



news

BALLOT SPECIAL

NOVEMBER 2019

TEACHERS' UNION OF IRELAND / AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN

Ballot on Online and Digital Learning – Institute of Technology/Technological University Sector

Vote 'YES' to engage in industrial action

Due to the refusal of the Official Side to concede TUI's claim to secure a national agreement on the development and delivery of online and digital learning in Institutes of Technology and TU Dublin, TUI is balloting Third Level members as directed by Annual Congress.

The question on the ballot paper will ask:

In order to secure such an agreement, do you agree to engage in industrial action as directed by the Executive Committee of TUI?

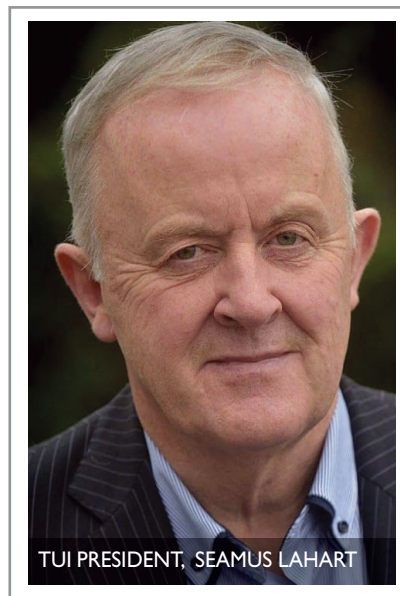
The industrial action will be, systematically and incrementally, to withdraw from all forms of activity relating to the development and delivery of all online modules and all online courses. The industrial action will be phased; in the first instance to refuse to engage in the development of new online learning modules/courses. Subsequent action will be taken as directed by the TUI Executive Committee, having regard to existing local agreements.

Annual Congress 2019 resolution:

'In the event that there is no satisfactory national agreement between the Union and the management side in regard of the development and delivery of all forms of online and digital learning by the 1st of September 2019, then Congress instructs the Executive Committee to conduct a ballot of all Third Level members to authorise industrial action – specifically to systematically withdraw from all forms of activity relating to the development and delivery of all online modules and all online courses, this action to commence in January 2020.'

A Word From The President

Online, e-learning and blended learning modules/courses have been and continue to be developed and implemented in an uncontrolled and haphazard manner across the Institute of Technology/ Technological University sector. It is unacceptable that an entirely inconsistent approach to the extra workload involved is taken, both between different institutes and within individual institutes.



TUI PRESIDENT, SEAMUS LAHART

Management frequently targets vulnerable members such as new appointees or those on precarious contracts to carry out this work. Clearly, the pedagogical design and delivery of online teaching requires relevant training and expertise. A claim lodged by the TUI with the appropriate national industrial relations forum for the sector was rejected without negotiation. The position of management and the Department of Education and Skills is that the workload model submitted by TUI is a cost-increasing claim.

The TUI position is that online, e-learning and blended learning is a workload-increasing measure being rolled out by stealth and imposition in a way which deliberately bypasses consultation and negotiation with the Union.

Continued overleaf

A word from The President continued from page 1

Virtual/online learning environments require significantly more resources than the traditional model of teaching and learning that takes place in the physical space of a lecture hall or classroom.

Content design and delivery, student interaction and assessment are all far more complex and labour-intensive for online courses than for face-to-face learning. Online learning also requires significant technological support, including the induction and ongoing training of lecturers and students. Substantial resources are also required to ensure the quality and sustainability of online learning programmes, which includes the retention of students and the student experience. In order to enable the development and delivery of quality-assured online learning modules/programmes, timetabled resources are required.

TUI recognises that in some IoTs, local agreements have been negotiated which give a good indication of the type of national agreement that TUI wants to achieve.

An important aspect of some of these agreements, which must be replicated nationally, is that participation by lecturing staff on such programmes is voluntary.

The industrial action (involving the systematic withdrawal from work on online, e-learning and blending learning teaching) will have regard for these existing local agreements. Industrial action is the only measure that remains to bring management and the Department of Education and Skills to the negotiating table in order to secure an appropriate national agreement for the Institute of Technology/Technological University sector.

The Executive Committee urges you to vote 'YES' to engage in industrial action on this issue.



What are you being asked?

You are being asked to agree to engage in industrial action over the refusal of the Official Side to concede TUI's claim to secure a national agreement on the development and delivery of online and digital learning in Institutes of Technology and TU Dublin.

What is the TUI Executive Committee recommending?

The Executive Committee is urging that you vote 'YES' to engage in industrial action.

When will the ballot take place?

Ballot papers will be posted on Friday, 22nd November 2019. Completed ballot papers must be returned (in the envelopes provided) to the Union's auditors, Deloitte, no later than 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, 12th December 2019.

Reasons to vote in favour of industrial action by voting “YES”

TUI's claim in pursuit of a national agreement which will recognise and make allowance for the additional workload involved in e-learning has been ruled out without negotiation as “cost-increasing”. A ballot in favour of industrial action is required in order to bring the other side to the negotiating table.

A phased withdrawal from the development and delivery of online and digital modules and courses is the appropriate industrial action as it will prevent the imposition by management of further workload increases. This will bring about the negotiation required to sustain the offering of such courses and modules across the sector.

Online and digital modules and courses are being rolled out and implemented across the sector in a reckless, haphazard and uncontrolled manner. Only a national negotiation in which TUI is bolstered by a mandate for industrial action can protect the terms and conditions of members and the quality of what is to be offered.

Managements can impose on vulnerable staff who are recently appointed or precariously employed to engage in online and digital development and delivery while making no allowance for the additional workload involved. The only way to protect such members from this exploitation is a mandate for industrial action.

E-learning initiatives are often driven by staff with particular interests and qualifications in the technology, taking no account of the additional burden that such work would impose on colleagues less well-versed in the technology when it is rolled out more generally. The national negotiation forced by TUI's industrial action mandate is the only way to address this.

The provision of necessary training and resources are essential for the quality of digital and online courses and to protect the interests of TUI members involved. The national agreement secured from TUI's industrial action mandate will include this as a vital element.

Reasons to vote against industrial action by voting “NO”

Mechanisms other than industrial action could be used to pursue TUI's claim, including local discussions or the review of lecturing.

Different forms of industrial action could be taken which do not impact on existing courses or the development of new courses.

Online offerings being rolled out in the sector allow Institutes of Technology/TU Dublin to compete in this marketplace. Industrial action would threaten the progress that is being made.

TUI has ongoing concerns across a range of issues affecting vulnerable academic staff. This matter should be included in the existing campaigns to protect the interests of such members.

Suitably qualified staff with the necessary experience should be assigned to e-learning initiatives. Local discussions and local mechanisms, including programme/course boards, can be used to ensure this is the case.

Necessary training and resources should be allocated for the design of any course and should be dealt with through normal academic processes.



AONTAS MÚINTEOIRÍ ÉIREANN
Teachers' Union of Ireland

Ballot on Online and Digital Learning

Due to the refusal of the Official Side to concede TUI's claim to secure a national agreement on the development and delivery of online and digital learning in Institutes of Technology and TU Dublin, TUI is balloting Third Level members as directed by Congress.

In order to secure such an agreement, do you agree to engage in industrial action as directed by the Executive Committee of TUI?

The industrial action will be, systematically and incrementally, to withdraw from all forms of activity relating to the development and delivery of all online modules and all online courses. The industrial action will be phased; in the first instance to refuse to engage in the development of new online learning modules/courses. Subsequent action will be taken as directed by the TUI Executive Committee, having regard to existing local agreements.

Place "X" in the appropriate box

YES

NO

**SAMPLE
 BALLOT PAPER**

DIRECTIONS TO VOTERS

1. **Vote by placing "X" in the appropriate box.**
2. Place the completed ballot paper in the envelope marked Páipéar Vóta/Voting Paper.
3. Place this envelope in the second, larger white envelope, seal and sign across the flap.
4. **YOUR NAME** and the **NAME OF THE BRANCH** should be clearly written in full in the space provided on the envelope. **FAILURE TO DO SO WILL MEAN YOUR VOTE WILL NOT BE COUNTED.** If you are unsure of the name of your branch, please check with your college/workplace representative or head office. **A list of Branches is on the back of this ballot paper for reference.**
5. The completed ballot envelope to be placed in the brown pre-paid envelope addressed to Deloitte, Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, to reach that address **no later than 5:00 p.m. Thursday, 12th December 2019.**
6. **Failure to comply with these instructions will render your vote void.**

**The Executive Committee urges
 that you vote 'YES' to engage
 in industrial action**