

Dear Dame Nancy Rothwell and Karen Heaton,

(Andrew Mullen cc, Patrick Hackett cc)

We have recently received the University guidelines regarding Coronavirus, which states that:

- All lectures with a registered cohort of 100 or more will be delivered using on-line content. These will be recorded and pod-casted but not live streamed. All recorded teaching from Monday 16 March will be released.
- During Weeks 8 and 9 lectures with a registered cohort of fewer than 100, small group teaching sessions, undergraduate laboratory and practical classes, and project activity will continue on a face to face basis. However, by Friday 27 March (end of week 9), these will mainly cease, and will move online wherever possible

Whilst we acknowledge that the response, and advice, has been varied across the University (at Faculty and School level), the current University-wide guidelines do not explicitly provide any information for GTAs who we feel will be disproportionately affected by these stipulations, as the majority of GTA work across the University is done in small class sizes.

GTAs have come to us with concerns that they feel uncomfortable taking public transport to come in to teach these classes, particularly those who live with vulnerable people. It has been further noted that where GTAs need to self-isolate they are scared they will not be paid for any work that they miss due to COVID-19. Whilst we believe this will be the case (as per Friday March 13th UMUCU/SLT meeting), the UMUCU GTA committee, call on University Management to clarify and fulfil their commitment to pay for all manners of work carried out by its employees, including GTAs. This information needs to be circulated by the SLT to ensure GTAs do not come in to teach when they may be putting themselves, or others, at risk. We ask that you outline the University and School-level provisions that are in place to deal with these payments (e.g. those GTAs submit weekly timesheets and will need to continue to do so, even if classes have been cancelled).

In addition to this, in line with UCU demands, we support an immediate end to all face-to-face teaching, starting from Monday the 16th of March, as a result of COVID-19. We welcome the decision to move to online teaching as an ad-hoc emergency measure. However, this move to online teaching presents a learning curve for many of us. As GTAs we will have to spend extra time to re-design, upload and research on the best way to deliver the sessions in an entirely new format. Most GTAs are employed on hourly contracts and we, thus, call on University management to add extra hours to our existing contracts to reflect this increased share of workload, with a clear explanation as to how these additional hours will be calculated. The University

Leadership has always emphasised the importance of the work that we do, and how they ensure that they pay for all hours worked, so we hope these demands reflect this.

We would also like to remind you that ASOS extends to UCU GTAs until April 28th, meaning that UCU GTA members will be delivering teaching to the best of their abilities within their contractual time constraints. Unless further hours are added, preparing teaching and learning how to teach online will be carried out within the tight constraints already allocated to the provision of GTA teaching.

In some courses, contact time with GTAs represents the majority of academic contact hours for students. As always, we endeavour to deliver high-quality teaching to our students even under these trying circumstances. We hope the University will do the right thing and acknowledge that the move to online teaching requires GTAs to spend more time on planning and delivering future teaching and, accordingly, makes the necessary adjustments to reflect this.

Kind regards,

UMUCU