

# ***SUPPORT FOR THE UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION***

## ***PROBLEM/IDEA***

Lectures and facility staff at Heriot-Watt and other universities have had their pay, working conditions, and pensions unfairly attacked by their employer.

University lecturers and administrative staff have received a below inflation pay offer - at a time in which many of us are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of a cost-of-living crisis.

Their conditions are under attack, with increasing numbers of workers - particularly women, BAME and disabled workers, [are given insecure and/or zero-hour contracts, forcing many to take up second jobs or work at multiple institutions.](#)

These attacks on our lecturers' conditions are detrimental to students as well as staff -all of us are suffering under a marketised education system. [Staff working conditions are students learning conditions.](#)

Students are often misdirected to biased information on industrial action disseminated by the University which takes and spreads their position and minimises their role. Instead Students should be directed to hearing the reasons for the action from the UCU itself.

## ***WHY SHOULD HWUNION DO IT?***

Staff working conditions are students' learning conditions, and we must fight together for a fairer, healthier education system for everyone who works and studies.

Together we are stronger: Standing with our lectures and staff unions allows us to build a better education system with staff.

The biggest threat to students in the short and long term is not strike action by staff, but by the neglect and commodification of universities. NUS and UCU are sister organisations committed to promoting the interests of our members and to defending education. They work together in calling for a better deal for students and staff, and in challenging the marketisation of education.

As members of the student movement it is in the interest of fighting for education system that is funded, accessible and lifelong, a system that reflects the needs of modern society, it is essential for students to stand in solidarity with the UCU.

## ***WHAT SHOULD HWUNION DO?***

The Student Union will:

- Inform students of what industrial action is including how it is likely to affect students, why it is ongoing, the union's position and how mitigating circumstances are applied
- Issue a joint statement from the Student Union and UCU
- Stand in solidarity with staff when on strike and to lobby Heriot-Watt to meet demands. This can be determined by each FTO team and will be held to account by student parliament.
- Allow the SU building to be available for student facing events run by campus unions, events such as teach outs and Q&As.
- Work with the UCU when appropriate to foster good relations regardless of whether strike action is ongoing.
- Emphasise the Union position in meetings with the University that the Union fully supports UCU. This support can be withdrawn via parliament or student led motion.
- Each FTO team will arrange to meet with local UCU leadership to discuss how best the Union can support the UCU during their term or pre-strike action.