

UNITE HIGHER EDUCATION STRIKE BALLOTS

FAQs

UCEA'S 1.4% PAY OFFER IS SIMPLY NOT GOOD ENOUGH- HE INSTITUTIONS CAN AFFORD TO PAY MORE.

With real inflation (RPI) still running high at over 4.6% (Aug 2025) there is no end in sight to the cost-of-living crisis. 1.4% is also a massive national pay cut.

UCEA's refusal to increase the pay award has left Unite and the JNCHES unions (UCU, UNISON and EIS) with no option but to move to formal strike ballots in higher education institutions in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. **Your union, Unite is urging you to vote YES for strike action. Yes, for fair pay.**

WHEN WILL THE BALLOT OPEN?

Unite is running disaggregated ballots at higher education institutions from the week starting 20 October to 1 December. The joint higher education unions, Unite, UCU, Unison and EIS have agreed to ballot members at the same time, paving the way for coordinated strike action in your institutions. This is great news and means we'll be campaigning together to get the vote out and secure strong YES votes.

WHY AM I BEING BALLOTTED?

Unite is progressing to full industrial action ballots over the Universities and Colleges Association's (UCEA) 1.4% pay offer for 2025/26. This follows branch consultative ballots in which 89% of members nationally voted to reject the offer and 86% voted to be balloted for industrial action. Your Unite reps are disappointed that it's come to this, but despite the unions invoking the JNCHES Disputes Procedures, UCEA made clear, it wouldn't be improving the pay offer and then imposed its 'final' pay offer from 1 August 2025. Additional local issues, including redundancies may be added to the ballot. **We believe that HE institutions can afford to pay more.**

HOW DO I VOTE?

This is a fully postal ballot. Ballot papers will be posted to your home. Make sure you put an X in the YES box for strike action and post your ballot paper back in the enclosed self-addressed envelope to ensure it arrives before the deadline: **12pm, Monday 1 December.**

Please double check you can vote by ensuring your membership details are up-to-date at: [MyUnite.unitetheunion.org](https://myunite.unitetheunion.org).

WHO IS BEING BALLOTTED?

Unite members working in higher education institutions in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland who voted to reject the pay offer in the branch-led consultative ballots. Your branch and officers can provide more information.

WHY SHOULD I VOTE YES?

- ✔ **You deserve better.** For over a decade, you have endured real term pay cuts, jobs cuts and punishing workloads. Your pay has fallen by a staggering 30% when measured against inflation. UCEA's offer of 1.4% is yet another real terms pay cut and compares poorly with pay awards in similar sectors, such as teachers (4%).
- ✔ **Everything but your wages are going up.** Food prices keep rising, up by around 37% since July 2020. Average UK private rents and water rates rose by 5.9% and 26.1% respectively in the last year. Mortgage costs have soared, and the Energy Price cap is rising again in October. **It's time to say ENOUGH!**
- ✔ **UCEA can afford to pay more –** Unite and the HE trade unions have tried to negotiate a fairer pay rise and remain open to talks. We are fully aware of the financial challenges facing universities. But imposing further real terms wage cuts on hard working staff is simply not the answer. The funding model for higher education is broken. We are calling on UCEA universities to join us in lobbying the UK government for a sustainable funding model and to stop making workers' pay for the crisis.



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JOBS ■ PAY ■ CONDITIONS!**

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STRIKE BALLOTS FAQs

WHAT HAPPENS IF I VOTE YES FOR STRIKE ACTION?

Strike action is a complete withdrawal of labour. First, a majority of Unite members in your workplace must vote in favour of strike action and 50% of those eligible to vote must have returned their ballot. Next, your Higher Education National Industrial Sector Committee (NICS) will meet to decide the dates of any action, the form of the action, duration and pattern. Your employer will be informed. This is a legal requirement. You will then be advised of your role in supporting the strike. Strike action will be coordinated with sister unions where possible. However, this is entirely dependent on achieving the balloting thresholds.

WHAT IS THE STRIKE FUND?

Unite is on your side – We will not let any employer starve our members back to work. We have a healthy strike fund and a pro rata strike payment of £70 a day to help you during the strike. Some conditions apply, more details will be provided closer to the time and members should contact your rep or officer if you have special additional needs.

CAN NEW JOINERS VOTE?

Yes, your colleagues can join at any time up to and including the day (days) of action and lawfully take part in the industrial action. This is a good time to encourage your workmates to join Unite. Get them to join online at join.unitetheunion.org or ask your rep for a supply of membership forms.

ARE NEW JOINERS ENTITLED TO STRIKE PAY?

This is a regional decision so please speak to your Unite rep and regional officer first for confirmation.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT THAT I VOTE?

Your vote is your voice. Don't lose it. This is a chance for higher education workers from Unite, UCU, Unison and EIS to stand together to say 'ENOUGH! We deserve better pay. When we stand together and vote together, we can win. Also, due to the strict turnout threshold rules not voting in the ballot reduces our chances of securing a successful mandate.

DOES IT REALLY MATTER IF I DON'T VOTE?

YES! Not voting in the ballot makes it harder to secure a successful mandate. Please don't lose your voice. Use your vote and urge your colleagues to vote too!

IS MY VOTE ANONYMOUS?

Yes. No-one knows how you voted but you. The ballot is run for Unite by an independent body called Civica Election Services (CES), formerly the Electoral Reform Society.

VOTE YES NOW FOR FAIR PAY.

HIGHER EDUCATION UNIONS ARE STRONGER TOGETHER

VOTE YES TOGETHER

unitetheunion.org/HEballot

SCAN TO
JOIN UNITE



VOTE YES
FOR FAIR PAY!

IN HIGHER EDUCATION



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