

THE UNIVERSITY WORKER

Rank and File Strike Bulletin: Week 1

What is this?

The University Worker is a rank-and-file bulletin produced by academic workers. This strike is the biggest in the history of HE - we need to win.

Help us distribute!

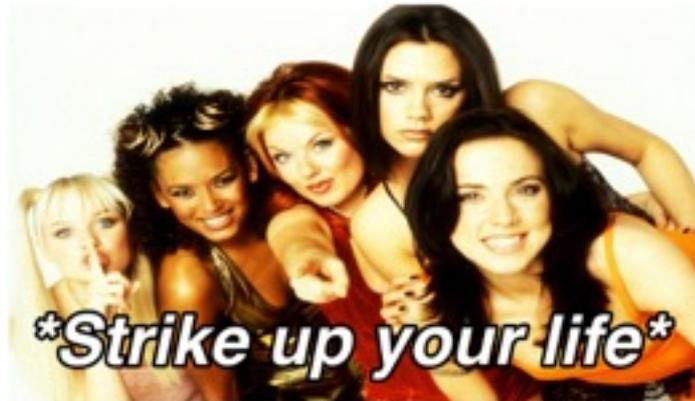
There will be 61 picket lines across the country. We want to be on all of them. Download the PDF from notesfrombelow.org and print some out.

PICKETING IS LEGAL

'It's illegal to have more than 6 people on a picket line' Sound familiar? It's wrong. This rule comes from a government-written set of guidelines for picketing which are not legally binding. Pickets of over 6 people aren't illegal unless they're "likely to endanger safety of people and property".

Anyone can attend a support demo beside a picket, including students. Workers from one university can attend support demos at other universities without breaking the law. *We're not flying pickets, we're flying demonstrators.*

Mob the picket lines!



What is the strike about?

The pensions scheme (USS) is going to be gambled on the stock market. The average loss for a new starter is likely to be over £200,000, about 40% of the total amount.

This attack on our pension is an attempt by management to further cut staff costs and is part of a wider change in higher education towards marketisation.

University bosses are lying when they say the scheme is about to go bankrupt. At the moment the schemes receives more money than it pays out and runs a healthy surplus.

Our pay has already gone down 14.5% in real terms since 2009. Now they're coming for our pensions. If we don't win this strike, they will attack again. Today, it's pensions. Tomorrow, it could be wages, holidays, contracts, anything.

How do we win?

The UCU (Universities and Colleges Union) have called a series of escalating strikes over the next four weeks on February 22-23, February 26-28, March 5-8 and March 12-16.

This strike will only be effective if we shut universities down. Our leverage comes from causing massive disruption.

That means we need strong picket lines which can do two jobs: first, convince students and workers to support the strike, and second, seriously inhibit the functioning of the university.

Students Organising in Solidarity

Students around the country are getting organised in numbers we haven't seen in years.

Grassroots organising, which had been dead for a couple of years (with notable exceptions), has sprung back to life. The numbers at meetings are at their highest since 2012/13.

Students at UCL joined staff in passing a motion of no confidence in uni management by 94%. Students at Sussex distributed 3000 strike leaflets in one day. Students all over the country are preparing for demos during the strike.

Teach-Out initiatives seem to have taken off all over the place - Kings, Goldsmiths, Warwick, UEA, everywhere. We're creating the free university we want out of the shell of the old.

Students, keep it going! You can exert some kinds of leverage that we can't. If uni management have to face a combined workers' movement and students' movement, they're in real trouble.

16 FE colleges join the strike

UCU members in 16 colleges have voted by 92% on a 63% turnout to take escalating strike action over pay. The employers have been notified that the first phase of action will be a two-day

Don't just let colleagues cross the picket line. Working during the strike directly undermines everyone's pension. Even if someone crosses a picket line on day 1, that doesn't mean we can't convince them to strike on day 2. **Where possible we should coordinate disruption with students.** We have common interests in opposing the increasing exploitation of students and staff through low wages and tuition fees.

Precarious hourly paid tutors will find this strike really hard, but we have the most to lose. 54% of us are on insecure contracts, lets fight back!

Academic workers need to reach out to support workers. Library, cleaning, cafe, maintenance, admin, construction, IT, transport... We're all workers, and we're all getting screwed over by the same bosses. Where we can, we should all go on strike. Together we can shut down the university.

Where we can't all strike together, we will be talking to non-academic workers on our campuses and encouraging them to take part in a '**go slow**'. That means deliberately slowing down their work in order to cause further disruption. For admin staff this might mean 'losing' some emails, for library workers it might mean taking an extra five minutes to scan some books, for cafe workers it might mean extending a break for ten minutes. Take it easy - the managers will have their hands full with students and pickets running around campus.

Let's follow the lead of support staff!

There have been a series of successful strikes by cleaners and other support staff at SOAS, LSE and the University of London. These campaigns have gone beyond defending conditions, and have improved them drastically in a way that we haven't seen in years.

Support staff at the University of London are refusing to cross our picket lines. At SOAS, workers are taking their holidays on these days. This kind of solidarity is inspiring.

They have shown us how to fight. Their model is an example to academic workers. If you want to win, you have to build for large, disruptive strikes, combine them with demonstrations, make alliances with social movements, and organise the union through rank and file democracy.

UCU London Region Demo: Defend Education - March for Pensions and Pay

Midday, Malet Street, Wednesday 28th February