



Report of HEC July 2020

Dear colleague

The higher education committee (HEC) met last week and made a number of important decisions, which are reported on in this update.

New JNCHES 2020/21

My last update on this year's negotiating round can be found [here](#).

Following concerted trade join side lobbying UCEA agreed to meet and start this year's negotiations on 7 July. At the meeting UCEA stressed their commitment and that of the employers they represent to New JNCHES and national UK bargaining and shared **the list of those HEI's that have signed up to New JNCHES for 2020/21.**

In line with the position set out in the email from the UCEA CEO, UCEA commented on the continued uncertainty created by the pandemic and the modelling HEI's are doing for a range of financial scenarios in which jobs and other terms and conditions are at risk. What employers want is certainty on finances for 2020/21 and this means the position on a pay freeze has not changed and will not change. **UCEA did confirm they were prepared to discuss a range of other matters raised by the unions, they would participate in further JNCHES meetings and an autumn meeting of JNCHES to review sector finances.**

The HEC received a report on the negotiations. After debating UCEA's pay freeze proposal for 2020/21, HEC unanimously rejected it. HEC's view is that employers are acting precipitately and some are using the pandemic as cover for unnecessary and detrimental changes to member's terms and conditions without the full picture on student numbers being available to support these attacks. UCEA should wait until the autumn and then review the situation on pay in the light of the actual data on student numbers.

In regards to the equality and pay related elements of the claim, HEC expressed concern on the lack of a meaningful responses regarding a UK level job security agreement, prioritising work on the impact of the pandemic for BAME and other disadvantaged groups, the detrimental treatment of precariously employed staff and the consequences of increasing workloads. HEC did agree to continue to meet UCEA alongside the other trade unions and negotiate on these matters. Dates for future JNCHES meetings are under discussion and branches will receive updates in due course.

Special HE sector conference

HEC discussed how best to implement a motion from a recent meeting calling for a special HE sector conference (SHESC). HEC considered how other unions had approached and dealt with organising conferences during lock down and the changes the other unions had made to their union's rules and standing orders to facilitate an on line conference. HEC agreed that an on line SHESC will be called in September (date TBC) but without any changes to UCU's standing orders, or to the format of the SHESC. A calling notice with details of the date and time of the SHESC, the timing for branch meetings and motion deadlines, CBC reports and other supporting information will be circulated next week.

Online all members meeting

HEC has agreed that UCU will organise an all members on line meeting. The meeting will discuss, agree and build united resistance against all job cuts in further, adult and higher education. The specific arrangements in support of the meeting are under discussion and will cover, the IT platform, how members register, speakers and themes, how members participate in the debate and ask questions, and the date and timing of the meeting. Branches are encouraged to look out for a further communication on this matter soon.

If you have any comments or feedback please contact me.

Paul Bridge

UCU head of higher education