

... and related

The Newsletter for Academic Related, Professional Staff in Higher Education

Introduction from UCU President

- UCU is built on the work of Academic Related and Professional Staff

When the media refer to our 120,000 strong union, it's often wrongly labelled as 'the lecturers' union' or the UK's 'academic union'.

Of course we know that is totally inadequate and inaccurate, and is why as President I'm very pleased to write an introduction to this newsletter to emphasise the crucial role played by Academic Related and Professional Staff members in UCU.

Our 120,000 strong membership of course covers a whole range of activities and employment categories in HE, FE, Adult and Continuing Education and indeed Prison Education. It's that richness and diversity which I think make us a strong and growing union able to draw on the knowledge and experience of such a wide range of people. As someone personally on an academic contract, and involved in research, I know that my own teaching and research could not be undertaken successfully without hard working academic related and professional staff underpinning everything that I'm involved in.

Having said this, does our union always get things right in relation to ARPS? No. Is the voice of ARPS members always heard loudly enough? No.

The work of the ARPS committee and networks is essential to ensure the profile and voice of yourselves are heard loudly. If you're not personally involved in these, please consider becoming more involved and discuss it with your colleagues, or get in touch directly.

Many things in our union are changing – let's make a louder voice for members in academic related and professional posts one of the changes that is at the centre of these developments.

Douglas Chalmers is President of UCU and can be contacted directly at president@ucu.org.uk

What does Action Short of Strike mean for Academic Related and Professional Services Staff (ARPS)?

So what does ASOS mean for you as a member of ARPS staff? It means you can incorporate action into your daily, working life outside of any strike days we may take.

Trade union legislation requires unions to describe the ASOS they intend to take on ballot papers. You will have seen on your ballot paper that UCU have listed the following as ASOS:

1. Working to contract
2. Not covering for absent colleagues
3. Not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled due to strike action
4. Not undertaking any voluntary activities
5. A marking and assessment boycott

Here's some guidance on how ARPS staff can participate in the varying types of action short of a strike.

Working to contract.

This means being very strict in working exactly to the minimum required by your own contract. Your contract will usually stipulate working hours; it allows you a lunch break and allows most of us a weekend. If your working hours start at 9am and finish at 5pm, then do exactly that. Do not start early and do not work late.

If your contract does not specify your working hours, stick to whatever your normal work pattern is, and avoid going over your hours (full time) or pro rata (part time).

Make sure you take your full lunch break, every day. If your contract allows breaks, take your breaks. Do not check or respond to emails or other contacts from management outside of working hours. If you have a work phone, leave it at your desk when you

leave for the evening.

Take the time you need to complete your work during any action short of a strike.

Not covering for absent colleagues.

If a colleague is off sick or on leave during the live action period, do not help management by picking up their work. Remember you are working to the minimum required by YOUR contract.

You can say **NO!**

Not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled due to strike action

If your role involves timetabling or scheduling, or room bookings, or other support for the scheduling of classes or lectures, you can refuse to undertake that work as part of the action.

Not undertaking voluntary activities.

Do you voluntarily attend meetings that you are not contracted to? Do you undertake support work on a voluntary basis? Have you been asked to complete a survey, consultation or a questionnaire? Are you asked to volunteer at open days or away days? Are you asked to volunteer to attend meetings or events outside of your working hours or during your lunch hour?

You can say **NO** to all of the above and anything else which does not form part of your formal roles and responsibilities.

Marking and assessment boycott

If your role involves administration relating to marking and assessment, you can refuse to undertake that work as part of the action. Examples might include the preparation of examination board materials, the allocation of marking and moderation duties, or any other administrative tasks related to assessment or marking.

How to say NO!

You can politely and professionally decline work/volunteering as part of ASOS or you can send an email stating:

'I am currently engaged in Action Short of Strike to defend pay, equalities [and pensions]¹ which includes working to my contract. All UCU members are advised not to cover for absent colleagues or undertake voluntary activities as part of this action. For this reason I am unable to...'

If your manager raises a concern about this, inform your local branch officers immediately.

Why do we do this?

The intention of ASOS is to legally slow down productivity. We all give additional hours to our roles

which our employers benefit from. Working to contract, refusing to pick up colleagues' work or volunteer our time shows employers just how much they rely on our goodwill.

ASOS allows us to withdraw our goodwill in a way which legally protects us from reprisals.

ASOS can be extremely powerful when enacted

2019 – 2020 Academic Related, Professional Committee

Tim Barrett	Bath (Chair)
Jess Meacham	Sheffield (Vice Chair)
Ben Andrews	Wolverhampton
Vicky Blake	Leeds
Mesar Hameed	Bath
Derek Keenan	Strathclyde
Kamie Kitmitto	Manchester
Paul Siddall	Essex

The Committee Secretary is Jenny Lennox,
Bargaining and Negotiations Official

jlennox@ucu.org.uk

properly and can add strength to the strike.

Academic-Related, Professional Staff annual meeting – Thursday 12 March 2020

The annual meeting elects the ARPS committee to advise the National Executive Committee. It also sends motions to the union's annual congress meeting to inform its work for the year, and it's an opportunity to discuss how to step up the fight in all our branches.

ARPS Survey open NOW

The ARPS Committee wants to better understand the issues that affect you as workers. Responses will inform the work that the committee does.

The survey can be found here -

<https://yoursay.ucu.org.uk/s3/Academic-related-professional-staff-survey-Love-our-ARPS>

Encourage all your colleagues to complete it too.

¹ In USS branches.