

24 November, 2017

Dear Sheffield UCU member,

You will be aware that this branch [expressed deep dissatisfaction](#) with the University's plan to significantly increase the number of Saturday open days, in particular with the terms under which staff were being asked to work. Alongside colleagues from Unite and UNISON, we have been discussing the issue as a matter of urgency with representatives from the University, and have managed to reach an agreement on a number of issues. You might like to look for yourself at the [updated guidance to Heads of Department](#) and compare with the [previous version](#).

The most important point to make is that we consider attendance voluntary to all but a small minority of staff (for example, those with an explicit clause on Saturday working in their contracts), and the updated guidance from the University does not contradict this. Staff members should decide whether the incentives offered are sufficient for them to be willing to attend.

Below, we address the demands from the motion passed at the recent branch meeting, and comments on how things have changed during discussions.

We will be discussing this issue further at our general meeting on 29 November, alongside other issues of significant importance, so we hope to see you there.

Sheffield UCU Committee

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*We demanded that...*

*- Attendance at the Saturday open days should be declared entirely voluntary.*

The [new guidance](#) removes any references to staff being "required to work", referring instead to an "offer to work", and expressly states that "under no circumstances should the threat of disciplinary action be used to secure attendance". We now consider working on a Saturday to be voluntary for most staff who are asked to do so. If you have any doubt about your situation, please contact us.

*- The University properly engages with staff and offers meaningful incentives fairly and consistently, and with agreement with campus unions.*

The University is offering a full day of time off in lieu to all at grades 7 and above who work on a Saturday open day, regardless of how many hours worked, and mandates that a full day is recorded in the workload allocation model. The University was unwilling to offer any additional incentives for grades 7 and above. Staff on grades 1 to 6 who work on a Saturday open day, outside of their normal contracted days, will be entitled to choose to receive overtime pay or take time off in lieu. Time off in lieu will be applied as for grades 7 and above, and overtime pay will be at time and a half.

*- The University reimburses childcare, car parking and travel expense costs to staff willing to sacrifice a Saturday from their personal time (recouped centrally not from departments).*

The University has agreed to trial free onsite childcare on a first come first served basis. Free car parking for staff is provided in the Arts Tower car park for all Saturday open days. Additional public transport travel costs incurred as a result of working on a Saturday open day will be reimbursed via the normal expenses claim process. Additional costs will come out of departmental budgets, but Faculty Finance Managers have been told to be "aware of the circumstances".

*- An equality impact assessment be undertaken and shared to demonstrate that an inclusive approach to Saturday open days will be managed. The EIA will need to make clear that there is no unreasonable discrimination against staff, student workers, or visitors with protected characteristics in moving to Saturday open days.*

An equality impact assessment has been taken and shared with the unions. It identified the following protected characteristics which could impact upon a staff member's ability to attend a Saturday open day: disability, caring responsibilities, religion or belief, pregnancy. It is acknowledged that the presence of one or more of the protected characteristics may mean that some staff are unable to work some or all Saturday open days. For more on this, see the University's guidance.

*- Our research-led University undertakes a proper evidence based cost-benefit analysis of the action to move to exclusively Saturday open days, and is accountable, taking full responsibility if the change results in a negative effect on recruitment.*

The impact and success of the open days will be evaluated at the end of the 2017/18 academic year. Heads of Department and Departmental Managers are welcome to offer feedback on the arrangements during the course of the year. Comments may be passed to the Director of Student Recruitment & Admissions or the Head of HR Services.