

UCU campaigns update 26 February 2016

Dear colleague

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1. Higher education (HE) pay campaign: tackling casual contracts

Tackling the growing use of casual contracts in universities is a central element of our campaign for [a decent deal for HE staff](#) and this week general secretary Sally Hunt wrote to members [arguing that insecure employment is not 'a small problem'](#). Check your pay and compare to others in the sector [using the new Rate for the Job webtool](#).

2. Fair pay in further education: Wednesday's strike action

UCU members in English further education (FE) institutions took strike action on Wednesday this week, and were joined on picket lines by UNISON members in a dispute over pay. [You can catch up with the action, follow media coverage and read reports from the picket lines here](#). For the last six years take home pay for FE staff has been declining in value - [check your pay and compare it to those at other colleges with our new webtool here](#).

3. In the news

- Joint strike in further education over 'insulting' pay freeze
- More scrutiny for senior pay, as Scottish universities call for less transparency
- £30m cut to Scottish university budgets 'deeply worrying'
- Progress on gender gap in Scottish universities 'agonisingly slow'
- Government rejects teacher representation on new apprenticeship body
- College loan debts hit £1.6bn

[Read all about it here](#).

4. UN anti-racism day events

Saturday 19 March is the United Nations (UN) international day for the elimination of racial discrimination and UCU is supporting the 'Refugees welcome – stand up to racism, islamophobia, anti-Semitism and fascism' demonstrations in London, Cardiff and Glasgow. UCU general secretary Sally Hunt will be speaking at the London event.

- [London demo](#) assembles 12 noon, BBC Portland Place, London, W1A 1AA
- [Cardiff demo](#) assembles 11:30am, Clare Gardens, Cardiff, CF11 6EN.
- [Glasgow demo](#) assembles 10:30am, George Square, Glasgow.

5. 'Don't cut me out' – lifelong learning in Wales

UCU Wales, NUS Wales and UNISON Cymru Wales will be launching their ['Don't cut me out' campaign](#) at 12.30pm in the ATRium Building, University of South Wales, Cardiff on Monday 29 February. The campaign will seek to impress upon Assembly members the need to invest in lifelong learning; ensure a fair deal for all students and invest in part-time, flexible learning. Politicians from across the parties have been invited to the event and will hear lay member testimonies on the importance of the sector. Please join us. Lunch will be provided.

6. Learn new skills with UCU's free CPD courses

Places are available on the following UCU continuing professional development courses, which are free to all members. Book your place today to avoid disappointment.

[Leadership in education](#) – Dundee, 10 March

[Mentoring](#) – Dundee, 10 March

[Classroom management](#) – Luton, 19 April

7. Iran: release teacher union leader Esmail Abdi

UCU has written to the Iranian authorities to condemn the six year jail sentence handed down to teachers' union leader, Esmail Abdi. Members are encouraged to [sign a new petition calling for Esmail Abdi's release](#).

8. End austerity march: 16 April 2016

UCU members will join [the People's Assembly march for health, homes, jobs and education](#) in London on 16 April 2016.

9. Get ready for direct debit

The new Trade Union Bill means members will no longer be able to pay their UCU subscriptions through payroll (also known as 'check off'). It's important that those of you that still pay union subs by 'check off' now transfer over to direct debit [which you can do online here](#). If you have any queries please get in touch with the UCU membership team at membership@ucu.org.uk.

10. Events and publications

Stop Trident national demo, Saturday 27 February 2016

March and rally organised by CND to protest against Britain's nuclear weapons system Trident. [12 noon, Marble Arch, London: more here](#).

Celebrate International Women's Day 8 March

Each year International Women's Day is celebrated across the globe on 8 March as an opportunity to draw attention to the struggle for women's rights. [You can find UCU postcards and a special film 'A woman's place is in the union' here](#).

Cuban arts and education initiative

UCU is supporting this [Music Fund for Cuba](#) art and education initiative with an exhibition of Cuban artists in London in the autumn and you can [help the appeal here](#).

Getting involved in UCU – a course for black members new to activism

This one day course is specifically designed for UCU black members who are interested in becoming more involved with UCU. The course will also include a professional development session about leadership. [For more details and to check entry criteria please use this link](#).

Defending further and adult education conference, 5 March 2016

This initiative taken by London region UCU will discuss how we can build a movement to defend the sector and put forward alternatives to the government's cuts agenda. Gordon Marsden, shadow minister for lifelong learning will be addressing the event. SOAS, central London, Saturday 5 March, 10:30am. [Register here](#).

All the best

Justine Stephens

UCU head of campaigns