

**Imperial College Union
Union Council / 20th February 2024
Part-time working whilst at Imperial**

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Seconder(s): Andreea Cojoccea (Deputy President (Welfare))

Decision(s): To approve

Union Notes

1. During the cost-of-living crisis, we have seen a rise in an inflationary peak in October 2022 at 9.6% [1].
2. Domestic undergraduate student maintenance loans have only risen by 2.3% for the 2022 and 2023 academic year [2].
3. The postgraduate research stipends are not standardised across the College, with some PhD funders increasing their stipend whilst others have not increased throughout their PhD. This varies based on funders.
4. While postgraduate-taught students have seen an increase in the amount they can borrow for postgraduate loans, it has only risen by 2.30% [2].
5. International students have seen a 7.98% increase in their course fees [3].
6. Due to these financial pressures over 50% of students are working part-time to cover their living costs which has been a steady increase from the 34% in 2021 [4].
7. The College's policy on part-time work is that during term time this is discouraged, and if unavoidable, the maximum recommended hours for undergraduates is 10-15 hours for both undergraduates and postgraduates [5].
8. For postgraduates, Imperials GTA policy is set at a maximum of 6 taught hours and 10 hours total [6].
9. That the policies put in place by Imperial are designed to safeguard the academic progress of undergraduate and postgraduate students. The university has provided mechanisms such as the bursary program and hardship funds to support students affected by the cost-of-living crisis (here denoted "Imperial's support package").

Union Believes

1. Imperial's support package is unable to offer adequate support for all students, resulting in students seeking alternative solutions such as part-time work to support their financial situation.
2. Imperial is failing to recognise that instructing students to reduce their part-time work or limiting their access to professional work within Imperial does not remove the financial burden on the students. These students still require this additional income to deal with their financial burdens. Limiting their access to such opportunities only makes it harder for them to achieve financial stability, which can have a negative impact on their academic progress and mental well-being.
3. The employment policy unfairly burdens students who are struggling financially, finding employment in your field which complements your academic calendar within the College will enable more students to avoid financial hardship while at university.

Union Resolves

1. To take the position that part-time work as part of your studies is now a must for many and not a choice. The Union will release a statement to this effect supporting part-time work for students.
2. To work with the College's Career Service for undergraduates and the Graduate School to develop info packs for part-time work.
3. To encourage Imperial to facilitate more academic-related employment opportunities within the College for students that will further their career development and align with their academic

pursuits by recognising the restrictions on work due to studying needs and their financial needs as these opportunities are often better remunerated.

4. To lobby Imperial to remove the hour cap from its student employment during studies policy for home students, and to increase this cap to that permitted by an international students' visa for international students.
5. To collaborate with Student Services to propose part-time work as an indicator of financial hardship, particularly for hardship fund and bursary applications.

References:

1. [https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costofliving/latestinsights#:~:text=In%20the%20UK%2C%20prices%20of,\(CPIH\)%2C%20has%20slowed](https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/costofliving/latestinsights#:~:text=In%20the%20UK%2C%20prices%20of,(CPIH)%2C%20has%20slowed)
2. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1038015/Higher_education_student_finance_2022_to_2023_-_equality_analysis.pdf
3. <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/students/fees-and-funding/tuition-fees/undergraduate-tuition-fees/2023-24/faculty-of-engineering/>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2023/aug/26/uk-universities-offer-three-day-week-to-let-students-find-part-time-work>
5. <https://www.imperial.ac.uk/aeronautics/study/ug/current-students/student-employment/>
6. https://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/study/graduate-school/public/gta-website/GTA-Framework_301122.pdf