

# Why Your Lecturers, Librarians, IT Workers and Professional Service Staff are Taking Action

## What is the strike about?

There are two reasons why we are striking:

- First, to protect staff pensions, which are under renewed attack after last year's dispute.<sup>1</sup>
- Second, to fight for the rights of casualised, female and BAME staff. Growing numbers of staff are working on short-term or precarious contracts that don't pay them enough to make ends meet. There is also a persistent gender and racial pay gap. This means that at Warwick, for instance, women [earn 74p for every £1 earned by men](#) and BAME staff are paid [an average of 25% less than their white colleagues](#). This action is about stopping the downgrading of pensions, ending casualisation and closing the gender and racial pay gap.

## What is it we want? What would constitute a win?

Our demands are simple:

- Protect staff pensions so that we can retire without facing poverty;
- Pay a £10/hour minimum rate for directly employed staff, and commit to the Living Wage Foundation's pay rates for the lowest paid on campus;
- Agree to develop a programme to close the gender and BAME pay gap;
- Agree to create a framework to eliminate precarious employment and to tackle rising workloads;
- Ensure that staff pay keeps up with inflation (salaries have fallen 20% on average over the past decade)

These demands are easy to meet. We're asking UUK (Universities UK, the association of university employers) to work with us to end the rampant levels of inequality in our workplaces and to make sure that people can actually afford to live on the pay for the jobs they do.

## Why should students care?

We know that you have incurred a large debt to attend university. Many of us fought hard against the meteoric rise of tuition fees. **But the high fees you pay are not used to pay more to those who teach you.** Gaps in gender and BAME pay, casualisation of staff and erosion of staff pensions are part of a decade-long assault on the integrity of universities as public institutions. As a result, we've seen the tripling of student fees, a trend toward short-term or sessional contracts at the expense of secure employment, the greater use of outsourcing models and the ballooning of managerial pay – and with these developments, the persistence of racist and sexist cultures at our university.

**If we want an environment committed to fairness and transparency, where teaching, learning and research – not profit – are at the heart of what we do, then we must collectively take a stand.**



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<sup>1</sup> For the past two years, the UCU has argued against proposed pension changes that would result in members losing an average of £10,000 a year, with younger staff hit hardest as they begin their careers. Last year, after prolonged strike action all across the country, UCU and UUK agreed to set up a Joint Expert Panel (JEP) to find ways to stabilise pensions and prevent their further deterioration. But the recommendations of the JEP have been rejected by the pension fund trustee board (which is chaired by a UUK vice-chancellor), and UUK has refused to address the issue further. At the same time, Warwick's own Jane Hutton, a highly regarded Professor of Statistics and a trustee board member, [was fired from the board after questioning its procedures](#).

## How does industrial action affect you?

We love teaching and working with students, and we do not take strike action lightly, any more than nurses or doctors do. The UCU has called for eight days of strike action from November 25<sup>th</sup> to December 4<sup>th</sup>. On these days:

- UCU members won't be teaching, holding office hours, marking or answering emails
- Any work missed, including teaching, will not be rescheduled
- After December 4<sup>th</sup>, UCU members will be observing action short of a strike (ASOS): this means working to contract, or working only the 36.5 hours per week stipulated in our contracts (most academics work 60+ hours, including weekends)

## How can Warwick students help?

In partnership with Warwick's Student Staff Solidarity Network, we will be holding a series of themed teach-outs, town-hall meetings and hootenannies on the picket lines, giving you a chance to join discussions about fees, debt, the future of work and radical alternatives to the status quo. We want you to be part of these activities. Join us! As Emma Goldman almost says, "If I can't dance, I don't want to be in your demonstration."

**Vote to support us** <https://www.facebook.com/events/797434250706212/>

If you want to help us stop hugely damaging changes to higher education, here are some ideas:

- Support the SU motion to support striking staff (on till Friday 12 November):
- Talk to your lecturers about the strike (and if they're not in the UCU, suggest they join!)
- Discuss it with your family and friends (more info: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/campaigns>)
- Contact Vice-Chancellor Stuart Croft at [S.Croft@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:S.Croft@warwick.ac.uk) and ask him to lobby Universities UK to meaningfully negotiate
- Contact your local MP to voice your concerns: <https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/mps/>
- Volunteer to help with the campaign by contacting the **Student Staff Solidarity Network** at [studentstaffsolidarity@gmail.com](mailto:studentstaffsolidarity@gmail.com) and <https://www.facebook.com/studentstaffsolidarity/>

**Remember: the more people support the strike, and the more unified that support, the sooner it's likely to end. With that in mind, please:**

- **Boycott lectures and seminars on strike days – do not cross the picket line!**
- **Join us as sympathetic onlookers/active supporters**
- **Help organise alternative student-led events**
- **Get in touch with any questions**

**Solidarity for all – together we can win this!**

