

From: Northumbria Announcements <it.announce@northumbria.ac.uk>

Sent: 24 February 2026 16:20

Subject: Important information for colleagues participating in UCU's industrial action

This message is being sent to all academic colleagues but is most relevant to colleagues participating in UCU's industrial action

A message from

Professor Tom Lawson



Dear Colleagues,

I would like to remind those who have participated, or may choose to participate, in industrial action about what is expected during this period.

Notifying the University

All colleagues who take part in strike action must notify the University on their first day back at work after each period of action, using [the mandatory online notification](#).

Mitigation

The University has a responsibility to prioritise work in a way that ensures students' education is not unduly disrupted. Mitigating the impact of industrial action means that sessions that did not take place must either be repeated within a reasonable timescale or replaced with suitable alternatives, such as:

- rescheduled or replacement synchronous sessions,
- asynchronous recording or
- an asynchronous recording that covers the content of more than one originally timetabled sessions.

Most colleagues engage constructively with this process, and we appreciate that. Colleagues will be expected to take part in discussions about mitigation and, where necessary, adjust or pause some activities to prioritise student learning. Workload adjustments will be made to support this. As set out in [my email of 16 February 2026](#), completing mitigation as close as

possible to the date of any missed sessions is considered a reasonable management instruction.

Withholding of Pay for strike action

Participation in strike action is a voluntary withdrawal of labour for the strike period, and the University is therefore entitled to withhold pay for that full day. This deduction is not dependent on whether or when missed learning is later mitigated. Although some recent UCU guidance suggests colleagues should seek the return of pay before completing mitigation, this does not reflect the University's position or legal obligations. Once colleagues return to work, the University may reasonably determine priorities, including rescheduling teaching or other activities missed due to strike action. For these reasons, colleagues are not entitled to have pay reinstated for strike days.

Withholding of pay for Action Short of Strike (ASOS)

The University's [Industrial Action website](#) provides full information on ASOS and the associated approach to withholding pay. The University does not accept partial performance and will withhold pay where ASOS results in a colleague failing to fulfil their full contractual duties. These duties include explicit responsibilities set out in terms and conditions and role descriptions, as well as implied obligations—for example, cooperating with reasonable management instructions and carrying out duties efficiently and collaboratively.

Communication with Students

It is disappointing that I must reiterate that colleagues must not discuss the dispute with students during teaching sessions, or display related materials on Blackboard or via any University-provided teaching resources. This includes the slides circulated by UCU for informing students about the action.

The University respects the right to participate in industrial action where this is done peacefully, respectfully and within statutory guidelines and legal requirements. However, actions that are deliberately disruptive will be addressed through usual staff management processes.

Please review the webpages for full information about [the University's position on industrial action](#) and the People and Organisational Culture intranet pages for factual information about [the University's proposals around academic pay and pensions](#).

Best wishes,
Tom

Professor Tom Lawson, FRHistS

Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Provost

