

From: Director of HR <hrdirector@comms.st-andrews.ac.uk>
Sent: 26 April 2023 15:20
To: Lisa Harley
Subject: UCU marking and assessment boycott

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UCU marking and assessment boycott

Dear Colleague,

The University and College Union (UCU), the trade union which represents some of our lecturers and tutors at St Andrews, as well as some professional staff, has called on its members to undertake a marking and assessment boycott from Thursday 20 April 2023.

This action is part of ongoing and renewed industrial action by the union in a national dispute over pay.

Since the University is not entitled to know who is and who isn't a member of the union, and UCU members have the legal right not to tell us beforehand if they will take part in the boycott, this email is going to all staff.

A marking and assessment boycott (MAB) is partial performance and a breach of contract. More than any other form of industrial action, it is, by its nature, a blunt instrument intended to target and disrupt students' education.

As a MAB is a breach of contract, the University will deduct 50% of salary from those who refuse to mark student assignments, exam scripts and dissertations or who refuse to assist with the organisation of assessment in other ways.

Salary deductions will take effect from 18 May 2023, and will continue until all allocated marking is completed, individuals confirm in writing that they are no longer participating in the MAB, or UCU call off the MAB.

Details of how this will take effect in practice will be published in FAQs on our Human Resources web pages shortly.

We sincerely hope that the number of our colleagues who refuse to mark students' work will remain low. We know that staff care deeply about their students, and those who decide to follow the union call for a marking boycott will do so with considerable regret.

It is with the same regret that we have to give notice that St Andrews, like the majority of UK universities, will deduct salary for partial performance. All monies deducted will go to discretionary funds to tackle student hardship.

The University will continue to lobby strongly for a national pay settlement that is fair to staff, and affordable and sustainable for their institutions. In the context of national collective bargaining, that means that a national settlement must be affordable for all institutions.

We sincerely regret this ongoing national dispute, the disruption it causes to students, and the toll it continues to take on our staff.

Mairi Stewart
Director of Human Resources

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