# University of Dundee staff to strike amid fears of 700 job cuts and compulsory redundancies



At the University of Dundee, tensions are mounting as staff prepare to embark on a five-day strike from May 26 to May 30, a decision catalysed by the alarming prospect of up to 700 job cuts. This latest wave of industrial action follows previous strikes in February and March, reflecting ongoing discontent within the university community regarding management decisions aimed at addressing severe financial shortfalls.

Initially signalling an intention to reduce jobs through voluntary redundancies, the university’s management recently indicated that compulsory redundancies could not be entirely ruled out. This shift has exacerbated anxieties among staff, particularly those working in critical departments such as the Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science and the Educational Assistive Technology Team. The latter plays a crucial role in supporting disabled students, making the potential cuts particularly concerning for both staff and learners.

Jo Grady, General Secretary of the University and College Union (UCU), described the university's approach to job losses as deeply troubling, urging the institution to honour the Scottish Government's recommendations against compulsory redundancies. Speaking at a recent event, she remarked, “Our members must take a stand against compulsory redundancies,” highlighting the urgent need for sustainable solutions that protect jobs and maintain educational standards.

The backdrop to these strikes is a substantial financial crisis at the university, which is grappling with a £35 million deficit. The university's interim principal, Professor Shane O’Neill, attributed this shortfall to multiple factors, including a notable decline in international student enrolments and escalating operational costs. In broader context, this situation is not unique to Dundee; other institutions have similarly faced drastic measures to address financial challenges.

Previous job cut crises at the university paint a stark picture of how such disputes can escalate. In March 2011, for instance, staff feared the threat of nearly 200 compulsory redundancies. After a one-day strike and negotiations, management agreed to policies aimed at avoiding redundancies, ultimately achieving nearly £9 million in savings. This presents a potential framework for current negotiations, should both parties seek a resolution that prioritises staff stability.

The Scottish Government, along with the Scottish Funding Council, has acknowledged the seriousness of the situation at Dundee University. They provided £25 million to support institutions facing similar financial predicaments, emphasising that while universities maintain operational autonomy, there is a crucial need for engagement with all stakeholders, including staff and trade unions.

In light of these recent developments, the university expressed disappointment at the planned strikes, particularly given efforts to establish a revised recovery plan. University representatives have assured that robust contingency plans are in place to minimise disruption to students. However, many within the campus community feel that the stakes are too high to ignore, arguing that the future of both jobs and quality education hangs in the balance.

As negotiations unfold amidst strikes and appeals for governmental intervention, the situation at the University of Dundee underscores broader challenges within the higher education sector, where financial pressures increasingly translate into tough decisions impacting the workforce and educational quality.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/), [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgrl84vm2vo)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/11/dundee-university-faces-hammer-blow-amid-plans-to-cut-635-jobs)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-13907285), [[7]](https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-dundee-axe-632-jobs-plug-ps35-million-deficit)
* Paragraph 5 – [[5]](https://news.sky.com/story/university-of-dundee-to-cut-over-600-jobs-to-plug-16335m-deficit-13326384), [[6]](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/11/dundee-university-faces-hammer-blow-amid-plans-to-cut-635-jobs)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/), [[4]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgrl84vm2vo)
* Paragraph 7 – [[2]](https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/), [[3]](https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-13907285)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/university-facing-staff-strikes-over-hundreds-of-threatened-job-cuts-FSQRG2P57BITRGJI7BPO5B7GSE/> - The University and College Union (UCU) members at the University of Dundee are set to begin a five-day strike from May 26 to May 30, 2025, in response to the university's decision to cut 700 jobs. This follows previous industrial actions in February and March. Initially, the university announced 300 job losses through a voluntary redundancy scheme, but the UCU claims that compulsory redundancies remain a possibility. The union is also concerned about redundancies in the Leverhulme Research Centre for Forensic Science and the Educational Assistive Technology Team departments. UCU General Secretary Jo Grady has called for intervention from the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council to address the crisis.
3. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-tayside-central-13907285> - In March 2011, staff and management at Dundee University resolved a dispute over job cuts announced the previous year. Union members feared nearly 200 compulsory redundancies, leading to a one-day strike. The cuts were part of measures to save millions annually. After extensive negotiations, both parties agreed on key policies, including redundancy avoidance. The university had achieved £8.7 million in savings against a £10 million target. Dr. Jim McGeorge, the university's secretary, expressed confidence in avoiding compulsory redundancies and achieving the remaining savings.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/ckgrl84vm2vo> - In January 2025, staff at the University of Dundee voted for strike action over the university's plans to cut jobs due to a potential £30 million deficit. The University and College Union (UCU) Scotland reported that 74% of its members supported the strike, with a 64% turnout. The university had previously announced a recruitment freeze and operational expenditure reductions but still faced a significant deficit. The UCU criticized the university's lack of engagement and the potential use of compulsory redundancies.
5. <https://news.sky.com/story/university-of-dundee-to-cut-over-600-jobs-to-plug-16335m-deficit-13326384> - In March 2025, the University of Dundee announced plans to cut 632 full-time jobs to address a £35 million deficit. The cuts would affect every school and directorate, representing about 20% of the workforce. Interim Principal Professor Shane O'Neill stated that an external investigation would be conducted into the financial issues. The university cited factors such as a severe drop in international student recruitment and increased costs as contributing to the deficit.
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/mar/11/dundee-university-faces-hammer-blow-amid-plans-to-cut-635-jobs> - In March 2025, the University of Dundee announced plans to cut over 600 jobs and reduce teaching by a fifth to cope with a £35 million deficit. Interim Principal Professor Shane O'Neill stated that nearly 200 academic staff and 435 support staff would be made redundant, affecting every department. The university also planned to sell assets and economize on operational costs. The University and College Union described the cuts as a 'hammer blow' to staff and criticized the management's handling of the situation.
7. <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/university-dundee-axe-632-jobs-plug-ps35-million-deficit> - In March 2025, the University of Dundee announced plans to cut 632 full-time equivalent jobs to address a £35 million deficit. The cuts, affecting about one in five posts, are the largest announced in the UK higher education sector that year. The university committed to an external investigation into the financial issues and acknowledged that compulsory redundancies were likely. The University and College Union criticized the cuts and called for alternative solutions to preserve education in Dundee.