

**Subject:** An update on Industrial Action from Professor Tom Lawson

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



Dear Colleagues,

I thought it would be useful to touch base and provide an update on the first three days of industrial action that have taken place on 1, 9 and 10 February. As you know there are 18 days of national industrial action in total planned over February and March 2023. As always, the University's primary aim is to minimise the impact of the action on our students.

**Colleagues who did not/do not intend to participate.**

I would like to thank colleagues who provided additional support on the strike days. I realise that this had the potential to disrupt your plans, and I am grateful for your responsiveness to this request. Your help in covering sessions and providing direct support to students has been very much appreciated.

**Colleagues who participated/intend to participate.**

*Notifying the University*

121 colleagues have advised the University that they participated in industrial action on 1 February, which is significantly lower than the 250 colleagues who participated in November 2022. The vast majority of this group have advised their Head of Department how they will re-schedule their sessions or take alternative steps to mitigate the impact of the action on their students.

Colleagues are required to advise the University on their first day back at work following each period of action via this [mandatory online notification](#). For example, if you participate in the strike days on 14, 15 and 16 February, you should complete it on 17 February (or your first day back at work). It is the University's responsibility to identify and implement suitable arrangements to manage the industrial action and this is a reasonable management instruction. Failure to engage with this process, as requested, is likely to be considered as Action Short of a Strike.

Some colleagues shared in advance their intention to participate and how they have mitigated, or will mitigate, the impact on their students. There is no requirement to complete it but advance notification via our [optional online notification](#) is welcome and helps in the overall planning and management of the action.

*Minimising the impact*

Minimising the impact on student learning is the University's priority when managing industrial action and the potential disruption of 18 days of strike action over a small number of weeks is considerable.

To mitigate the impact of the action the University requires colleagues, as appropriate to their role, to set aside other activities on non-strike days in order to prioritise student learning, for example, by rescheduling sessions to these days and ensuring dissertation supervision takes place on these days. It is for this reason that colleagues who participate in the industrial action are required to be on campus on the non-strike days in the same week. This is important as a means of providing visible on-campus support to our students. The requirement to mitigate the impact as close to the date of any missed sessions is not negotiable, and is considered to be a reasonable management instruction.

#### *Action Short of a Strike (ASOS)*

We know that mitigations have been put in place for the majority of sessions impacted by strike action. Refusal to carry out reasonable management instructions about attendance on campus and the prioritisation of specific work is a breach of contract and will be considered as partial performance of duties. As the University does not accept partial performance, we reserve the right to withhold pay for each day impacted by partial performance.

#### *Industrial Action FAQs*

Please continue to review the [online FAQs](#) which contain operational arrangements including how, and when pay will be withheld, what constitutes action short of a strike and the implications of this, and what you may and may not say to students.

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*

