

NOTES FROM AN OU STUDENT *

"I have seen and experienced under-resourced, overworked, stressed staff striving to attain the highest standards with 'their hands tied'.

When these terms and conditions are unfair then employees must make a stand.

[If the OU now puts] revenue over tutors, staff and students ... [t]his creates a diluted service as any organisation is only as good as its people.

People do not strike because they want to but rather it is because they have to.

The students know what is going on and I am sure they all stand with their tutors."

**19 February 2020, quoted with permission*



When Higher Education fails its staff, it's failing students too. Students deserve to be supported by staff who can give their very best to teaching.

And that depends on job security, fair pay, equality at work and a healthy work/life balance.

We very much regret that students are affected by the action. **At UCU's request, pay deducted from staff will be donated to the OU's Student Study Support Fund.**

Open University Branch of UCU

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Email: ucu@open.ac.uk

JOIN UCU: www.ucu.org.uk/join

Donate or claim from our hardship fund: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/campaigns>

UCU
University and College Union

UCU has always joined students in opposing tuition fees and the commercialisation of higher education. This is why the **NUS has issued a joint statement with UCU supporting the strike action:**

<https://ucu.org.uk/UCU-NUS-jointstatement>

- In some parts of HE, up to 75% of teaching staff are paid hourly or on insecure contracts.
- Current university staffing models are based on very significant overwork, leading to a mental health crisis for HE staff
- The average workload for full-time staff is 50 hours a week, with 1 in 4 academics reporting higher figures. Some staff at the OU report working 60 hours a week as normal.
- Staff are under so much pressure that they don't have sufficient time to support students.
- **Compared to 10 years ago, some staff at the OU are routinely working nearly 7 days a week while being paid for about 4.**

Pay has also fallen dramatically in real terms against inflation (21% over 10 years) and this is hitting staff unequally: there is persistent discrimination against women and BAME staff as seen in the gender and ethnicity pay gaps.

The pressures in the sector on pay, pensions, and working conditions are driving staff out of Higher Education. **It's time to fix this.**

If you care about these issues please write to university leaders asking them to negotiate for an end to these disputes.

<https://ucu.org.uk/strikeback-speakout>. You can also donate to the OU branch of UCU Hardship Fund to support the strike:

<http://ucu.open.ac.uk/branch-hardship-fund>.

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