

# ***Mental Health Overwork Job Insecurity***



‘...Over two thirds of...academic or professional services [staff] currently struggle for half of their time to complete their workload and nearly one-third struggle all of the time.’\*

‘Those on fixed-term contracts experience worry and anxiety about their employment status with over one-third stating they experience poor mental health because of it.’\*

According to ***Pressure Vessels: The epidemic of poor mental health among higher education staff***, between 2009 and 2015, counselling referrals rose by an average of 77%, while staff referrals to occupational health services rose by 64%. Higher education is an ‘anxiety machine’. Rising workloads, insecure contracts, poor management practices and waves of job losses are all factors.

## **Solutions**

- Realistic, appropriate workload norms and models
- Job security and career development
- Staffing levels adequate to cover annual leave, study leave and routine sickness absence

\*Prof Mike Thomas, foreword to Liz Morrish, May 2019, <https://www.hepi.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/HEPI-Pressure-Vessels-Occasional-Paper-20.pdf>

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If you're affected by these issues don't forget that OU Staff can access the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) in complete confidence. There's more information on the Wellbeing pages of the intranet: <https://openuniv.sharepoint.com/sites/intranet-people-services/pages/wellbeing.aspx>

## **UCU Strike**

### **Job Security, Workload, Equality, Fair Pay and Pensions**

#### ***Things you can do to help***

- Write to the Vice-Chancellor asking for urgent action to resolve the disputes.
- (This site provides addresses and a suggested text on pensions: <https://ucu.org.uk/article/10650/Staff-speak-out-to-save-our-pensions>)
- Post information and support on social media
- Make sure your office has some of the strike leaflets and chat to colleagues about the strike
- Make a donation to the local UCU Hardship Fund for strikers: <http://ucu.open.ac.uk/campaigns>
- If you're academic or academic-related (G7 or above) you can join UCU and take action. [www.ucu.org.uk/join](http://www.ucu.org.uk/join)

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