



We Won't Be Letting Up!



Industrial Action Letter — 17th Oct 2026

Response to **ICTU-affiliated Unions** suspending Strike



@PWO_Ireland



Strike— tober '26

PWO President Eden Skehan

As we know you are aware, country-wide industrial action scheduled to begin on October 21st has been **suspended by a majority** of unions due to a new round of negotiations between the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) and this government. We wish our fellow workers success in their negotiations. However, because graduate researchers do not have the same kind of recognised employment as most public sector workers, **we will largely be excluded from this deal** no matter what it brings. Additionally, this deal will not address PWO's other demands from industrial actions on the 5th and the 14th, including **standardisation of work contracts, access to public services, and years of reckonable residence for all graduate researchers**. As a result, the PWO is **not suspending industrial action** on October 21st.



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Instead, **branches will meet this Monday** to determine what actions they will take to push for our demands on that date. Some branches may strike. Others will hold demonstrations. We recognise that **our members are precarious workers who survive on thousands of euro less than minimum wage**, so we will not dictate what course of action they must adopt. **This decision will be taken collectively.** Unlike other kinds of trade union organisations, all of our members are working graduate researchers, meaning we must choose as an industry how we will **defend each other** democratically and in the interest of all. That does not mean we will de-escalate, but that we will **choose tactics which will best respond to our material conditions.** Every member of our union is an organiser, and **we will need every member and every ally working together to win.**



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Last Wednesday, on the UCD picket, **I saw over a hundred graduate researchers coming together to tell universities and this government that we cannot continue under our present circumstances. We are hungry, our children are hungry, and after years of asking for justice we have been met with disdain and silence.** But the faces I saw on that picket were happy ones. We fed each other. We entertained each other. We made a new university possible together. **We are going to do this again.**



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The universities can get away with underpaying and mistreating us **because they expect no one to notice or care**. Recognised staff members often normalise this treatment and say it is a part of the process of preparing for jobs we likely will not find. HR departments use convoluted systems and carefully engineered contracts, **if there is a contract at all**, to **cheat graduate researchers** out of their pay, time, and health. The government sees us as a **convenient way to save money by underfunding universities** while knowing no one will meaningfully push back against them. Meanwhile, millions of euro are pushed into **AI speculation, dual-use military technology, and executives' pockets**. They can do this because for decades we have put up with **being treated like we're invisible and worthless**. And as far as they can imagine, nothing about this will change.





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But I saw smiles on those pickets from people who were **living, breathing examples of what our research community can become** if we choose to see it. We cannot be silent any longer because **we cannot afford to keep quiet**, and there is blood in the water. If we fail to meet this opportunity, then we will continue to slide limply into the void. **This is not acceptable and we will not accept it. PWO is officially asking all Irish university staff, students, and community members to take action with us on 21st October.** Otherwise, the status quo will swallow us whole. **We remember the 2008 financial crash.** In this time of monsters, we will not become a living, hopeless corpse.

Watch our channels. Speak with our members. Get ready to fight.

In solidarity,
Eden Skehan
President, PWO



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Want to get involved? We have **branches** across third-level institutions in Ireland!

...and, we would be happy to **help you set up** one across the 32 counties.



National Executive is looking for **union branch reps** in...

ATU • BMC • CAFRE • DBS • DkUC • IADT
MIC • MTU • NCAD • NCI • NRC • OU (NI)
QUB • SERC • SETU • SMC • SPPU • SUC
SWC • TUS • UU



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