

SENT - Do Not Edit.

Emergency JCF - Proposed Agenda Items

1. Failure to include unions in decision-making bodies

Discuss the current management attitude towards unions and recognise that QMUL is a collective organisation that only works through consensus. Management portrays the institution as inclusive, yet has excluded staff, through their union and health and safety representatives from key decision-making. The meeting should discuss and resolve ways to reverse this.

2. Briefing on Covid-19 and management's response.

University communications have focused heavily on moving teaching activity online and remote working, without offering any reassurance to professional services staff, especially those who are less likely to work from home due to the nature of their work. Libraries, student services and estates services are kept open as usual without consideration of the health and safety risks to staff working there. Communications didn't acknowledge that certain staff members were still on strike, and they were not given the time to learn the processes required for working at home, including teaching online. The meeting should discuss and resolve ways to redress these and related issues.

3. Provision of documents.

The health and safety representatives have requested documents related to the Coronavirus Response Group and the Infectious Diseases Group. The meeting should receive an update on documents requested. Hopefully this will be feedback on the information provided rather than a reminder to provide it.

4. Data on staff and students at risk (i.e., older persons, reported underlying health issues).

This will presumably be included in the document cache, because management will have included these in risk assessments. If not, we will request further data at the meeting or by correspondence afterward.

5. Halt recording of Covid-19 absence as sickness, and ensure that the Attendance Policy is not triggered by Covid-19 absence

Any sickness absence triggers relating to Covid-19 should be discounted (including stress related absence). Any recording of Covid-19 related absence as sickness absence, including the potential for formal action under the Attendance Policy, should be halted. It acts as a disincentive to social distancing and risks exacerbating the spread of the virus, including amongst employees and students on campus. To be specific,

- for those staff who have been told to isolate (whether or not they have symptoms) to be given full pay and not have this counted as sickness absence or suffer any other detriment
- for those staff who are unable to attend work as they have family members affected by the virus (e.g. if there are school shut-downs, those with elderly care responsibilities) to be given full pay and not have this counted as sickness absence or suffer any other detriment
- for those staff who have become ill and/or infected with COVID to be given full pay and not have this counted as sickness absence or suffer any other detriment
- for those staff who may be affected by any site closure to be given full pay and not have this counted as sickness absence or suffer any other detriment

6. Halt all individual processes such as纪律处分, grievances and capability hearings and all restructurings be halted until emergency measures are lifted

If everyone is working from home, it will be difficult, and contrary to government advice, for their representatives to attend in order to support members. Virtual hearings or investigations cannot be properly effective.

7. Pay deductions for Strikers

UCU members will be returning to work on Friday after strike action, during which it has become clear that the higher education sector is at a breaking point and staff goodwill is lower than ever. These are not circumstances in which universities should be taking staff for granted and failing to respect their right to a safe and healthy workplace. Furthermore, the exercise of collecting information and applying salary deductions in the midst of the on-going crisis seems an unproductive use of current stretched resources. Moreover, members have contacted their students this week to reassure them. It would be counterproductive and exacerbate difficult labour-management relations to make deductions and add further financial stress in what are already exceptionally difficult times for individuals, families and the global community. A crisis is a good time to build solidarity and goodwill. So far this opportunity has been squandered. Now is a good time to change that.

8. Movement to a skeletal staff on rotation in Estates and Facilities.

With many students checking out or returning indefinitely to their family home and the reduction of non residential cleaning duties through the closure of offices and cancellation of lectures, it would appear sensible to limit risk by reassessing necessary staffing levels and on rotation allow some staff not to make 'non-essential' journeys under Government guidance, especially with London Underground changing to a weekend timetable as this is the mode of transport the vast majority have to take. Staff will not be forced to come in, although there will be an overtime incentive to do so, if the college 'closes', which to all intents and purposes is what is already happening. The meeting should review proposals for staffing of these types of roles.

9. Working from home policies

The shift to working from home has significant implications for workers, and constitutes a significant change to working conditions. There are a myriad of health and safety, duty of care, equipment, environment, and related issues to consider. Policies and guidance needs to be reviewed to ensure they are fit for purpose. The meeting should review the current state of these policies and establish an appropriate group to agree changes to them.