



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **1. Will the University be open on the day of strike action?**

Yes, the University will be open and will take all reasonable steps to minimise disruption.

### **2. How do I inform the University if I am taking part in strike action?**

If you are taking part or not working normally because of the industrial action on Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October, on your next normal working day you need to visit <https://staffrecord.aber.ac.uk>, log in using your username and password, and fill in the required information. If you would prefer a paper form, print one out (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/strike-information/>) or ask your line manager for a copy. You need to submit this information by Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November via one of the above methods.

### **3. Do I need to inform the University if I am working normally?**

No you do not need to take any action.

### **4. What does working normally mean?**

This phrase is being used to capture all activity associated with your employment such as working on University premises, field work, attendance at conference, research leave, annual leave, etc. for which you normally receive pay. If you are working normally you do not need to take any other action.

### **5. Are all the recognised trade unions participating?**

Yes UCU, UNITE and UNISON are all taking part.

### **6. What does 'action short of a strike' (ASOS) mean?**

ASOS is a range of sanctions aimed at causing disruption up to but not including full strike action. Our interpretation is that the work to contract, due to start from November 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 means that work that has been previously arranged prior to the UCU notification of action short of a strike should be adhered to as this is part of normal and accepted working practice. This means that any additional duties previously agreed should be performed, as should attendance at events such as Open Days which are expected activities for academic staff.

We appreciate that your interpretations may be different and that such action is not as clear cut as in a strike situation. If our interpretations differ our suggestion is that you contact your Union institutional representative for advice.

### **7. What if I am not scheduled to work?**

If you are not due to work then you do not need to take any action to inform us.

### **8. Leave**

Annual leave, flexi leave, time off in lieu etc. will not be approved from today for 31<sup>st</sup>

October 2013 or on any further days of planned strike action once the strike action has been declared. This does not affect any leave requests that have been approved previously. Arrangements for Home Working will also be affected unless this is normal practice **and** agreed in advance.

**9. Why am I asked if I am on strike when I access the HR Self Service Portal?**

As the university does not hold information about trade union membership, nor is it aware of the intention of other members of staff in connection with the action, collecting data directly from staff is the simplest way of ensuring accurate data. Therefore this question will appear if you log into the HR Self Service Portal between Thursday 31<sup>st</sup> October and Friday 8<sup>th</sup> November. If you are not participating in the strike action select the box next to "If this page does not apply to you" you will then proceed to the HR Self Service Portal as usual.

**10.If I take part in industrial action and do not work normally how much pay will I lose?**

You will lose 1/260<sup>th</sup> of your annual pay for each day of action you participate in.

**11.Why will I lose 1/260<sup>th</sup> for each day of industrial action I support?**

It is reasonable for the University to calculate its loss based on the actual work requirement of its staff. Staff are not required to work a total of 365 days. This is the period in which days are worked as opposed to the number of days actually worked. The deduction will therefore be made on the basis of 1/260<sup>th</sup> of annual salary for each day of action.

The level of deduction is confirmed in UCU's advice to its members in its FAQ's which states that "You should expect to have a day's salary deducted for taking part in the strike. In general, we would not expect any employer to deduct more than 1/260th of your annual salary for each day of action. Any loss greater than this may be challenged by the union".

**12.What impact will this have on my pension?**

The University has considered the position in respect of staff who take strike action. Employee pension contributions will be deducted as normal for these days and the University will maintain the employer contributions to the relevant pension scheme. Therefore continuous service for pension purposes will be preserved.

**13.When will I have my pay deducted for any day of strike action?**

The deduction for days of action on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 will take effect in November 2013's pay.

**14.Will I be informed if a reduction is going to be made from my salary?**

Yes. You will be sent a letter advising you that a day's pay will be withheld from your salary. This will take effect in November 2013.

**15.What should I do if I am off sick?**

Please note that if you are on sick leave, you do not need to take any action and your pay will be based on your current sickness entitlement. However for period of sickness absence which commences on days of strike action must be accompanied by a doctor's

fit note.

Those on sick leave immediately before industrial action starts will be assumed to be on sick leave, providing that a doctor's medical certificate is provided that covers the day of action.

#### **16. What if I have a half day holiday?**

If you are working for part of the day and have pre-booked annual leave for the remainder, you were working normally on the 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 and do not need to take any other action.

#### **17. What should I do if I can't access or find the document via the briefing note?**

You should go to the HR website [www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr](http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr) or [www.aber.ac.uk/cy/hr](http://www.aber.ac.uk/cy/hr) and go to the section titled "Strike Action" or "Gwybodaeth Streic". If you are unable to access the website please ask your line manager to print off a hard copy of the reporting form for you. Alternatively you can contact HR direct on 01970 622055.

#### **18. What should I do with any keys etc. that I am responsible for?**

Employees on strike should ensure routine handover procedures are followed for example returning property such as keys to buildings or vehicles.

#### **19. I work shifts, what time do strikes start?**

In terms of those on shift work, it is assumed in the case of a one day strike that it operates from midnight to midnight.

#### **20. How many people will there be on any picket line?**

The law requires that pickets be restricted generally to a maximum of six people at their own place of work.

#### **21. Where will the picket lines be?**

Picketing may only be undertaken on the highway at or near the employee's own place of work; they must not be on University property or premises.

#### **22. What can those on a picket line do?**

The only purposes of picketing are to:

- peacefully obtain or communicate information; and/or
- peacefully to persuade a person to work or not to work.

In **no** circumstances does a picket have the legal power to prevent other employees from reporting for duty or to compel you to listen or to do what he/she asks you to do. All employees who wish to cross a picket line and report for duty must be allowed to do so. Every employee has the right to decide on an individual basis whether to cross a picket line.

#### **23. What should I do if I want to cross a picket line?**

If you wish to work on the day of the strike you should walk or drive carefully past the

picket line and report for work as normal.

**24.What happens if I don't cross the picket line on the day of the strike?**

You will be regarded as being on strike and pay will be withheld from your next salary payment, you will need to fill out the appropriate form or report through the HR Self Service Portal see the answer to question 2 above.

**25.Will the pickets be intimidating or threatening towards me?**

We do not expect this to occur. In the past picket lines have always been organised professionally and the behaviour of the pickets has been courteous and non-threatening.

**SC**  
**October 2013**