

Vote Megan #1

For Postgraduate Student Officer



PostGrad Issues

As postgraduates, we have very specific concerns, needs, and questions. From our future as professionals to the support we receive in conducting advanced academic work, those challenges must be met head-on.

I aim to:

- Increase availability of studentships, grants, and scholarships to PG students
- Lobby for extension of government-subsidised student finance to PhD students to match the English and Welsh systems.
- Work alongside faculties, societies, and the QUB Alumni Network to create accessible and frequent jobs fairs and networking opportunities for students
- Advocate for the rights of student academics, tutorial assistants, and researchers, namely: a living wage, workplace rights, reasonable hours, and paid sick/maternity/paternity leave
- Hold regular meetings with PG course and school reps to ensure all student needs are being met inside the classroom

Why am I Running?

Throughout my 5 year university journey- from Belfast to Glasgow and back again- I have always been invested in the student experience. Universities have a duty of care towards their students, and we must hold them to account. QUB continues to put profits before student welfare, especially when it comes to postgraduates. The postgrad community at Queens has been ignored for long enough. I am running for this position not only to demand for what we deserve, but to also create and maintain an environment where postgrads are welcomed, encouraged, and supported.

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Who am I?

I'm currently studying on the Human Rights Law Master's programme. When I first came to QUB, I was classed as an international student, which quickly radicalised my outlook on university fees. Since then, I have been active in student representation as a Course Rep and a School Rep, as well as running various societies and participating in committees such as the Gender Network and the International Ambassador programme. My activism is informed by my socialist feminism, focusing on grassroots movements in and beyond Queens, focusing on advocating for the rights of women, LGBTQ+ people and students.

Student Wellbeing and COVID-19 Issues

We should be ambitious. What we aim for is not just for us, today, it's for the future of postgraduates. Our lives extend far beyond lecture halls, which is why I will:

- Continue to make Queens campus and buildings more accessible and signposted in various languages
- Push for faster responses to Exceptional Circumstances applications, as some schools currently take weeks to reply to students who are experiencing extreme disruption to their studies
- Ensure access to lecture recordings and class materials
- Increased mental health support from the SU- puppy days are cute, but not sufficient mental health support!
- Inform international students as to how learning will be delivered so they can make an informed decision about moving to Belfast
- Support student concerns and meet with faculty members to review academic expectations during the pandemic, including a return to campus **when safe**

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Student Activism

I believe that a Postgraduate Officer should play a wider role in the SU and advocate for everyone in our university community- whether undergrad, postgrad, lecturer, or any other worker. This is why I am committed to:

- Support & continue to take an active role in the Students Deserve Better campaign, which has started a new wave of student activism
- Lobby for extending the COVID Relief Fund to intl & part-time students- QUB must match this payment if the Executive refuses
- Action against schools which are failing to support/accommodate students with additional needs, whether mental or physical. As someone who is registered with Disability Services, I understand first-hand the struggles faced when seeking support from some schools

- Lobbying for affordable if not free childcare at the QUB crèche. Students with caring responsibilities should not be forced to choose between their families and their education
- Solidarity with all QUB employees taking industrial action, and willingness to take up direct action once it is safe to do so
- Lobbying against the grossly unfair salary of the Vice Chancellor, which is 10 times the average salary in Northern Ireland before including his allowances for his rent-free mansion, which was recently renovated to the cost of £50,000.