

UCU say strike action might escalate by Easter holidays



The University and College Union (UCU) is staging regular protests about pay increases proposed for senior staff, and The Edinburgh Reporter met a group of striking university workers in Chambers Street at the end of last week. The current protests involve the staff working strictly to contract and taking strike action at the busiest times of the week but there is a possibility that the strike action could escalate by Easter including refusal to mark students' work.

Their main point is that while university pay has dropped in real terms by 13% since 2009, students' tuition fees have trebled. The latest pay offer is just 1% which the union states will mean their pay falls further behind the cost of living. At the same time university principals and vice-chancellors have enjoyed pay increases over inflation rates, and according to UCU the average salary paid to those in these posts is now £215,000.

They claim that any discussions with the universities have not resulted in any fair offer being made.

The union insists that universities in the UK can afford to pay more as they have a combined surplus of £1bn and many more in reserve. They also recently campaigned against a reuse in tuition fees saying that education is a right not a privilege.

We spoke with Gordon Reid of UCU who explained the union's position:-

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