

A QUICK GUIDE TO

VCV  
4 FIGHTS \$  
PENSIONS

FOR STUDENTS



# BEFORE WE START

## What is a UNION?

- It's where people who work at the same place, or do the same trade, join together to make a democratic collective, to help them to negotiate safe working conditions, fair pay and a decent and equal place to work.

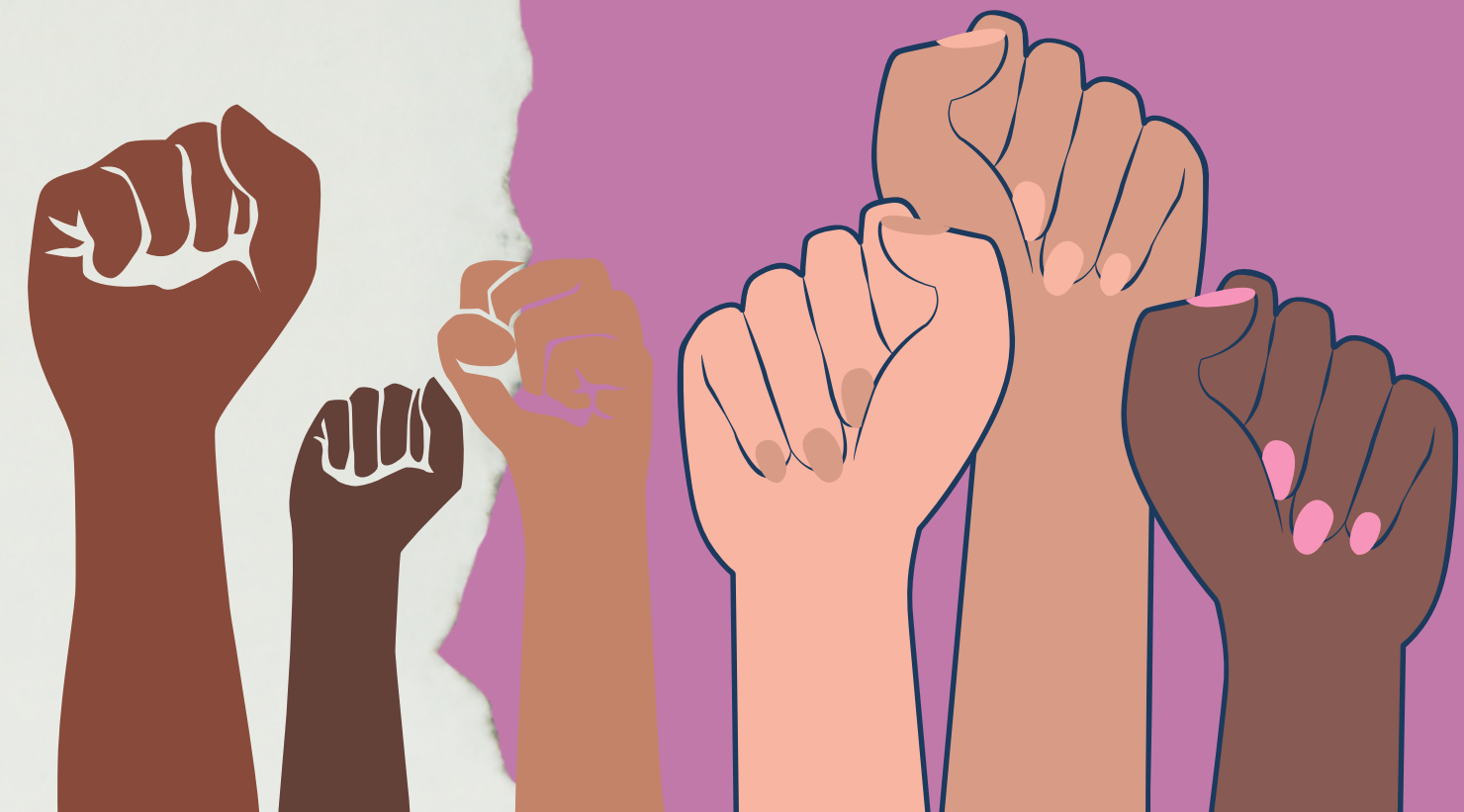
## What is UCU?

- University and College Union is the union of academic staff, including postgraduate students who teach, and university staff in professional and managerial roles, at universities and colleges across the UK.

# WHAT HAPPENS DURING STRIKES?

1. We withhold our labour, we don't work at all during strike days.
2. We don't get paid for the days we strike.
3. We hold physical and virtual 'picket' lines: we stand outside our workplace to tell others why we are striking.

END PAY  
GAPS



# WHY ARE WE STRIKING?

## 4 fights

17% racial pay gap  
18.9% gender pay gap  
9% disability pay gap



1. INEQUALITY
2. CASUALISATION
3. WORKLOAD
4. Below inflation pay rise

68% of research  
staff are on  
casualised  
contracts





## Significant pay gaps

- 17.1% racial pay gap
- 18.9% gender pay gap,
- 9% disability pay gap



## We are at a breaking point

- 4 in 5 staff surveyed are struggling with workload
- 86% of staff surveyed have been directed towards mental health support because of workload




[www.ucu.org.uk](http://www.ucu.org.uk)

## Casualisation is rife in unis

- 68% of research staff are on casualised contracts
  - 3, 545 academic staff are on Zero hour contracts
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## Below inflation pay rise

- £8.70 the hourly rate of the lowest paid teacher in HE
  - 25% fall in salaries against inflation since 2009
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# What do

# we want?



## 1 Equality

National agreed action to close the racial, gender and disability pay gaps.

## 2 Job Security

agreed framework to eliminate precarious employment

## 3 Manageable workloads

35 hrs to be the standard weekly employment contract for all HE staff  
National action to address workload

## 4 Fair Pay

pay rise of inflation +2% or 12%;  
minimum wage of £12 per hour

This is a national dispute with very real local consequences.

#UCURISING

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# VSS PENSIONS

**THE LESS YOU  
ARE PAID THE  
LESS GOES IN  
YOUR PENSION**

UUK voted to cut  
££££ from our retirement benefits  
representing an annual guaranteed  
pension cut of 35% for a typical member

# SAVE OUR PENSIONS

## HOW DO PENSIONS WORK?

We (staff) pay about 10% of our salary every month into a pension fund called USS, universities pay some into it too.

## WHAT HAPPENS TO THE MONEY?

USS invests the money from all the university workers across the UK, and the income from those investments also goes into the USS pot. Then when we retire we get a regular income to live off.

## WHAT IS THE ISSUE?


Staff will be asked to pay more for our pension and get less back at the end - which means some of us will struggle financially when we're old.

## OUR DEMANDS

1. UCU members demand employers to revoke the massive cuts which they imposed on members of the USS pension scheme, and put pressure on USS to restore benefits to 2021 levels as soon as possible.
2. UUK to put strong pressure on USS to ensure that the next and all subsequent valuations of the financial health of the scheme to be evidence-based and are moderately prudent.

## THE STATE OF USS PENSION FUND

The payments that go into the pot are about £3 billion a year, the pensions that are drawn out are about £2 billion a year, and the USS scheme currently has about £88 billion pounds in the pot.



younger staff, & those affected by pay gaps such as women, BAME & disabled staff will suffer the most with pension cuts



# What can students do?

Our working conditions are your learning conditions



Make your voices heard!

Ask senior management to engage in meaningful negotiations with UCU

Let striking staff know you support them!

Show your support by using #ucurising

Join our teach outs on strike days!

Organise a fundraiser for our strike fund. We don't get paid while on strike

Follow us on social media  
@ucunion  
@ucunion



# STRIKE DAYS

1, 9, 10, 14, 15, 16,

21, 22, 23, 27, 28

February and

1, 2, 16, 17, 20, 21,

22 March 2023

## DON'T FORGET!

- Make your voices be heard
- Our working conditions are your learning conditions
- We didn't come to this decision lightly
- We ask management to donate our lost wages to Student Hardship Funds
- Donate to our strike fund

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