

## Strike Funding

This motion instructs the Students' Union to initiate a debate with the University over how the funds generated from striking staff salaries should be used and this debate should be steered by the discussion in this room tonight

## Climate Emergency

This motion instructs the Students' Union to declare a Climate Emergency and develop an action plan to demonstrate how it will build solidarity with the University and other Universities in tackling the crisis facing our planet

## Free Education

This motion instructs the Students' Union to reaffirm its commitment to the principle that access to a University education should be free and ensure this is built into its education strategy for the years ahead

## International Volunteering Opportunities

This motion instructs the Students' Union to cease offering international volunteering opportunities, due to the environmental impact and damage to the infrastructure of countries impacted by voluntourism

# Children-friendly room

BIANCA-EUGENIA SEMCZUK

<b>Overview</b>	<p>Due the disadvantage the students with dependent children are put at, I proposed the idea of a children-friendly room - a space where the parents in the presence of their kids can have access to the library's facilities, be able to study and do their assignments.</p>
<b>Facts</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. According to HESA*, in the academic year 2017/2018, the University of Leicester admitted 5430 mature students out of the total amount of 5580. (see appendix A)</li><li>2. Such children-friendly rooms already exist in some universities, such Sussex, Derby or Aberdeen.</li><li>3. The idea had 3 positive comments from students with kids, all of them supporting the concept. (see appendix B)</li><li>4. On paper, there are many grants, allowances or scholarships for students with children. In reality, not everyone qualifies for them, especially some of the international students. (see appendix C)</li></ol> <p>*HESA = Higher Education Student Statistics (<a href="https://www.hesa.ac.uk/">https://www.hesa.ac.uk/</a>)</p>

<p><b><i>Opinions</i></b></p>	<p>Our student body includes a large number of students with dependent children. They have to combine work, study and childcare commitments, which can be pretty challenging and overwhelming. Sometimes they have to stay extra hours after nursery/school studying for exams or writing assignments - which involves investing even more money in childcare or baby-sitting.</p> <p>I strongly believe that students they are put at disadvantage around the campus, in particular when it comes to using the Library. I think that a family-friendly study space for the exclusive use of students with children would be extremely beneficial and help them improve their academic performance as well.</p>
<p><b><i>Actions/Outcomes</i></b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Immediate implementation of such room</li> <li>2. We consider the security issues, therefore the access to the room would preferably be made by card access or a code provided only to the students applying for the utilities of such room.</li> <li>3. The presence of a third party to look after kids is not requested, as the students would not leave their children unattended.</li> <li>4. The parents can sign at the beginning a document stating that the university/library is not responsible for anything that happens.</li> <li>5. The age range for the children: 0 to 12</li> <li>6. Ideal venue: Library</li> </ol>

# Student Support for UCU Strikes

ADNAN RAHMAN, EDUCATION OFFICER

**Overview** (100 words)

The University & College Union (UCU) which is the biggest representative union for academic lecturers, PhD student researchers and professional staff have voted to strike nationally over the following issues:

- Pay
- Pensions
- Equalities (gender and race pay gaps)
- Casualisation and Precarious Employment (phD students)

Each local branch has voted on whether to strike or not. Leicester UCU is one of 74 University branches that has voted in favour of 14 days of strike action commencing on Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> February. Student support is integral to successful disruption and overall better working & learning conditions for students & staff.

**Facts**

*Statements that are true, please provide appropriate references*

UCU has announced 14 days of strike action on the following dates:

- Week One: Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> and Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February
- Week Two: Monday 24<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> February
- Week Three: Monday 2<sup>nd</sup>, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup>, Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> and Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March
- Week Four: Monday 9<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup>, Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup>, Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> and Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March

Universities UK which is the national governing and representative board for British

universities has asked that lecturers contribute more to their existing pensions deal.

Staff pay has declined by 17% over a decade, further compounded by gendered and racialized pay gaps. UCU are asking for a 3% increase in pay plus a cost of living pay rise. Comparatively, Vice-Chancellors across the UK got an average pay rise of 3.5% last year. (<https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/press-releases/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-ucu-strike/>)

The local UCU branch here have now agreed a deal with the University whereby any strike pay will now be deducted across five months and UCU will hold all protests on designated picket lines as opposed to protesting on and across campus.

The Students' Union (SU) have agreed a mitigation deal with UCU and the University whereby students are not assessed on any topics that are not covered in lectures, that any lecturers going on strike communicate that to students and explain why. We have also asked that when asking students to not cross pickets in solidarity, that UCU bear in mind that students without EU passports need to sign in so as not to jeopardise any student's license to remain in the country. More details of this can be found in Leicester UCU's Strike Handbook - <https://www.uculeicester.org.uk/ucu/strike-handbook-feb-mar-2020/>

There will also be a pot of money, similar to last time, where we as an SU can decide how and where to prioritise that money – that is something we can present and explore in future union council meetings.

The National Union of Students (NUS) have already expressed solidarity with the UCU nationally - <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/press-releases/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-ucu-strike/>

**Opinions**

*What should the Union think or believe on this topic/issue?*

The SU should stand in full solidarity with UCU and striking University staff, many of whom themselves are PhD students on precarious contracts, as the conditions in which they teach & work are the conditions in which we learn. If our lecturers and support staff are unsupported and not valued, then they are unable to deliver the quality of education we all come to University for.

**Actions/Outcomes**

*What are the things you would like to see happen?*

Students should not cross pickets in solidarity but that is at an individual's discretion.

Full-time Executive Officers would be mandated to support the strikes and not cross pickets – i.e. not attend any university meetings during strikes in university buildings, instead holding any meetings over the phone or in the SU office in solidarity, thereby remaining engaged with the University whilst maintaining solidarity with striking staff.