

To All DUCU Members

You will no doubt have seen the information which has been sent to you over the recent weeks about the upcoming strike over the drastic changes to the USS pension scheme. Many of you will have attended departmental UCU meetings as well.

This e-mail gives you information about what we are doing in the build-up, and what to do on the actual strike days.

- **A Durham UCU Meeting for all members** will take place on **Wednesday 21st February at 13:00 in Elvet Riverside 201**. Please come along as we need to be quorate to pass a motion to set up a local hardship fund to assist those members in Durham who will be hardest hit by the financial impact of taking strike action. Strike leaflets and posters will be available at the meeting.
- Action short of a strike will commence on 22 February and continue until further notice.
- Strike action will take place on

Week one :- Thursday 22 & Friday 23 February (two days)

Week two:- Monday 26, Tuesday 27 & Wednesday 28 February (three days)

Week three :- Monday 5, Tuesday 6, Wednesday 7 & Thursday 8 March (four days)

Week four :- Monday 12, Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14, Thursday 15 & Friday 16 March (five days).

- FAQ's can be found at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/uss-action-faqs>
- Any strike related queries for Durham UCU should be sent to ucustrike@durhamucu.org.uk
- A Student Staff solidarity group can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/dustudentstaffsolidarity/>
- Durham Students Union has posted our communication to students on all its social media - <https://www.durhamsu.com/articles/why-are-your-lecturers-striking>

- On the first day of the strike, Thursday 22nd February there is a **regional rally**. Assemble from 12pm, at Grey's Monument, Newcastle. Speakers currently confirmed include TUC Regional Secretary, Beth Farhat and UCU Head of Higher Education, Paul Bridge. Please attend if you can!

Please show your support for the strike by helping us promote the rally. The below links should be of use:

Information on the regional website: ucunorthern.org.uk/event/uss-dispute-rally-22feb2018

Retweet us: twitter.com/UCUNorthern/status/963758696219185153

Share the Facebook event: facebook.com/events/427108537712188/

- **Picketing**

We will be picketing at all entrances on the Science site, Elvet Riverside and some departments. Our Picketing Supervisor (a post now required by Law) will be our Hon. Secretary, Francis Pritchard. He will act as a point of contact to ensure that pickets are peaceful, do not cause obstruction, and are otherwise safe and in line with the Picketing Code

We will meet on the corner of Stockton Road and South Road at the following times:

Thursday 22nd 7am - picketing till 10am

Friday 23rd 8 am - 10am

Monday 26th 7am - 10am

Tuesday 27th 8am – 10am

Weds 28th 11am – 1pm

Should we need to organize additional pickets for future weeks, we will be in touch. If you are planning to picket an individual department (not picketing on University property) you must get permission from the Picketing Supervisor by emailing ucustrike@durhamucu.org.uk. If you want to volunteer for picketing please also let us know! We need all the volunteers we can get, we need to picket and be visible to keep the message going. Follow us on twitter at <https://twitter.com/DurhamUCU>

- We hope to hold a 'teach in' in the third week of the strike – more information will be circulated nearer the date.

- Financial support 14 days of strike action will have an impact on the university, it will also have an impact on us. Strike pay will be available- The union has agreed to provide strike pay based on up to £50 per day after the first three days' strikes undertaken. Priority will be given to those on insecure contracts, low earnings or with special circumstances. https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/9164/USS-dispute-Support-for-members-taking-industrial-action/pdf/ucu_ussdispute_fightingfund1.pdf
- Solidarity visits We hope to set up a local hardship fund to help those most in need – to that end we will be visiting our neighbouring universities at Sunderland and Teesside on the second day of the strike. If you can assist with transport, or want to take part – please contact ucustrike@durhamucu.org.uk. If you know of anyone who wishes to support us please also let us know.
- What else can you do?

Write to the VC - encourage him to come out against the UUK proposals and call for a return to negotiations. vice.chancellor@dur.ac.uk

Encourage colleagues to join UCU and strike.

Print out and display the door poster available [here](#).

- Reporting your strike action
- You do not have to tell the University whether you plan to take industrial action in advance of the date when action begins as this will enable them to minimise any disruption the action is aimed to cause. Once the action has begun you should respond truthfully to any query from your employer as to whether you have taken industrial action. To avoid having all fourteen days pay deducted at the end of March, we would recommend members respond with details of their February action in February and again in March. You should not, however, respond to any such query while you are on strike.
- If you are asked to give permission to the University to allow them to continue to pay full employee contributions to USS for each day during strike action, and do so – we suggest you add the following text:-

“ I do not give my consent for this data to be used for any other purpose than to allow Durham University to continue to pay my full employee contributions to USS for each day during strike action”

The University has assured us that any such data will be used only for the purpose it is intended for, and will not be shared with departments and faculties.

- On completion of strike action you may be asked or instructed to carry out work you have missed due to taking strike action. **We advise you to ask what work your head of department or 'line manager' prioritises, and what work you should not do in order to carry out such work.**

Francis Pritchard
Hon. Secretary
Durham UCU