

UCU JNCHES Negotiators report April 4 2023

In this document we set out the implications of a decision to reject or accept UCEA's offer on pay and pay-related elements, and conclude with a recommendation that members reject it.

On 30th March the Higher Education Committee (HEC) voted to formally reject UCEA's pay offer (now imposed), which consists of two elements:

1. No improvement in the pay offer for 2022-23 (3%, with a taper for the very lowest paid).

2. A banded increase for 2023-24

- Points 3–5 – 8%
- Points 6–14 – 7%
- Points 15–25 – 6%
- Points 26–51 – 5%

This 2023-24 offer includes an interim payment of 2% or £1,000 (whichever is greater) from 1 February 2023. A small number of universities have not implemented this pay adjustment, and have instead invoked a clause that permits them to delay implementation for up to 11 months.

In 2022-23, UCU members received 3% (increased amounts apply only to the lowest salary points). The majority of UCU members will be on salary point 26 and above, but across institutions, there are also members on salary point 25 and below.

Unless inflation falls before August 2023, this pay adjustment represents a real terms pay cut in excess of 15% against RPI over the two year period from August 2022 to 2024, equating to nearly two months of work (55 calendar days) for free each year of our future working lives. For members on points 25 and below this represents a cut of approximately 14% over the same period.

See the 'UCU HE negotiators blog' for more detail*.

Analysis of the ACAS negotiation progress and prospects

The pay-related elements Terms of Reference for further ACAS negotiations can be found at [New JNCHES reviews terms of reference - 14 March 2023.pdf \(ucu.org.uk\)](#)

Our detailed analysis is set out on the 'UCU HE negotiators blog'*.

ACAS negotiations on pay-related elements will continue based on the proposed Terms of Reference which are limited in nature and do not represent binding commitments by employers, until February 2024. For comparison, in 2020, UCEA agreed to make recommendations to their subscribing employers to take concrete and binding steps to address casualisation, workload and pay gaps. This offer was then retracted.

In the light of the fact that neither the pay nor pay-related components of the offer sufficiently address the terms of our dispute, we recommend members REJECT this offer.

What happens if members vote to Accept the proposals?

If members vote to ACCEPT these proposals, the talks under the current Terms of Reference would begin, and elected negotiators and officials would be mandated to negotiate the best possible outcome for members. The imposed pay adjustment would remain unchanged.

We will produce reports and recommendations as per standard practice to support decision making at HEC, special sector conferences, and for members more generally. However, these negotiations might be confidential, and if the experience of the recent ACAS talks is a guide, our ability to report back may be limited.

What will happen if members vote to Reject the offer?

If members vote to REJECT these proposals, our union will call on the employer to improve on these pay and pay-related elements. Branches will be called upon to organise industrial action including a Marking and Assessment Boycott in the forthcoming assessment period, potentially backed up by strike action.

UCEA have stated that action must be paused whilst ACAS negotiations continue. The joint trade unions have replied that they do not accept UCEA's no-strike clause.

Branches will be strongly encouraged to send delegates to the Special HE Sector Conference scheduled for 19 April (deadline for registration is 14 April). The deadline for submitting amendments to motions is also 14 April. For more information see https://www.ucu.org.uk/hesc_19april2023

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*the 'UCU HE negotiators blog' can be found on Medium at www.medium.com/@ucunegotiatorshe