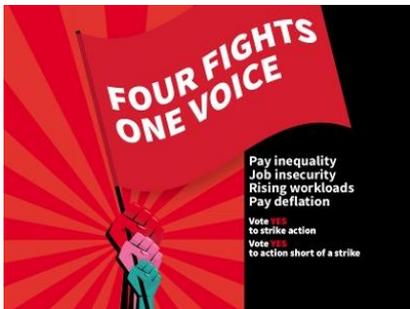


University of Leeds University & College Union

Four Fights One Voice ballot



UCU members are being balloted now on whether to take industrial action on inequality, casualisation, workload and pay. In our

sector there are significant disability, gender and ethnicity pay gaps, over 170 000 colleagues on casualised contracts, and increasing workloads, despite the value of university salaries having fallen against inflation by over 20% since 2009. A successful vote for action would further strengthen UCU's mandate to negotiate nationally with our employers and demand they commit to tackle these issues. See: ucu.org.uk/he2019

As Jo Grady, our new UCU General Secretary, said: "By standing up for pensions, pay, equality and job security, we are defending not just ourselves but our profession. The sector's income has increased by a third since the beginning of the financial crisis, and that is thanks to our hard work in an incredibly difficult environment. How have employers rewarded us? With intensifying casualisation, wage suppression, and pension cuts. Some of us may not feel the effects of cuts and inequalities directly, but we can all appreciate what they do to our colleagues. Securing national agreements on these things is the most efficient way to make the sector fairer, more inclusive, and more appealing to future generations of university staff."

Remember, the law requires that votes on industrial disputes have to be done by post, not online, and reach a 50% turnout. We owe it to each other to express our democratic voices through voting as otherwise anti-union laws silence us all as a collective. The other campus trade unions, Unite and Unison, will also be balloting around the same time.

USS Pensions ballot



In the same envelope as the Four Fights One Voice ballot is a ballot for action on USS pensions. We called off our

strike last year on the promise of a Joint Expert Panel (JEP) being established to look at how the pension scheme operated. Now employers are forcing USS members to pay towards contribution increases arising from USS's refusal to implement key proposals of the Joint Expert Panel (JEP). Employers have done little to challenge USS's rejection of those proposals, preserving their comfortable relationship with USS at the expense of their relationship with staff. Our contributions will rise to 9.6% of salary from October 2019, and 11% of salary from October 2021. UCU commissioned an analysis of the changes from independent experts First Actuarial. They showed that, compared with the situation members would be in if the Scheme had continued in its pre-2011 state, the typical USS member stands to lose £240,000 in retirement, and for many members, losses will climb as high as £730,000. Latest news, including a link to the 2 Aug letter from UCU to all USS members, is here:

ucu.org.uk/strikeforuss. For local news on the dispute, see leedsucu.org.uk/pensions

International staff can now strike without visa consequences

The Home Office has now updated its guidelines to specify that striking doesn't count as unauthorised absence for visa (Tier 2) purposes, via an exception to the rule on absences from employment without pay. Details at gov.uk/guidance/immigration-rules/immigration-rules-part-9-grounds-for-refusal#pt9variation

General Secretary open meeting



UCU general secretary Jo Grady is coming to University of Leeds on Wednesday 2 October. An open meeting is scheduled for 1pm-2pm in Mechanical Engineering Lecture Theatre B, and she will also meet with our anti-casualisation working group. Please put this in your diary and register (so we can keep an eye on numbers): leedsucu.org.uk/jo-grady-visit/. This is an exciting opportunity to engage with, influence and take inspiration from our new leader.

UCU seeks guarantees on EU citizens' rights in event of no-deal Brexit

Contradictory statements from the Home Office about freedom of movement in a no-deal scenario have caused unacceptable levels of confusion and uncertainty for EU citizens living in the UK including many university staff. On August 29th, UCU General Secretary Jo Grady wrote to the Prime Minister asking for urgent assurances about the rights of EU citizens in the event of a no-deal Brexit. The full letter can be read here: ucu.org.uk/article/10267/UCU-seeks-guarantees-on-EU-citizens-rights-in-event-of-no-deal-Brexit

For research students & supervisors

After much campaigning by UCU and others, it has been confirmed that all UKRI funded PhD students (AHRC, ESRC, NERC, EPSRC, STFC etc.) are now entitled to have their funded period extended, if they become ill, for up to 13 weeks per year (medical certificate needed). See ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/

Climate emergency stoppage

On the 20th September, school children will strike once again for Government action in the face of our climate emergency. UCU calls for trade unions to support school students with a 30 minute solidarity work stoppage on 20th September. Following requests from campus trade unions, the University has agreed that staff can stop work for 30 minutes (in addition to the normal lunch break) in order to participate.

We will be marching, with students and the other campus unions, to Millennium Square to support the Leeds Youth Strike for Climate group. Meet at Parkinson steps at 12 noon sharp. Bring an alarm clock, and if possible make your own placard!

Leeds UCU have a new Climate and Ecological Emergency Working Group and welcome new members. Email ucu@leeds.ac.uk to join.

Welcome to new officers and committee members

Our 2019/2020 officers and committee were elected in May and took office on the 1st August. Details here: leedsucu.org.uk/about-us/

Our new Vice President, Chloe Wallace, is a brand new officer and tells us about herself here: leedsucu.org.uk/introducing-chloe-wallace/

First General Meeting of 2019-2020

Our first Leeds UCU General Meeting will be on Thursday 24th October at 1pm. Members, please keep an eye on your emails for full details.

Check your details / Join UCU

Please make sure UCU holds the right details about you, so you can have your say in union decisions and so we can support you if you have problems at work.

1. Log into MyUCU at <http://ucu.org.uk>
2. Check your postal address
3. Check your employer
4. Check your membership type.

If you are not yet a member, join today!
ucu.org.uk/join