



University Strike

University and College Union (UCU)
Spring 2020

The 2019-20 dispute so far

- Members of the University and College Union voted 3 to 1 in support of industrial action over pay, equality, casualisation and workloads.
- UCU members at 60 universities including University of Brighton went on strike between 25th November and 4th December 2019. This video tells you about that strike action and its impact

<https://vimeo.com/378827716>





We fight for equality and fair pay.

We fight against casualisation and unfair workloads.

We will continue the fight to provide students with the education they deserve.

To the students who have supported us, to the colleagues who have stood with us...

THANK YOU!

We strike because rights are not handed from above; they are fought by pressure from below.

Make your voice heard to university management at:
ucu.org.uk/studentvoice

The Background

- women are paid on average 15.1% less than men
- the disability pay gap is 8.7%
- black academic staff earn 12-13% less than white colleagues of the same gender and experience
- salaries have fallen against inflation by over 20% since 2009.
- academic staff work over 50 hours during a typical week.
- over 170,000 staff are employed on fixed-term or other casual contracts.

Why we're striking

Our working conditions are your learning conditions

**Thu 20 - Fri 21 Feb
Mon 24 - Wed 26 Feb
Mon 2 - Thu 5 Mar
Mon 9 - Fri 13 Mar**

**We all deserve better.
Complain at
www.ucu.org/studentvoice**

EQUALITY AND CASUALISATION

Fixed-term contracts



Teaching-only academics

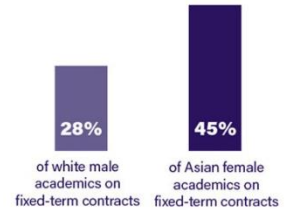


Fixed-term contracts
49%



Hourly-paid contracts
42%

Fixed-term contracts

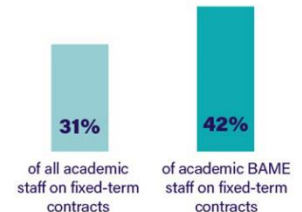


Research-only academics



Fixed-term contracts
67%

Fixed-term contracts



@BrightonUCU

This is
unacceptable



How this negatively affects you

Our working conditions are your learning conditions

- Many of those who teach you are on insecure contracts. They don't know if they will be employed next semester or next year. This means their focus isn't 100% on the job they want to do: teaching you. They're worried about being able to pay the bills. They're distracted by having to find other work. They're working part time in non-academic jobs to make ends meet.

You don't want to be taught by staff in this position

- You are being short changed by a university sector which is happy to take your tuition fees but unwilling to provide the basics such as enough staff on secure contracts to teach on your courses.



Why strike?

It is the only option left.

Taking no action means we not only accept, but in fact we *help to perpetuate* the things that are so wrong in higher education.

Striking is a last resort but we will not stand by and watch HE get steadily worse for staff and students.



What we are asking for

The industrial action is intended to force the employers who run higher education to improve the situation in four specific areas:

- Inequality
- Casualization
- Pay
- Workload



What did the last strike achieve?



- The strikes before Christmas brought the university's negotiating group back to the table to discuss things that they had previously refused to discuss, such as pay and equalities. This was a significant victory for the unions!
- Yet their proposals did not go far enough to convince the unions that they are serious about tackling the issues at hand.
- Our action worked. But we're not there yet and we need to show that we will fight until things are made right.

What Does the Students' Union Say?

- The National Union of Students (NUS), who represent you, are in support of our action. You can read the joint NUS/UCU statement here <https://www.ucu.org.uk/UCU-NUS-jointstatement> and can view a short video here <https://youtu.be/cnVe-aXan8Y>

“UCU general secretary Jo Grady, NUS president Zamzam Ibrahim, and NUS vice president Claire Sosienski Smith on why you should support the strikes and turn your anger on university management and the unfair treatment of staff. [#UCUstrike](#)”



- You can also read an updated statement from the NUS on “Everything you need to know about the UCU strikes this February and March” here: <https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/press-releases/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-ucu-strike/?load=5&top=204>

What about Brighton SU?



BSU has asked for your opinion on the upcoming strikes:

<https://twitter.com/SUBrighton/status/1226879550031880192>

Make sure you have your say. You are the union. It's the union officers' job to represent your voice.

How will this affect my classes?

Strike days have been called on 14 days, over four weeks.

- Week one - Thursday 20 & Friday 21 February
- Week two - Monday 24, Tuesday 25 & Wednesday 26 February
- Week three - Monday 2, Tuesday 3, Wednesday 4 & Thursday 5 March
- Week four - Monday 9, Tuesday 10, Wednesday 11, Thursday 12 & Friday 13 March

No teaching-related activity will take place for the duration of the strike.

Will strikes definitely happen?

Not necessarily.

There is still time to settle this dispute before strike action starts. But the ball is in the universities' court.



Vice Chancellors facing strike action in their institutions need to recognise the strength of feeling among their staff and students - and the justice of our claim - and tell their negotiators to reopen talks with the unions.

What can I do?

- Be angry
 - The HE sector has got away with overseeing a system that is unequal for staff and inadequate for students.
- Tell the Vice Chancellor how you feel
 - You, not your staff, are the people with the real power here. The University treats you as paying customers. You're not getting the service you're paying for and you shouldn't accept this. The University has docked the pay of striking staff. What have they done with this money? Shouldn't it go to you?
- **Ask the vice-chancellor for fresh negotiations and demand your money back - you can do this online at:**
www.ucu.org.uk/studentvoice
- Tell BSU your opinion on the upcoming strikes:
<https://twitter.com/SUBrighton/status/1226879550031880192>
- Visit the picket lines to express your support
- Show your support for the strike action online with #UCUstrike



A final message from us

We sincerely hope that university managements will agree to UCU's proposals, allowing the strikes to be called off. But we hold the conviction to fight until university managements sign up to implement the real changes that are required to make universities fair for all.

