Frequently Asked Questions

Industrial Action and University Operations

1. What industrial action has been notified to the University?

The University has received formal notices of industrial action from a number of staff representative unions.

These include:

- SIPTU work-to-rule and related industrial action commenced from 00.01 on 30 September 2026.
- IFUT members undertook a one-hour work stoppage from 12.00pm to 1.00pm on 5 October 2026.
- IFUT members undertook 24-hour strikes on 14 October 2026 and 21 October 2026.
- IFUT has formally notified the University of a further **24-hour strike on Thursday, 12 November 2026**, from 00:01 to 23:59.
- SIPTU has also notified the University of strike action on **12 November 2026**.
- Wider coordinated public service industrial action has been announced nationally in support of a successor Public Service Pay Agreement.

The University continues to monitor developments and assess their potential operational impact

2. How do I know whether industrial action applies to me?

Staff should refer to communications issued by their own trade union.

The University does not maintain operational records of union membership for industrial relations purposes and cannot advise individual staff members whether they are participating in industrial action.

3. Should staff continue attending work as normal?

Unless a staff member is participating in industrial action in accordance with instructions received from their trade union, normal working arrangements continue to apply.

4. Will the University remain open?

Yes.

The University's intention is to continue teaching, research, student support and business operations wherever possible.

However, some activities may be affected depending on the extent of participation in industrial action. This information will be notified to staff and students when decisions are made.

5. Can meetings continue during the period of industrial action?

In general, yes.

Routine operational meetings, management meetings, committee meetings and support activities should continue unless there is a specific operational reason preventing them from doing so.

Where attendance may be affected by industrial action, organisers should review arrangements and make decisions on a case-by-case basis.

6. Can interviews proceed?

Yes.

Interview boards should generally proceed as planned.

The Chairperson should contact panel members in advance to confirm their availability and willingness to participate. If the panel remains appropriately constituted and all necessary participants are available, interviews should proceed.

If participation is affected, advice should be sought from HR before any decision is made to postpone interviews.

7. Can training courses, workshops and information sessions proceed?

Generally, yes.

Training activity should continue unless:

- The activity is directly affected by industrial action
- Key facilitators are unavailable
- Attendance levels mean the event can no longer be delivered effectively.

8. What does "work to rule" mean?

The formal SIPTU notice states that participating members will work strictly within:

- Contracted hours
- Agreed job descriptions
- Established procedures
- Agreed staffing arrangements
- The duties associated with their grade.

The University recognises that individual staff members will determine their own participation in accordance with union guidance.

9. What is meant by "withdrawal of goodwill"?

The SIPTU notification indicates that participating members may withdraw from voluntary arrangements, informal flexibility and unpaid additional responsibilities beyond contractual requirements.

Managers should continue to manage operations as normal but should be mindful that certain discretionary activities may be affected.

10. Can managers ask staff to undertake additional duties arising from vacancies or absences?

Managers should continue to manage operational requirements appropriately.

However, the SIPTU notice states that participating members may refuse:

- Duties associated with vacant posts
- Duties assigned outside their grade
- Duties ordinarily undertaken by other grades.

Any significant operational concerns should be discussed with HR.

11. Can change management, restructuring and organisational development work continue?

The University will continue to progress institutional priorities wherever possible.

However, SIPTU has advised that participating members may not cooperate with:

- Organisational change initiatives
- Restructuring projects
- Workforce modernisation initiatives
- Redeployment initiatives
- Service redesign programmes.

Managers should consult HR where uncertainty arises.

12. Can digital, technology and system implementation projects continue?

University projects may continue.

However, SIPTU has notified that participating members may decline involvement in:

- Implementation of new technologies
- Testing and roll-out of systems
- Automation projects
- Digital transformation initiatives
- Technology-driven work changes.

Project leads should assess any potential impacts and seek advice where required.

13. Can staff engage with external consultants?

The University will continue to engage with its external suppliers, contractors and consultants.

However, SIPTU has advised that participating members may decline participation in certain consultant-led activities, including workshops, reviews and meetings.

14. What arrangements applied on 5 October 2026?

IFUT notified the University that its members would undertake a one-hour work stoppage between 12.00pm and 1.00pm.

Managers should anticipate that teaching, meetings and other activities involving participating IFUT members may be affected during that period.

15. What arrangements apply on 12 November 2026?

IFUT and SIPTU have notified the University that its members will undertake a 24-hour strike on Thursday 12 November.

The University is also aware of wider public service strike activity planned for these dates.

Contingency planning is underway and further guidance will be issued in advance of 12 November 2026.

16. Will classes take place on 12 November?

The University is currently assessing the potential impact of the proposed strike action on 12 November 2026.

Students and staff should assume that teaching and other scheduled activities will proceed unless advised otherwise. Where teaching is affected by industrial action, the relevant School or College will communicate directly with affected students and staff

17. How will students be informed of any disruption?

If any disruption to teaching, examinations, student services or campus activities arises, appropriate communications will be issued through the University's established communication channels such as direct emails from Programme Directors; student and college ezines; all-student emails.

18. Should managers ask staff whether they are union members?

No.

Managers should not seek to establish trade union membership.

Where operational planning is required, managers may discuss availability for specific duties or activities but should not request information regarding union membership.

19. What should I do if I am unsure whether an activity can proceed?

You should:

1. Discuss the matter with your line manager.
2. Consider whether the activity forms part of normal operational business.
3. Consider whether the activity clearly falls within the scope of a notified industrial action measure.
4. Seek HR advice where uncertainty remains.

20. Will staff face any detriment for participating in lawful industrial action?

The University expects all staff to be treated with dignity and respect regardless of their position in relation to industrial action.

21. Should staff tell their manager that they are taking part in industrial action/strike?

Staff are encouraged to notify their manager as early as possible if they know that their participation in industrial action may affect their availability for work or their ability to undertake scheduled duties. Early notification assists the University in planning for the delivery of teaching, research, student services and other operational activities.

However, staff are not required to disclose trade union membership. Managers should not seek information regarding union membership and should focus only on operational arrangements and workforce planning.

Where a member of staff intends to participate in a strike day, it is helpful if this is communicated in advance where possible. Staff who decide to participate on the day should notify their manager as soon as practicable in accordance with any guidance issued by the University.

Key Principle: Managers may ask about availability for work and operational coverage requirements but should not ask employees whether they are members of a trade union.

22. Will uncertified sick leave continue to be available during the period of industrial action 12 November 2026?

No. Staff who are absent due to illness on **12 November 2026** must submit medical certification in accordance with the University's Sick Leave Policy and normal absence reporting procedures.

23. What should I do if I become ill and cannot attend work?

Staff who are unfit for work due to illness should notify their manager in the normal manner and submit the required medical certification as soon as reasonably practicable.

Normal absence reporting procedures remain in place.

24. Why is uncertified sick leave being suspended?

The University must ensure that attendance and absence arrangements are managed consistently during a period of industrial action and that staffing levels can be monitored appropriately in order to support continuity of operations.

25. Will existing certified sick leave arrangements be affected?

No.

Staff who are absent on certified sick leave will continue to be managed in accordance with the University's Sick Leave Policy and normal procedures.

26. Can annual leave continue to be requested?

Annual leave already approved will remain approved unless staff are advised otherwise.

However, due to contingency planning requirements associated with industrial action, requests for annual leave on **12 November 2026**, submitted on or after 4 November 2026, will not normally be approved.

27. Why are restrictions being placed on annual leave approvals?

The University must maintain appropriate staffing levels and operational resilience during the period of industrial action.

Restricting additional leave approvals enables Colleges, Schools and Units to better manage potential operational impacts and maintain service delivery.

28. What if I have already booked travel or made commitments based on annual leave that has been approved?

Previously approved annual leave remains approved.

The restriction applies to new requests submitted after 04 Nov 2026 2026.

29. Are there any exceptions to the annual leave restriction?

Requests will be considered only in exceptional circumstances and subject to operational requirements.

Managers should consult HR before approving any leave requests submitted on or after **4 November 2026** for **12 November 2026**.

30. What if I have a medical appointment already arranged?

Staff should continue to discuss planned medical appointments with their manager in the normal way.

Existing approved arrangements will not normally be affected.

31. Will attendance be monitored during the industrial action period?

Yes.

As with any period of operational risk, attendance and absence levels will be monitored to support workforce planning and operational decision-making.

32. Will I lose pay if I take part in strike action, and how will deductions be calculated?

Participation in strike action is not regarded as time worked and employees who participate in strike action should expect a deduction from pay. Deductions will take place after the strike action and this will be communicated.

33. Does participating in industrial action affect my pension contributions?

Yes. Any pension implications arising from participation in industrial action will be administered in accordance with relevant pension scheme rules and applicable public sector arrangements.

34. Can I work from home on a strike day if I am not participating in industrial action?

Yes. Staff who are not participating in industrial action should continue to work in accordance with their approved working arrangements unless notified by their manager. Existing hybrid working arrangements remain in place unless staff are advised otherwise by their manager.

35. What happens if I am due to work from home or have annual leave booked on a strike day?

Approved hybrid working arrangements remain in place. Approved annual leave remains approved and staff on annual leave are not expected to attend work.

36. Will car parking and campus access arrangements change on strike days?

The University intends to remain open on strike days. Staff should continue to access campus in the normal way. Should any specific access, parking or traffic management arrangements be required, these will be communicated in advance.

37. Where will updates be published?

The University will publish updates on the HR website, through all staff mails and through its usual staff communication channels. This FAQ document will also be updated as required.

Last Updated: 4 November 2026

Staff are encouraged to refer to the latest version of the FAQ as the situation develops.

Managers

38. Can I ask staff whether they intend to work on a strike day?

Managers may ask staff whether they expect to be available for work on a strike day for contingency planning and operational purposes.

Managers should not ask staff whether they are members of a trade union or whether they intend to participate in industrial action because of their union membership.

Suggested wording:

"In order to support operational planning for 12 November, can you please advise whether you expect to be available for work on those dates?"

39. How should I record absences on strike days?

Guidance on recording attendance, industrial action and other absences will be issued separately to managers in advance of the strike dates.

40. Will the Library, IT Services, Student Services and Student Health Unit remain open?

The University's intention is that all key student-facing services will remain operational wherever possible.

However, service levels may be affected depending on staffing availability arising from industrial action. Any changes to service availability will be communicated as soon as possible through the appropriate channels.

41. What about Force Majeure leave?

Force majeure will not be available. Force Majeure Leave does not normally apply to school closures, childcare disruptions, industrial action, adverse weather, or planned medical appointments, procedures or hospital visits, as these are not unforeseen emergencies. In such circumstances, staff should discuss alternative leave arrangements with their manager.

42. Will I be docked pay if I participate in Strike action?

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) has issued correspondence to all public sector employers. In this they have stated staff cannot be paid for any period of unauthorised absence due to industrial action. As such there will be a requirement from the Department for Public Sector employers to deduct pay from any employee who does not attend work due to strike action irrespective of union membership. Unfortunately, we have no discretion regarding this matter.

43. When will potential pay deductions be made?

No salary deductions will occur in October; any applicable deductions, which we as a public sector employer are required to make, will likely take after October. We will provide additional details on this process at a later date.

Disclaimer

This FAQ is intended to provide operational guidance to staff and managers. It does not constitute advice on participation or non-participation in industrial action. Staff should refer to communications issued by their own trade union regarding the nature and scope of any industrial action.