

**A STRONG VOICE FOR  
POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS**



**@Courtney4PostGrad**

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# COURTNEY

**#1 FOR VP POSTGRAD**

**ACCESSIBLE  
EDUCATION FOR ALL**

**BETTER MENTAL  
HEALTH PROVISION**

**BETTER WORKING  
CONDITIONS FOR  
STUDENT WORKERS**

**ACCOUNTABLE  
SUPERVISION**

**MODERNISE THE  
CAMPUS**



**ACHIEVING CHANGE**

# ME & MY EXPERIENCE

I'm back! My name is Courtney Girvin and I'm running to be your next VP Postgraduate. I'm a working-class, Northern Irish student studying an MA in Conflict Transformation and Social Justice. I'm passionate about helping people and changing the system so that it is better for current, and future, postgraduate students.

- Course Representative for International Relations over two years
- Active member of both Amnesty QUB and LGBTQIA+ societies
- Actively campaigned for equal marriage and the decriminalisation of abortion.
- Co-founder of the Belfast Girl Gang, an online group to combat loneliness and isolation among all women, including our trans sisters!
- Member of Project Choice and their social media team



## PRIORITY ONE: ACCESSIBLE POSTGRAD EDUCATION FOR ALL!

Everyone deserves access to quality postgraduate education regardless of their class or national identity. For NI students there is no current cap on tuition fees. The current tuition loan does not rise with inflation leading to student's relying more on part-time jobs and external bank loans. This doesn't factor in the hidden costs of postgraduate education and the additional costs of living. I will fight to ensure accessible education for current and future postgraduates.

- Fight against increased fees in Postgraduate education, ensure that universities cannot charge more than the current maximum Postgraduate Tuition loan.
- Secure more funding for vulnerable student groupings such as those from low-income backgrounds.
- Revitalise the Fund Our Postgrad campaign to be a key grassroots and student-led campaign, working with all students for the common good.
- Increase information and campaigns towards Undergraduate students in relation to Postgraduate education.
- Ensure PG Research students are entitled to funded extensions and/or their work protected against COVID-19 related detriments.
- Actively campaign to abolish tuition fees



## PRIORITY TWO: BETTER MENTAL HEALTH PROVISION FOR ALL

No one deserves to have their mental health negatively impacted by higher education. OMNI found 78% of students have poor mental health, with the main contributors being academic and financial pressures. As someone with lived experience of mental health difficulties I know all too well how academic and financial pressures can exacerbate mental health conditions.

- ➔ Reform exceptional circumstances so that is compassionate, empathetic and more trusting of students post-COVID in regard to bereavements and student illnesses.
- ➔ Ensure that a Student Safety Net is implemented to support students throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- ➔ Create spaces for Postgraduates and Liberation students to encourage group meetups to tackle issues such as isolation and loneliness.
- ➔ Create weeks for both Postgraduate and Undergraduate to ensure transitions to higher levels of study are not negatively impacting mental health.

## PRIORITY THREE: WORK WITH STUDENT WORKERS

The fight that QBSU workers had to undergo in December to ensure pay parity with other workers is a struggle often faced by Postgraduate students and student workers. There needs to be a strong force on campus to fight the increased casualisation of workers.

- ➔ Reform how zero-hours contracts are used on campus by the University.
- ➔ Work with UCU to ensure the University does not take advantage of PG students.
- ➔ Fight to ensure that student workers and PhD candidates are paid monthly and not semesterly.



## PRIORITY FOUR: ACCOUNTABLE AND STANDARDIZED SUPERVISION

I will ensure that there is a concrete policy in place that produces standardised supervision at all levels of education, from Undergraduates to PhD students. It is imperative that both staff and students know what is expected of both parties in a supervisory relationship. It will include:

- ➔ Clear guidance in relation to timetabling and standards for good practice.
- ➔ Clear accountability measures for lecturers and students who do not deliver on these standards.
- ➔ Support and reporting mechanisms established for those engaging in misconduct, including sexual harassment and predatory language .

## PRIORITY FIVE: MODERNISE THE CAMPUS

Postgrads are a diverse bunch of students, with mature students, international students, part-time students and students with caring responsibilities to name a few. In recognition of this I will:

- ➔ Make campus more accessible by increasing the number of social spaces for all students, and ensuring longer opening times for the library and The Graduate School.
- ➔ Post-COVID, I want to ensure that online lectures and lecture recording remains in place to ensure students can learn when it is most convenient for them.