

# HANDS OFF OUR PENSIONS

## Support our strike: defend the right to a decent pension

### Why we are striking today

Members of the University and College Union (UCU) are taking strike action today to defend their right to a fair pension.

Staff in universities across the UK are under attack on all fronts from cuts to jobs and pay and now our pensions too.

We have tried to enter into talks with the employers to reach an agreement over our pension, but to no avail. We have repeatedly called on the employers to meet us at ACAS to resolve the issue, but they have refused. We are now left with no option other than to strike.

### Pensions under attack

For decades, university academic and related staff have accepted pay levels that are lower than comparably skilled professions partly because we had a pension scheme that we were proud of. The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) provides for a fair and decent retirement.

Now our right to a dignified and well-earned retirement is at risk from the employers' proposed changes.

### University employers have proposed changes that would mean:

- Younger and new staff not being allowed access to the final salary pension scheme.
- Staff on short-term contracts or taking career breaks at risk of being shut out of the final salary scheme.
- Reduced pensions for any staff who are unfortunate enough to be made redundant.
- All staff paying more into their pension schemes or working longer to make up for the employers cutting their costs.
- The creation of an unfair two-tier pension scheme that would be unsustainable in the long-term.

### Unnecessary changes

There's no need for the employer's reforms. Our pension scheme is in good health. In fact it's growing. We even proposed our own changes to make sure the scheme remains sustainable in the long term. But the employers are not listening. We have tried time and again to reach an agreement with them but they refuse to compromise.

The same universities that have chased higher tuition fees and cut lecturers' jobs now appear intent on wrecking a pension scheme that is one of the main reasons that good quality staff stay in our universities.

### No legitimacy

Time and again, wherever staff have had an opportunity to express their views democratically, they have rejected by huge margins the employers' proposals to downgrade their pensions.

The employers have refused to listen, pushing on with a sham consultation and continuing to refuse our calls to talk and compromise.

We believe that they have unnecessarily provoked a bitter dispute by forcing unpopular proposals on staff through a short-termist desire to save money.

### Please support our strike

UCU members cannot stand by and watch our pension scheme destroyed. We believe that universities should be protecting staff, not attacking them. That's why we are striking today.

**Please support university staff. Support our strike.**

