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## Members recommended to accept pay offer

A well attended special FE Sector Conference has agreed to recommend to members the latest pay offer for England from the Association of Colleges (AoC) *"as the best that can be achieved in the present circumstances."* The offer of 3.2% over 10 months from 1 October 2008 will now be put to all England FE members in a ballot that opens on 29 September for a period of two weeks.

The special FE Sector Conference of delegates from FE branches was held in Birmingham on 20 September following meetings at local branches to consider the AoC's final offer.

In a wide ranging and passionate debate it was clear that all delegates were disappointed that the final offer from the AoC fell well short of the unions' claim of 6% and short of the current rate of inflation. However, it was noted that only a sustained campaign of industrial action was likely to improve the offer and even this was not assured now that all the other FE unions had accepted the offer.

This year's pay negotiations opened with an offer of 2% from the employers which, while unacceptably low, was higher than any recent opening offer and followed a very successful day of industrial action and rallies by UCU FE branches alongside the National Union of Teachers and other public service unions. A further round of lunchtime protests with other FE unions around England and a day of industrial action in London branches coinciding with the TUC's public sector lobby of Parliament saw the offer ultimately improved to one of the highest in the public sector this pay round.

### Implementation campaign & early claim for 2009/10

If members vote to accept the current offer in the ballot, it will only mark the end of this particular stage in our continuing campaign to achieve pay parity with school teachers and pay awards that keep pace with inflation. Conference also considered motions that dealt with our continuing strategies on pay and conditions going forward over the next year. It was agreed to instruct the FE Committee of the national executive committee (FEC) to co-ordinate a national campaign including targeted industrial action in those colleges who have yet to implement the 2003/05 pay scales or failed to implement last year's or this year's pay settlements. Conference also called on the FEC to work with the other FE unions and submit as early as possible a pay claim for next year including:

- A minimum 6% or £2000
- Increase Parity with school teachers
- £6000 London weighting.

The final decision on this year's pay offer for FE in England is now over to members to decide. If the decision is to accept, conference has laid out a clear strategy to move forward. Target colleges that are dragging their feet on the 8 point scale and submit an early claim for next year to build on the momentum of this year's successful action and campaign. Ballot papers will arrive at your home from the 29 September. Make sure you use your vote If you have not received a ballot paper by 2 October contact [dbussell@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dbussell@ucu.org.uk)

## Diplomas

UCU is building an electronic network of UCU members working or going to be working on the new Diplomas introduced this year.

If you are interested in joining the new Network and receiving information and letting head office know what's happening at your college on Diplomas, contact Dan Taubman [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk)

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## UCU prison reps induction training – module 1

This 2 day course is aimed at members who work in prison education that are new to the role of the rep or are thinking about undertaking this essential role.

This module must be completed before any of the other accreditation modules can be attended.

This course will help you to:

- understand your role and legal rights as a UCU representative
- develop the skills and knowledge necessary to enable you to undertake this role effectively.

This course will cover topics such as:

- the purpose of UCU, its structure, functions and democratic processes and how you can get involved in these
- support that can be provided to you as a UCU rep
- how organising and campaigning methods support your union role
- how to build and sustain effective UCU branches

For more details and an application form please use the following link:

[www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3485](http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3485)

## NUT/UCU Seminar on 14-19

**14 November 2008**

**Free but limited places available**

Speakers on:

- 14-19 Qualifications strategy and content
- Diplomas
- local authorities as lead in 14-19
- joint NUT/UCU work on 14-19

If you are interested contact Dan Taubman at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk)

## Union Learning Reps Training

There are some spare places on the second module of the ULR course '**Working with Members**' which is taking place in **Harrogate** on **5 & 6 November 2008**.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Linda Lawton at the UCU Manchester office [llawton@ucu.org.uk](mailto:llawton@ucu.org.uk)

ULRs continue to play a vital role in UCU workplaces, fighting for good quality CPD entitlements for all our members to ensure that they are well equipped for the ever changing challenges that the education sector presents such as increased expectations, unreasonable workloads and stress.

We must promote and protect lifelong learning opportunities for all to allow our members and future members to continue to enhance their professional and personal lives.

If your branch doesn't yet have a ULR and/or you are interested in becoming one, contact Linda Ball at Head Office [lball@ucu.org.uk](mailto:lball@ucu.org.uk)