

## What's happening now with the pensions dispute and strike action?

- **The dispute continues**, because the employers (Universities UK) have not come up with an adequate offer to reduce the effects of the pension cuts
- But **striking staff have gone back to work**. This is because every strike day has to be confirmed in advance. The 14 days announced have now ended at most universities
- Union members are currently refusing to take on extra tasks beyond their contracts, but will generally be doing **core work including teaching** as normal
- **There will be no strikes** this week (19 to 23 March) or during Easter
- The UCU has announced it may take **up to 14 further strike days** if there is no deal
- The extra strikes would be in April, May or June but **have not been scheduled** yet
- The strike days would probably be different at different universities

## Is there a risk to exams, dissertation/project supervision, or graduations?

- Everyone hopes UUK will offer a deal that avoids any strikes after Easter. Some universities are already making constructive moves that show relations are improving: [tinyurl.com/go-cambridge](https://tinyurl.com/go-cambridge), [tinyurl.com/go-bristol](https://tinyurl.com/go-bristol) and [tinyurl.com/go-leicester](https://tinyurl.com/go-leicester)
- All sides are dedicated to ensuring students can get their degrees, whatever happens
- If there's no early deal, universities will make various arrangements to allow this, such as disregarding missed assessments, or changing exam papers

## What do staff feel about the effects of the strikes on students?

- All of us wish we didn't have to do this – we'd rather get back to our jobs
- The strike is not aimed at students. Researchers, technicians and others are also striking, including some PhD students. But visible effect on teaching is the main way to get management to pay attention
- A fair deal on pensions will help the next generation: not only future UCU members, but people in other industries needing a safe retirement
- Standing up to the employers helps us to resist casualization and other measures that reduce quality of teaching. Our working environment is your learning environment!
- We have had huge support from students who agree on these bigger issues

## Can you tell me more about the background to the dispute?

- Some useful introductions are [tinyurl.com/article-strike](https://tinyurl.com/article-strike) and [tinyurl.com/video-strike](https://tinyurl.com/video-strike)

## What can students do to help?

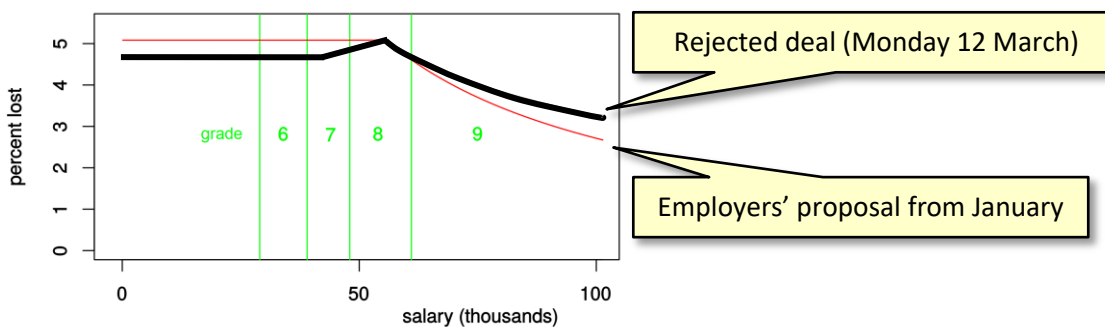
- Contact your university leader to show your continuing support. There are contact details and a sample email wording at [UCUstrike.wordpress.com](https://ucustrike.wordpress.com)
- Support us online. Facebook [UCU](https://www.facebook.com/UCU), Twitter [@ucustrike](https://twitter.com/ucustrike), hashtag [#USSstrike](https://twitter.com/ucustrike)
- Find more ways to help at [www.ucu.org.uk/student-uss-information](https://www.ucu.org.uk/student-uss-information)

## Why is this strike so big? Surely some change to pensions is needed?

- Planning for change is always needed, but proposed cuts huge and unnecessary
- Experts have **discredited Universities UK's claim of a six-billion-pound deficit** ([tinyurl.com/uss-deficit1](http://tinyurl.com/uss-deficit1), [tinyurl.com/uss-deficit3](http://tinyurl.com/uss-deficit3), [tinyurl.com/uss-deficit4](http://tinyurl.com/uss-deficit4)), with some analysis showing a very healthy picture
- Plans for a major element of individual defined contributions push **enormous risks onto pension-holders** ([tinyurl.com/dc-problems](http://tinyurl.com/dc-problems))
- **UUK made these decisions in a strange, unaccountable fashion** ([tinyurl.com/who-uuk](http://tinyurl.com/who-uuk), [tinyurl.com/uss-bursars](http://tinyurl.com/uss-bursars)). Its behaviour has strained the patience even of some employers ([tinyurl.com/go-churchill](http://tinyurl.com/go-churchill)) who see the need for a fair deal for staff

## I heard that Universities UK offered a deal brokered through Acas last week. Why didn't UCU members accept the deal and go back to work?

- Most members agreed the deal offered didn't show much improvement on key issues
- This graph by David Firth, a statistics professor at Warwick, shows the difference in effective salary loss (this translates into pension cuts typically around 30 to 40%):



- From this, it's clear that **those paid the least would still suffer big losses** (David's analysis at [tinyurl.com/uss-stats](http://tinyurl.com/uss-stats) suggests alternative approaches to the problem)
- Members were also concerned about **lack of protection against inflation, lack of guarantees on the future of defined benefit, and demands to re-schedule classes without making up lost pay**
- The deal showed progress in other areas and proved **UUK is finally listening seriously**. Support for the strike is solid, and we may soon get the deal we need

## I want to add my voice to the campaign. How do I join UCU?

- Over 400 new members have joined University of Manchester UCU since the dispute began. Immediate membership is available at [www.ucu.org.uk/join](http://www.ucu.org.uk/join)

## I can't join UCU, but want to help. What can I do?

- **Donate to the fighting fund** which organises emergency payments for striking staff who will struggle with salary deductions. You can donate online at [www.ucu.org.uk/fightingfund](http://www.ucu.org.uk/fightingfund)
- Contact your university leader to show your continuing support. There are contact details and a sample email wording at [UCUstrike.wordpress.com](http://UCUstrike.wordpress.com)
- Support us online. Facebook [UCU](#), Twitter [@ucu](#), hashtag [#USSstrike](#)