



## **UCU at Queen's Response to Queen's University Pay Decision (April 27, 2023)**

UCU (University College Union) at Queen's University Belfast is disappointed by Queen's University management's bizarre decision to withhold 100% of pay, yet offer a 50% ex gratia payment, to staff participating in a marking and assessment boycott (MAB). Queen's management's withholding of 50% of staff pay is disproportionate and punitive, and the use of an ex gratia payment is cynical and disingenuous given that participating staff are completing all of their work except marking and assessment.

UCU is currently undertaking UK-wide marking and assessment boycott (MAB). A MAB is a legal form of action short of a strike in which staff complete all of their work except for marking and assessment.

The decision by Queen's management stands in stark contrast to Ulster University's stated commitment to withholding 0% of staff pay for participating in the UK-wide UCU marking and assessment boycott.

Sean O'Connell, President of UCU at QUB, said: "This MAB is being undertaken as a last resort, to bring university employers back to the negotiating table to address the fundamental problems with higher education pay and conditions. By paying staff who participate in the MAB only 50% of their salaries, Queen's management are employing a bullying tactic designed to intimidate staff from participating in legal industrial action. Staff are still doing all of their other work, including providing informal feedback to students. Our members are already suffering from the effects of over a decade of real terms pay cuts and terrible working conditions, on top of the current cost of living crisis. If Queen's truly cared about staff working conditions and students' learning conditions, it would follow Ulster University's leadership by not withholding any staff salary, and urging UCEA (the university employer's organisation) to negotiate with UCU."

Staff working conditions are students' learning conditions. UCU at QUB calls on employers to make a reasonable offer on pay and conditions that reflects the current cost of living crisis and over a decade of real terms pay cuts, which mean that salaries are today worth over 25% less than they were in 2009. Many staff are struggling financially; unsafe workloads and increased use of fixed term and casualised contracts negatively impact on staff health and wellbeing, as well as undermining the student experience.