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Pay and Job Security: Update

Following extensive consultation with branches and local associations, the UCU Higher Education Committee (HEC) agreed to reject the employers' full and final offer and to seek agreement from other unions to continue pressing UCEA for a jointly agreed and national approach to tackle job security issues. It was agreed that we would work closely with other unions and the NUS, to develop a campaign on job security, linking workload issues, student staff ratios and the quality of HE.

UCU has been playing a key role in the national trade union side and all unions have been pressing the UCEA board to seek a revised mandate from subscribing institutions. In a joint letter, the UCEA board was asked to return to the negotiating table and to review their position to enable constructive dialogue about a jointly agreed and national approach to job security in the sector.

Joint union and employer talks at ACAS?

UCEA replied saying that they were not prepared to offer further negotiations on pay. However, they agreed to a meeting at ACAS involving the new chair of UCEA.

The national negotiating teams from the trade union side met on 4 November to discuss their next steps. The meeting was followed by talks between the trade union side and the employers at ACAS, where a robust presentation of the trade union case was made once again. The employers made an initial response and the ACAS talks were adjourned until 24 November. For updates on the progress of talks see the dedicated page on the UCU website:
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3642>

Ratification of Hourly Paid Assimilation Agreements

Following the passing of motion L10 at the Higher Education Sector Conference in May, the Higher Education Committee have set up a ratification panel to oversee the implementation of proposals relating to the assimilation of hourly paid staff under the Framework Agreement.

Therefore, no proposals relating to the assimilation of hourly paid staff should be agreed locally until such proposals have been agreed by the new ratification panel.

The process of national ratification is intended to strengthen the position of local negotiators and also make the employers aware that UCU takes its commitment to the fair treatment of hourly paid staff seriously.

Once proposals have been sent to the national ratification panel we will seek to get a decision on the proposals as soon as possible but please be aware that this may involve the setting up of a meeting of the ratification panel. For further information see UCU HE Circular 35 at www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucuhe35.rtf

HE Circulars

HE branch / LA circulars contain information, guidance and advice on a range of HE issues for use by branches / LAs. These circulars are now available on the UCU website under branch, rep and activists resources / UCU branch and LA circulars (highlighted in green). In the past few months we've issued advice on promotion criteria (UCUHE7), negotiating fixed-term contract policies (UCUHE19), equal pay audits (UCUHE23), challenging redundancies (UCUHE25), ratification of hourly paid staff (UCUHE35) and changes to employment statutes (UCUHE36).

Framework Agreement Follow-up Survey

At the Higher Education Sector Conference in May, delegates passed several motions asking HEC to collate data on a number of issues including a number relating to the Framework Agreement.

In order to collate the information requested by HESC we would be very grateful if you

could spend a few minutes completing a short survey (by 27 November) that can be found at:

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/frameworkfollowup>

Careers in Research Online Survey

The latest Careers in Research Online Survey was undertaken by researchers in 51 participating Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in spring 2009. CROS is designed to gather anonymous views from research staff in UK HEIs regarding their experiences, employment, career aspirations and career development.

The aggregate results of the survey are available on the Vitae website at http://vitae.ac.uk/CMS/files/upload/CROS_2009_October.pdf

However, it is at a local level that the results of the survey can be helpful to UCU in progressing our priorities to improve the security of employment of research staff and develop rewarding research careers. We'd like to know who took part in the survey and whether your institution is sharing local results with you. Was your institution one of the participating institutions? The results of the survey should be being used locally to tackle issues affecting research staff and this should be being undertaken in partnership with UCU.

For further information please contact Jane Thompson at jthompson@ucu.org.uk.

Consultation on the Research Excellence Framework (REF)

Currently, the higher education funding councils' are consulting over the future shape of the Research Excellence Framework (REF).

The full consultation paper is available at <http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/> and

there is a useful summary guide at:
<http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/resources/REFguide.pdf>

UCU would welcome comments on all aspects of the REF proposals, in particular, on the plans to make 25% of research funding dependent on its perceived 'economic and social impact'. Another significant change (compared to the 2008 RAE) is the proposal to reduce the number of subject panels. Please send in any comments to Rob Copeland, policy officer rcopeland@ucu.org.uk by no later than Thursday 26 November.

For details of the UCU's 'Stand up for Research' campaign click on <http://www.ucu.org.uk/standupforresearch>

The Postgraduate Review: views sought

The Government is currently undertaking a review of postgraduate provision in the UK <http://www.bis.gov.uk/postgraduate-review>, covering both taught and research postgraduate provision. Its principal areas of investigation will be:

- to assess the competitiveness of UK institutions in the global market for postgraduate education;
- to assess the benefits of postgraduate study for all relevant stakeholders;
- to assess the evidence about the needs of business and other employers for postgraduates;
- and to examine levels of participation, in terms of who undertakes postgraduate study, and whether there are barriers affecting the diversity of participation and any associated reduction in the availability of high-quality entrants.

UCU will be submitting a response to the postgraduate review and we would welcome your comments on any aspects of the review. We are particularly keen to highlight issues relating to postgraduate student finance, access and support and on the employment and professional opportunities for postgraduates who teach. Please send in your comments to Rob Copeland, policy officer rcopeland@ucu.org.uk by no later than Thursday 26 November.

Health Educator's Advisory Group

Following a call for members in the August issue of HE News, we are pleased to announce that the newly formed Health Educator's Advisory group will hold its first meeting on Thursday 5 November 2009.

However it's not too late for interested members to get involved. We would particularly welcome members from the Eastern and Home Counties, Scotland and London regions.

The group's 2009/10 meeting schedule has been confirmed as follows:

Thursday 5 November 2009; Monday 25 January 2010; Wednesday 31 March 2010

All meetings will be held from 1100 – 1400, at Carlow St. For further information please contact Barbara Beckles, bbeckles@ucu.org.uk, 020 7756 2553.

Annual Equalities Conferences

Registration is now open for the Annual Equality Conferences. The conferences are an excellent opportunity to meet other UCU members, discuss key issues and help formulate policy for UCU on each of the equality strands. The 4 Equality Standing Committees will also be elected at the

conferences. The conferences are free of charge and travel expenses will be met.

Women Members' Annual Conference- Friday 13 November 2009 - Reclaim feminism, reclaim the fight for women's rights.

LGBT Members' Annual Conference - Saturday 14 November 2009 – 40 years after Stonewall: What's our agenda today?

Disabled Members' Annual Conference - Friday 20 November 2009 - Achieving equality with disabled members.

Black Members' Annual Conference - Friday 11 December 2009 - Recession: the Impact on Black Workers.

For further information or to register go to:
<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2669>

UCU Environmental Conference and 10:10

The UCU has signed up to the 10:10 campaign on carbon reduction, committing itself to cutting 10% of its emissions next year as well as pressing HE and FE institutions to follow suit. We are also organising a major conference for UCU environmental activists where we will look at developments in the education sector as well as those at national and international level. This will take place on 25 November 2009 at UCU head office.

The conference will also provide an opportunity for a progress report on developments in the Climate Solidarity project which UCU is participating in alongside other unions.

For more information and registration see <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3386>

Annual Meetings for early 2010

The following annual meetings of specialist groups will be held in early 2010. Official notices will go out in due course:

Post 92 HE staff: deadline for motions - 13 January; deadline for registrations - 20 January; meeting date – 3 February 2010.

Staff on Casual Contracts: deadline for motions – 5 February; deadline for registrations - 12 February; meeting date – 26 February 2010.

MRC, NIBSC and GE Healthcare: deadline for motions – 12 February; deadline for registrations – 19 February; meeting date – 5 March 2010.

Academic Related Staff: deadline for motions – 17 February; deadline for registrations – 24 February; meeting date – 10 March 2010.

Membership Records

Thank you to those members and branches that have helped us in updating our membership records. Your continued assistance is essential in ensuring the smooth running of our communications, democratic structures and ability to run industrial action ballots.