



Motion in Support of Strikes

This motion was submitted to Union Assembly for discussion on Tuesday 2nd December 2025 by Sam Burgess, Special Interest Representative of Societies Committee, on behalf of the Students Support the Strikes campaign group.

As a result of debate and a vote at Union Assembly, the motion was approved on 2nd December 2025.

LUSU notes:

Lancaster University has announced it needs to cut £35.3 million from its spending over the 2025-26 academic year in order to ensure longstanding financial sustainability. Most universities are reliant on international student tuition as a source of income due to the 2018 home tuition freeze and high inflation. In recent years international student numbers have declined, causing a crisis in university funding. In response to the crisis universities have had to cut expenditure. Lancaster University plans to cut 417 FTE jobs by the end of the 2025-26 academic year. After a period of voluntary redundancies, senior management announced a “stocktake” to determine whether sufficient savings had been made, or whether compulsory redundancies were to be considered necessary.

In response to the threat of compulsory redundancies, and the increased stress and pressure that it would entail on an already overworked staff body, the Lancaster branch of the UCU (LUCU) voted in favour of industrial action on the 15 October 2025. Action Short of A Strike commenced on Monday 10 November 2025, and LUCU had announced full strike action on Thursday 27 November and Friday 28 November 2025.

On Wednesday 19 November, the University management concluded their “stocktake” and ruled out the need for compulsory redundancies of academic staff until at least 31 July 2026. Following this, LUCU called off all planned industrial action.

LUCU have a mandate for strikes up to April 2026.

Compulsory redundancies of Personal Service staff are still possible before 31 July 2026, and compulsory redundancies of academic staff could be brought back after 31 July 2026.

Several student groups have formed or come out in support of LUCU and industrial action, including: Students Support the Strikes, Lancaster University Labour Cub, Lancaster University English Literature Student Network, Lancaster Socialist Work Student Society, Lancaster University Plant-Based Universities Campaign, Lancaster University Fossil Fuel Careers Campaign, Lancaster University Palestine Solidarity Group, and Bowland College JCR.

LUSU believes:

This is not the only way the University could make these savings, but due to the financial pressures exerted on the institution they are unlikely to make savings elsewhere without another kind of pressure forcing their hand. They could, for example, stop investing in trophy projects like the Management School refurbishment and campus in India, but they need these projects to attract new sources of revenue. The international campuses have become necessary as less students are choosing to come abroad to the UK as education quality increases in their own countries and costs far less. We therefore won't get anywhere with moral appeals to senior management: they do not want to fire staff, it leads to negative media coverage, high tensions, and a less effectively run institution.

The senior management cannot run the University themselves: without the labour of lecturers, administrators, and other staff, the courses wouldn't be taught, the buildings wouldn't be cleaned, the library wouldn't be organised, and the admissions applications wouldn't be processed. Withholding this labour is therefore the most effective way for staff to protect their jobs, their conditions, and their wellbeing.

Staff and students have the same interests, that of maintaining an institution where education can flourish. While students' experiences may be slightly hindered by the strikes, the problems that students express with the strikes are going to be problems that already exist within the higher education system under capitalism. The complaint that they are paying nine grand a year and therefore they want to be taught, for example, expresses more so the general dissatisfaction with the amount of debt students have to take on and in exchange for very few contact hours and support. We should connect the issues that students face to the ones that staff do, rather than feeding into any divisions. Firing staff will not only have a detrimental impact on those who lose their jobs and those who are forced to overwork themselves further than they already are to compensate, but less academic staff will mean lower quality, less personalised teaching, and less professional services staff will make it harder for students to access the support they need.

Without clear sight of how and when students will be consulted, we cannot support any of the work of LU Future. We also do not endorse redundancies where there is no clear vision for what the University will look like afterwards.

LUSU resolves:

To stand in solidarity with recognised trade unions in any future disputes regarding employment, workload, and department closures related to LU Futures.

LUSU will publicly support any industrial action that is taken by recognised trade unions in response to any future disputes regarding employment, workload, and department closures related to LU Futures.