



DEC 2019

Taking

Action

Matters

This autumn you will be aware that UCU held a double national ballot on the USS Pensions and Pay & Equality. Reading UCU (yet again!) comfortably exceeded the legislative 50% threshold on voting turn out and members voted overwhelmingly for strike action (72% on USS Pension and 68% on Pay and Equality). This meant that on Monday 25th November, Reading UCU members started eight consecutive working days of strong strike action and we had vibrant, creative picket lines based at London Rd, Earley Gate, Pepper Lane and Shinfield Road entrances. Yes the Picketing Panda made an appearance. Yes there were babies and dogs and guitars and songbooks. Yes we had teach outs. Here is a run down of our action...



Need advice on
ASOS?

See **page 2** of
this newsletter!

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Earley Gate picket disco dancing again to the music provided by our picket colleague!

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Action Short Of Strike

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Making up missed teaching and appointments: there are some FAQs at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/he-action-faqs>

which cover action short of a strike, about rescheduling and about refusing to re-schedule. See FAQs 4, 7, 8 and 15 in particular. We would like to know about all cases where people are being instructed to make up missed classes, and – because every case is different – the implications for both students and staff of that particular class.

If you haven't got a contract which states the number of hours, check on Employee Self Service to see how much time the University deems you to be entitled to for annual leave. It's likely to be a 35 hour week, which translates loosely as seven hour days. Seven hours is also understood to mean 9.00 till 5.00 with an hour's unpaid lunch break. What does a lunch break mean? It means you step away from your duties, go and eat something, go for a walk, do a gym class, read something frivolous, do some online shopping etc. It does not mean eating a sandwich at your desk whilst surfing the news online but being willing to answer the phone or talk to colleagues. It doesn't mean using the time to catch up on something else that you haven't had time to do. You're not paid for lunch. If you work through your lunch break, you are regularly giving back money and time to the university. For those of you on a full time contract, it means you're being paid for 35 hours but working 40. Do the maths.

“ We are of course all working now to contract: so there are things you can do to remind yourself of that instead of slipping back into the routines we've all taught ourselves or been forced into... ”

If you have a contract which states the number of hours you work: then set a calendar reminder to go home at the right time. Nobody is paying you to “just finish one more email” or to “get this out of the way before tomorrow”. If the work doesn't fit into the hours that you're paid to work, then this is a clear sign of your workload being too much to ask of you. It's not a sign of failure on your part. Don't fall into the trap of ‘other people seem to get the work done in the time, so I must be inadequate if I can't’ – because, essentially, what you're doing is adding to the number of people who appear to complete their duties within the paid hours, simply because the damage to your own self-esteem is such that you are discounting some of your own time.

HELPFUL LINKS

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/he-action-faqs>

[https://twitter.com/](https://twitter.com/USSbriefsstatus)

[USSbriefsstatus/1203729352279625729](https://twitter.com/USSbriefsstatus/1203729352279625729)

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/he-action-faqs>

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/working-to-contract>

CAPTION COMPETITION



Teach Outs and Student Support

Teach Outs!



RUSU Referendum

On 25th November 2019 the results were announced. RUSU student members voted in support of the UCU strike action and action short of a strike.

Should RUSU support UCU strike action over pension dispute?

YES 775
NO 418

Should RUSU support UCU strike action over pay and working conditions dispute?

YES 768
NO 375

EAGLES



13 079

HOTEL ACADEMIA

Bm F#
On a dark empty campus, cool wind in my hair
A E
Advertising slogans rising up through the air
G D
All around are the buildings, all shiny and new
E F#
All a little bit too grand for the likes of me and you
No one stood in the doorway, no one stood on the lawn
And I was thinking to myself 'where have all the people gone?'
But the posters looked expensive and they showed me the way
There were voices down the corridors, thought I heard them say

G D
Welcome to the hotel academia
Em Bm
Such an empty place, such an empty space
G D
Plenty of room at the hotel academia
Em F#
Any time of year, you can find it here

The management is all twisted, they've got the Mercedes bends
They've got a lot of wealthy city boys that they call friends
See them try to get a cheap loan so that they can expand
Although they won't pay staff pensions unless we force their hand
So I called up the VC, and asked him to get this fixed
The VC said 'we've got to save money' and went on with the usual tricks
And still those voices are calling from far away
They'll go on and on at you and this is what they say

Welcome to the hotel academia
Such an empty place, such an empty space
Living it up at the hotel academia
Where you buy a degree and pay enormous fees

REF reports on the bookshelves, TEF reports on the floor,
The NSS reports are stacked up by the door
And up at head office they're strategizing for the rest
They've not been in a classroom for years but still they know best
Last thing I remember I was running for the door
Trying to figure out what university is actually for
'Relax' said the VC, 'You don't need pensions anyway,
The way this sector is going you'll work until your dying day'

First Chorus (Plenty of room...)



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Great to see support staff and academic staff being able to be together again on and around the picket lines without locked doors in between: this really is 'community'

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Press Room

Reading Chronicle: [Strike at the University of Reading](#)

Get Reading: [Teaching disrupted as University of Reading staff go on strike over pay and pension disputes](#)

Spark: [60 universities including Reading announce 8-day strike from November 25th](#)

Reading Chronicle: [University of Reading threatening to cut 100% of pay amid battle over 'unpaid overtime'](#)

BBC: [University of Reading staff warned of 'up to 100%' pay deduction](#)

Get Reading: [Reading university staff to strike in row over pensions](#)

Visitor's Corner...



Prospective Labour MP Matt Rodda singing!



VC R Van de Noort learning about the disputes?!



It simply wouldn't be a RUCU picket without...

Portrait Gallery: Our picketers—beautiful inside and out.



Season's Greetings from Reading UCU!

