



**Referendum 2021
Campaign Teams Briefing**

Your Voice
Only Louder

Welcome to Training

- Welcome
- Background Information on UCU Strikes/Industrial Action
- Background Information on Referendums at the Guild of Students
- Community Organising
- Online campaigning
- In-person campaigning
- Other Support & Next Steps
- Questions



During the Session...

You are welcome to:

- Have something to eat and/or drink
- Do an activity that may help your concentration (e.g. play a game)
- Ask questions!
- There will be a 5-minute break during the session



What is UCU?

- UCU are a **Trade Union** who represent over 130,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians and postgraduates in universities, colleges, prisons, adult education and training organisations across the UK
- On 16th November, they announced that staff at universities across the country, including at the University of Birmingham, would take **three days of strike action between Wednesday 1st and Friday 3rd December (inclusive)**
- The UCU also announced they would be taking indefinite **“action short of a strike”**. This will include working strictly to contract and refusing additional duties



Why are staff taking industrial action?

The industrial action has been called in relation to 2 disputes:

1. Pensions

- UCU have a long running dispute with Universities UK over the future of their pension plan.
- Negotiations between UCU and UUK about the valuation of the scheme have broken down

2. The “Four Fights”

- UCU are concerned that the pay and working conditions of University staff has declined over recent years.
- This dispute relates to pay and working conditions for staff, including workload, equality and casualization issues

The University note that they believe that staff deserve good pay and working conditions, and that UoB is an excellent place to work. They have argued that they have provided a 1.5% pay increase for all staff on academic related contracts for this year and continue to make investments into leave, equality, progression and career development for staff. They are concerned that this action will have a disproportionate impact on the education of Birmingham students, particularly as a number of the disputes outlined are national, rather than local, issues.



Why are staff taking industrial action?

You can read more about the disputes here:

<https://www.guildofstudents.com/representation/industrialaction/>

This page includes FAQs from both UoB and BUCU about the industrial action.



Does the Guild already have a policy on the proposed strike?

In 2020, students voted for a policy that says the Guild should support all industrial action undertaken by staff. [You can read this here.](#)

Earlier this week, your Guild Officer Group resolved (in accordance with our by-laws) to **hold a referendum** in order to ask students to cast their vote and determine whether the Guild should support industrial action in relation to current disputes, for the duration of this academic year.

This is because industrial action is an issue that students hold various different beliefs on, and which may affect their education, both in the short and long term. Much has also changed since the existing policy to support industrial action was passed, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Additionally, a large proportion of students have joined the University since the vote last year, and those new students deserve a say.



What does a Yes or No vote mean?

There's a full break down of what a Yes or No vote means here:

<https://www.guildofstudents.com/referendum/>

The Guild will continue to support individual students (including those choosing to vote “Yes”, “No” and “Abstain” in the Referendum) through Guild Advice and representation functions, in relation to the impact strikes may have on an individual students' academic student experience and academic progression.



What is a Referendum?

- A referendum is an online vote on a particular proposal that all full Guild members can take part in
- Students can vote Yes, No or Abstain
- All fully registered students can vote
- A referendum can be used to seek opinion from students on a proposal, decide Guild policy, and decide affiliations of the Guild of Students. Referenda do not have the power to elect or appoint any Officer, representative or member of Guild of Students staff.
- The Referendum quorum is 2,000



Referendum Timeline

- Tuesday 23rd November @ 10am – Deadline for Campaign Teams to submit details of campaign team leader to Guild
- Tuesday 23rd November @ 4pm – Guild will confirm the leaders of the official campaign team
- Wednesday 24th November @ 4pm – Deadline for submission of each official campaign team's Referendum Argument
- Thursday 25th November @ 12pm – Referendum Arguments will be published on the Guild Website
- Friday 16th November @ 10 am – Voting opens on the Guild Website
- Tuesday 30th November @ 12pm – Voting closes on the Guild Website
- Tuesday 30th November @ 4pm – Referendum Results announced



Campaign Teams

- The Guild will recognise Campaign Teams for the referendum – one for Yes, one for No
- Campaign Teams receive a budget of £100 from the Guild and can upload a Campaign argument of 500 words to the Guild website.
- Campaigns Team **must**
 - Be made up of **fully registered UoB students** only
 - Inform the Guild of their **campaign team leader** – this person will receive the budget and upload the campaign argument
 - Not involve external people or organisations in their campaigning
 - Respect all Guild and University codes of practice & regulations



Budgets

- Each team will receive a £100 budget for their campaign
- You must not exceed this budget
- Keep all receipts for your campaign
- Send receipts and campaign expenditure form by the deadline
- Budgets will be published on the Guild website



Complaints

- The Guild's Returning Officer or nominee shall be responsible for overseeing the process of the Referendum to ensure it is free and fair
- Any grievances about the conduct of the Referendum, including individual campaigns, either as a group or individuals
- Complaints should be made in writing to the President and the nominee of the Returning Officer via elections@guild.bham.ac.uk



Campaign Teams

- This referendum is related to Guild Policy
- In this type of referendum, Full Time Officers **cannot** join campaign teams or take a stance on the referendum
- In this type of referendum, Part Time Officers **can** join campaign teams or take a stance on the referendum **only in their capacity as students**



Campaigning

Community Organising

In-Person Campaigning

Online Campaigning



Community Organising

A tool (method) that you can use for campaigning

Use this because it:

- Can be done by anyone
- Doesn't require money, power or a special/technical skills – just requires people to want to work together with others
- Has helped ordinary people to achieve great things
- Helps us to break down stereotypes and prejudice that we might have about other groups of people

It helps different groups of people to feel united and motivated, and to turn this unity and motivation into democratic action and develop responses to problems

- It can help all UoB students to develop power through self-interest (which can be used in election campaigns and making positive change for students, at the Guild and University)



Community Organising

Two main concepts (parts) to community organising:

- 1) Power
- 2) Self-interest



Power

Activity: What comes to mind when we say power? Who comes to mind →
e.g. control, authority, oppression, dictation, presidents, media moguls

- OED definition of power - capacity to do something
- Power -> If you want change, you need power
- Some people (particularly people who strongly believe in equality) may feel uncomfortable with the term “power” – due to negative associations
- When you build power to make change, you don’t need to give up on your values, you just need to be realistic on how you’re going to use your power
- The stereotypes about “power”, and “less powerful people”, should also be reconsidered
- Community Organising -> building power through relationships with others through common interests and shared values



Self-Interest

Self-interest > what are you interested in? What matters to you? Why do you care about these things? What makes you angry? Why does this motivate you?

Appreciating self-interest is important for successfully making change for 3 reasons:

- (1) Appreciating own needs and motivations - need people who want to make changes
- (2) Appreciating self-interest of others - genuinely interested in other people, find out what motivates them
- (3) Recognising people are motivated to get involved by things they care deeply about

Making change and campaigning needs to be accessible to all students - for people to stay engaged in these, it needs to be something that matters to them



How Does CO Apply To The Referendum?

Self-Interest related to the referenda will be all about students' views on UCU strikes

- Do they agree?
- Do they disagree?
- Do they not have an opinion on it?

You need to talk to students, online or in-person



How Does CO Apply To The Referendum?

Building Power Through Self-Interest

- You might want to reach out to students who you know may have an opinion on the strikes
- Reaching out to a diverse range of students is also important (even if you don't usually interact with them, or think that they will disagree)
- There are lots of ways you can reach out to students – whichever method you use, you can use this method to build relationship and network (which a big part of community organizing and building power)
- You may want to encourage students who have similar interests to be part of your campaign team



Community Organising

You can use your existing networks to campaign!

You can also talk to new people to campaign!



Campaigning - General Notes

- Both in-person and online campaigning allowed
- No limit to how many people on a campaign team
- You can submit a statement supporting your campaign – there is a word count and deadline for this
- There are some do's and don'ts that need to be followed



In-person campaigning

Campaigning in-person may involve speaking to students around campus, via door knocking, at events etc, and having a general physical campaign presence around campus (e.g. putting publicity material up).



General Guidance

For any physical publicity/campaign materials (e.g. leaflets, banners etc):

- Avoid fences or exterior surfaces. Using rope on lampposts, trees and walls is okay. Don't remove plastic tree tags.
- Don't create blind spots.
- Don't mark the ground.
- Estates will remove any material that looks untidy.

**Remove anything you put up ASAP after the close of voting.
Failure to do so may result in a fine from the University.**



General Guidance

For printed materials (e.g. leaflets, posters):

- Make it really clear *which team you are*.
- Limit the amount of text but think about what key messages you want people to take away at a glance.
- Include dates and how to vote
- Avoid language that is insulting or offensive.
- Ensure that photos don't depict drunkenness or consuming alcohol.



Where might you talk to students?

- The Guild of Students
- Library
- Uni Centre
- Muirhead Tower
- Mason Lounge
- Med School
- Sports Centre / pitches
- University Station
- Any entrances onto Campus
- Learning Centre
- Path from Vale to campus
- Car Parks
- Westmere

We can circulate a digital copy of the University map



Online campaigning

- Upload a written statement
- Social media – Facebook, Instagram, Tik Tok, Weibo, Twitter, Discord, LinkedIn etc...
- Post in Facebook Groups
- For all of the above, you can also use memes, videos, campaign photos, GIFs, etc...



What Does A Great Online Campaign Need?

- A plan (e.g. comms/social media plan) – including key messages and how you will communicate to students about it
- Online presence – but not spamming!
- Engaging and consistent content
- Support from other students (i.e. a campaign team)
- Reaching out to a variety of students (if applicable)



Social Media

There are lots of social media websites that you can use for an online campaign



- You may want to create a separate page/channel for your campaign
- You may want to create a comms/social media plan
- On your social media pages/accounts, you can include a written statement, campaign photos, a digital campaign poster, videos, memes etc.
- You can also post in Facebook groups etc. – there are do's and don'ts for this and a list of Facebook pages can be found later in this PowerPoint



Digital Campaign Posters (& graphic design/branding)

Free tools & resources you can use:

We would recommend using Canva for creating digital posters – it's free, easily accessible and really easy to use! <https://www.canva.com/>

Here is a tutorial for beginners - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJSgUx5K6V0>

You can also use PhotoPea EG - [Photopea | Online Photo Editor](#)



Videos

Using videos is an excellent way of varying content on your campaign pages & helping your content to be engaging

You may want to:

- Introduce who you are
- Talk about your campaign



Videos

There are lots of free tools & resources you can download and use:

- OpenShot - <https://www.openshot.org/>
- VSDC Free Video Editor - <http://www.videosoftdev.com/>
- Shotcut - <https://shotcut.org/>
- Blender - <https://www.blender.org/>
- Best Free Video Editing Software in 2020 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UyYzyWrR5iU>
- Top 5 Best Free Video Editing Software 2020 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxlyJHaLu7U>



More on Campaigning

- We can circulate more guidance
- You don't have to do all of these, just do what you are comfortable with!
- Whichever way of campaigning you choose, it will be extremely beneficial for your campaign – it shows students that you are serious and care about UCU strikes

It may be helpful to set SMART goals for your campaign – this will help you plan your time during your campaign:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**chievable
- **R**ealistic
- **T**ime-Bound



Things to Consider

Talk to students with similar interests, but talking to a range of different student groups is still really key – there may be lots of students that you don't usually interact with, or have never interacted with – it doesn't mean that you can't talk to them, or they won't agree with you!

There are some groups of students in particular who feel that candidates don't talk to them during elections, campaigns, referenda etc:

- International students
- Postgraduate students
- Med students
- LGBTQ+ students
- Ethnic minority students
- Disabled students
- Care leavers
- Parents
- Carers
- Mature students
- Commuter students
- Trans students



Things to Consider

- If you do talk to students who disagree with you, don't feel disheartened or discouraged by it. Say thank you for taking the time to talk, and encourage them to vote
- Consider how your campaign can be inclusive and accessible for different students (e.g. videos include subtitles)
- Think about how you would communicate with students from countries with different political circumstances – not every country has a democracy or trade unions!
- Whatever campaign method you use, ensure that you use simple, clear and concise language
- If there are particular groups of students or related topics that you would like to find out more about (e.g. racism, ageism, homophobia), or want to learn more about EDI, you can come and talk to us about it, and we can recommend resources for you to read



Further guidance

- Don't do something that will stop somebody from voting freely and fairly
- Don't sit there and watch people voting
- Don't harass individuals to vote for your side of the argument, online or in person

Also:

- Don't spam social media pages
- Don't use your student group meetings as a campaign meeting
- Don't use your student group Facebook page to post information about your campaign
- Don't use the private Facebook group for your student group as a campaign platform
- Don't use mailing lists that other candidates don't have access to



Support

Talk to each other!

You can talk to us: studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk

Guild Advice: guildadvice@guild.bham.ac.uk

Officer Team: [Officer Team - Guild of Students](#)

