

Supporting the UCU Strike: Students on Picket Lines

NUS is supporting UCU in their disputes over pay and equalities and pension changes. This is a short briefing clarifying the legalities of students joining picket lines.

Students on Picket Lines

Following enquiries from students' unions about the legality of students joining picket lines, **we can see nothing in the [Code of Practice: Picketing](#) which says it is illegal for students to show solidarity with staff who are on picket lines by joining them** in their capacity as students.

What you can't do

Students cannot, however, be part of the picket lines as an official picket. This means that they **cannot be identified as an official picket** would be, for example with a UCU armband.

Students **cannot engage in the activity of an official picket**, including **persuading employees of the workplace to not enter**. They also **can't physically prevent** someone from entering their place of work or study – or act in a way which would **constitute a breach of the peace**.

You should also be mindful of **local codes of conduct** before carrying this out, in case your university rules against disrupting other students' learning, preventing students or staff from entering a campus, or is monitoring attendance during the strike.

What you can do

Students can **hold solidarity demonstrations** near to picket lines and **engage with other students about the issues of the strike**.

You can also **stand with staff** on or near a picket line, but it should be clear you are not an official picket – it's best to have a **chat to the picket line supervisor** (who will be easily identifiable) when you get there to say you are there to show solidarity and ask what is most useful for you to do!

Any questions?

Further briefings on the following issues are available on our [UCU Strike Hub](#):

- In-depth briefing on the issues behind the strike
- Winning the Arguments on Supporting the Strike
- Supporting Student Complaints and the UCU Strike
- Suggested asks for students' unions to universities
- Template letter to Vice Chancellors for individual students
- Legal Guidance for Students' Unions on Students' Rights During the Strike

If you have questions on this briefing, please contact Hannah Sketchley, Policy Officer, on Hannah.Sketchley@nus.org.uk