

A message from

## Professor Graham Wynn

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education)



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Dear {#First Name#}

A couple of weeks ago I let you know that industrial action had been announced by UCU, the academic staff trade union, of which some colleagues at Northumbria are members. I wanted to write to you now to update you on the upcoming industrial action, when it will take place and what it may mean for you.

I have set out some of the key information below, but you can find more guidance and answers to a lot of questions on the industrial action webpage and associated FAQs.

What is happening?

The industrial action at Northumbria, which is taking place in 63 universities across the country, is a national campaign over pay, casualisation, equality of pay and workload in the sector. In some universities, but not Northumbria, there is further action that relates to staff pensions. The pay dispute is negotiated at national level and no single university can determine the pay award across the sector.

There are five days of strike action, which will take place on:

- Monday 21st and Tuesday 22nd February,
- Monday 28th February,
- Tuesday 1st March and Wednesday 2nd March.

Some staff may also take part in Action Short of a Strike (ASOS), which began on Monday 7th February. This may mean staff do not take part in voluntary activities, cover for absent colleagues or reschedule classes affected by strike action.

How will I be affected?

We respect the right of our staff to strike, but we will do everything we can to minimise the impact on your learning and teaching. Throughout the period of strike action, the continuation of your education will be our priority. We will make every effort to minimise the impact on your studies and have put in place plans to mitigate any potential disruption.

Not all members of our academic staff are members of UCU and not all UCU members will take part in the industrial action. University buildings and services will remain open on the strike days and we expect the majority of classes across campus to proceed as normal. However, some Departments may be more affected than others, and this may lead to some classes being cancelled at short, or with very little, notice.

In the event of a class being cancelled, your department will advise you in advance wherever possible. We are not able to provide advance notice in all cases because staff participating in strike action do not have to notify their employer in advance. However, some colleagues may choose to inform the University of their intention to strike, which will allow for alternative plans and/or notification of any class cancellations.

You will still be able to use our facilities, such as the Library and Students' Union, as well other learning spaces, to study on campus during strike days.

You will not be recorded as absent if a class is cancelled due to strike action. This means, if you're an international student with a Tier 4 visa or Student visa, it will not be affected.

Will my grades be affected if classes are cancelled? Will I be able to graduate as normal?

Your marks and academic performance will not be affected by the industrial action and finalists will be able to graduate on time, as planned.

We will closely monitor any impact of the strike action on modules and ensure that action is taken to ensure no students are disadvantaged. This will include looking at rearranging any missed teaching, protecting the learning outcomes of your modules and ensuring all assessments are fair and appropriate, based only on material taught prior to the assessment.

Can I claim compensation for the classes that are cancelled?

The impact of the strike action is likely to vary significantly, with some Departments only affected to a very limited degree. While we are unable to predict the detailed effects of the strike action, we will closely monitor the situation during the action. Following the period of strike action we will be able to assess how students have been affected and how any missed teaching has been mitigated. At this point, we will advise any students who feel the teaching on their modules has been significantly affected by the industrial action on how to make a complaint, which will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

If I travel to University but my classes are cancelled as a result of the strike action will you reimburse my costs?

We are currently working on a process to reimburse students who may pay for travel to classes that are cancelled at very short notice. We will provide you with more details on this very soon.

We apologise to any students who may be inconvenienced by to the industrial action and hope that where classes are unavoidably cancelled on the day you are able to make use of the library or other campus facilities to continue your studies.

If you need further guidance, the Industrial Action Help and Support article on the Student Portal provides more information and a link to speak with someone via Ask4Help. In addition, you may also find additional support via your Students' Union too.

Thank you very much for your patience and support.

Best Wishes,

Graham.