

# The workload crisis in HE

Unsustainable workloads are having an impact on the health of staff across the Higher Education sector.

According to a recent national UCU survey:

- 4 in 5 HE staff are struggling with workload
- 78% reported increased workloads during the pandemic
- 86% have been directed to support for mental health due to workload

At the Open University, 67% of staff reported working overtime and over one-third reported that workload had impacted their physical or mental health (Staff Barometer Survey July 2020).

As part of this strike action UCU is demanding employers, including the OU, sign up to:

- A standard 35-hour week for all HE contracts
- A UK-wide action plan to support the development of workload models agreed between institutions and their local union branches
- Workload models that take into account post-pandemic changes in working practices
- Improvements to job security that will ease workload pressures and anxiety.

At the OU we are pushing for management to start taking the health impact of overwork seriously and provide meaningful mitigation.

**The current workload situation is a crisis and we're at breaking point!**



We're fighting for improved pay and conditions, including sector job security and action to close the equality pay gaps.

Open University Branch of UCU email: [ucu@open.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk)

Facebook (openuniversityucu) and Twitter @oubucu (#OneOfUsAllOfUs #UCUStrike #USSMess)

See our website for strike day activities: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk>

Donate to or apply to the Hardship Fund: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/branch-hardship-fund>



## We are also faced with pension cuts of 35% (average)

Pensions are deferred pay and this loss will be devastating. The rationale for the cuts is based on a discredited valuation taken in March 2020. Even using the most pessimistic assumptions, the supposed 'deficit' in USS has already almost disappeared since then.

UCU put forward a costed, credible alternative that would have maintained benefits and given time for a new valuation but the OU refused to consider it.



**After this strike we're balloting for further action. Want to help improve pay and working conditions and fight for your pension?**

- **Join UCU:** [www.ucu.org.uk/join](http://www.ucu.org.uk/join) and join the strike
- Sign our petition and circulate it on social media: <https://speakout.web.ucu.org.uk/urgent-we-call-upon-open-university-to-resolve-pension-and-pay-disputes>.
- Attend our open strike rallies and teach-outs: [www.ucu.open.ac.uk/](http://www.ucu.open.ac.uk/)
- **Members:** update your personal information on [MyUCU](#) for the new ballot **and vote YES**
- **Members:** continue to observe and to respect action short of a strike (ASOS). Do not work more than contracted hours or take on voluntary work. Do not cover for colleagues on strike. Do not move meetings to accommodate strike dates.



**Open University Branch of UCU** email: [ucu@open.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk)

**Facebook** (openuniversityucu) and **Twitter** @oubucu (#OneOfUsAllOfUs #UCUStrike #USSMess)

See our website for strike day activities: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk>

Donate to or apply to the Hardship Fund: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/branch-hardship-fund>

