We all care about our students and are creating maximum disruption now to protect the future of their University and get back to work as soon as possible. Student organisations support this strike action and are asking students to support their lecturers. Please encourage your students to take the actions outlined in the template email below. We have no control if they wish to organise themselves to go through tutorial material in independent groups, but we ask that they do not do this in University buildings.

Email template to send to students before the strike, to explain why we are taking action (several other template letters here under ‘Strike resources’: https://www.ucuedinburgh.org.uk/resources):

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Subject: University staff on strike for 10 days, and how this affects you

Dear all,

You have probably heard by now about the upcoming university staff strike by University and College Union (UCU), to take place 14-18 February, 21-22 February and 28 February-2March. As a UCU member I will be taking strike action alongside my colleagues across the UK, to ask our employers to come back to the negotiating table to talk to us. Our union has repeatedly tried to negotiate with employers to no avail – so now we have no choice but to strike.

What is a strike? A strike is when staff feel so strongly that something is wrong, they stop work to protest and put pressure on the employer to change their minds.

First of all, it’s important to note that **we don’t \*want\* to strike**. We care about our students as individuals, we love teaching you, and we value the education that we facilitate. The fact that we value that education is one of the many reasons why we feel compelled to strike, even as this will add to the hardship we have all been through since March 2021 during the Covid-19 pandemic. **Our working conditions are your learning conditions**. Striking staff will not have 3 days off, but 10 days in the cold with no pay.

Taking strike action is never easy, especially for teachers. But employers (universities) across the UK are refusing to listen to us as staff when we object to their plans to: 1) cut our pensions by up to 35%, and 2) not act on the gender/race/disability pay gaps in our universities, the wide use of insecure contracts (colleagues working on fixed-term and hourly contracts, instead of secure ones), and excessive workloads which means your teachers are working up to 60 hours per week, many of them falling ill.

Our union UCU believes that high quality education and fair working conditions depend on contracts that give staff stability and continuity of employment. Casualisation (job insecurity) is bad for staff and bad for education, yet it's endemic in our colleges and universities:

* 46% of universities and 60% of colleges use zero hours contracts to deliver teaching;
* 68% of research staff in higher education are on ﬁxed term contracts, with many more dependent on short-term funding for continued employment.
* The average and gender pay gap as per the University’s own equality report is 16.7% and the race pay gap is 7.9%. There are more male and white staff at higher levels of employment, showing the problem is structural discrimination preventing women, non-binary and BAME staff getting promoted.

The strike is part of a campaign for increased job security, equal pay, and fair treatment for all employees. We want to see an improvement in the working conditions of workers in the university who are on ﬁxed term, fractional, and/or hourly paid contracts.

How can you support the strike?

* Write to Professor Peter Mathieson, University Principal, principal@ed.ac.uk (There's a template email here if you would like to use it: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1OotT29yg0QL_graZ1_u6UeZr8A3r4-DQCZpESVnhe-8/edit>)
* Please respect the picket lines, and work from home if you can on strike days
* Write to your MP <https://www.ucu.org.uk/USS-emailyourMP>
* Show your support on social media - tweet the University!
* Show your solidarity at the pickets in front of University buildings, and especially join the national UCU Scotland rally in front of the Scottish parliament on Thursday 2 December at 1pm, and the virtual rally (via
* Keep up to date on strike activities and participate where you can in teach outs, meetings, film screenings, panels and other events via UCU and Student Association / Staff-Student Solidarity Network websites and social media
* Join the Staff-Student Solidarity Network Edinburgh actions (@sssn\_edi on Twitter)

I hope you will support your lecturers, tutors and other university staff as we try to make our universities better places for learning and research. We often try to hide from students the bad working conditions we have (overwork and insecure employments), but a strike action brings these out. The more visible support we have, the more pressure we can put on management to demand Universities UK and the managers of our USS pension fund get back to the negotiating table.

Some more information from student newspapers here: <https://studentnewspaper.org/article/further-ucu-strike-dates-announced-for-february> and here: <https://thetab.com/uk/2021/11/11/dont-blame-your-lecturers-for-striking-blame-uni-management-for-giving-them-no-choice-228279>

Many thanks for your support and solidarity,

[name]