

This is the latest edition of HE news. In this edition you will find updates on:

- **The Joint HE trade union national claim and New JNCHES negotiations**
- **Special HE sector conference at the end of April**
- **New bargaining and campaigning guidance on zero hours contracts**
- **The latest update on UCU approach to the Research Excellence Framework**
- **Details of the health Educators Forum meeting on 17 April**
- **USS consultation**

1. The Joint HE trade union national claim

The first meeting at New JNCHES took place on 26 March following the submission of the joint unions' national claim the week before. At the meeting the trade union side set out the details of the claim and the employers made an initial response. No offer was made and both side agreed to schedule an additional meeting as part of the negotiating timetable on 14 April.

The joint unions' claim

The claim was drafted by UCU's national negotiators and agreed by the Higher Education Committee in February this year. The claim focuses on a 'keep up and catch up' pay offer, coupled with a pay equality claim that builds on work undertaken following last year's agreement by seeking to address the position of casually employed / zero hours staff, hourly paid lecturers, the HE gender pay gap and pay equality issues above the 51 point spine. All the central elements of the claim approved by the HEC were endorsed by the joint trade union side, consisting of UNISON, Unite, EIS and GMB, before being submitted to the employers on 18 March.

What happens next?

A series of negotiating meetings have been agreed following the initial meeting on the 26 March. New JNCHES will meet again on Tuesday 14 April, Friday 24 April, and Tuesday 12 May. We will keep branches updated on the progress of the negotiations.

The full details of the joint union claims can be found here:

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/UCUHE246.rtf or
www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUHE246.pdf

2. Special HE sector conference

In line with the decisions taken the May 2014 sector conference the HEC has called a special higher education sector conference to take place on **Wednesday 29 April 2015 in Manchester**. The business of the conference will be to receive and consider a report on the progress of the 2015 pay negotiations.

Further information was sent out in the calling notice to branches on Friday 20 March: www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu643.html or www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/ucu643.rtf

3. Ending zero-hours contracts in further and higher education

Now's the time to take the fight to the employers over zero-hours contracts

Alongside other unions, UCU continues to hammer away in the press and Parliament to raise the pressure for legislation that would outlaw zero hours contracts. But our national campaign is also focused firmly on raising pressure on key employers and driving change in our institutions. And we're making headway too. At Edinburgh and now Glasgow Universities there has been positive progress in moving away from using zero hours contracts and the union has capitalised on this by writing to eight other Scottish universities urging them to get on board and commit to negotiations. At key target institutions in England, active campaigns have been built with national assistance and several have negotiations in progress. The public and political profile of zero hour's contracts is not going to diminish and our campaign has real momentum. Now is the time to turn up the pressure on your employer by building local campaigns, plugging into the national campaign, and pressing for negotiations. UCU has produced new cross-sectoral bargaining and campaigning guidance to help branches negotiate the end of zero hours contracts, which you can access here: www.ucu.org.uk/?mediaid=6886

Contact Jonathan White for more details on at jwhite@ucu.org.uk

4. Research Excellence Framework - UCUHE/240

Branches are asked to feedback on their institutions initial response to the 2014 REF results and the equality impacts that have occurred/occur as a result of the REF process. Please send any relevant information to UCU bargaining and negotiations official Jenny Lennox at jlennox@ucu.org.uk.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/UCUHE240.rtf or www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/UCUHE240.pdf

5. Health educators' forum - Friday 17 April

This is an opportunity for UCU members working in health education to get updates about issues in their sector, and to input into the work of the union in health education. Health Education England will be leading a discussion on the 'Shape of caring review', followed by representatives from sister health unions and the Council of Deans of Health talking about key issues for the year ahead. We want to hear about the things that matter to health educators, so branches should encourage their members to come along and have their say. Branches can send more than one member to the Forum. Members can find out more and register here: www.ucu.org.uk/healtheducators

6. UCUHE/245 USS consultation – guidance for members

USS employers will be circulating information from USS on how scheme members can respond to the USS consultation. This circular suggests points members may wish to make in response to the prompt questions posed in the paper. Members should feel free to add their own comments.

UCU will be sending a separate formal response to the consultation.

www.ucu.org.uk/circ/rtf/UCUHE245.rtf or
www.ucu.org.uk/circ/pdf/UCUHE245.pdf