

# University lecturers on strike today

Members of the UCU across Scotland are striking today in a row over pay and changes to staff pensions as part of a national day of strike action at universities across the UK.

Staff in 15 universities, across the country, including the University of Edinburgh, will walk out in row over a second consecutive real-terms annual pay cut and lack of an agreement on job security. Further for 9 universities, members are protesting plans for greater pension contributions from staff, reduced pension benefits and an increase in the pension age in the USS pension scheme.

UCU members will be on picket lines across Scotland from 8am with many branches joining together to hold regional rallies in Aberdeen, Glasgow and Stirling.

UCU members' action in Scotland is part of the first UK-wide strike action in universities for five years. The union has received the support of the National Union of Students, despite the likely disruption to their members' studies.

UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, said: 'Strike action is always a last resort but the attacks on pay and jobs have created real anger and, instead of burying their heads in the sand, the employers need to respond urgently to our concerns. University staff really value their pension rights and those in the USS scheme in Scotland have made their views of the detrimental changes crystal clear.

'Staff are sick to the back teeth of being told that their pay and pensions need to be cut to pay for an economic crisis created by others.'

Commenting on UCU's strike action today, Liam Burns, NUS

Scotland president, said:

“Today thousands of lecturers across Scotland are standing up for education in Scotland and, up and down the country, students are supporting them in their action. Lecturers could have chosen to go into industry or the private sector to earn more money but instead they are educating the next generation of talented people in Scotland. Pensions make up part of the fabric of being an academic and so employers need to get back round the table to restart negotiations in a way that includes, not excludes, lecturers.

“On Tuesday over 4000 students, lecturers, parents and pupils marched in Edinburgh to launch the election campaign. We hope to put education at the front and centre of the election campaign and at the top of the agenda for the next Scottish Government.

“Staff have supported us in our campaign to stop tuition fees and students are supporting staff today. We have a lot more work to do over the coming time – fighting fees, protecting numbers and improving student support – making sure we protect education as one of the things we can be most proud of in Scotland.