Hi everyone,

In the interest of minimising disruption to your studies, I wanted to make you aware of upcoming strike action from many lecturers, instructors, researchers, administrators, IT staff, librarians and postgraduate students, at 74 UK learning institutions (including University of Brighton).

 **What is a strike?**

A strike means that members of a trade union withdraw their labour during a very serious dispute. Workers don't get paid while on strike - it's **very financially damaging to workers**, and so it's **always a last resort action**. They usually form a ‘picket line’ outside their work, and encourage workers and students to show solidarity by refusing to enter. Even workers not personally affected by the issues go on strike, putting themselves on the line for their less-fortunate colleagues across the country - that's what being in a union means.

 **Why are Brighton staff striking?**

University workers will **lose thousands of pounds of pay** in this strike, so it's not an action taken lightly. It's not just about Brighton workers and managers. It's a **nationwide** dispute between university workers and managers. Specifically, the strike is over:

1. Universities' failures to tackle decreasing pay, equality issues, unmanageable workloads, and precarious zero hours employment (the ['**Four Fights**'](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/10715/Our-four-fights/pdf/ucu_four-fights-explainer.pdf));
2. [Changes to a **pension plan**](https://www.ucu.org.uk/article/10269/University-staff-balloting-for-pension-strikes-240000-worse-off-as-costs-rise-and-benefits-cut?list=1676)**,** which means some workers will pay tens of thousands of pounds more into their pension, but receive tens of thousands less in their old age.

The **National Union of Students**, made up of and representing students across the country, know that the strike will disrupt students' teaching - but they're still [**supporting the strike**](https://www.nus.org.uk/en/news/press-releases/everything-you-need-to-know-about-the-ucu-strike/?load=5&top=327&utm_content=bufferdb595&utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter.com&utm_campaign=buffer). They can also tell you how to complain to the university about your disrupted teaching.

**Where can I learn more about the background to all this?**

Talk to your lecturers, IT staff, librarians and instructors.

Read what one union member has to say about [**what's happening to universities**](https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/nov/28/universities-workers-strike-marketised-sector-money-staff?CMP=share_btn_tw).

Read what about how university [**working conditions are damaging workers' mental health**.](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/nov/29/im-striking-because-insecure-academic-contracts-are-ruining-my-mental-health)

Search [**#PrecarityStories**](https://twitter.com/hashtag/precaritystories) on Twitter to see the terrible conditions many lecturers work in.

**When will the strike happen?**

14 days of strike action are planned, split into 4 periods:

* Thursday and Friday, February 20-21
* Monday to Wednesday, February 24-26
* Monday to Thursday, March 2-5
* Monday to Friday, March 9-13

You can ask workers if they'll be on strike during these periods, but they don't have to tell you. You can minimise disruption to your learning by using cancelled classes to do extra reading and revision.

**How can I show support for the strike?**

If you want to support striking staff you can do any of the following:

* Visit the **picket lines** to express your support
* **Tweet or Insta** your support using the hashtag *#UCUstrike*
* **Email the vice chancellor** to ask for fresh negotiations - you can do this[**here**](https://www.ucu.org.uk/studentvoice)
* Encourage those who are able to support striking staff by **donating** to the [**UCU Fighting Fund**](https://www.ucu.org.uk/fightingfund)

All the best,