

# NO TO THE IMPOSITION OF 1%! YES TO ESCALATING THE ACTION! BUILD 3 DECEMBER STRIKE!

## The 31 October strike: defending pay and education

**The strike on 31 October was a huge success. Lecturers, researchers, academic-related staff and other university workers from UCU, Unison and Unite had big and lively picket lines.**

Some universities were closed completely and many had empty lecture theatres and closed libraries. In many universities students joined picket lines with their own banners supporting lecturers.

Beyond trying to reverse the year-on-year pay cuts experienced by our members, the strike tapped into broader anger about the marketization of education, increasing workloads and the deleterious effects for both ourselves and our students.

## Employers are rattled

UCEA, our employers' organisation, has told its members to impose the 1 per cent offer. In other institutions managers will be asking if 'we would like to accept it'.

So on the one hand UCEA is saying that it would like to negotiate and on the other imposing the very figure that led to the dispute in the first place.

We should be clear that this is a provocation designed to undermine the dispute and the negotiations. What it does show is that UCEA is rattled by the success of the strike on 31 October and the prospect of another one on 3rd December. Meanwhile the work-to-contract is starting to bite as some managers are frantically firing off emails asking staff 'what they are not going to be doing'.

## Putting on the pressure - escalating the action

The 31 October strike was to launch the pay campaign. No-one expected the employers to roll over. That is why we need to escalate the action and put on the pressure, both through making the work-to-contract bite and building for the strike on 3 December to make it even bigger. Rather we need to keep the pressure on and talk about the sort of action that wins a decent increase in pay.

The policy of the UCU is clear from its HE Sector Conference in May. It is to commence with a one-day national strike, with other HE unions if possible, then to impose a 'work-to-contract', and to intensify ASOS and action with two and three strikes through the autumn and spring if the employers do not budge.

However, at every step, where possible we will be looking for joint action with other unions, but not being tied by it. The decision to go for another one-day strike on the 3rd December is clearly aimed at maintaining joint action with Unison and Unite, and now with the EIS (Educational Institute of Scotland). This makes sense in the first instance, as the EIS joins in, but there is already pressure in those other HE unions for a more determined strategy. The UCU can strengthen the argument of colleagues in the other unions by pushing forward with its plans for escalation after the 3rd December.

## The 'cost of living' crisis

The cost of living crisis is very real for our members and other university workers. There is money in the higher education system, but it is not being used to reward staff in the system. Rather we have suffered year on year pay cuts, while others in the system have three figure salaries. Our salary cut is equivalent to a reduction of one scale point every year.

## What we need to do;

- \* Build the strike on 3 December, organise picketing, rallies and demonstrations
- \* Hold departmental meetings to build support for the strike and work to contract
- \* Organise teach-ins and involve students
- \* Explain the link between the pay claim and wider issues to defend education
- \* Bring together activist networks with Unison, Unite and students
- \* Press our National Negotiators to escalate to TWO-DAY strikes in January/February, and an intensification of ASOS before the end of the first semester. To this pass this motion and send it to HEC/national negotiators
- \* Press for a national demonstration at the end of January with other workers 'No to pay cuts and austerity, Yes to Education and public services'

### Pass the following motion:

"XXX branch/ LA of the UCU notes the success of the industrial action taken so far in pursuit of our pay claim; however it is clear that escalation will be essential to the winning of a decent pay rise. To this end we call on HEC/national negotiators to implement the judicious escalation to two-day and three-day strikes, as resolved by the May 2013 conference of our union" (Resolution HE33).