**How do I ‘work to contract’ in 2021 (ASOS)?**

From 1 December onward UCU asks that you work to contract, as a form of action short of a strike (a form of industrial action). This means only working strictly to the hours that you are paid (on the days when we are not on strike).

For now, the first step of ASOS should be to ask members to work to contract. This is different from previous disputes, in which ASOS immediately escalated to cover not only working to contract, but also withdrawal from duties that are part of your contract. This time we are engaging in escalating ASOS, with further actions coming unless employers get back to the negotiating table.

* Working to contract includes following the reasonable directions of the employer. UCU’s legal advice is that a request to reschedule teaching cancelled due to strike action could be a reasonable direction
* Refusing to reschedule teaching or other activities that have been cancelled is covered by a separate part of our ASOS mandate, as set out in the ballot insert accompanying members’ ballot papers, and in the formal notices sent to employers. That part of the ASOS mandate has not yet been activated.

This could make the first phase of ASOS different from previous UCU disputes, in which members have immediately been asked not to reschedule cancelled work.

There will be an important opportunity for the union to update this position and add other actions, including refusing to reschedule, to our ASOS programme when its Higher Education Committee (HEC) meet on 8 December. If HEC decides to include refusal to reschedule, that will allow members to avoid most if not all requests to reschedule from managers which they may receive after the December strike dates.

**What to do if you are asked to reschedule**

In the meantime, we have developed a course of action for working to contract which we believe will empower members to take control of unsustainable workloads and collectively hold employers to account.

This course of action is based on accepting that (until HEC expands our ASOS programme) missed activities can be rescheduled, and on forcing managers to own the workload implications and take explicit responsibility for any excessive demands which they wish to place on members.

**The action which we want members to take if they are asked to reschedule any activities in December is as follows:**

* **Explain to your manager that rescheduling will require you to work beyond your normal weekly working hours, or to postpone or cancel other duties**
* **Ask the manager whether they will allow you to postpone or cancel other duties**
* **If they will not allow you to postpone or cancel other duties, ask the manager to instruct you formally in writing to work beyond your normal hours, and ask them to specify by how many hours.**

The point is to make managers put it on record and in writing every time they are placing expectations on a member of staff to work more than a standard number of working hours per week. This is something which most managers will be extremely reluctant to do. **Hopefully this added administration will form a strong disruptive action.**