

# Why We Are Striking

UCU took strike action for 8 days on equality, pay and pensions in 2019. Thanks to the initial action we have made huge progress. However we need real guarantees to ensure job security, fair and equal pay, and the affordability of the USS pension scheme.

## PAY AND EQUALITY ('FOUR FIGHTS'): KEY DEMANDS

- New framework for phasing out precarious and insecure contracts
- New approach to tackling workload problems
- Equal pay audits to close the gender and ethnicity pay gaps
- Pay rise above inflation: RPI plus 3% or min £3349 rise

Employers must recognise the scale of our concerns and reach a national agreement on these key issues which together are destroying health and damaging careers.

## USS: SAVE OUR PENSIONS!

UCU's action in 2018 defended USS as a Defined Benefits scheme. The strike led to setting up a Joint Expert Panel (JEP) but its first report was largely ignored. As a result USS imposed big contribution hikes in April 2019 and October 2019, which largely wiped out the below-inflation pay rise. A second report shows a fair pension is affordable using a sensible valuation approach. If this is ignored our pension provision will be under threat again.

To settle the dispute, employers must pay more for the unnecessary contribution rises forced onto staff since April 2019, and implement the recommendations of the second JEP report.

## What can you do?

- Join UCU if you are academic or academic-related, and take part in the strike
- Spread the word: put up posters, circulate leaflets, chat to your colleagues, talk about the UCU strike days on social media.
- Donate or apply to the Branch Hardship Fund: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/campaigns>

**1. PAY**



**RPI PLUS 3%**  
(a total of 5.2% as at December 2019) or minimum of £3,349



**£10/HOUR FOR IN-HOUSE STAFF** and Foundation Living Wage for contractors

**3. EQUALITY**



**CLOSE THE GENDER AND ETHNIC PAY GAPS** with time-specific agreements with specific actions



**A FULL EQUAL PAY AUDIT** covering all protected characteristics, to be shared with the campus trade unions

**2. WORKLOAD**



**35 HOUR WORKING WEEK** as a basis for our contracts

**A NEW APPROACH TO WORKLOAD MANAGEMENT**

Adoption of the Health and Safety Executive's Stress Management Standards, or equivalent



**LOCAL ACTION PLANS** to reduce work-related stress and ill health

**A PAYMENT TO ALL STAFF** in recognition of the unpaid hours we have worked



**4. CASUALISATION**

**A framework to eliminate precarious employment. Institutions will create action plans with commitments to:**



**END ZERO-HOURS CONTRACTS**



**TAKE OUTSOURCED STAFF BACK IN HOUSE** on specific timescales



**END WORKER ARRANGEMENTS FOR TEACHING STAFF** in favour of proper employee contracts



**REVIEW THE USE OF HOURLY PAID LECTURERS** in post-92 universities

**POSTGRADUATE TEACHING ASSISTANTS**

Give them guaranteed hours and proper employee contracts, linked to the national pay spine



**FRACTIONAL CONTRACTS** Transfer more hourly-paid staff to fractional contracts



**IMPROVE JOB SECURITY** and create more open-ended contracts for researchers