

Susan E. Chambers BA (Hons) MA FCIPD

Susan E. Chambers BA (Hons) MA FCIPD

12 Parc Gyddoniaeth
Prifysgol Aberystwyth, Cefn Llan
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AH
Ffôn: (01970) 622060
Ffacs: (01970) 622975
E-bost: eec@aber.ac.uk

12 Science Park
Aberystwyth University, Cefn Llan
Aberystwyth, Ceredigion SY23 3AH
Tel: (01970) 622060
Fax: (01970) 622975
E-mail: eec@aber.ac.uk

14th January 2015

Dear Colleague

Re: Industrial action over proposed USS pension reform

I regret to inform you that Aberystwyth University has been advised of UCU's intention to induce its members to participate in continuous action short of a strike with effect from Friday 16th January 2015 in the form of an assessment and marking boycott. This is regrettable given that the process for seeking an agreed solution to the proposed USS reforms is still in play at this time.

I very much hope that you will decide to continue to work normally. If so, thank you very much for your support. I apologise for having to write to everyone in the terms set out in this letter, but it is very important that all our staff, whether or not they are UCU members, understand the implications for their pay if they decide to participate in the action.

Aberystwyth University considers that participation in the notified industrial action would constitute a breach of your contract of employment. In particular, we regard the action called by UCU as going to the heart of the duties undertaken by staff involved in student learning and teaching. Student feedback on their learning is crucial to their learning experience and fundamental to the role of the institution and its academic staff. The action therefore has the potential to have a serious adverse effect on our students and the reputation of our institution. We also consider that any impact would increase, particularly if the action continues for some time.

UCU members were warned in the voting paper that participating in industrial action may place them in breach of their contract of employment.

We hope that you will, despite the UCU call, continue to do your job in full. However, please understand that if you are only prepared to perform limited duties, then legally we are not obliged to pay you anything at all. Any work which you perform whilst you are participating in the action will be regarded as being undertaken by you in a purely voluntary capacity and accordingly without entitlement to pay.

If participants subsequently decide to resume normal working then from that date onwards they will be paid normally, but pay deducted will not be re-instated.

Although we could refuse to pay anything to participants in the industrial action, we are prepared for the time being, and without prejudice to our right to deduct 100% of pay, to limit deductions to 25% of pay from all participants in the action. This percentage may be subject to ongoing review on a collective and an individual basis.

Although we are not obliged to do so, we will maintain USS pension contributions (with both employer and employee contributions at 100%) and therefore death in service cover will remain in place even if you participate in the action.

Deductions from pay will therefore be made from all participants on account of their involvement in the industrial action. These deductions will commence from the earlier of either your confirmation that you are participating in the industrial action or evidence of your refusal to work normally.

The deductions may not take effect immediately, depending upon the dates of participation in the action and the payroll run for the relevant month.

If, as I hope, you work normally throughout the period of the industrial action then no deductions will be made from your pay.

If you are taking part in, or not working normally because of, industrial action short of a strike, you need to visit:

<https://abw.aber.ac.uk/Agresso/System/Login.aspx>

Log in using your user name and password and fill in the required information. You MUST complete this online form as soon as is reasonably practical on the day you begin action short of a strike.

If you do choose to take part in the action being called by UCU and at a later stage you decide to change your position regarding your involvement in the industrial action and resume working normally you should notify the manager of your HR team immediately, in writing, or via Aberpeople as detailed in the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) on the HR website.

I regret having to write in this manner. It is not my wish to see staff having any amount of pay withheld but equally it is clear that staff cannot be allowed, without sanction, to pick and choose which duties they are or are not prepared to perform. You will be aware that negotiations continue at the Joint Negotiating Committee and that both sides have accepted that benefit reform is necessary. I very much hope that a negotiated settlement will be reached and that we will see an early end to this dispute.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact hr@aber.ac.uk or visit the FAQ's on the HR website (<http://www.aber.ac.uk/en/hr/employment-information/strike-information/>) or alternatively contact Carol Jenkins in the HR department on 01970 621796 or the appropriate HR team..

Yours sincerely



Susan Chambers
Director of Human Resources