Request for a Caseworker form

**Please complete this form and return it to** [**ucu@open.ac.uk**](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk) **to request a caseworker.  Please provide as much information as you can. This form creates an informal agreement between you and your caseworker - please treat them with respect, all our caseworkers do branch casework on a voluntary basis.**

**We aim to allocate a caseworker within 1-4 working days of receiving this completed form.**

Please note that we are unable to allocate you a caseworker before you return a completed copy of this form.  While you wait for someone to be allocated, there are some immediate things that you can do to help yourself and prepare before speaking with your caseworker:

1. **Take a look at the *OU Branch Casework Information and Sources of Support* document we have sent you.**

We have compiled this document to answer many common questions and provide you with immediate sources for emotional support and advice on your rights to UCU representation, which may be helpful to you if you have a meeting with People Services scheduled imminently.

1. **Prepare a timeline document for your caseworker.**

In order for your caseworker to provide the best advice, quickly, they will need appropriate information from you – a timeline of events relating to your issue, with dates, along with key documentation is particularly important. Whilst you wait for a caseworker to be allocated, if you can prepare and send the timeline and key documentation on to [ucu@open.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk), then your caseworker will be able to prepare for the meeting with you.

**Accessibility**

1. We aim to be accessible to all. If you need any help completing the form, please ask the Branch Administrator, [ucu@open.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk).

**Confidentiality**

1. We will use the information you provide only to process and advise you on your case. Your case will be dealt with confidentially, but details may be shared with local UCU branch officers. If this is a concern to you, please speak to your caseworker.
2. Please refer to the UCU Privacy Notice at <https://ucu.org.uk/privacy> for further information about how we use your data, and your rights under data protection legislation.

**Working with a caseworker**

1. Your caseworker will let you know the best way of contacting them during your case, and how quickly you can expect a response. They will not be able to respond immediately to messages or be available to take calls at all times. Please be patient, they are volunteers and will respond as soon as they can.
2. Be open with your caseworker about everything relating to your situation, and any concerns you may have about the process. They will not judge you, and they need to know everything about your case in order to advise you effectively.
3. As your case progresses, your caseworker will discuss how you should work together, and it is likely that you will share tasks between you. We understand that unexpected events can get in the way of meeting deadlines, but please let your caseworker know in good time if you are unable to keep to agreed dates.
4. You will remain responsible for your case, including for making any decisions about direction, for producing and submitting any required documentation and for meeting any deadlines (e.g. hearing submissions, legal claims). Your caseworker will advise and support you. They will not do anything you tell them that you don’t want them to do, but they may not undertake actions which they do not agree with or which they believe to be harmful to your case.
5. At times your caseworker may need to ask you difficult questions about your case or provide you with advice that is difficult for you to hear. Please be assured that this does not mean your caseworker does not believe you or is not on your side. It is an essential part of supporting you, both to help you to prepare for questions from your employer, and to help you to understand the strengths and risks in your case prior to making decisions.
6. In very rare cases where a member behaves in an unreasonable manner or makes persistent unreasonable demands and continues to do so after the unreasonableness has been explained to them, we may be forced to withdraw caseworker support. Although every case is different and individual circumstances will be considered, examples of unreasonable behaviour or demands may include:

* Intimidating, bullying, harassing or acting in an aggressive or seriously disrespectful way to your caseworker or other UCU staff or members.
* Making persistently excessive demands on your caseworker’s time, in terms of the volume and / or timing of communication or requests.
* Pressuring your caseworker to undertake or support actions they believe to be unethical.
* Persistently failing to complete tasks by the dates agreed with your caseworker.
* Delaying or persistently changing decisions on your case to the point where progress cannot be made; or
* Pursuing multiple individual complaints against your employer, if your caseworker advises a single process for all complaints would be a better strategy.

Your relationship with your caseworker should be one of mutual respect, and we hope that you will find the support from your caseworker invaluable throughout your case. Your caseworker will let you know the best way of contacting them during your case, and how quickly you can expect a response.  They will not be able to respond immediately to messages or be available outside of working hours.  Please be patient, they are volunteers and will respond as soon as they can.

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| **Your Name** |  | | |
| **Your Membership Number**  *Leave blank if you don’t know* |  | | |
| **Your Membership Information**  *Information on how to join UCU and national + local subscription levels are available here:* [OU branch UCU: Membership (open.ac.uk)](https://ucu.open.ac.uk/membership) | Have you joined UCU within the last 3 months?  Yes  No | | |
| Are your membership subs paid up to date and at the correct level?  Yes:  No:  Not sure, I will check: | | |
| **Your Contact Details** | Your telephone numbers …………………………………………………………………………..  Your email addresses …………………………………………………………………………………  Best times to contact you ………………………………………………………………………….. | | |
| **Your work area** | Your faculty or unit \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  Your School or team \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| **Your Location**  *Please indicate your normal place(s) of work* | Walton Hall  Homeworker  Regional or national office, please specify which one: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| **Your Staff Category**  *Leave blank if you don’t know* | Central Academic  Central Academic-Related  Regional/National Academic  Regional/National Academic-Related  Associate Lecturer  Research staff  Other, please specify: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ | | |
| **The problem you need help with**  *Please describe the issue that prompted you to contact us* |  | | |
| **Support for meetings with management**  *\*Note: A* ***formal*** *meeting is one that has been called for in writing where you are given the right to have a union representative present.*  *\*\*Note: You may be able to have the date and time of a meeting moved by 5 days, where you have a right to a UCU rep attending. Please tell People Services (HR) that you are seeking a caseworker.* | **Do you require support for one of these types of meetings?**  Disciplinary hearing  Grievance hearing  Capability meeting  Bullying & Harassment hearing  Performance Improvement Plan (PIP) meeting    **Have you been asked to attend a *formal\** meeting regarding:**  Restructure  Redundancy  **Please tell us the time, date and location of your meeting\*\***  Time………………………………………………………..  Date………………………………………………………… Location………………………………………………….. | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Support for returning to work following sickness** | Are you due to return to work, or have you recently returned to work, following a sickness absence of 4 weeks or more?  When are you currently due to return to work, or when did you return to work?  Date………………………………………………………… | **Yes** | **No** |
| **Nature / Type of Case**  Indicate all which apply, or leave blank if you don’t know | Bullying & Harassment  Capability / probation  Disciplinary  Discrimination  Fixed term contract issue  Flexible working (including Agile Working Requests)  Grievance  Health and Safety  Line Management issue  Performance management  Pensions/retirement  Part-time working issue  Redundancy  Sickness or health issue  Workload or AL FTE issue  Other issue, please specify: | | |
| **Equality Factors**  *The law provides additional protection from certain types of discrimination. If you feel that any of these categories are relevant to your case, please indicate accordingly* | Pregnancy/Maternity/Paternity/Adoption/Shared parental leave  Marriage / Civil Partnership Status  Sexual orientation  Sex  Religion/belief  Race  Gender reassignment  Disability  Age | | |
| **Legal support**  *For certain kinds of issues, to protect your rights, there is a time limit of three months minus one day to utilise the law. Your caseworker can discuss this with you thoroughly and where appropriate refer for further or legal advice, however, please note that it remains your responsibility to watch the relevant timeline and abide by relevant legal deadlines.* | Do you consider yourself to have been discriminated against?  Yes  No  If so, do you consider yourself to have been discriminated against because of one of the named equality factors above?  Yes  No  When do you think the last act of discrimination was?  Date: ……………………….  Do you think the discrimination that affects your issue to be ongoing?  Yes  No | | |

**Thank you for completing the casework request form.**

**Please return it to** [**ucu@open.ac.uk**](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk) **and we will endeavour to assign you an appropriate caseworker within 1-4 working days.**

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| **Case reference** |  |
| **Date of initial contact from member via** [**ucu@open.ac.uk**](mailto:ucu@open.ac.uk) |  |
| **Date info pack sent** |  |
| **Date member returned *completed*** **casework form** |  |
| **Name of caseworker** |  |
| **Case result (in summary)** |  |
| **Date case was closed** |  |

Form updated March 2024