

## Guidelines for the UWE branch of UCU local hardship fund 2022-23

Whilst UCU is not able to give assistance to all members taking strike action, the union offers financial support both nationally and locally for members at risk of serious hardship. Union members must ensure they are paying subscriptions at the correct rate in order to be eligible.

The Local UWE UCU Branch Hardship Fund provides support to UWE UCU members during disputes where substantial pay is deducted for taking part in industrial action. This local support is **additional** to UCU's National Fighting Fund and members apply separately for support from **both** schemes.

The branch does not have sufficient resources to fund all members and the branch expects members to apply where there is greatest need only.

### [UCU's National Fighting Fund 2022-23](#)

Members in need of financial support should apply first to the UCU National Fighting Fund, which can be done online. The union nationally has agreed to provide strike pay as follows: members earning £30,000 or more (gross) will be able to claim up to **£50 per day from the second day of strike action onwards**; members earning below £30,000 will be able to claim **up to £75 per day from the second day of strike action onwards**.

The maximum you can receive will be the pay deducted for the days you are eligible to make a claim for. There is also cap of **11 days** which is subject to review for all members including future waves of action.

Priority will be given to those on insecure contracts, low earnings or with special circumstances but it is anticipated with this cap that all claims will be paid. Members will need to be logged in to ['My UCU'](#) in order to make an application to the [National Fighting Fund](#).

### [Local Branch Hardship Fund](#)

This is funding available from the UWE Branch of UCU, for UWE UCU members, **in addition** to UCU's National Fighting Fund support listed above. Please note that the branch has limited funds and can only help those members most in need.

UWE UCU members can apply for:

1. Up-to £30/day from the first day of action.

To apply, download and complete the UCU UWE hardship application form from the branch website, attach relevant pay slips and return both by email to [ucu@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@uwe.ac.uk)

There is also cap of **11 days** which is subject to review for all members including future waves of action.

### Queries

A period of industrial action is extremely busy for national and local UCU staff. If you have a query about financial support or eligibility for members, please help us by directing your inquiry to the right place:

- 1) For questions regarding the national UCU Fighting Fund, please contact UCU Head office: [fightingfund@ucu.org.uk](mailto:fightingfund@ucu.org.uk).
- 2) For questions about UWE Branch Local Hardship Fund, please email: [ucu@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@uwe.ac.uk)

### Eligibility

To be eligible to make an application to the fund you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a current and fully paid up member at the time of the action and the date of application. Please note that no payment can be made to members who are in arrears or paying at an incorrect subscription level. Note that the subscription level should be your gross salary prior to deducting anything, including salary sacrifice elements such as pension.
- Have taken part in the industrial action called by the union.
- Have been docked pay for the action.
- Be able to supply a copy of your pay slip(s) showing the gross amount of pay deducted in respect of each day's participation in the action.
- Have successfully applied to the national hardship fund.
- Claims must be made within 3 months of the salary deduction and 12 months of the industrial action.

### What evidence is needed to support an application for financial support?

Applications must be accompanied by evidence of pay deduction, i.e. copies of the relevant pay slip from UWE. Applications for financial support cannot be considered without this evidence unless in the most exceptional circumstances, where application is made for an advance on a hardship payment. Your pay slip will be treated with strict confidentiality. Scanned pay slips can be submitted in PDF or JPEG format.

### Exceptional Advance Payments and Repayment of Advances

The Local Hardship Fund can provide funding in advance of payslip evidence, in anticipation that the appropriate payslip evidence will be provided within 3 months and that the member is fully eligible to receive hardship funding. If the applicant is found not to meet the criteria listed above under "Eligibility", or if payslip evidence is not provided, the advance must be repaid in full.

### What happens if UWE reimburses my deducted pay?

If this happens, we would expect you to repay any payment you receive from the Hardship Fund within 3 months of receiving the reimbursed pay from UWE. This will allow us to run the Hardship Fund again in future to support our members.

### How will I be paid?

The form asks you to give bank account details. Payment will be made by BACS (bank transfer) unless you request a cheque instead. **Please ensure that you correctly enter all the bank details, as we may not be able to recover payments sent to an incorrect bank account.** If this happens, we regret it may not be possible to make a further payment from the fund to compensate for a mis-directed payment.

### What will I be paid?

The branch does not have sufficient resources to fund all members and the panel expects members to apply where there is serious need only. Payment from the Hardship Fund combined with the strike pay from the national Fighting Fund cannot amount to more than the gross loss of earnings.

### When can payment be expected from the Local UWE Branch Hardship Fund?

The panel for the local Hardship Fund will endeavour to process applications and make payments as quickly as possible after receiving evidence of deductions. If a member's application for Local Hardship Fund support is approved, then the Branch will generally make payment within one week or at the most 2 weeks of the application being received.

If there are significant personal circumstances leaving the striking member vulnerable (e.g. with essential unpaid bills or at risk of exceeding an agreed overdraft) special application may be sought for funding to be approved and granted *in advance* of the payslip details being made available to the

branch. Please see above under 'advance'. In such a case members should make their request in writing to the Hardship Fund at least 2 weeks before the date funding is absolutely required.

### The application procedure and process

Any request for financial support from the local UWE branch Hardship Fund will be considered anonymously, fairly and in strictest confidence by a panel appointed by the Branch Executive Committee.

In keeping with the union's commitment to transparency and good practice, the panel members will include the Branch Treasurer; and two others.

To apply for financial support from the local Hardship Fund, please complete the application form and submit to [ucu@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@uwe.ac.uk) mailbox.

### Appeals

Appeals can only be made on procedural grounds and should be addressed to the Branch Chair, who will review the matter in conjunction with another member of the Executive Committee.

**May 2023**