

London Living Wage for Student Staff

Proposer: Abhijay P. Sood, Union President

Seconded: Fifi Henry, ICU Deputy President (Finance & Services)

ICU Notes:

1. “The London Living Wage is a voluntary hourly rate of pay calculated by the Greater London Authority each year... It represents the minimum rate that an individual would need to be paid to cover the basic costs of living in London” [1].
2. Student staff working at Imperial College Union (ICU) are not currently paid the London Living Wage [2a]. Our minimum pay rate is currently £8.72 per hour, in line with the national minimum wage.
3. The London Living Wage is currently set at £10.75 per hour [3].
4. The student unions at most other major London universities are London Living Wage employers, including [4]:
 - a. UCL Student Union
 - b. KCL Students’ Union
 - c. LSE Student Union
 - d. Goldsmiths Students’ Union
 - e. London Metropolitan Students’ Union
 - f. Middlesex University Students’ Union
 - g. SOAS Students’ Union
 - h. UEL Students’ Union
 - i. UAL Students’ Union
 - j. Union of Kingston Students
5. A petition for ICU student bar staff to be paid the London Living Wage, initiated by a former bar manager, received over 1500 signatures last year [5].
6. The College’s casual worker rate exceeds the London Living Wage, currently set at £11.16 [6]. Members of staff in the College’s Campus Services and Finance teams have expressed concerns in the past that our minimum pay rate is significantly lower than that of the College.
7. Officers of the Union, including the President, have been elected on a mandate of implementing the London Living Wage and improving the work environment for staff more generally [7].

ICU Believes:

1. Student staff at ICU deserve the same treatment as their counterparts at other student unions.
2. ICU should be a setting an example for employee pay and conditions, in accordance our stated values.
3. Our student staff are one of ICU’s most valuable assets. They are the only ICU employees many students interact directly with, and often work long hours with little breaks. The work is often physically demanding, and in the case of bar staff can involve being subjected to physical or verbal abuse.

4. Working at ICU would be more attractive with higher pay, reducing the need for agency staff who are generally less productive due to their unfamiliarity with the particular workplace and more expensive per work hour. Changes of this nature would likely lead to higher levels of consistency, greater institutional memory among ICU student staff, and more motivated and productive staff members.
5. Considering this, proposed improvements to student staff remuneration should be considered alongside wider changes to conditions and recognition at ICU.
6. There is a strong democratic mandate for the implementation of the London Living Wage, which the Union Council should support.
7. As a charitable organisation, the Board of Trustees has final say of ICU's financial matters. Given this mandate and the uncertainty caused by COVID-19, it is reasonable that the Board sets a timeline for the implementation of the London Living Wage for our student staff.

ICU Resolves:

1. To call on the Board of Trustees to set a timetable for implementation of the London Living Wage for student staff.
2. To mandate the Deputy President (Finance & Services) to ensure the Services and Sustainability Board is consulted on this timetable.
3. To mandate the Deputy President (Finance & Services) to report back to Council about developments regarding the implementation of the London Living Wage.
4. To mandate the Deputy President (Finance & Services), and the Services and Sustainability Board, to commence a wider piece of work on conditions of student staff.
5. To call on the Board of Trustees and future Officer Trustees to ensure that, once fully implemented, pay rates remain equal to or greater than the London Living Wage.

[1] <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/business-and-economy/london-living-wage>

[2] <http://felixonline.co.uk/articles/2018-03-28-imperial-college-union-bar-staff-launch-petition-for-london-living-wage/>

[3] <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/calculation>

[4] <https://www.livingwage.org.uk/accredited-living-wage-employers>

[5] <https://www.change.org/p/imperial-college-union-president-and-dpfs-get-imperial-college-union-bar-staff-paid-london-living-wage>

[6] <https://web.archive.org/web/20200216080108/http://www.imperial.ac.uk/media/imperial-college/administration-and-support-services/hr/public/salaries/job-families/College-worker-rate-%28pdf%29.pdf>

[7] <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/leadership-elections-2019/manifestos/a-to-z/6897/abhijay-sood>; <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/leadership-elections-2019/manifestos/a-to-z/6895/fi-fi-henry>; <https://www.imperialcollegeunion.org/leadership-elections-2020/manifestos/a-to-z/8288/abhijay-sood>