



**Private and Confidential**

All Staff

30 January 2023

Dear Colleague

UCU has notified the University that it is calling on its members to take industrial action in support of its dispute over the 2021-22 Pay Award. The notification of action follows a UCU ballot which closed in November 2022.

UCU is calling on its members to take both strike action and action short of a strike (ASOS). The strike action consists of the following dates:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		01/02/2023		
			09/02/2023	10/2/2023
	14/02/2023	15/02/2023	16/02/2023	
	21/02/2023	22/02/2023	23/02/2023	
27/02/2023	28/02/2023	01/03/2023	02/03/2023	
			16/03/2023	17/03/2023
20/03/2023	21/03/2023	22/03/2023		

As previously advised, UCU is also asking its members to take action short of a strike (ASOS), in the following forms, and the University's position remains unchanged in relation to this action.

- Only working contracted hours and duties and not volunteering to do more
- Not rescheduling classes and lectures cancelled due to strike action
- Not covering for absent colleagues
- Removing uploaded materials related to, and/or not sharing materials related to, lectures or classes that will be or have been cancelled as a result of strike action

You will appreciate that we do not know which of our employees are members of UCU and therefore it is necessary to write to all staff in preparation for the industrial action.

**Strike action**

We realise that most staff will not be called upon to take part in the strikes but in order that we can plan properly and safely, we are asking you to advise us in advance if **you intend to take part in the action, completing the [linked pro-forma](#) as soon as possible** or on the date you are taking strike action.

If you do not intend to take part in the strike action you do not need to complete this form.

The policy of St Mary's University is to withhold a day's pay (at a rate of 1/260<sup>th</sup> of salary) from staff for each day of strike action in which they participate. If you confirm your participation or, in the absence of confirmation, we subsequently have evidence that you did participate, **your pay will be withheld for each day you participated**. Line managers will also be monitoring attendance on the strike days

and students will be asked to notify us if their lectures are cancelled. All withheld pay will be added to the Student Hardship Fund.

I would also advise you to refer to the information on pension contributions ([link](#)) and pension benefits in the event of participation in strike action. For example, absence due to industrial action cannot be classed as reckonable service in the Teachers Pension Scheme and must be shown as days excluded.

If you do take part in the strike action, please note that pay deductions will be made one month in arrears. The withholding of pay is without prejudice to any other right or remedy of the University, including any claim for damages for breach of contract.

### **National Resolution**

Nationally, Universities & Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) continue to negotiate with Unions for the sector as a whole to resolve the dispute. The 2023 pay round has been opened with a commitment to implement a proportion of the award six months early as a direct response to current cost of living concerns facing our staff. No HEI could offer a pay award that would get close to current levels of inflation.

The offer made by UCEA means that all staff earning £50k or below will receive a minimum uplift of 5%. The lowest paid staff will receive up to 7%. This would be in addition to any incremental progression due to individual members of staff, typically worth 3% in addition to the base pay uplift.

Developments in the negotiations will be communicated to staff in due course.

### **Conclusion**

Many staff will not wish to participate in this action and I regret having to write to staff who do not intend to take part. However, given the proposed strike action we need to make plans to mitigate any impact on students and to ensure that we have fully communicated the St Mary's University position to all staff. We hope that you will understand why it is necessary.

St Mary's University very much hopes that you will decide not to take part in the industrial action, and that it will not be necessary to implement the above policy on pay in your case.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact your nominated Human Resources Business Partner.

Yours sincerely



Ruth Thompson  
HR Director