

# THE UCU PENSIONS STRIKE: A STUDENT GUIDE



**SUPPORT THE STRIKE!**



# WHY ARE STAFF STRIKING?

The representative organisation for the UK's universities (Universities UK) wants to make a massive cut to the pension schemes of all academic staff and academic-related staff (e.g. librarians, student counsellors, IT staff, etc.).

## **STRIKE:**

A strike is a form of protest in which workers refuse to work, in response to employee grievances.

**These staff will lose up to 40% of their pension. The average lecturer will lose £200,000 of their pension in retirement.** In simpler terms, these changes will screw over academic staff and make their retirement situations even more precarious than they already are. These proposals are disastrous. Even the Vice Chancellors of Warwick, Loughborough, and Glasgow have come out against them, realising that these changes will hurt staff, students and higher education as a whole.

**Staff don't want to strike!** They want to be teaching you, publishing their research, engaging with the public and supporting our education. That is why they are working in this sector. Sadly, they now have no other choice than to strike. They have been backed into this decision due to the stubbornness of Universities UK (UUK). **Strikers are not paid during the period they are striking.** They are risking a lot, because the stakes are so high.

## HOW LONG WILL THIS STRIKE LAST?

This strike is planned to last 14 days in total. These are the official dates put out by the UCU.

WEEK OF TERM	DAY
Week 7	Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> , Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> (FEBRUARY)
Week 8	Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> , Tuesday 27 <sup>th</sup> , Wednesday 28 <sup>th</sup>
Week 9	Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> , Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> , Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> , Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> (March)
Week 10	Monday 12 <sup>th</sup> , Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> , Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> , Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> , Friday 16 <sup>th</sup>

However, there is a possibility that these strikes will last longer than 14 days if the strikers' demands are not met. It is important that we support our staff to ensure that they can return back to doing what they love – teaching, researching and supporting our education.

**REMEMBER:** The strike can and will end if UUK do the right thing and withdraw their awful plans!

## HOW WILL THIS STRIKE AFFECT ME?

UCU members of 61 universities overwhelmingly decided to back this strike, including Warwick.

During the strike, UCU members won't be:

- **teaching;**
- **holding office hours;**
- **marking;**
- **answering e-mails**

The work missed in this period, including teaching, will not be rescheduled—it will just be gone.

We do not know if exams will be disrupted and we do not know if you will be asked to write on topics that have been missed. It is the responsibility of university management to sort this out...

“Strike action on this scale has not been seen before on UK campuses, but universities need to know the full scale of the disruption they will be hit with if they refuse to sort this mess out.”

## HOW WILL THIS STRIKE AFFECT STAFF?

Striking is not just ‘disruptive’ to your education, it is also disruptive for the lecturers and staff who are being forced into taking this action.

**Striking is not a holiday! Strikers are NOT PAID during this period.**

Strikers are missing out on 14+ days of pay. They all have to pay their rents, mortgages, childcare, food, and electricity bills, and thus risk significant financial hardship in undertaking this action.

Overall, staff are losing out on so much more than students. This is not a choice that they made lightly, it was a necessity that they were forced into.



## WILL THIS STRIKE WORK?

Strikes absolutely do work, but only if we're united.

For example, last year cleaning staff at LSE and SOAS won massively improved working conditions following a strike.

An integral feature of this successful campaign was unwavering solidarity between university staff and students. If we support workers, we can end the strike ASAP and improve the lives of our teachers and the future academics amongst us.

## SO WHAT CAN I DO AS A STUDENT?

Stand alongside staff on picket lines, and please don't cross them!

Throughout the strike, staff will be forming picket lines at key sites across campuses. Picketing is a legal activity, and these lines are aimed at spreading awareness, gaining support and convincing as many people as possible not to go into work. Staff immensely value student support on these picket lines.

### **PICKET LINE**

a boundary established by workers on strike, especially at the entrance to the place of work, which others are asked not to cross.

Though students themselves are not on strike, it strengthens the impact of the strike if as many students as possible don't go into lectures on strike days and show their solidarity on picket lines!

Let others know you support the strike by wearing a purple square, and sharing your support on social media!

Follow "Warwick Student-Staff Solidarity" on Facebook for the latest on the strike, and pick up a purple square from a picket line, or make your own!

Write to the Vice Chancellor demanding that they use their voice as a member of UUK to oppose these plans! Contact UUK directly to let them know what you think of their disastrous proposals!

Their contact details are:

**ADDRESS:** Woburn House, 20 Tavistock Square, London, WC1H 9HQ

**EMAIL:** [info@universitiesuk.ac.uk](mailto:info@universitiesuk.ac.uk)

**PHONE:** +44 (0)20 7419 4111



# SUMMARY

Staff are striking because they will lose up to 40% of their pension. The average lecturer will lose £200,000 of their pension in retirement, meaning their futures are incredibly precarious

The strike is scheduled to last 14 days overall, starting in week 7 and ending in week 10, but the strike can and will end before that if UUK withdraw their awful plans.

Striking is not a holiday. Strikers are not paid during this period, and they want to get back to teaching, researching and supporting our education as quickly as possible.

Striking is the last resort - all other options have failed. The blame for disruption lies solely with UUK.

*Student-staff solidarity is essential for the success of this campaign. Students should support the strike because we ALL deserve a secure future, and because our education will suffer if these proposals are not defeated.*