

# Guidelines for the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund

29<sup>th</sup> July 2023

UCU members who take part in industrial action, including the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB), during the USS (pension) and Four Fights (pay, workload, equality, casualisation) disputes may be subject to deductions from their pay or suffer lost earnings.

UCU offers financial support both nationally and locally for members at risk of hardship. The LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund provides support to LSE UCU members during disputes where pay is deducted for taking part in industrial action (or where members suffer lost earnings, e.g., those on hourly-paid and other insecure contracts). This local support is **additional** to the [UCU National Fighting Fund](#). Members are expected to apply to the National Fighting Fund before applying to the Local Branch Hardship Fund. No member can receive combined payment from the national and local funds greater than the total pay deductions or earnings losses incurred.

There is no specific definition of 'hardship'. We rely on the judgements of members about whether they are at risk of hardship, bearing in mind the finite resources of the branch and the needs of other members.

To be eligible you must be paying your UCU subscription at the correct level (which may be zero for PhD members) – please check this prior to any claim.

## [UCU National Fighting Fund](#)

Members in need of financial support should apply **first** to the UCU National Fighting Fund, which can be done online: [https://my.ucu.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/543](https://my.ucu.org.uk/app/answers/detail/a_id/543).

Where the employer has deducted between 50% and 99% of daily pay for partial performance, the fund will pay: £30 for each day of ASOS taken by members earning £30,000 gross or more per annum; and up to £45 for each day of ASOS taken by members earning less than £30,000 gross per annum. This is subject to a cap of 9 days. More information can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

## Local Branch Hardship Fund

LSE UCU members who have lost pay as a result of participating in industrial action can apply to the local branch hardship fund as follows:

- Members earning £30,000 gross or more per annum: £30 for each day of action for which pay is wholly or partially lost
- Members earning less than £30,000 gross per annum: up to £45 for each day of action for which pay is wholly or partially lost

This is subject to a cap of 14 days, and to the other eligibility criteria set out below.

To apply, download and complete the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund application form, attach relevant pay slips or other evidence of lost earnings and return both by email to [ucu.membership@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ucu.membership@lse.ac.uk) using the subject line "LSE UCU Hardship Fund Application"

## Queries

- 1) For questions regarding the UCU National Fighting Fund, please contact UCU Head office: [fightingfund@ucu.org.uk](mailto:fightingfund@ucu.org.uk).
- 2) For questions about the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund, please email: [ucu.membership@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ucu.membership@lse.ac.uk) using the subject line "LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund". We

aim to support you in making a claim if you need to and we will endeavour to respond as quickly as possible, but please bear in mind that we are all volunteers carrying out union responsibilities in addition to our LSE workloads.

## Eligibility

To be eligible to make an application to the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund you must meet the following criteria:

- Be a current member at the time of the action and the date of application. Please note that no payment can be made to members who are in arrears or paying at an incorrect subscription level. The current subscription rates are listed at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/subscriptions>. Note that the subscription level should be your gross salary prior to deducting anything, including salary sacrifice elements such as USS pension. **PhD members with free UCU membership are eligible for the Local Branch Hardship Fund.**
- Have taken part in the industrial action called by the union.
- Have been docked pay for the action, or, for members on hourly-paid and other insecure contracts, have lost earnings as a result of taking part in the action.
- Be able to supply a copy of your pay slip(s) showing the gross amount of pay deducted for participation in the action, or, for members on hourly-paid and other insecure contracts, other evidence of lost earnings (see below for examples).
- Have made the application to the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund within 3 months of the last payslip (or other evidence) showing pay deductions or earnings losses as a result of industrial action.

## What evidence is needed to support an application for financial support?

If you receive a deduction from your salary, you should supply copies of your LSE pay slip(s) showing deductions.

If you are hourly paid, or on another contract which means that you suffer earnings losses but do not have a pay slip showing deductions, please provide alternative evidence and explain its relevance on your application form, for example:

- Contract of employment, for example showing separate payment for marking
- Email or other correspondence about work offered and (a) accepted and then not performed as a result of participating in industrial action; or (b) declined for reason of participating in industrial action
- Evidence of the rate of pay for earnings foregone
- Payments received in a previous year for work similar to that foregone this year

Please contact us if you would like to discuss what evidence to provide before submitting your application.

Your pay slip will be treated with strict confidentiality (see 'The application procedure and process' below). Scanned pay slips can be submitted in PDF or JPEG format.

## What happens if the LSE reimburses my deducted pay?

If this happens, we expect you to repay any payment you receive from the Local Branch Hardship Fund within 3 months of receiving the reimbursed pay from the LSE. This will allow us to run the Local Branch Hardship Fund again in the future to support our members.

## How will I be paid?

The form asks you to give bank account details. Payment will be made by BACS (bank transfer). **Please ensure that you correctly enter all the bank details, as we may not be able to recover payments sent to an incorrect bank account.** If this happens, we regret it may not be possible to make a further payment from the fund to compensate for a mis-directed payment.

## What will I be paid?

You can claim from the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund for any deductions or earnings losses incurred as a result of participation in the action:

- (a) that will not be covered by the National Fighting Fund, and
- (b) up to a maximum of 14 days in any one period of industrial action mandate (currently end of September 2023), and
- (c) such that the combined amount claimed from the National Fighting Fund and the LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund is not greater than the total gross deductions or earnings losses you have incurred.

## When can payment be expected from the LSE Local Branch Hardship Fund?

We will endeavour to process applications and make payments as quickly as possible after receiving a valid and complete application. If a member's application for LSE UCU Local Branch Hardship Fund support is approved, the Branch will generally make payment within one week.

## The application procedure and process

Any request for financial support will be considered anonymously, fairly and in strictest confidence by a panel appointed by the Branch Committee, consisting of the membership secretary, treasurer and two other members of the branch committee.

Your application and associated evidence will be stored securely, and will be treated in confidence. The materials will be seen only by the panel, and, if required, by the UCU auditors.

To apply for financial support from the Local Branch Hardship Fund, please complete the application form with all supporting evidence and submit to [ucu.membership@lse.ac.uk](mailto:ucu.membership@lse.ac.uk) using the subject line "LSE UCU Hardship Fund Application".

## Appeals

Appeals can be made only on procedural grounds and should be addressed to the Branch Chair who will review the matter in consultation with the regional UCU representative.