must protect our students' education and experience through this industrial action. It is also important that we take an equitable approach across our entire University community. In order to protect our students' education, we will be asking all staff taking part in any industrial action (including ASOS) to prioritise all planned educational activities above all other activities. 100% of pay will be deducted from staff undertaking industrial action, including ASOS, if all planned educational activities are not undertaken. Please [see the FAQ](#) for more information.

Staff can find out more about the issues at the heart of the action related to pensions by reading the material from the [information briefing sessions](#) held by an independent pensions expert from Mercer in October, and by using the USS [pension modeller](#), which helps USS members see the potential impact of the changes upon them individually, based on their own circumstances. Sheila Gupta has recently written blogs with current information on [gender inequality](#) and [fixed-term and casual contracts](#) at Queen Mary. You can find further information on our [EDI webpages](#). Please do read this, as a significant amount of misinformation has been circulated.

If you have any questions, please first look at [the FAQs](#), and then raise any unresolved issues with your line manager.

We know staff across the University are united in our commitment to deliver an outstanding education to our students. We hope we can work together to mitigate the impact of this industrial action on our students, who have already faced so much disruption in their time with us. We have had a fantastic start to this calendar year with the graduation ceremonies: do have a look at some of the news stories and pictures. And last Thursday, we had an event in the science and engineering

faculty to celebrate some of the amazing successes of staff there, including in education and the student experience. There is much to look forward to, including new colleagues joining us as a result of strategic investments in [science and engineering](#) and [humanities and social sciences](#). Investment in medicine and dentistry is also planned.

We will write to you again when there is further information to share.

Best wishes,

Queen Mary Senior Executive Team

Colin Bailey – President and Principal
Stephanie Marshall – Vice-Principal (Education)
Andrew Livingston – Vice-Principal (Research and Innovation)
Wen Wang – Vice-Principal (Science and Engineering)
Matthew Hilton – Vice-Principal (Humanities and Social Sciences)
Mark Caulfield – Vice-Principal (Health)
Philippa Lloyd – Vice-Principal (Policy and Strategic Partnerships)
Colin Grant - Vice Principal (International)
Sheila Gupta – Vice-Principal (People, Culture and Inclusion)
Jonathan Morgan – Chief Governance Officer and University Secretary
Karen Kroger – Chief Financial Officer
Ghazwa Alwani-Starr – Chief Operations Officer

