

## Branch Delegate Meeting (BDM) questions: notes

These notes are intended to support branch officers in their discussions with members as they consult in preparation for the BDM on 29 March 2023. The branch briefing which took place on 23 March asked us to provide further clarity and we have tried to do so

1. We do not have 'deals' with employers to put to members. The HEC (Higher Education Committee) will decide whether any final agreements are put to members in a formal consultation. What we have is the promise of further negotiations. What we have 'agreed' are:
  - a. **terms of reference for future negotiations on casualisation, pay spine reform, workload, and equality pay gaps**
  - b. **a joint statement with UUK (Universities UK) about them restoring the USS (Universities Superannuation Scheme) pension benefits and supporting a prudent valuation**
  - c. **UCEA (Universities and Colleges Employers Association) issued a statement which clarifies their position** and the **joint unions released a statement in response**
  - d. if we agree to engage in the negotiations and if the negotiations continue, we will work with elected negotiators to work towards agreeing framework agreements on pay spine reform, casualisation, workload, and equality pay gaps. These agreements will then form the basis of local negotiations led by local branches supported by regional and national officials.
2. Question one asks whether branches want us to continue to engage in negotiations with the employers on those terms:
  - a. the consequence of saying 'yes' is that the negotiations will continue on the four areas led by elected negotiators
  - b. the consequence of saying 'no' is that there will be no more negotiations on these agreed terms
  - c. the risk is that there will be no further negotiations until spring 2024 when we open the 24/25 pay round
  - d. agreeing to not continue the negotiations also puts at risk any potential agreements with USS.

3. Questions two and three ask whether members should be consulted over the agreements to negotiate with the employers:
  - a. members in the e-consultation and the BDM both voted in favour of members being consulted
  - b. the consequence of saying 'yes' is that members would be asked whether they want to continue to negotiate with UCEA and UUK on the terms agreed. If members said 'no' in that consultation, the negotiations would end (similar to the consequences and risk associated with saying 'no' to question one)
  - c. the consequence of saying 'no' is that members would not be consulted.
  
4. Questions four and five ask whether members want us to commence a Marking & Assessment Boycott (MAB). The MAB could commence from w/b 17 April. Training for members is planned.
  - a. the consequence of saying 'yes' is that HEC/HEC officers could approve the MAB from w/b 20 April
  - b. the consequence of saying 'no' is that HEC would be advised the BDM did not agree to commence the MAB and take that into consideration what making its determination
  - c. the aim of a MAB would be to either continue to provide leverage to the employer to secure positive outcomes from the negotiations (and an improved pay offer) or to provide leverage on the employer to improve the terms of reference of any negotiations (and agree an improved pay offer). The MAB could also provide leverage on UUK to give greater clarity and certainty to their commitment to restore USS benefits
  - d. the risk of this course of action is that UCEA have made it clear that they will not engage in further negotiations if UCU are engaged in industrial action. We run the risk of them leaving the negotiations.

24 March 2023