

Workload and Insecurity

More than 70% of respondents to the 2018 OU UCU workload survey said overwork had a negative effect on their mental and physical health. The figures for poor morale and bad impact on personal life were the same or worse.

And many staff members are on temporary or insecure contracts.

Fair Pay and Equality

To catch up with inflation since 2009, HE staff would need a 23% pay rise. Workloads have also risen significantly.

The Gender Pay Gap currently stands at 15.1% for HE. For OU administrative and professional staff, it is 9.5% (median). The Ethnicity Pay Gap in the sector is 12-13% but roughly 26% at Russell Group universities. We need national pay audits, leadership and action on these issues.

A Broken Business Model

As a result of the UCU strike, it is finally being recognised that **staff job insecurity is causing reputational and educational harm**. The OU is ahead in implementing the Associate Lecturer Contract but there is much more to do on fixed-term and consultancy contracts.

The proportion of university income spent on staff has dropped over the last ten years and is lower than in many other countries including Canada, USA and Australia.

Open University Branch of UCU

Like and Follow OU UCU on Facebook ([openuniversityucu](https://www.facebook.com/openuniversityucu)) and Twitter @oubucu and #ucustrike

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Donate to or apply to the Hardship Fund: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/branch-hardship-fund>

Pensions Are (Deferred) Pay

Pensioners contribute to the economy through spending, taxation and volunteering. To have an active and fulfilling retirement requires certainty about income, which is why we went on strike over USS in 2018 to save Defined (guaranteed) Benefits.

As a result of the strike a Joint Expert Panel, with members appointed by both sides, was set up to look at the short-term issues and long-term valuation and governance. **The panel's findings vindicated UCU's view that there were significant problems with the valuation methods.** The panel made recommendations to try to resolve the dispute over the 2017 valuation. Unfortunately most of the recommendations were ignored and USS imposed emergency contribution rises.

Since April 2019 staff members have paid an extra 1.6% in contributions, for a total of 9.6% of annual salary. This has nearly wiped out the 1.8% below-inflation pay rise. Employers are also paying much more. USS has also been accused of lacking transparency after a whistle-blower alleged Trustees were prevented from obtaining vital information.

After being let down over the first JEP report, members want a concrete commitment to implementing the most recent JEP recommendations to keep our pension safe and affordable.

How You Can Help:

- *If you're academic or academic-related (G7 or above) you can join UCU and take action with us: www.ucu.org.uk/join*
- *Make a donation to the local UCU Hardship Fund for strikers: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/campaigns>*
- *Support the strike on social media and by chatting to colleagues.*

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