

Jon Hegerty and Ruth Smith
Joint Union Side Secretaries
Joint Higher Education Sector Trade Unions

By email

11 January 2023

Dear Jon and Ruth,

2023-24 New JNCHES pay round

I would like to thank you and the other higher education trade unions for agreeing to the process for an early start to the 2023-24 New JNCHES pay round. We received this confirmation from all five sector trade unions earlier today. For ease of reference, the agreed process is attached as Appendix 1. Now that we have this confirmation, UCEA is able to make an offer in respect of the pay uplift for 2023-24.

As we have stated previously, higher education institutions (HEIs) understand the anxieties facing many members of staff as inflation pushes up the price of energy and everyday necessities. Similarly, many HEIs themselves face significant increases in costs against a backdrop of already stretched finances. A significant number of HEIs remain in deficit, while the median surplus across the sector is a modest 2 percent of total income. As a consequence, while employers have a great deal of sympathy with staff coping with cost of living pressures, no HEI could offer a pay award that would get close to current levels of inflation.

However, UCEA is committed to working constructively with the HE trade unions to reach an early settlement to the 2023-24 New JNCHES pay round. In order to reach a swift conclusion to these negotiations, UCEA is willing to make the following offer for the 2023-24 New JNCHES pay round from 1 August 2023:

Spinal Column Points	Uplift
3 to 14	7%
15 to 25	6%
26 to 42	5%
43 to 51	4%

This structure of pay award would ensure an uplift of 7 percent for all staff earning up to and including £22,662. It would ensure an uplift of at least 6 percent for staff earning up to and including £30,502. All staff earning £50,300 or below would receive a minimum uplift of 5 percent. This would be in addition to any incremental progression due to individual members of staff. As we have previously identified, this is typically worth 3 percent in addition to the base pay uplift.

If an agreement can be reached on these percentage uplifts for 2023-24, we are prepared to implement a proportion of this award as an interim uplift from February 2023, which is within the 2022-23 financial year.

This is a significant financial risk for many HEIs who are unable to forecast with certainty their income for 2023-24. However, to provide support to staff, our members understand the importance of trying to make an early pay award.

Our proposal would that, from 1 February 2023, there would be an interim uplift for staff based upon the following distribution:

Spinal Column Points	Uplift
3 to 14	2.8%
15 to 25	2.4%
26 to 42	2%
43 to 51	1.6%

The remainder of the uplift would then be awarded in August 2023, as follows:

Spinal Column Points	Uplift
3 to 14	4.2%
15 to 25	3.6%
26 to 42	3%
43 to 51	2.4%

It is clear that employers' level of affordability across the sector is modest in comparison to the unions' desire for a pay uplift in excess of any measure of inflation. However, we hope that our proposals will be recognised by the Union Side and the HE workforce as a genuine attempt by employers to address the cost of living pressures that they face.

As we have previously discussed, following the conclusion of the negotiations relating to the pay award for 2023-24, UCEA is then prepared to begin negotiations over the additional non-pay items submitted by the Unions' joint claim for 2023-24 in line with the jointly agreed process.

We look forward to discussing this offer with you at our next scheduled meeting on Monday 16 January 2023.

Yours sincerely,



Raj Jethwa
Chief Executive

Appendix 1

Process for bringing forward the New JNCHES negotiations for the 2023-24 pay round

The parties to New JNCHES are amending the procedure for the 2023-24 pay round, to begin and conclude the pay negotiations on an earlier and accelerated timescale, in order to seek to address immediate cost of living difficulties for staff in the HE sector.

Whilst employers view the 2022-23 round as closed, employers also recognise that the unions do not regard the 2022-23 round as concluded and that the unions would want any settlement of 2023-24 to take account of this. The employers agreed to consider this as part of the 2023-24 pay round.

Procedure

The round consists of three negotiating meetings between UCEA and the five joint trade unions, on 9th January (re-convened from 13th December 2022), 16th January 2023 and 25th January 2023, on the pay award for 2023-24.

Specifically, there will be up to three negotiating meetings on pay aiming to conclude by the end of January.

If these meetings do not result in an agreement between the parties, then either party can invoke the New JNCHES Dispute Resolution Procedure outlined in Appendix A of the New JNCHES Agreement and the process and timescales set out in that procedure will apply.

Following the conclusion of the negotiating meetings, and Dispute Resolution Procedure (if invoked), relating to the pay award for 2023-24, the parties will begin negotiations over the additional non-pay items in the unions' joint claim for 2023-24. The dates for these negotiations will commence as soon as reasonably practicable following the negotiations (and dispute resolution procedure, if invoked) over pay, and no later than the usual March to May timescale set out in the New JNCHES Agreement. If these meetings on additional non-pay items do not result in an agreement between the parties on those matters, then either party can, in relation to those matters, invoke the New JNCHES Dispute Resolution Procedure outlined in Appendix A of the New JNCHES Agreement and the process and timescales set out in the procedure will apply.