

UWE Branch of UCU

Frequently asked questions about our local hardship fund

Q. Will UCU be able to support me financially, if I take part in strike action and face hardship as a result?

A. Yes. With extended strike action, the local branch and national UCU appreciates that for some members this is just not a financial loss they can afford to take in full. This branch is also strongly committed to giving financial support to prevent hardship for members taking strike action. Those who need financial assistance can access both a national UCU fighting fund, and a local UWE branch hardship scheme.

Q. When should I expect the deductions to be taken from my salary?

A. We understand that UWE intends to make deductions in the month following the strike action. The same expectation is made with respect to the MAB, but there has been no confirmation from about the timing.

Q. When can I apply?

A. For both the fighting fund and hardship funds you can apply as soon as you have had pay deducted/received a payslip with a deduction. You can apply earlier if you have exceptional circumstances.

Q. What will I be able to claim from the UCU national fighting fund?

A. The national fighting fund works as follows:

- in the sum of £50 for the second and subsequent days of strike action for members earning £30,000 gross **or more** per annum (this is subject to a cap of 11 days. This will be kept under review); and,
- in the sum of up to £75 for the second and subsequent days of strike action for members earning **less than** £30,000 gross per annum (this is subject to a cap of 11 days. This will be kept under review).
- The guidelines for MAB deductions have not yet been published.

Q. What will I be able to claim from the local UWE branch Hardship Fund?

A. Members can apply to the local UWE branch hardship fund on top of the national scheme. The branch hardship fund works as follows:

Up to £30 from the first day of action subject to a cap of 11 days. This cap will be subject to review if further action is called.

A strike day or part day will be recorded as one day. A MAB deduction day will be recorded pro-rata with the deduction rate. At present the deduction for MAB is expected to be 10 days pay in total, consisting of 20 days at 50 % deduction.

Q. What rules will apply to both the national and local schemes?

A. For both schemes:

- applications can only be made after the deductions have been made
- evidence will be required in the form of a payslip showing the deductions
- the total amount paid out across in the national scheme will be no higher than the deductions actually made for the days that funding is available. The local scheme will not pay out more than the difference between the total deduction and the amount paid by the national scheme because it the total claimed cannot be more than the original gross deduction.

For the local Hardship Fund, members are expected to have already applied to the national Fighting Fund first.

Q. Is the funding from the fighting and hardship funds taxable?

A. No, the funding is not taxable, and does not need to be declared as income.

Q. What happens if the UWE refunds strike deductions?

A. In this scenario as a branch we would ask that you return back to us any funds from the hardship fund within 3 months of the UWE refunding strike deductions. You will not be required to return funding from the Fighting Fund but can choose to make a donation instead.

Q. What can I do now to make sure I am eligible to claim financial support?

A. Payments from both schemes are dependent on the member paying the current UCU subscription rate for their salary.

This is the gross salary, before any deductions, including TPS/USS and tax, are made. If you think you might need to apply for financial support, it is essential that you check as soon as possible that you are paying the correct subscription rate for the contract you currently have. You can do this on the [MyUCU](#) website area. In particular this may affect anyone whose salary has changed due to taking on a different role, or whose working hours (or FTE) has changed since they joined UCU. This includes ALs, whose correct rate must reflect all modules for which they are currently contracted, even if there is only a temporary FTE increase.

Q. Who will be involved in handling claims to the local UWE branch hardship fund?

A. All applications to the local hardship scheme will be anonymised by the branch administrator before being put before a UCU branch sub-committee, including the Treasurer and another Officer, for decision. No personally identifiable details of any member will be made available to the sub-committee.

Q. Is there a time limit for making a claim?

A. Yes. Claims must be made within 3 months of the salary deduction in question and within 12 months of the industrial action.

If you have any questions about the support available, please contact the UCU office:

ucu@uwe.ac.uk

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