



# The boycott of assessment and marking activity

## A briefing note for heads of department and line managers

**W**e are very appreciative of the strong support for our pay campaign demonstrated by UCU members who are heads of department or line managers.

When the marking boycott begins on 6 November, some employers will no doubt seek to put such staff under pressure to assist management in various ploys aimed at undermining the boycott. UCU members are resisting this pressure.

Here are some points to remember if you are a UCU member who is a head of department or line manager.

### **Reallocation of marking work**

The marking and assessment boycott includes all aspects of the process including all administrative work associated with formal assessment. Allocation of marking or examining duties clearly falls within the lawful industrial action being conducted by the union.

Therefore you should not reallocate to non-union staff work boycotted by fellow UCU members.

If asked to do so by a person in authority you should seek the instruction in writing and then respond that you are supporting the lawful marking and assessment boycott

called by UCU and will not therefore be able to reallocate work as this is included in the boycott.

### **Taking on marking yourself**

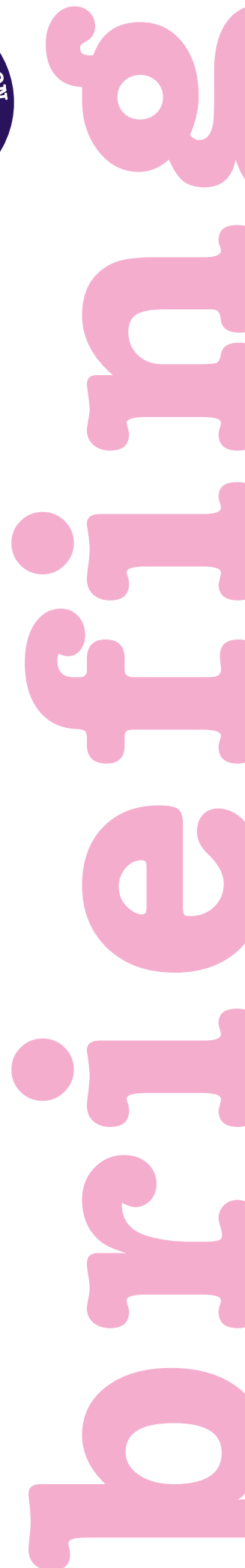
Heads of department should, under no circumstances, take on marking or assessment of work themselves from any source for the duration of the marking and assessment boycott.

If asked to do so, you should respond as above that you will not be able to do any marking because you are supporting the lawful industrial action called by UCU.

### **Identification of individuals taking part in the action**

If you are asked to identify individual colleagues who are participating in the action, or asked to make an assessment of the amount of time normally spent by such members on marking and/or assessment, you should respond that these are properly matters for the university's human resources department and, that as a UCU member supporting the action, you have a conflict of interest which should be respected.

If you feel that you are being harassed or unfairly penalised because of your support



for the UCU action you should contact your branch who will seek the advice of an appropriate full-time official.

### **Reporting on the impact of the action**

Some heads of department or line managers are also being asked to provide details of the impact of the marking boycott in their departments. We would advise members to supply that information in general terms and not to identify individuals. UCU has already told members taking part in the action short of a strike that they have no obligation to volunteer information about their action, or to give advance warning of participation, or to give any detailed information about the coverage or impact of their action. If members follow this advice, heads of department will in any case be limited in the amount of detail that they will be able to provide to the university centrally.

### **Can non-members support the marking boycott?**

We have had a number of inquiries as to whether heads of department or line managers who are not members of UCU can support our marking boycott. We are not allowed in law to induce those we know to be non-members to support the action. If you support the objectives of the pay campaign and are not currently a member you can join and will be protected to participate in the industrial action.

