What follows is a suggested template to help explain participation to students and to provide some broad guidance. Remix, adapt, make it work for your context **but remember you need to avoid being seen to ‘induce’ a particular response from the student(s), so we advise including the options we have listed in full**. We [*have a Word document with the text in*](https://www.cardiffucu.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Dear-Students-template.docx) too, if you would find that useful.

Dear Students,

I hope you're all well.

With the exam boards completed and marks being released you may be in a situation where not all your assessments have been marked. This may mean that you are unable to graduate or progress to the next year for the time being, or you may be doing so with missing marks. I wanted to contact you to let you know that I am one of the members of staff participating in the Marking and Assessment boycott, to explain why, and to provide some general guidance.

First, I would like to emphasise that I am very sad and disappointed that I have not been able to mark/process the assessments for this module; both yourselves as students and we as staff have worked hard to prepare for them, but I feel very strongly about the reasons for the action (details of which can be found below).

I am also sorry that you have been impacted by this action, but those running our Universities have given us no choice. There have been disputes about our pay and working conditions for ten years, with little or no improvement, and those of us in the Union feel that we have come to the end of the line, and that we have no other option than to take this approach.

We have undertaken this boycott in order that UCEA – the group that runs our Universities – return to the negotiating table, but rather than engage constructively in this way they have chosen instead to try and work around the boycott, leading to the present situation.

Please also note also that the University is deducting 50%, and up to 100% of pay for those participating in this action, over a period that has lasted over two months, and will continue unless the Management show a willingness to resolve the situation. Due to the fact they have decided to take this punitive approach, we have called further strike days, including during graduation week.

If you would like to discuss the situation with me, please do contact me via email so we can arrange a meeting. Academic schools have also set up their own response units for students on this issue, so please feel free to contact the school if you would like to. If the situation is affecting your health please do not hesitate to seek support from student support through [student connect](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/health-and-wellbeing/how-to-get-in-touch-for-support-using-student-connect). If you feel that you would like to challenge the decision of the Exam Board you can consider our [appeals procedure](https://intranet.cardiff.ac.uk/students/study/exams-and-assessment/results/appeals). If you would like to lodge a complaint, UCU advises that you contact the Vice-Chancellor (see final section below).

The situation is untenable and we are keen to see it resolved as soon as possible; when members are satisfied that employers are serious about addressing these issues, the boycott will end. Please see below for details.

And to reiterate, I am happy to talk about this with any of you if that helps.

Take care,

xxxxx

## UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott: Info for students at Cardiff University

## What is happening?

We are members of the University and College Union (UCU). We are your seminar tutors, professional services staff, and lecturers. We teach you, we support and guide you, and we do the research you rely on.

Along with thousands of other UCU members across all UK universities, we are taking part in a ‘Marking and Assessment Boycott’.

**A Marking and Assessment Boycott is when university workers stop doing all work relating to students’ summative assessments**.

We will carry on doing all other aspects of our jobs. You can still contact us as usual if you have any problems or questions about your studies or personal welfare. We will be here for you.

This Marking and Assessment Boycott started on 20th April 2023 and it will continue until university bosses agree to return to the negotiating table to work out an acceptable deal.

## Why is it happening?

We are asking university bosses for the following:

1. **Give us secure employment** with a stable income, so we can plan our lives – not precarious, temporary or hourly-paid jobs.
2. **Get rid of pay gaps** for gender, race and disability.
3. **Pay us enough** so we can all afford the rising cost of living.
4. **Reduce our workload** to a survivable level.

We already took multiple forms of strike action this year and in previous years. Our employers still haven’t made us a fair offer.  The Marking and Assessment Boycott is our absolute last resort. We have stopped marking assessments so university bosses will listen to us.  We want to find a resolution to this dispute and get back to normal as soon as possible. But it is now in the hands of our employers.

## How is this affecting students?

During the Marking and Assessment Boycott:

* Some of your summative assessment results this academic year may have been affected. You might not get your marks until after the marking boycott ends.
* If you are in the final year of your degree, as an undergraduate or postgraduate student, this may mean your graduation is delayed.
* There might be delays to official decisions about whether you can progress to the next year of your course.

Once university bosses show members they are serious about resolving these issues, the boycott will end, we will resume our marking and assessment activities, so that students can receive marks and progress and/or graduate.

We are also deeply concerned that the university has taken many shortcuts in order to lessen the impact of the boycott, worryingly reducing the quality of your degrees in the process. This is because of a risk that senior managers have made decisions to let students progress or even graduate without their work being properly marked. By bypassing the essential process of marking student work, such decisions could tarnish the employment prospects of Cardiff University graduates. We must be vigilant and oppose this.

## Why should students support the Boycott?

**Our working conditions are students’ learning conditions.**

We are trying to protect our whole university community – including you – from year after year of harmful reforms that have damaged our morale and made it almost impossible to do our jobs properly. We care deeply about students. We want you to be able to learn and thrive. This is why we come to work every day!

We are really worried that if we do nothing now, university staff will face even more impossible workloads and a poorer and poorer quality of life. Students’ experience will only get worse, even though you (and your younger siblings) will still have to pay extortionate fees and get into debt.

We are worried that women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and working-class people who work here will face even more disadvantages.

The Marking and Assessment Boycott is now the only way we can achieve a fairer and more equal university, for the benefit of students and staff alike.

More info: [https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/13501/ucuRISING-student-explainer-leaflet/pdf/ucuRISING\_Strike\_student\_leaflet\_Mar23.pdf](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucu.org.uk%2Fmedia%2F13501%2FucuRISING-student-explainer-leaflet%2Fpdf%2FucuRISING_Strike_student_leaflet_Mar23.pdf&data=05%7C01%7CWilliamsH47%40cardiff.ac.uk%7Ceb43d3ce047a465150f008db5dcc5f8d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1%7C0%7C638206904567767464%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=jxObc6ITFDu4X6MQK6En9xgjQUljVubMKy9IRq75G9U%3D&reserved=0)

## How can students help end the boycott?

1. **Email our Vice-Chancellor**, Prof. Colin Riordan: [v-c@cardiff.ac.uk](mailto:v-c@cardiff.ac.uk) Say you support the current UCU Marking and Assessment Boycott. Ask him to please take steps to address UCU’s demands around casualisation, pay equality, pay, and workload. Request a refund of your student fees.
2. **Sign this pledge**: [https://www.ucu.org.uk/supportthestrikes](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucu.org.uk%2Fsupportthestrikes&data=05%7C01%7CWilliamsH47%40cardiff.ac.uk%7Ceb43d3ce047a465150f008db5dcc5f8d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1%7C0%7C638206904567767464%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=KLk6HTMc3nWSSxxL4Nl0M5MsTIS7Ded9EuzAZE8hnGg%3D&reserved=0)
3. **Post on twitter** to say you support the Marking and Assessment Boycott, using the hashtag [#ucuRISING](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2Fhashtag%2FucuRISING&data=05%7C01%7CWilliamsH47%40cardiff.ac.uk%7Ceb43d3ce047a465150f008db5dcc5f8d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1%7C0%7C638206904567767464%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BijGLUw57NFM4c8yQjUwM1qIZH7jMgmySorV%2F9RqZpE%3D&reserved=0) and tagging [@CardiffUCU](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FCardiffUCU&data=05%7C01%7CWilliamsH47%40cardiff.ac.uk%7Ceb43d3ce047a465150f008db5dcc5f8d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1%7C0%7C638206904567767464%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=2dmNshelBRjoue2kSmFGLnHPlGmBx7rIohmok3R%2FAk8%3D&reserved=0).

More info: [https://www.ucu.org.uk/MAB2023](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ucu.org.uk%2FMAB2023&data=05%7C01%7CWilliamsH47%40cardiff.ac.uk%7Ceb43d3ce047a465150f008db5dcc5f8d%7Cbdb74b3095684856bdbf06759778fcbc%7C1%7C0%7C638206904567767464%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=IIHCDJBHmgYnXS7jCPJ%2FZvCihKbEWRLtaMw2%2B8ZQDzg%3D&reserved=0)