

Motion to call on the SRC to support members of the University of St Andrews in taking industrial action as called upon by the UCU in 2018

This SRC Notes:

1. In January 2018 the *University and College Union* (from here on UCU) announced strike action due to changes to the national pension scheme by *Universities UK* (from here on UUK)
2. Strikes were announced to take place Thursday 22, Friday 23, Monday 26, Tuesday 27, Wednesday 28 February, Monday 5, Tuesday 6, Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8, Monday 12, Tuesday 13, Wednesday 14, Thursday 15 and Friday 16 March 2018
3. After academic salary real-term has been reduced by 15% over the past 10 years. The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) now threatens to take away pension security for university staff (see Appendix 1)
4. The Management of the University of St Andrews has stated no support of the strike causes and expressed no intention in calling upon UUK for renegotiations with the UCU (See Appendix 2). The Student Representative bodies of the University of St Andrews have, to date, not taken position on the upcoming strike action
5. The right to strike is recognized as a human right and constitutes part of a healthy democracy
6. 90% of teachers that are St Andrews UCU members voted in favour of strike action
7. The UUK has pursued changes to the pension scheme without agreement with the UCU, and without any compromise of its position
8. Changes to the pension scheme are made on a national level by the UUK board of which Principal Sally Mapstone is a member

This SRC Believes:

1. That lecturers and university staff who assert their right to strike should be met with understanding and support from the student body
2. That students and the university will benefit from improved conditions for staff as it enables high learning and teaching quality in the long-term development of the University of St Andrews
3. People working in higher education deserve fair remuneration as well as fair treatment in decisions regarding their pension scheme security

This SRC Resolves:

1. To express understanding for and support strike action taken by those working at the University of St Andrews regarding changes to the USS pension scheme and to stand in solidarity with them
2. To encourage the senior management team at the University of St Andrews to reconsider their position in order to pressure the UUK to return to negotiations with the UCU
3. To work with the University to minimize effects on students' academic experience as a result of strike action
4. To inform students about the strike and ways of supporting it
5. To urge the university not to penalise the absence of students from tutorials and lectures during the period of the strike

Proposer: Alexandra Weiler, 170019944

Seconder: Leonie Hoher, 170015326

APPENDIX

1 Baker, S., 2017. Real-terms pay for UK academics still below 2010-11 salaries, *Times Higher Education*. Available through: <<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/real-terms-pay-for-uk-academics-still-below-2010-11-salaries>>

2 Mapstone, S. (2018). Industrial Action. [email].

Real-terms pay for UK academics still below 2010-11 salaries

THE analysis of Hesa data also shows that gender pay gap for professors remains stubborn

May 4, 2017



By [Simon Baker \(/content/simon-baker\)](#)

Twitter: [@HigherBaker \(http://www.twitter.com/HigherBaker\)](#)



Source: Getty

Average pay for UK academics was still lower last year than in 2010-11 once the increased cost of living is accounted for, a *Times Higher Education* analysis (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/features/times-higher-education-pay-survey-2017>) has shown.

Figures on pay for full-time staff in UK universities show that academic staff were paid an average of £49,408 in 2015-16, while professors received an average salary of £79,030.

[Times Higher Education Pay Survey 2017 \(/features/times-higher-education-pay-survey-2017\)](#)



(/features/times-higher-education-pay-survey-2017)

[READ MORE \(/FEATURES/TIMES-HIGHER-EDUCATION-PAY-SURVEY-2017\)](#)

For academic staff, this was 2.8 per cent lower than the equivalent salary, adjusted for 2015-16 prices, of £50,854 five years earlier. Each academic year since 2010-11 has seen a fall in average pay for academics in real terms, according to the *THE* analysis.

The drop in real-terms pay for professors from 2010-11 to 2015-16 was 3.1 per cent, down from an average of £81,528 in 2010-11 (2015-16 prices), although professorial pay has kept ahead of inflation in the past two years.

The analysis comes as unions and UK universities are embroiled in the latest wrangle over annual pay rises, with employers having made a final offer of 1.7 per cent (https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8574/UCEA-final-offer-201718/pdf/NJ_2017-18_-_Detail_of_the_final_offer_made_on_27_April_2017.pdf), plus additional increases for lower-paid staff.

Reacting to the *THE* analysis, Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union, said that institutions were spending too much on capital projects and vice-chancellors compared with staff. "The time has come for universities to reassess those priorities and invest properly in their finest asset," she said.

However, Helen Fairfoul, chief executive of the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (Ucea), said that her organisation's own analysis of pay in higher education showed that it "remained in step with the wider economy and that pay for the range of jobs in the sector remains competitive".

"Coupled with excellent pension schemes and other benefits, HEIs [higher education institutions] continue to offer an excellent total reward package," she said.

THE's analysis used Higher Education Statistics Agency data that reveal average pay for full-time staff at every institution in the UK.

As well as showing average pay in different types of role, the data are also broken down by gender, revealing that the overall pay gap between male and female academics was 10.53 per cent in 2015-16, a fall of 0.43 percentage points on 2014-15 and the fifth consecutive year that the gap has closed.

For professors, the gender pay gap remained smaller at 5.83 per cent, but this represented a small increase on the year before of 0.06 percentage points. Some universities with the highest gender pay gaps for professors in 2014-15 also saw them increase more significantly. At City, University of London (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/city-university-london>), the gender pay gap rose 1.5 percentage points to 10.5 per cent and at Swansea University (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/world-university-rankings/swansea-university>) it went up 1.3 percentage points to 13.1 per cent.

A spokeswoman for City said that as part of a programme of measures, it had introduced a banding scheme "to make it easier to identify and address any gender anomalies in pay at professorial level".

"An equal pay review was undertaken last year and further actions are being implemented to address gender pay issues, which are largely among the professoriate," she said.

A Swansea spokesman said that more female academics were being promoted thanks to its work to tackle the issue, "with near equal proportions of men and women at senior lecturer and lecturer grades, and increasing numbers of women promoted to associate professor and professor".

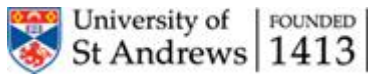
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Essex pay uplift for female professors 'did not go without challenge'

The director of human resources at a university that decided to give female professors a one-off salary hike (<https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-of-essex-hikes-salaries-for-female-professors-to-eliminate-pay-gap>) in an attempt to wipe out the gender pay gap has described how the move was challenged by a male academic.

Industrial Action

Tue 20/02/2018 12:34



Dear Colleagues

I am writing to you about the pending industrial action. This week, a national dispute between the University and College Union and Universities UK over the future of the Universities Superannuation pension scheme will signal the start of a period of potentially disruptive strike action at the University of St Andrews and another 60 universities across the UK.

Both the proposed changes to USS and the prospect of industrial action are causing anxiety and concern. USS is the story that no one wants to tell, and few want to hear, but I hope that you will take time to make your own mind up about the best way forward for the scheme, for individuals, and for our university.

I respect the right of our academic and professional services staff to take industrial action, and know that this is a decision not taken lightly, for many reasons. I also know that we all share a profound concern for the effect of industrial action on our students, and that this is particularly felt in this university, where the nature of the way that we work means that students and staff have a powerful sense of each other as individuals.

A number of you, students and staff, have taken the trouble to write to me and members of the Principal's Office in recent days to register your concerns. I am grateful for the opportunity to have open exchanges, even if we cannot always agree.

As your Principal I am writing to set out some key points in relation to the scheme, the dispute and to the University of St Andrews. This letter is written by me personally, but it is signed and endorsed by the University's entire senior team.

The scheme and the proposals

USS has suffered a series of funding crises over the past decade. What is unavoidable is that the current valuation situation, which estimates the scheme's deficit at £6.1 billion, *has* by law to have a recovery plan which will satisfy the USS trustee and the pensions regulator by the regulator's deadline of 30 June 2018. This is the red line which we all face.

As a result of changes at the last reform of the scheme, following the 2014 revaluation, USS is already a 'hybrid' pension scheme, offering a defined benefit arrangement to staff on salaries up to £55,500, with a defined contribution arrangement for portions of salary above that level.

UUK and UCU representatives have met more than 35 times to discuss the 2017 valuation of the pension scheme and UUK has repeatedly agreed to extension of deadlines within this process at the request of UCU. These delays have added pressure to the requirement, which cannot be avoided, to complete the current valuation process by 30 June 2018.

The UUK proposal is to move the scheme to a fully defined contributions scheme. UUK has modified its original proposal, in particular by agreeing to explore a framework for the possible reintroduction of defined benefit in due course, as well as to explore de-risking the scheme. The option remains open for further talks with UCU in

these areas as well as in, for example, exploring how deficit recovery contributions can be kept as low as possible.

The UCU proposal, which was carefully considered but rejected by the independent chair of the national Joint Negotiating Committee, the body made up of representatives from UUK and UCU which is responsible for making changes to the scheme, would have added substantially to the contributions from both members and employers.

Employees' contributions would have risen by nearly 3 per cent, and employers' contributions by over 5 per cent. Benefits would also have been reduced by around 8 per cent.

In St Andrews, the UCU solution would have dramatically increased the salary bill with the consequence that appointments of staff would have been drastically reduced, staff-student ratios would have significantly deteriorated, and the University would have had to look urgently at other options to reduce costs. We run a very tight budget here, with a very small operating surplus. We have very little room for manoeuvre.

Governance

This is the fourth time in ten years that USS has been in very serious trouble, and the interventions taken to address this to date have clearly not worked, and raise serious questions about the governance of USS.

In our response to technical consultations with employers on the future of the pension scheme the University of St Andrews has continually raised questions about the governance of USS. At recent public meetings in the University during the current dispute we offered to write a joint letter with UCU to the USS scheme trustee raising these concerns. UCU do not at present wish to take up this offer. I have, however, raised the future governance of USS explicitly at the UUK board, and will be writing to follow this up with UUK and with USS.

The charge that St Andrews has been 'hawkish' is simply not accurate.

We have rather been honest about the scale of the challenge facing USS, the need for reform and the responsibility which I believe we all have to act now, and not simply to kick the can down the road for those who come after us.

Consultation

Formal consultation with members of the scheme on the UUK proposal agreed in the JNC will be undertaken by USS from mid-March for a 64-day period.

We believe that our staff should have as much opportunity as possible to understand the agreed JNC proposal in detail and we will be arranging sessions in the University at which staff can seek information on pensions from experts independent of the University (bearing in mind the important point that benefits accrued to April 2019 will be protected by law).

We will be publicising these closer to the time. We hope staff will go along to one of these sessions and look at the options that are being proposed within the revised benefit package, which will include allowing employees to choose a lower and more affordable level of pension saving while still benefitting from the full employer contribution.

Students

As you know, we have written to all students explaining that the majority of academic, professional and managerial staff at St Andrews are not members of UCU, and indicating that the University is acutely aware of the potential effects of industrial action on teaching and assessment. Our students are highly intelligent, independent and resourceful: they will continue their studies despite cancelled classes. We know that staff will

want to ensure that students' work is graded, according to our usual practices, in a way that is robust and a fair reflection of the teaching they receive.

We will continue to keep students informed, at School level in particular, and via the Students' Association. I very much appreciate student strength of feeling in relation to the dispute and its possible impact on studying and morale.

St Andrews

Since my appointment as your Principal, I have sought to advance and improve the staff experience.

We have clarified our promotions procedures, and established new routes through them. We have introduced a pilot mentoring scheme for mid-career and senior academic women. We have run the first professorial merit exercise in five years. We are pursuing plans to provide this University's first dedicated housing development for early and mid-career staff, and have opened a new nursery for the children of staff and students. We have established inclusivity and diversity as a University priority, and we have set up a fund to encourage research projects in these areas.

In all of the cases where this has involved resource we have budgeted prudently to be able to do this. Were the UCU proposal to have been adopted, few of these kinds of proposals would go on being practicable.

Having considered this dispute at length and in depth, and out of fairness to this and future generations of staff and students at the University of St Andrews, we must take a view on the facts, and what is best in the long-term for USS and for the sustainability of this University.

That is why this University will not be calling for a return to negotiations on a UCU proposal which has already been exhaustively tested and ruled out as unsustainable through the JNC's democratic process.

All of us signing this letter would wish things were different, all of us are members of USS and all of us are acutely sensitive and sympathetic to what these proposals expect of individuals.

Everyone in this community knows how well we all live, work and debate together under normal circumstances: let us continue in the coming weeks to support one another as best we can, whatever our perspective on the dispute.

Professor Sally Mapstone (Principal)
Professor Garry Taylor (Deputy Principal and Master)
Professor Lorna Milne (Proctor and Senior Vice-Principal)
Professor Derek Woollins (Vice-Principal Research)
Mr Alastair Merrill (Vice-Principal Governance)
Mr Derek Watson (Quaestor and Factor)
Professor Brad Mackay (Vice-Principal International)