

Action pays results for all

We will see the results of UCU's longest running pay dispute this month as the 2% pay increase won by this year's strike action finds its way into pay. "We" includes not just the members of the three unions that supported the 9 month dispute, but ALL those working in grades represented by UCU, UNISON and Unite., whether they are members or not. The dispute also raised pay for permanent and fixed term staff to the level of the Living Wage where there is a 35-hour working week. Bath, unlike most universities, has a 36.5 hour working week. Hourly paid staff will still be paid less than the Living Wage. Bath has plenty of these. UCU is supporting a [petition from local hourly paid staff](#) and students calling for the Living Wage to be paid to ALL staff.

If you are not yet a member of UCU you can join us now. UCU is a **national** union with local branches. If you are a member then please pass this on to a colleague who is not and explain to them the benefits of membership. Together we can

- protect your pay more effectively
- improve the position of those on hourly paid contracts
- reduce your workload
- defend your pension from further cuts (see inside)
- represent you when you face discrimination or unfair treatment

For more details go to <https://join.ucu.org.uk>



Employers play divide and

Changes to USS - the pension scheme for UCU members working in pre-1992 universities - imposed in 2011 created a two tier pension scheme that UCU opposed. The changes meant that there was a big gap between the pension rights of existing members and new entrants. At the time, UCU said that when employers create a two-tier benefit system, within a few years there would be pressure to close the better scheme. Employers ARE now considering further changes that will reduce the benefits available to ALL members.

The main changes imposed in 2011 were:

- new entrants would be offered a pension not based on final salary but a career-average. UCU did not object in principle to the introduction of a career average (CRB) scheme but we did have a problem with this particular scheme, particularly the accrual rate of 1/80th. We argued for an accrual rate of 1/65th.
- an increase in the contribution rate from 6.35% to 7.5%

Following strike action, UCU did manage to secure some improvements to the proposed changes, but the seeds of divide and rule had been sown.

USS is a private fund, and one of the last to still offer defined benefits. Across the pension landscape we have seen defined benefit schemes being replaced with defined contribution schemes, effectively transferring the risk from the employers and the fund to the individual member but leaving big pension funds with enough cash to continue acting as big players in the city markets.

Employers are now circulating information about the need to cut benefits and increase contributions because of a deficit in the fund. UCU rejects the methodology used to value the fund, and rejects the idea that the deficit means the pension fund will cost more and offer even poorer benefits.

UCU expects to enter intensive negotiations between now and November on the future of the scheme. Our aims are:

- to maintain USS as an attractive scheme for members which is sustainable in the future
- to address the gap between the two tiers (Final Salary members and CRB members) of USS.

rule to cut pensions again

Last year we put a formal proposal to the employers that we should work towards broad comparability with the TPS scheme. TPS is the scheme for UCU members in post-1992 universities. Benefits for TPS members are now significantly better than those for new entrants (CRB) to USS.

The employers are playing a divide and rule game. We must not let them play us off against each other. Whichever tier of USS you belong to we all share a common interest in securing an equitable pension which offers benefits that match those available to members of TPS working in post 1992 universities.

We believe that it may be necessary for the union to take collective action to secure the best possible outcome to the negotiations. Strike action and the deployment of assessment and marking sanctions have to be contemplated. Letters will be sent letting employers know that we may need to declare a dispute if changes are forced through.

University of Bath UCU will send two delegates to a special conference on 19th September to hear the latest news from our negotiators. There will be a special branch meeting on 11th September (see back page for details) where we will decide what we want our delegates to do. Please clear your diary to attend this important meeting.

Local moves to improve conditions for hourly paid staff

Your local negotiators were accompanied by UCU Regional Official Nick Varney at a meeting with the Vice Chancellor and other senior university managers in May. Top of our list of concerns was the university's poor record on dealing with its growing number of hourly paid staff.

UCU has an agreement with the university which allows so called 'variable hours teaching fellows' who work more than 322 hours for at least two years to be offered fractional contracts. Very few hourly paid staff have benefitted from this agreement since it was signed in 2009, so we do not think that it offers enough protection to hourly paid staff, and we are seeking to renegotiate it.

The meeting in May has led to further talks and we hope to be able to present a deal for members to consider in the next few weeks. If you have an hourly paid teaching or research role, join UCU now so we can negotiate more effectively on your behalf and you can have your say.

News round-up

Plans to develop a 170 space car park and access at the NW of the campus are being opposed by parents at the nearby nursery and by others. UCU is hosting a [petition](#) calling for more open consultation with staff, students and the wider community ... the TUC are organising a [Britain Needs a Pay Rise](#) march and rally on Saturday 18 October - watch out for details of transport from Bath ... Bath UCU's call for greater transparency and accountability of the University Remuneration Committee is receiving [more support nationally](#) many Bath UCU members have responded to a call for [medical aid for Palestine](#). You can join them by texting 70070 with "GAZA10£10". This will donate £10 which will be added to your phone bill ... Bath UCU is joining forces with other staff and student unions in the South West to call on Vice Chancellors to speak out against proposed cuts to [Disabled Students Allowance](#) from September 2015 ... University of Bath HR have finally produced [draft job descriptions for academic staff](#). You can post your comments on our blog. We are still pressing for all teaching work to be paid at Grade 7 or above ... If you want to become more active in UCU get in touch to discuss how you can help.

For more information see our local blog at <http://bath.web.ucu.org.uk>

Meeting for all members
(new members welcome)

Pensions under attack ... again

Thursday 11th September 12.30
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