

Frequently Asked Questions – UCU Strike

Should students still turn up for classes?

Yes, unless students hear otherwise they should attend teaching sessions as normal.

On the days of industrial action the University will ask all of its teaching staff to let it know if they are participating in strike action. If we can then identify which teaching sessions will be affected we will email students and put out announcements on Blackboard.

Will tutors be on strike for the full period of strike action?

Whilst there is a chance that UCU members will be on strike for the full period of strike action it is possible that some might not participate or not necessarily all the days. We expect that most teaching will take place as planned.

If we receive prior notification from UCU members that they will be on strike, we will advise students in advance of cancelled classes. Unfortunately, this may not always be possible and our advice to students is to attend teaching sessions as normal unless they hear otherwise.

What is action short of a strike?

UCU members taking 'action short of a strike' will come to work on their usual working days but may take one or more of the following actions:

- working to contract
- not covering for absent colleagues
- not rescheduling lectures or classes cancelled due to strike action
- not sharing materials relating to lectures or classes cancelled as a result of strike action and;
- not undertaking any voluntary activities.

What is being done to resolve the dispute?

At a national level, the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), which represents higher education institutions in national pay negotiations, has proposed further joint work on the non-pay elements of the trade union claim.

What will the University do to minimise disruption?

Since BGU was notified of the local mandate for strike action, the University has been meeting with the local UCU branch and also the BG Students' Union executive team to manage and minimise the potential impact of the planned industrial action.

We will continue to keep colleagues and students informed via email and staff and student portal announcements

Will assessments be affected?

Students with assignment deadlines due during the period of strike action should submit those by the specified submission date as normal.

The University is compiling a list of which module assessments are due during and immediately after the period of strike action. Once we know which modules' classes have been affected we will review how that might

potentially impact assessment completion. BGU will do everything to ensure that assessment performance is not affected by industrial action. This might, if necessary, include:

- rescheduling in-class-assessments (tests, presentations, demonstrations etc.) and placement visits;
- extending the deadlines of any submissions immediately after the strike period for module assessments impacted by the strike action;
- reviewing examination questions covering academic content where the delivery was disrupted during the strike.

Examination boards at the end of the academic year will have detailed understanding of how any module may have been affected by the strike. This will be used to ensure that module cohorts achieve fair and equitable outcomes.

Any industrial action will not stop students being able to graduate or progress to the next stage of their studies.

What support is the University putting in place?

CELT will also be able to provide general learning development support and Student Advice will provide well-being support. The library, of course will be open providing physical and electronic access to learning materials and BGFutures can provide on-going career support.

Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns?

We have set up a dedicated email address for students: studentexperience@bishopg.ac.uk.

Will attendance records be affected (including Tier 4 visa holders)?

If teaching sessions do not take place as a result of the planned industrial action then that session will not be used in the calculation of your attendance record. If you hold a Tier 4 visa your status will therefore not be affected by any industrial action.

How does the University intend to spend the pay that's been withheld from staff who participate in industrial action?

The University will work with the Students' Union to determine how to spend the pay that is withheld from staff who participate in industrial action. Our primary focus is to ensure students receive appropriate content for any modules that may have been disrupted by the strikes; as such additional resources will be allocated to allow for the provision of alternative content. All remaining withheld pay will be allocated to activities that support students affected by the strikes and we will continue to allocate further resources over the course of the next few months as the work to mitigate the industrial action continues.

Can I claim compensation for missed teaching?

On the basis of the information currently to hand, the University is not considering any form of reduction in fees or compensation because we have mitigation plans in place to ensure that students suffer no detriment as a result of any impact that may be incurred. The University will be keeping full records of any and all impacts of the industrial action to ensure this is the case.

Will I have to cross a picket line?

If industrial action takes place then we would expect there to be picket lines at some entrances to our campus. A person who decides to cross a picket line must be allowed to do so (including union members). The picket line must be carried out peacefully and must not obstruct entrances, create nuisance for neighbouring properties or trespass on private property.

The unions are responsible for ensuring any pickets are briefed with regards to the how peaceful picketing must be conducted. The law requires picketing to be peaceful “for the purpose of obtaining or communicating information or peacefully persuading a person to work or not to work.” The pickets can only be those who work for the University and we believe pickets will respect your right to enter the campus.

I’m a visiting/exchange student; what about the impact of industrial action on me?

It is expected that any impact would be minimal. Students should be able to complete the modules they have chosen to study at BGU, undertake any associated assessment, and have grades confirmed in line with expected schedules. If you do have any concerns then please contact either Sophie Saunders or Wayne Dyble via your usual channel of communication, international@bishopg.ac.uk