



Thursday 25th November

UGM Agenda

Time	1pm - 3pm
Date	Thursday 25th November 2021
Location	Zoom
Chair	TBC
Agenda	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Introduction & Ground Rules2. Motion 1: SOAS SU To Stand in Solidarity with UCU and UNISON3. Motion 2: SOAS Complaints Procedure Reform4. Motion 3: Extension of Online Tutorials5. Executive Committee Reports6. Ratifying the Minutes of the Previous UGM7. AOB



UGM Motions

Motion 1

Title	SOAS SU To Stand in Solidarity with UCU and UNISON
Proposer	Maxine Mallon
<p style="text-align: center;">This Union Notes</p> <p>1.1 That the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) passed a mandate for strike action in 58 universities, which means they are legally allowed to go on strike any time between December 2020 and April 2021;</p> <p>1.2 That UNISON has a live ballot from 2020 over a pay dispute with SOAS and will coordinate action with UCU;</p> <p>1.3 That UCU take three days of strike action this term, on December 1st-3rd inclusive and action short of a strike (ASOS) from December 1st to run throughout the 6 month legal mandate, which expires on 3 May 2022 which will begin with working to contract, with potential for escalation into further strike action in the new year;</p> <p>1.4 That employer body Universities UK (UUK) voted to push ahead with its proposals to cut thousands of pounds from the retirement benefits of university staff, rather than implementing UCU's proposals would have delivered higher benefits in return for lower contributions than those put forward by employers;</p> <p>1.5 That the changes proposed by Universities UK (UUK) to the Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) pension scheme would result in significant cuts to members' retirement income, with a typical member losing up to 35% of their pension;</p> <p>1.6 That UCU's national Four Fights (Pay, Workload, Racial and Gender Pay Gaps and Casualisation) are symptoms of a privatised and marketised higher education system that exploits staff and students and puts profit above students and staff;</p> <p>1.7 That UCU and UNISON has consistently supported student campaigns and actions;</p> <p>1.8 That UCU and UNISON represents university staff nationwide as well as at SOAS;</p> <p>1.9 That many UCU members who are in the early stages of their career are also members of the Students' Union, and have been at the forefront of the anti-casualisation campaign at SOAS, Fractionals For Fair Play.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">This Union Believes</p> <p>2.1 That industrial action is the way in which workers can have collective power over their conditions and that we recognise workers rights to take that action;</p>	



2.2 That a defined benefit pension fund is one of the last remaining forms of job security for early career academics and those who have worked on fixed-term, casual, or part-time contracts for most of their careers;

2.3 That the uncertainty and precarity proposed by Universities UK are counterproductive in creating a Higher Education system which has University staff respected and treated with dignity and respect;

2.4 That supporting striking university workers is an important campaign in the fight against the increasing privatisation and marketisation of higher education;

2.5 That although industrial action is likely to affect students in the short-term, supporting UCU and UNISON ballot is a way of supporting students' learning conditions in the long-term;

2.6 That cross-union solidarity is more effective than isolated demands;

2.7 That winning this battle over pensions will give confidence to young academics, students and society more widely that we can shape our futures if we come together and take action against privatisation and commercialisation of our education and of the welfare state.

This Union Resolves

3.1 To give full and public support to UCU and UNISON on any industrial action that follows the ballot result;

3.2 To request that the SOAS Director and Chief Operating Officer lobby UUK to roll back proposals which undermine the entire pension system and demand that UUK re-enter negotiations with UCU, and to lobby UCEA to re-engage with UCU's demands for a meaningful pay settlement, as well as national commitments to address pay inequality, casualisation and workloads;

3.3 To keep students informed about the negotiations and how students can take action to influence these negotiations to a fair resolution for UCU members;

3.4 To request that any pay deductions of striking workers be allocated to a student hardship fund;

3.5 To continue to support students during the strikes and provide welfare and advice for those who need it;

3.6 To respect the picket line by closing down the Students' Union commercial venues and offices on official UCU strike days and to encourage students to join staff picket lines;

3.7 To develop, in coordination with SOAS UCU, UNISON and others, any other forms of solidarity action that students can take, including providing student support at the picket line;

3.8 To gain assurances from SOAS Senior Management Team that no student will be



adversely impacted by the strike when it comes to graduation and continuation in their studies.



Motion 2

Title	SOAS Complaints Procedure Reform
Proposer	Mudaser Ali
<p style="text-align: center;">This Union Notes</p> <p>1.1 Bullying and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated at SOAS, as stated in item 1.1 of the school's Dignity and Respect Policy.</p> <p>1.1.1 Bullying is defined as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, which may include an abuse or misuse of power, through means that threaten, undermine, intimidate, humiliate, denigrate, take advantage of or injure the recipient.</p> <p>1.1.2 Harassment is defined as unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity; and/or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment which relates to one of their protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief, sex, sexual orientation. Harassment is both a criminal offence and a civil action under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.</p> <p>1.2 SOAS aims to proactively work towards the elimination of bullying, harassment and victimisation, by building an inclusive culture, raising awareness and ensuring transparent effective mechanisms by which complaints can be addressed, as stated in section 2 of the SOAS Dignity and Respect Policy.</p> <p>1.3 A student has faced significant financial hardship from the delays in the complaints process relating to their specific complaint.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">This Union Believes</p> <p>2.1 SOAS has failed in its aim to work towards ensuring transparent effective mechanisms by which complaints can be addressed.</p> <p>2.2 Members of SOAS staff are aware of the lack of accountability procedures associated with the complaints procedure and use this as a means of continuing to behave inappropriately towards students.</p> <p>2.3 SOAS' mediation process as part of the complaints procedure is inadequate and has failed.</p> <p>2.4 At least two senior SOAS academics have been involved in overseeing a student's complaint, have failed to follow through in their duty of care for this student, and in doing so have led this student to incur costs throughout the complaints process.</p> <p>2.5 SOAS has not committed to decisions made around compensation, which pushed a student into homelessness.</p> <p>2.6 At least one student has been neglected by the complaints procedure.</p>	



2.7 Inappropriate disclosures were made during an investigation into a student's complaint, leading to an inadequate outcome.

2.8 A student has reported not receiving adequate academic support by members of staff, despite being entitled to additional support.

2.9 A student has reported being faced with a long term threat from a staff member that would hinder their ability to pursue their education.

2.10 A student has reported that one of the members of staff that harassed them misused their position as a staff member to encourage other students to follow in harassing them.

2.11 A student has reported collusion amongst members of staff in harassing them through the use of racist, Islamophobic and antisemitic remarks in classes, following their initial complaint.

2.12 A student has been victimised for submitting a complaint.

This Union Resolves

3.1 To demand that SOAS reviews the existing complaints procedure and implements a stringent accountability process to ensure that all processes associated with complaints are completed within a defined timescale.

3.1.1 This requires SOAS to states a deadline to define when the complaints procedure for individual cases must have been complete.

3.1.2 This process must guarantee students financial compensation should the complaint not be resolved in the defined time limit. This requires SOAS to create a progressive compensation system, such that the value of compensation students are entitled to increases as the number of days past the set deadline for resolving the complaint increases.

3.1.3 This timescale must be communicated in an agreement made with students, that is governed by English law and subject to the jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

3.2 To demand that SOAS commits to appointing external reviewers for student complaints within 20 working days, where it has been deemed necessary for an external reviewer to be involved in the process.

3.3 To demand that where SOAS requires an external reviewer is required to resolve the complaint, that SOAS appoints an accredited, practicing barrister that must not be employed by SOAS.

3.4 To demand that all external reviewers must communicate the findings of their investigation with all key stakeholders in intervals of 10 working days, until their investigation is concluded.



3.4.1 Key stakeholders are defined as the student that raised the complaint, anyone that the student considers to be within their support network and/or representative of them, and members of staff that have been involved in the complaints procedure.

3.5 To demand that all external reviewers must complete their reviews, providing reports of all contact made with staff, the student or any other stakeholders involved within 10 working days of the review start date.

3.6 To demand that SOAS reconsiders verdicts provided on all complaints where the original resolution timescale was exceeded and/or students voice that the complaints resolution timescale was unreasonable.



Motion 3

Title	Extension of Online Tutorials
Proposer	Emily England
This Union Notes	
1.1 Online tutorials allow international students who are not on campus to engage with their modules easily	
1.2 Students who have troubles travelling or who face ongoing problems benefit from having a space where they can still attend their classes and engage with their subject	
1.3 Online tutorials are a beneficial alternative learning method	
1.4 Allows students who are unwell or experiencing certain symptoms to not have to miss a class	
This Union Believes	
2.1 International students moving onto campus will benefit from having online tutorials for the first month as they settle in	
2.2 Allowing online tutorials as international students move onto campus and settle in will benefit their studies	
2.3 Will limit any further Covid cases as students with symptoms can use this slot when needed	
This Union Resolves	
3.1 Online tutorials will be available at least up until the February reading week	
3.2 At least one online tutorial will be offered by each module	
3.3 Additional online resources and support will be offered	