

Dear colleague,

You are being balloted on whether to accept the proposals for a two year settlement on IfL membership agreed by UCU and other trade unions, with the government, IfL and employers.

As you know, UCU and the other trade unions have been in talks with the government, IfL and employers in order to try to find a negotiated settlement on the dispute over IfL fees.

These discussions followed a fantastic campaign in which 22,000 members signed a mass petition protesting the hike in IfL fees, and withheld their membership in the face of significant pressure.

The talks that followed have been very tough but we have reached a point where your negotiators (the General Secretary and National Head of FE) are clear that the joint proposals are the best that can be achieved through these negotiations. The proposals do not fully meet all our demands and concerns but the unions have won some key concessions.

The Further Education Committee of the national executive recognise the concessions that have been achieved but is of the view that the proposals still remain inadequate and recommends that members should reject the proposed two year settlement and move to an industrial action ballot on boycotting fees.

It is right that members should now decide on the next steps.

The key points of the agreement are:

1. **Reduced fees:** Annual membership of £38 and with further reductions for those earning less than £1600.
2. **Review of IfL:** UCU and other trade unions will have a central role in reviewing IfL through a reference group. It will cover the governance, regulatory responsibilities, membership services, and future fee levels. This review is premised on the shared principle of having a flourishing, independent, professional membership body that is both *accountable* and *relevant* to its members. The unions would vigorously pursue these objectives in the review and take stock after two years.
3. **Principle of employer assistance on fees:** The proposals explicitly recognise that individuals may approach their employers to seek support in the payment of fees and commits employers to provide adequate facilities and time for CPD. If the proposals are accepted UCU will advise individuals and branches to lodge claims for such financial support for fees and if necessary organise industrial and/or legal pressure on employers to meet such claims.

The proposals would form the basis of a two-year settlement and the unions would not be bound beyond that point were IfL to propose raising the fee at any future date.

You can download the full agreed statement here:

<http://campaigns.ifl.ac.uk/t/10134215/19309273/22476/0/>

Why you are being balloted:

Considering where we started from earlier this year, it's clear to us that UCU's campaign has been highly effective. But we must be clear. We have not got everything that we wanted and feeling on this issue is strong. There is now a clear choice for members.

On this basis, we are putting these proposals to members to decide on the next steps. Please vote either

YES we should accept these proposals for a two-year settlement

NO we should reject and conduct an industrial action ballot to boycott fees.

Sally Hunt, General Secretary

Barry Lovejoy, National head of further education