

13 April 2023

Dear Colleague

### **UCU Industrial Action**

The University has been informed by the Universities and Colleges Union (UCU) that their members will be taking part in further action short of strike (ASOS) from Thursday 20 April 2023 until the end of September 2023. This is in response to ongoing disputes over the USS pension, pay and working conditions. The action short of a strike will now include undertaking a marking and assessment boycott in addition to the [previously communicated ASOS](#).

The University is not party to personal information pertaining to UCU membership and is therefore unable to identify those colleagues who are eligible to participate in the action. Forgive me therefore for writing to everyone employed across the job families for whom UCU is the recognised union. I apologise to those of you who are not involved and thank you in advance for continuing to work normally.

I would remind you that the University has an obligation to students with regards to assessment to enable academic development and subsequent graduation or progression. The boycott has the potential to seriously impact on our responsibilities in this regard and we will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the University meets its duty to students.

The University will not withhold salary from colleagues participating in action short of a strike where this takes the form of working to contract or not undertaking any voluntary activities. It reserves the right however to determine the tasks to be prioritised during working hours and to reschedule classes where appropriate in the interests of the student experience during this period.

For the avoidance of doubt, participation in any or all of the following actions will be deemed as partial performance of duties: 'not rescheduling classes and lectures cancelled due to strike action', 'not covering for absent colleagues', 'removing uploaded materials related to, and/or not sharing materials related to, lectures or classes that will be or have been cancelled as a result of strike action' and 'undertaking a marking and assessment boycott'. As outlined in the [Industrial Action Policy](#), the University does not accept partial performance of contract and reserves the right to withhold up to 100% of pay in response.

Colleagues who fail to complete these duties, but continue to perform others, will be deemed to be working on a voluntary basis. In recognition that colleagues may continue to volunteer their time to perform other duties, the University has decided, as a gesture of goodwill, to withhold 30% of pay where colleagues participate in the marking and assessment boycott.

For each colleague participating in the marking and assessment boycott, pay will be withheld from the first day following the date when that colleague was due to have completed and returned their first set of marks to the relevant colleague(s) within the School. This will remain the case until such time as they resume the full performance of their contract or until the end of the legal industrial action.

Where colleagues refuse to take part in other assessment-related activities reasonably required of them or participate in other forms of ASOS deemed as partial performance, the University will deduct 30% of pay in these cases also.

There will be no reimbursement of withheld pay after industrial action ceases, including where outstanding work is duly completed and/or after returning to normal working.

Pay deductions for action short of strike in April will be taken from the May salary payment. Deductions for action short of strike action in May will be taken from the June salary payment and so on until the end of the legal dispute.

Colleagues should be aware that the University is not obliged to make pension contributions for those in membership of the pension scheme during periods of partial performance. However, the University will continue to pay employer contributions, as a gesture of goodwill, for participating scheme members. Similarly, employee pension contributions will be deducted as normal irrespective of any reduction in salary due to participation in industrial action. This will ensure continuity of pension scheme membership and life assurance benefits.

Those participating in the action are respectfully requested to give early notice of their participation. In any event, colleagues are kindly asked to notify their Head of School or Service by completing and returning the form below immediately after commencing action short of strike.

While the University fully respects the right of members to participate in industrial action, we remain hopeful that we can work with trade union colleagues to minimise the impact on the student experience.

We regret this latest call for industrial action and continue to strive to maintain positive working relations with UCUG throughout these disputes. Further information, including the University's Industrial Action Policy and FAQs can be found on the [Human Resources – Industrial action webpage](#). Should you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact your [College or University Services People & OD team](#) in the first instance.

Kind regards

*Christine Barr*

Christine Barr  
**Executive Director of People & Organisational Development**

## NOTIFICATION OF ACTION SHORT OF A STRIKE

*Please complete the form below in relation to Action Short of a Strike (ASOS) (if you are participating and have not already submitted a notification)*

**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**School/Service:** \_\_\_\_\_

**I intend to participate/I'm participating in Action Short of Strike as noted below:**

*Please note any dates or duration of intended action short of a strike in the table.*

<b>Action</b>	<b>Participation (Y/N)</b>	<b>Dates (From/To)</b>
Working to contract		
Not undertaking any voluntary activities		
Not covering for absent colleagues		
Removing uploaded materials related to, and/or not sharing materials related to, lectures or classes that will be or have been cancelled as a result of strike action		
Not rescheduling classes and lectures cancelled due to strike action		
Undertaking a marking and assessment boycott		

**Signed** ..... **Date** .....

Colleagues participating in the action are respectfully asked to give early notice of their participation.

In any event, colleagues should notify their **Head of School or Service** by completing and returning this form immediately after commencing action short of strike. If for any reason you are unable to return the form, you should contact your Head of School or Service immediately.