*This message is being sent to all academic colleagues on behalf of Professor Tom Lawson, Deputy Vice- Chancellor.*

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| Dear Colleagues    UCU has notified the University that its members will commence a period of continuous action short of a strike (ASOS) from 20 April 2023.  This follows twelve days of strike action taken during February and March 2023 across which around 10% of our students experienced disruption to their studies. The action relates to pay and conditions, as explained in our [previous communications](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.northumbria.ac.uk%2Fabout-us%2Findustrial-action&data=05%7C01%7Clouise.johnson%40northumbria.ac.uk%7Cca0e72e2715340dadb5608db40c9fec1%7Ce757cfdd1f354457af8f7c9c6b1437e3%7C0%7C0%7C638175008599619516%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Y3LLGz%2F74kvR15trYRTW3E3hINZa0NxQzsWMNYtpxcs%3D&reserved=0). There was a possibility that UCU’s online consultation with members which closed on Monday 17 April might lead to the action being stood down but regrettably that has not happened as 56% of those voting rejected the proposals.  The ASOS includes a marking and assessment boycott, which has the potential to cause significant disruption to the experience of our students.  The University has a duty to take reasonable steps to avoid or limit the impact of this action and will continue to prioritise education during this period so that our students can graduate or progress to their next year of study, even if this disrupts some of our other activities such as research and administration.  I am writing to inform colleagues, whether you are participating in the action or not, how the University will respond to the action and how we will, with your support, mitigate its impact.    Expectations of academic colleagues during the marking and assessment boycott  Colleagues who do not intend to take part in the boycott are encouraged to inform their Head of Department and in departments impacted by the action may be asked to reprioritise other activities to allow them to undertake additional marking.  Maintaining the integrity of our awards and supporting students to achieve the assessment outcome they have worked for will continue to be our first priority and the University has plans in place to protect our students’ outcomes during the marking and assessment boycott.  UCU’s guidance reminds members that students must only receive feedback or marks within the existing formal processes and that assessment materials are the property of the University and must be made available if requested.    Participation in the action  The University respects the right of UCU members to participate in the marking and assessment boycott. Many universities will be withholding pay at 100% for the period in which colleagues engage in the action, as they are entitled to.  At Northumbria we will pay all colleagues at their existing level until the date when marks are due to be submitted, and will withhold pay from the date marks are due but are not submitted. We reserve the right to withhold 100% pay for ASOS, however we are willing to make a discretionary payment of 50%, from the date when marks are due to the date all duties are resumed or the date assessment decisions are made, where colleagues:   * Use the online declaration system at the start and end of any period of participation (as explained below). * Cooperate fully with requests for information which allow mitigation plans to be made. * Voluntarily continue to perform other aspects of your role, such as research.   Colleagues are required to complete an [online notification](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fforms.office.com%2Fpages%2Fresponsepage.aspx%3Fid%3D3c9X5zUfV0Svj3ycaxQ349I-pQMP2WJLpruHqY6aI51UREcxMkM1U1lXMkQ5VUxWNUZTMTJRSFozUSQlQCN0PWcu&data=05%7C01%7Clouise.johnson%40northumbria.ac.uk%7Cca0e72e2715340dadb5608db40c9fec1%7Ce757cfdd1f354457af8f7c9c6b1437e3%7C0%7C0%7C638175008599775777%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=bVpSXjjuBjeEawuUHIkH110NydhliazoRdSwqNMZKL8%3D&reserved=0) on the first date on which marking and other activities associated with assessment are not undertaken as they normally would be. Participation in the action will be deemed to be continuous until the date when a further [online notification](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fforms.office.com%2Fpages%2Fresponsepage.aspx%3Fid%3D3c9X5zUfV0Svj3ycaxQ349I-pQMP2WJLpruHqY6aI51UMzI2SlhQVlNRQU5FQk9LS0Q5T0FUUEMyMCQlQCN0PWcu&data=05%7C01%7Clouise.johnson%40northumbria.ac.uk%7Cca0e72e2715340dadb5608db40c9fec1%7Ce757cfdd1f354457af8f7c9c6b1437e3%7C0%7C0%7C638175008599775777%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=V0iGX3HZaf8alf%2BpqzWNYBOdPt4ENe81OqrucBFx%2BpY%3D&reserved=0) indicates that full duties have been resumed, when assessment decisions are made or UCU calls off the action.    Next steps  The coming weeks will be challenging for everyone. It is disappointing and follows a commitment at Northumbria in December 2022 to support colleagues with higher levels of pay, in the absence of a higher national salary offer at that time.  It is vitally important that colleagues respond quickly and positively to requests for information and support with marking wherever possible to ensure that our students can progress or graduate, knowing they have met the learning outcomes and have confidence in the value of their qualification.    Please review the [online FAQs](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.northumbria.ac.uk%2Fabout-us%2Findustrial-action&data=05%7C01%7Clouise.johnson%40northumbria.ac.uk%7Cca0e72e2715340dadb5608db40c9fec1%7Ce757cfdd1f354457af8f7c9c6b1437e3%7C0%7C0%7C638175008599775777%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=IguJgT7XzmK2Z02klSB%2BKDBiNzLyA5XxrvMf9iwNxQI%3D&reserved=0) for more information on the marking and assessment boycott, other forms of action short of strike and about the industrial action.  If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your Head of Department, Faculty Pro Vice-Chancellor, or me.    Best wishes,    **Professor Tom Lawson, FRHistS**  (he/him)    *Deputy Vice-Chancellor* |
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