

TO: Assembly

FROM: Seun Twins, Jack Ballingham, Charlie Procter, Declan Merrington, Jonah Graham

RE: Durham SU policy position on UCU industrial action

DATE: 11 November 2021

Durham SU Notes

1. That the University and Colleges Union (UCU) have recently conducted a ballot for industrial action including strike action and action short of a strike (ASOS).
2. As well as continuing to protect pensions, which was the focus for the 2018 UCU strikes, staff are also balloting over the 'four fights'¹;
 - i. Addressing gender, ethnic and disability pay gaps for university staff
 - ii. End contract casualisation and rising job insecurity
 - iii. Tackle rising workloads
 - iv. Fair pay
3. In 2018 Durham Students' Union passed policy to support UCU's strike action ²

Durham SU believes

1. Many Durham postgraduate research student are adversely affected by the issues raised particularly in UCU's Four Fights campaign, and as dual members of Durham SU and UCU they will be entitled to vote in the ballot and engage in any industrial action.

Durham SU resolves

1. Durham SU supports the University and College Union because we want great people to be in great jobs, making our education excellent. Our staff deserve secure and equitable work and their pension contributions protected.
2. No UCU member will engage in industrial action lightly, and we respect and support the difficult decision they have made. We know that striking is always the last option. This dispute must be resolved, through negotiation, as soon as possible.
3. There is no contradiction in supporting UCU's campaign goals whilst recognising that ongoing strike action could harm students' education. Students won't have had a 'normal' education for three years, and they deserve the full Durham experience. The quicker the dispute can be resolved, the better for students and staff.
4. The Durham SU Officers will make every effort to advocate for the continued quality of teaching and learning, for reasonable adjustment in assessments, and to represent the interests of all members (including postgraduate research students) to the University administration.

1) <https://www.ucu.org.uk/hedisputes>

2) [Durham SU update: UCU strike action policy @ Durham SU](#)