

**Imperial College Union
Union Council / November 2025**

ICU Council Stance on Joint Trade Unions' Industrial Action during Autumn 2025

Author: Philippe de Saint-Seine - Council Representative, PG Natural Sciences

Seconders: Maria Semerkina - PhD student, Department of Physics
James Gibbon - PhD student, Department of Physics

Decision: To approve

Union Notes

1. The University and College Union (UCU) is the recognised trade union for academic staff teaching Imperial College Union members' courses at the University.
2. The three recognised trade unions at Imperial College London, the UCU, Unite, and Unison, have each balloted in favour of taking industrial (strike) action in Autumn 2025. Within the UCU, with 59.06% of eligible members voting in the ballot, 76.61% voted in favour of strike action.
3. The UCU has announced that their members will take industrial action on the following days: 13, 14, 25, 26, 27 and 28 November 2025.
4. The trade unions have already taken industrial action this academic term on the following days: 7, 8, 27, 28 October 2025.
5. The trade unions' mandate to take industrial action will expire in March 2026, opening the door to further industrial action in Spring 2026 if their demands are not met this academic term. They have not yet announced further industrial action dates between December and March, as they are waiting to see how University management will respond to this Autumn's industrial action.
6. The latest local pay award by the University for 2025-26¹ was a blanket 2.0% increase to all staff salaries.
7. The Office for National Statistics' inflation figure is 4.1%² nationally for the past year.
8. The UCU states that, compared to inflation, Imperial staff salaries are 7.2% lower than they were in 2018.
9. University management has recognised that their pay offer was indexed on benchmarks (to compare Imperial staff salaries to other London universities in similar roles) that turned out to be incorrect. Though some roles' pay have been exaggerated by 35%³, University management have decided not to revisit the issue⁴.
10. The latest pay award included an additional one or two more University closure days per year, depending on when Christmas lands in the calendar.
11. The student-staff ratio has increased by 13.5% on average in over the past decade (see Figure 1).⁵
12. The Office for Students has issued new guidance⁶ pertaining to monetary refunds to students whose modules have been 'disrupted' by industrial action. The BBC⁷ reported that students at Newcastle University were reimbursed £100 / disrupted module if they were Home fee status students, £200 / disrupted module if they were International fee status students, for up to 6 modules. This led Newcastle University to pay out at least £1.7 million to students last summer.

¹ <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/human-resources/employee-experience/pay-and-pensions/pay-initiatives/annual-pay-award/>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices> [last visited 08 Nov 2025]

³ <https://ucu.imperial.ac.uk/archives/1143>

⁴ Felix, issue 1879, p. 4 - https://issues.felixonline.co.uk/felix_1879.pdf

⁵ <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/admin-services/strategic-planning/statistics/college-overview/>

⁶ <https://www.officeforstudents.org.uk/publications/protecting-the-interests-of-students-during-industrial-action/>

⁷ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9w1zwjn41xo>

13. The Union is currently helping the Joint Trade Unions logically by providing storage space for picketing material.

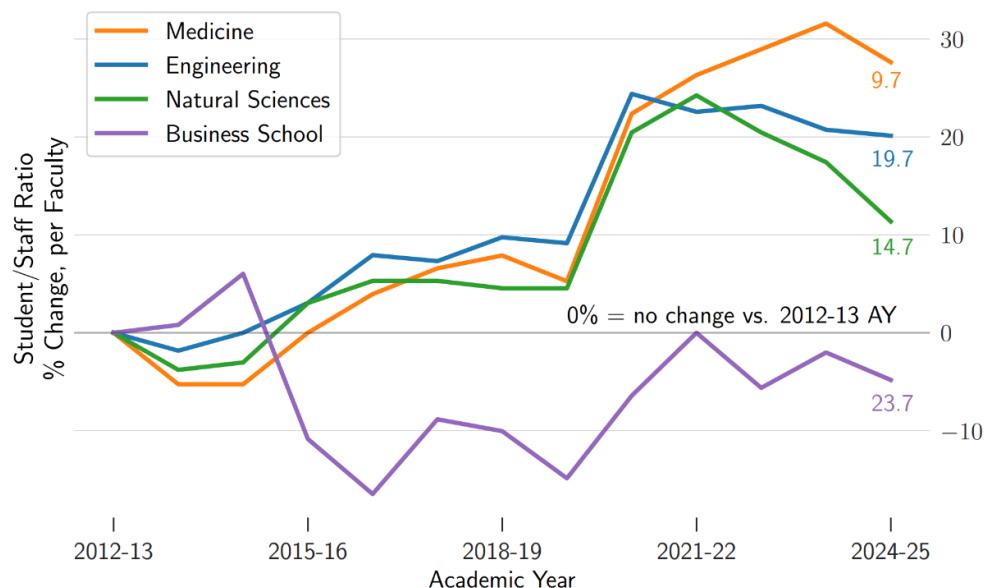


Figure 1 – Percentage change in the number of students per staff in each Faculty, where 0% = 2012-13 Academic Year. The numbers on the right-hand side are the student-staff ratios for 2024-25 (e.g., the student-staff ratio for the Business School was 23.7 last academic year).

Union Believes

1. Students will have a better university experience if teaching staff feel they are being fairly compensated.
2. All staff and workers at the University deserve fair compensation.
3. Staff and workers have a right to take industrial action, regardless of trade union membership status.
4. An increase in the relative number of students compared to staff results in an increased workload for most staff.
5. The extra University closure day(s) (as mentioned in Union Notes 10) is(are) welcome but is(are) not as versatile for staff as usual paid time off. Staff who do not celebrate Christmas or who might prefer to visit family at another, preferred time, might not find this(these) extra day(s) as useful as usual holiday days.
6. The University may not be able to deliver all their learning outcomes to students because of industrial action. This will force departments to reschedule teaching later into the term or even into the next term, burdening already heavy student and staff calendars to avoid tuition fee reimbursements.
7. The University may not be able to support students as much as they should because of industrial action e.g., through lost personal tutorials, and other such pastoral meetings, which count towards the University obligations to students and bear an impact on students' experience.
8. The Joint Trade Unions' demands which bear no direct cost to the University e.g., an increase in unpaid parental leave, an increase in the number holiday days, establishing a working group to determine the feasibility of transitioning to a 4-day work week, are reasonable and should be implemented by the University.

Union Resolves

1. To support University staff and workers participating in industrial action.
2. To continue providing the Trade Unions with logistical support for their picketing material.
3. To support the Trade Unions' stances in their negotiations with the University.

4. To mandate the relevant Officer Trustees to send messages to their relevant contacts in University management indicating the Union's support for staff and workers on strike and the Union's support for the Joint Trade Unions' arguments in their negotiations.
5. To assess, with PGR, PGT, and Undergraduate student representatives, the level of disruption of industrial action at PGR, PGT, and Undergraduate levels.
6. To tell casual workers working at Union outlets that they have the right to join the relevant Trade Union for their line of work, and that they are allowed to participate in industrial action.