**Section One: Frequently asked questions**

Q. Why is industrial action taking place?

A. The University of Manchester recognises three trade unions, and one of these, the University and College Union (UCU), has confirmed UCU that they will be taking further [industrial action](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/news/display/?id=28996) over two disputes in relation to pay and working conditions\* and the USS pension.

The UCU demands are available [on their website](https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/12469/FAQs)  and responses by [The Universities and Colleges Employers Association](https://www.ucea.ac.uk/news-releases/8nov22/) (pay) and [USS Employers](https://www.ussemployers.org.uk/news/universities-uk-uuk-response-announcement-ucu-strike-dates) (pension) are available.

 Q. When is the industrial action taking place?

A. UCU has announced that industrial action in the form of 18 days of strike action will take place throughout February and March:

Week 1 – Wednesday 1st February

Week 2 – Thursday 9 and Friday 10 February

Week 3 – Tuesday 14, Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 February

Week 4 – Tuesday 21, Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 February

Week 5 – Monday 27 and Tuesday 28 February and Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 March

Week 6 – Thursday 16 and Friday 17 March

Week 7 – Monday 20, Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 March

Action short of a strike (ASOS) commenced in November 2022 and will continue, ending no later than Thursday 20April 2023.

Q. What does strike action mean?

A. On the Strike Days detailed above, UCU members may choose not to carry out any of their contractual duties.

Q. What does action short of a strike (ASOS) mean?

A. UCU has notified us that it will induce its members to undertake continuous action short of a strike (ASOS) starting on 23 November 2022 and ending no later than 20 April 2023. UCU has informed us that ASOS could consist of its members:

* only working to contract;
* not undertaking any voluntary activities; not covering for absent colleagues;
* removing uploaded materials related to, and/or not sharing materials related to, lectures or classes that will be or have been cancelled as a result of strike action;
* not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled due to strike action.

UCU members cannot lawfully undertake any other forms of ASOS unless UCU provides our University with 14 days’ advance written notice.

Q. How is the University managing this action?

We recognise the strength of concerns over pensions and pay and conditions and that a vote for industrial action is not taken lightly. Pay is determined on a national scale. The Universities & Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) represents HEIs in collective pay negotiations that covers circa 325,000 employee members.

Our immediate priority must be to minimise disruption for our students and employees. We will monitor the likely impact of action being taken and work with departments and students to develop contingency plans to minimise disruption.

Q. Will the University and buildings remain open?

A. Yes, the University will remain open on strike days. It's our aim that all our campus spaces remain open and that activities, events and services run as normal. However, we anticipate there will be some disruption.

**Section Two: Participating in Strike Action**

Q. Will all UCU members take part in the action?

A. Taking part in industrial action is a personal choice. Whilst some UCU members will take part, others may choose not to.

Q. Can employees in other trade unions, or not a member of a union, take part in the action?

This strike action is being organised by the UCU. Any University employee who is not a member of the UCU is expected to carry out their contractual duties as normal during periods of industrial action, however if they choose not to cross a picket line and therefore participate in strike action (provided they are not a member of any other union) they are protected from dismissal and have the same rights as trade union members who have voted for strike action. However, they should declare their refusal to cross the picket line when subsequently asked by their manager and they will have pay deducted for that day.

Q. As a line manager do I have to ask my team members if they intend taking part in strike action?

A. Before strike days/ASOS, line managers can ask employees if they intend to take part in strike days/ASOS prior to the action taking place to ensure that duties are not assigned to employees who are taking part in action. We expect employees to respond promptly and honestly to such requests. However, employees taking part in industrial action do not have to confirm they intend to do so before the action takes place. Line managers must ask employees if they have taken part in industrial action **after** the date the action begins, and employees must respond.

Q. Do I need to report to my line manager that I intend to take part in strike action?

A. Before strike days/ASOS, line managers can ask employees if they intend to take part in strike days/ASOS prior to the action taking place to ensure that duties aren’t assigned to employees who are taking part in action. We expect employees to respond promptly and honestly to such requests. However, employees taking part in industrial action do not have to confirm they intend to do so before the action takes place.

Q. When and how do I report that I have taken part in strike action/ASOS?

A. Once the action has taken place, employees who have taken part should complete the following form:

[Participation in Strike Action 1st February – 22nd March 2023](https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=B8tSwU5hu0qBivA1z6kad0l9aaTHCWlAvHQ9dt-nFIZUMTdXSUVQUkM1T1AwUzEyOFlXOUVKMk9MRC4u) **:** This form should be completed after each period of strike action and by the following deadlines;

* **Week 1**-Wednesday 1 February: You should report this by **Monday 6th February**
* **Week 2** – Thursday 9 and Friday 10 February: You should report this by **Monday 13th February**
* **Week 3** – Tuesday 14, Wednesday 15 and Thursday 16 February: You should report this by **Monday 20th February**
* **Week 4** – Tuesday 21, Wednesday 22 and Thursday 23 February: You should report this by **Friday 24th February**
* **Week 5** – Monday 27, Tuesday 28 February, Wednesday 1 and Thursday 2 March: You should report this by **Monday 6 March**
* **Week 6 &7** – Thursday 16 Friday 17, Monday 20, Tuesday 21 and Wednesday 22 March: You should report this by **Friday 24 March**

Q. Will my pay be reduced when I go on strike?

A. Yes. The University has decided to withhold pay at 100% of 1/365th of annual salary for each day of strike action taken on strike days. Employees will be able to see the detail of the amount withheld in their payslips on MyView. Please note that where any late notifications of strike action are received, colleagues will have their corresponding pay withheld in the next available payroll. This will be shown in their payslips on MyView. Please see the deadlines to report and when deductions will be made on the [Guidance on Industrial Action document](https://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=65191).

Q. Will my pay be reduced if I take part in ASOS?

A. UCU has informed us that the ASOS could consist of

* only working to contract;
* not undertaking any voluntary activities; not covering for absent colleagues;
* removing uploaded materials related to, and/or not sharing materials related to, lectures or classes that will be or have been cancelled as a result of strike action;
* not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled due to strike action.

Colleagues with Academic and Academic-related contracts, and Research and Teaching employees at our University are “required to undertake such hours as necessary for the proper discharge of their duties”.

Provided that the ASOS carried out by individuals does not impact upon the proper discharge of their duties then this should not result in partial performance of duties and the University will not withhold pay. However, if ASOS does impact upon the proper discharge of their duties, the University reserves the right to withhold pay up to 100% at a rate of 1/365th of salary each day of ASOS.

Q. What happens to the pay that is withheld?

A. We are discussing with our Students’ Union how any strike pay that is withheld can be used to benefit our students.

Q. I have not taken part in strike action or ASOS. Do I need to do anything?

A. Employees who have not taken part in any action do not need to complete the online reporting form/s but should inform their line manager when asked, that they have not taken part in any action. Any employee who fails to report taking part in strike action or ASOS which affects the “proper discharge of their duties”, but who is later found to have taken part in such action, will have pay withheld.

Q. What if I expect to be absent from work on the strike day/s?

If you will be absent from work but want to take part in the strike action, please ensure that you report your intention to strike.

If you are absent from work for other reasons, for example you are on holiday or sick leave, please ensure that you follow the normal authorisation/reporting procedures so there is no confusion within your department as to the nature of your absence.

Heads of Department will be working to mitigate the effects of the industrial action on students, and in particular working on how their department can continue to support teaching and learning. Therefore, if you are available, you may be asked to support the department in this way.

Q. What measures will be put in place to cover any missed teaching as a result of industrial action?

A. Following the conclusion of the strike action, colleagues who took industrial action will be asked by their Head of School to prioritise the missed teaching and learning opportunities for students as a result of the industrial action and to ensure that the Intended Learning Outcomes (ILOS) are met as expected and certainly prior to student assessments taking place.

We are not asking colleagues who took industrial action to perform additional work and if they are unable to do so within their normal workload, they should discuss this with their line manager to identify other activities that could be reduced in order to prioritise missed teaching.

The University has been clear that colleagues who are taking ASOS that amounts to partial performance of duties will be in breach of contract. Accordingly, if colleagues fail to prioritise missed teaching, as requested, they will not be entitled to their contractual pay. The University reserves the right to withhold pay up to 100% at a rate of 1/365th of salary from colleagues in such circumstances.

If colleagues fail to respond to requests in writing about action they have taken to prioritise missed teaching they will be regarded as taking part in ASOS that amounts to partial performance and the University will be entitled to withhold pay from colleagues in full as above.

Q. Will I be asked to cover for colleagues who are taking strike action?

A. The University is under an obligation to mitigate the impact of industrial action on students and will try as far as possible to maintain students learning. This could include asking colleagues to substitute where appropriate.

Q. I’m a GTA – will I continue to be paid for teaching that gets cancelled due to strike action, even if I am not on strike myself?

A. The University will ensure that no employees (including GTAs) are negatively impacted financially as result of strike action where teaching (or other paid activity) gets cancelled. If you are a GTA who chooses to take strike action you must report it by completing the appropriate form(s). You should report strike absence only for the days on which you were due to work.

**Section Three Picketing**

Q. What is a picket line?

A. Picket lines are there to enable those taking part in strike action to pass on information about the reasons behind the action to employees, students and visitors to campus. Each picket should be made up of a maximum of six people (as per the Government’s Code of Practice on Picketing) who are expected to pass on information in a peaceful and respectful manner.

Picketing does not include:

* the blocking of entrances to premises or physically barring the passage of people or vehicles;
* violent, disorderly or unruly behaviour;
* using threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour;
* damaging property;
* trespassing on private property.

Such actions will be reported as is appropriate, which may include to the Security team and/ or the police.

Pickets will generally gather at, or near, the main entrances of the University buildings across all campuses and will usually be present to cover the busy periods of employees arrival times, i.e. mornings.

In no circumstances does a picket have power to require people to stop, or to compel them to listen or to do what the picket asks them to do. A person who decides to cross a picket line must be allowed to do so.

The University expects that all employees, regardless of opinion towards the industrial action, remain polite and courteous to each other and respect each other's views.

In the same way that picketers are not allowed to use threatening or abusive words or behaviour towards employees not on strike, employees either not involved in the industrial action or who have chosen not to go on strike must not use threatening or abusive words or behaviour towards picketers.

Q. Am I allowed to cross a picket line?

A. Yes. Employees and students should not be prevented from gaining access to University premises to carry out their work or studies.

Q. What happens if I don’t cross a picket line?

A, Employees who refuse or fail to cross a picket line and who consequently cannot carry out their work will have their pay deducted at the same rate as those taking part in strike action. If you have any questions about working during strike action you should contact your People and Organisational Development Partner.

Q. How will the picket lines be managed?

All pickets must be supervised by a trade union official (or an appointed member of the trade union) to ensure that picketing is conducted peacefully and in line with relevant legislation and best practice.

The picket supervisor will be identifiable, normally through the wearing of an armband, badge or tabard.

In the unlikely event of any concerning behaviour, the picket supervisor can be approached at the time. You can also report the matter by speaking to the People and Organisational Development team, your line manager or a member of the University Security team.

**Section 4: Support and Wellbeing**

Q. What guidance has been shared with students on strike action?

A. We are advising students to continue attending teaching, completing assessments, and generally studying as normal. We have told them that Schools will try to minimise disruption, but that there may be some impact on their teaching or research supervision and in many cases, we will not know about this in advance.

Further information for students is available on our University’s strike action: [information for students page](https://www.manchester.ac.uk/strike-faqs/) – this will hopefully answer most queries. The University has also sent this information direct to all students via email.

Q. Where can I go for support if the action affects my wellbeing?

It may be helpful for you to discuss your concerns with your manager in the first instance.

The University has a network of trained counsellors and provides support for employees through the employee assistance programme provided by [Validium](https://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/wellbeing/mental-wellbeing/mental-health/employee-assistance-programme/). Call 0800 358 5997 or +44 141 271 7555 (landline alternative for international and/or mobile use) to speak to an advisor.

Lines are open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year – you’ll always be able to speak to someone who can help. Calls are confidential and what you say will never be shared with anyone at the University.