

Improving the terms and conditions for academic-related and professional services staff

What is a model claim and how do we use it?

UCU has drawn up this model claim for ARPS staff to help branches to address a number of longstanding concerns that ARPS members have raised with the union.

The claim should be submitted only after consultation with ARPS members, so that it can focus on the important issues for those members in your branch. It can also be submitted with sister unions active in your university to maximise the impact and increase your bargaining strength.

The list of issues in the claim is not exhaustive, so branches should feel free to change/remove/add parts to the claim to fit local circumstances. A consultation/survey of ARPS members could help inform this process.

As well as drawing up the claim, it is important for branches to consider a campaign plan at the same time. To be successful in negotiations it isn't enough to ask, you need to put the employer under pressure to give, and that must be a cumulative process.

Regional offices and the bargaining and negotiations team will happily support branches to prepare, submit, campaign and negotiate around this claim.

February 2021

Model campaign plan timetable

This is a suggested campaign plan timetable. Branches can of course deviate from it, but make sure this is part of your discussions and planning if you decide to submit a claim.

Week no.	Action	Possible contacts and resources
Week 1	Call meeting of academic-related and professional services staff/members to discuss issues and pass enabling motion.	Invite a national speaker (HEC, ARPS, bargaining and negotiations team) and share the motion.
Week 2	Launch survey of academic-related and professional services staff/members to identify key issues for the claim.	Refer to model survey.
Week 6	Sub-group to develop local claim using national materials, including the model claim, and local issues.	Contact your regional office or bargaining and negotiations team to get support with this.
Week 7	Sub-group to plan supporting campaign strategy.	Contact your regional office or bargaining and negotiations team to get support with this.
Weeks 9-12	Get endorsement of claim at a meeting or via an e-ballot.	
Week 15	Lodge the local claim with your employer.	
Week 20	Sub-group follow up/progress.	Contact your regional office or bargaining and negotiations team to get support with this.
Week 22	Review progress of negotiations and support needed and feedback.	Your regional official will be able to help with this.
Week 25	Meeting to discuss escalation as agreed in plan if necessary.	Contact your regional office to get support with this.

A model letter to accompany the claim

Dear [NAME]

We believe that we have a common interest in addressing the concerns of academic-related, professional staff (ARPS) since they make up a significant proportion of the academic teams, but receive little of the attention and recognition.

A UCU survey of academic-related, professional staff (including non-UCU members) conducted in Autumn 2019 identified the following issues as most important to them individually and collectively as ARPS:

1. workload
2. career progression
3. pay.

And only 17.5% of those surveyed said they had clear promotional pathways available to them.

The same survey identified that 74.1% of respondents didn't have any defined Continuing Professional Development. 36.1% of those surveyed were members of a professional body, of whom 38.2% reported that their employer paid for their membership of this body.

Pay and career progression

As you will be aware, the AUT (one of UCU's predecessor unions) and UCEA signed off on a Memorandum of Understanding on 16 March 2004, which specifically sought to ensure that academic-related and professional staff in Pre-1992 universities did not suffer a detriment in comparison to their previous career progression on the old ALC pay spine.

The MoU stated:

Grading for academic-related staff

To address the AUT's concern about grading arrangements for academic-related staff, it is:

- emphasised that the requirements in the Framework Agreement about common grading across staff groups will embrace both academic and senior administrative, library and computing staff
- noted that a number of pre-1992 universities and colleges have already been engaged with AUT, or have indicated willingness to engage with AUT, in developing role profiles for academic-related staff; and agreed that any institution which has undertaken work of this sort should be invited to contribute such profiles to a library database, maintained nationally by UCEA. These profiles for senior administrative,

library and computing staff, suitably indexed with reference to grade and function, would be published to assist HE institutions and their partner unions in the process of negotiating and implementing new grading arrangements on a timely basis.

This means that incremental progression to the contribution threshold (ie to the top of the main grade) will take no longer than it did under the previous pay and grading arrangements.

These aims were reinforced by Appendix A of the National Framework Agreement which says the following:

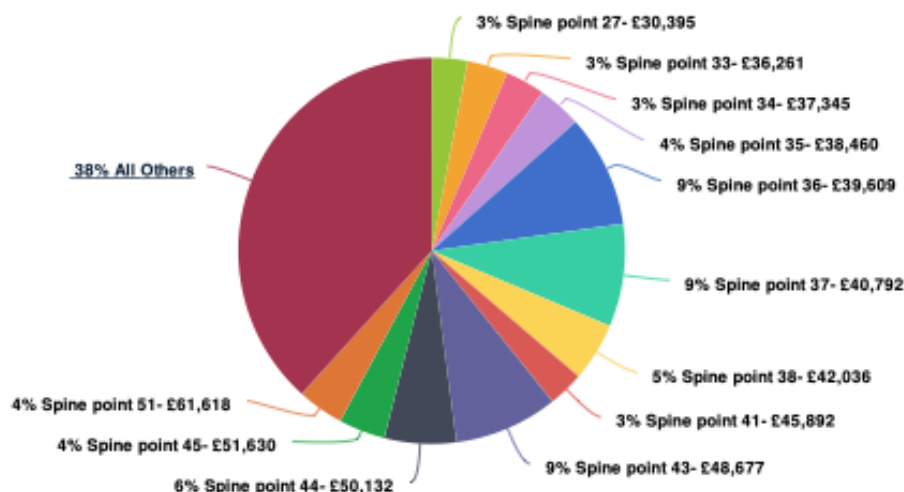
PRINCIPLES FOR THE DETERMINATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF PAY AND GRADING STRUCTURES

The following principles underpin all aspects of this Framework Agreement. Every institution covered by this agreement will adopt pay and grading structures which:

- apply to all staff covered by the remit of the JNCHES, except clinical academics
- have been developed in partnership with their recognised trades unions, working to reach negotiated agreements on a timely basis
- link with the nationally determined pay spine in a clearly defined, rational and orderly manner
- support the achievement of equal pay for work of equal value, with the application of pay points to staff being transparent, consistent and fair
- base the allocation of staff to grades on the outcomes of job evaluation/role analysis arrangements which:
 - enable equitable, consistent and transparent judgements to be made about the relative value or size of jobs
 - apply institution-wide, covering all groups of staff
 - reflect the JNCHES guidance which will be updated in autumn 2003
 - have been administered in consultation with the recognised unions
 - provide access to appropriate review procedures, in the event of disputes about grading outcomes
- apply common grading across all staff groups, including where pay structures are expressed locally in terms of more than one job family or career pathway
- be appropriate to the objectives and culture of the HE institutions to which they apply
- provide for salary and career progression to attract, retain and motivate staff, rewarding appropriately their knowledge, experience and contribution
- have regard to the resources likely to be available to the institution
- be readily implementable over a sustained period
- be developed and introduced in consultation with those affected – managers, staff and their representatives
- be readily understandable to staff and clearly communicated to them.

The UCU survey of academic-related, professional staff of Autumn 2019 found that there was clear clustering of staff around the top of grades 7 (spine points 30-34 with progression points between 35 and 37) and 8 (spine points 35-43 with progression points between 44 and 46) and in the progression points relating to those grades.

6. Please select the national pay point that is closest to your full time equivalent salary (as of August 2019)



We believe this demonstrates that ARPS staff do not have the same ability to access clear promotional pathways as some academic staff do and become 'stuck' at certain points in the career framework.

56% of respondents to our survey told us that they were unable to secure promotion in their current role, and yet 35.5% of respondents have been employed by their current university for more than 15 years. These are skilled, experienced staff who feel that their employer doesn't want to develop their skills or draw on their experience.

33.2% of respondents told us their institution was struggling to recruit in their areas, and 39.1% of these people said these issues were related to pay.

UCU's survey, and our discussions/survey [delete as appropriate] of local members highlights that ARPS staff feel overlooked in comparison to their academic colleagues, and yet they are an integral part of the university.

We are submitting the attached claim so we can work with you to start to address these issues, and look forward to meeting with you shortly to discuss these further.

Your sincerely,

[BRANCH COMMITTEE/PRESIDENT]

The model claim

We are therefore asking the University to implement the following:

1. To confirm that progression from [insert here the appropriate grades or spine points, the Framework Agreement states Grade 6 to Grade 7 (at spine point 30)] will be the normal expectation of academic related, professional staff (to mirror the previous career progression agreement and honour the framework agreement)
2. That beyond [insert here the appropriate grades or spine points, the Framework Agreement states grade 7 (spine points 30-34)], proper pay, progression and promotion parity between academic-related, professional staff and academic staff will be instituted. To achieve this, we propose establishing a working group consisting of university and UCU colleagues, to review the current pay progression routes for academic-related, professional staff in comparison to those of academic staff. Once any differences have been identified, a plan should be established to level-up ARPS to eliminate those differences, so parity can be achieved. UCU has model academic-related job family role profiles that may help with this process:
https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/3540/UCU-model-academic-related-job-family-role-profiles-Oct-09/pdf/ucu_arprofiles_oct09.pdf
3. The working group should also consider the job evaluation process for academic-related and professional services staff with reference to the professional standards in their industry, where they exist, and establish UCU involvement in the job evaluation process.
4. Provide all academic-related, professional staff with a minimum of 10 days [this number can be increased depending on local circumstances] a year for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). This time should be used for any training which has been jointly identified by the individual and their manager as useful in their professional development, and shouldn't include centrally organised training planned to cover areas central to an individual's work, such as rolling out new software; changed personnel practices or a similar university-wide initiative. There should be money set aside by the institution to cover/contribute to the costs of this CPD.
5. Cover the cost of academic-related staff joining the appropriate professional body for their area of work. The individual and the line manager should jointly agree on the appropriate body for the individual.
6. Ensure that academic-related and professional services staff have proportionate representation on governing bodies.
7. Extra paid time off from work (on top of any other designated facilities time) for nominated branch officers to meaningfully participate in this work.