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### 1. **Institute for Learning (IfL)**

No UCU FE member can be unaware of the furore that has opened up since the Institute for Learning wrote to its members informing them that from April 2011, they would have to pay their own membership fee of £68. UCU has had an unprecedented number of messages from its own members expressing their outrage over this and their views on IfL.

Sally Hunt and Barry Lovejoy wrote to all members updating them on the latest legal advice on delaying payment of IfL fees and informing them of the next steps of the campaign, which include a formal ballot for a boycott. Please make sure you read the advice and circulate it among UCU members. You can read it in full here: <http://www.ucu.org.uk/iflfee>. UCU FE branches have the latest edition of the FE Branch Officers Update on 22 March to which is attached a letter on UCU proposed action on IfL – contact your branch officers for a copy.

Over Easter there have been meetings between UCU and the other FE unions and AoC and IfL. These meetings are being brokered by John Hayes MP, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning. We will inform members on any progress following that meeting.

The UCU on-line petition on IfL is still live. You can sign it or download a printable version at: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5271>.

Part of UCU's activities in response to IfL is to formulate an alternative to IfL's concept of FE professionalism. We need this because UCU, and NATFHE before it, fought hard to establish that FE lecturers and UCU members are professionals and the equivalent in status and esteem with school teachers. We need to continue to fight for our professionalism and work

at developing a concept of professionalism that can be owned by UCU members. Dan Taubman will be presenting a first draft of this at a fringe meeting at UCU Congress at the end of May. If you are interested in contributing to developing policy on professionalism, contact Dan at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk).

## 2. Professional Development in Higher Education

The furore in further education over the Institute for Learning (IfL) has not been replicated in the HE sector. However, academics have criticised the decision of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) to cut all funding to its 24 Subject Centres (all of which are located in specific higher education institutions). Earlier in the year UCU wrote to the chief executive of the HEA calling for them to rethink the proposals. In particular, we highlighted our concerns about the impact on academic and academic-related jobs, as well as on ongoing support for discipline-specific teaching activity in higher education. A campaign has been set up to save these Subject Centres. **\*WHAT YOU CAN DO\***: Join the facebook campaign

(<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Campaign-to-Save-the-HEA-Subject-Centres/183404401680459>) and sign the online petition here: <http://www.ipetitions.com/petition/heasubjectcentres/>.

The HEA have also been undertaking a review

(<http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ourwork/universitiesandcolleges/accreditation/ukpsf-consultation>) of their UK professional standards framework (UKPSF). The UKPSF for teaching and supporting learning, launched in February 2006, is a framework which uses a descriptor-based approach to professional standards. It is used primarily by institutions in designing their professional development programmes for staff.

The HEA review proposes a number of changes to the current framework. While UCU shares the HEA's desire to improve the recognition of teaching, the new framework risks moving into areas which are essentially matters for employer-union negotiations (for example, on promotion criteria).

For UCU's response to the review click here:

[http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/m/s/profstandardsrev\\_ucusubmission\\_jan11.doc](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/docs/m/s/profstandardsrev_ucusubmission_jan11.doc).

## 3. Funding Update

### FE

The funding allocations for colleges for both adult work and for 16-19 are with colleges. For adult learning there has been an overall cut of 4.3% in funding rates (the cash that colleges are paid per student) and cuts to funding for literacy and ESOL. The main and most pernicious change however is to who gets free provision. Up to now all students on benefits get fee remission. However from next year only those students on 'active benefits', that is Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance, will receive full fee remission. Those students on what are called 'inactive benefits', income support, disability and incapacity benefits, housing benefit or working tax credits, will have to pay programme fees

at 50% of the costs of the programme. Colleges are going to be monitored closely on how much fee income they collect. They may lose funding the following year if they don't meet their SFA target. Minimum Performance Levels, which have been raised by 63% for many programmes, will be implemented more rigorously and funding cut to programmes that don't meet the new levels.

On 16-19 funding the allocations are now being made on 'lagged' numbers, that is how many the college enrolled in 2009-10. The funding cut has been to the 16-19 'entitlement'. These are teaching hours that are spent on tutorials and 'extra-curricular' activities. The allocation per student has been cut from 114 guided learning hours to 30 hours. The 16-19 allocations have now been sent to providers and can be seen on the YPLA web site at:

<http://www.ypla.gov.uk/aboutus/ourwork/funding/allocations/>.

In February DWP and BIS published proposals on 'skills conditionality'. These propose that those unemployed claimants who are assessed as needing skills training, will be referred by Jobcentre Plus to a skills needs assessment undertaken by the new adult careers and advice service, Next Step or by providers. If the assessment results in directing the claimant to a training programme, this will be mandatory. If the claimant refuses to go to the assessment or take up the recommended training programme, then there will be benefit sanctions. To see the proposals go to <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/skills-conditionality.shtml>. UCU's response which opposes the proposals can be obtained from Dan Taubman at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk).

Full briefings and questions to ask managements on the funding allocations for both adult learning and 16-18 provision can also be obtained from Dan. Dan would also like to hear in more detail on the impact of the funding cuts in your college.

## **HE**

### *England*

Recurrent grant for higher education teaching in England in 2011-12 is being cut by 8.2% in cash terms compared with the previous year. Recurrent funding for research is being cut by 2.8%. Funding for university-business/community links (the Higher Education Innovation Fund) is being held constant in cash terms at £150m.

On average total recurrent funding for HEIs in England for 2011-12 is being cut by 4.1% in cash terms. This works out as a real terms cut of 6.5% on average, once the estimated impact of inflation has been included.

In addition, research which received a 2\* (quality that is recognised internationally) in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise is having its funding cut.

Capital funding for 2011-12 will be £223m, a 58% cash reduction from the previous year. Of that funding, £111m will be for the Research Capital Investment Fund, and £54m for the Teaching Capital Investment Fund.

## *Wales*

Overall allocations to universities in Wales in 2011-12 will be 4.6% lower than the previous year in cash terms. Teaching is being cut by 8.4% and research by 0.9%. But strategic and initiative allocations (including widening access) will rise by 16.3%, and innovation and engagement funding will rise by 28.9%.

## *Scotland*

In December 2010 the Scottish Funding Council announced total recurrent allocations of £956m for 2011-12, with research and knowledge transfer being cut by 0.6%, no change in widening access funding, and a 10.9% cut in teaching funding. While changes in research and widening access funding varied considerably among institutions, all HEIs had a 10.9% cut in teaching funding. In March this year SFC announced an addition of £3.5m to the allocations.

## **4. Consultation on Postgraduate Research Funding – Comments Sought**

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) is currently conducting a review of funding for postgraduate research programmes. The main proposal is to link the allocation of the research degree programme (RDP) supervision fund more closely with RAE scores (in particular 3\* and 4\* quality). In essence, this is likely to result in a greater concentration of doctoral funding in a smaller number of universities. Similar trends are apparent in the allocation of research council funding e.g. doctoral training centres.

The consultation document is available at:

[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2011/11\\_09/11\\_09.pdf](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2011/11_09/11_09.pdf)

Please can you send in any comments to Rob Copeland [rcopeland@ucu.org.uk](mailto:rcopeland@ucu.org.uk) by no later than **Friday 10 June**.

## **5. Update on ESOL**

ESOL programmes will be hit hard by cuts to FE funding from 2011-2012 and the changes to eligibility for free provision (see article **Funding Update: FE** above). In addition all funding for ESOL programmes in the Workplace will be ended. ESOL staff and students and a wide variety of organisations including NATECLA, the Refugee Council, UNISON, NUS, PCS, TUC, and NIACE launched a new campaign to defend and fight for ESOL, Action for ESOL.

Thursday 24 March was designated a day of action for ESOL teachers and students to protest against the Government's policies on ESOL. There were rallies, marches and events all over England. In London there was singing, theatre and a teach-in to demonstrate the importance of free ESOL provision near the Houses of Parliament. At 1.30pm on the same day a delegation delivered a petition of 20,000 signatures to Number 10. You can find full details of the day's events and of the ESOL campaign at <http://actionforesol.org/events>.

Currently the campaign is collecting information on job and programme losses in ESOL. If these are happening in your college or service, please let Dan Taubman know

[dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk).

## 6. FE Initial Teacher Training and UCU's Teacher Educator Networks

### Funding

Problems are looming for FE initial Teacher Training (ITT) funding. Currently FE ITT is funded through HEFCE for HE institutions that deliver FE ITT. The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funds FE ITT through awarding bodies. Next year 2011-2012 HEFCE funding for teacher education is reduced and this will impact on FE ITT. The SFA funding will be £7.5m for 2011-2012. The real crisis will occur in 2012-2013 when HE teaching funds in England will be reduced by 80% and restricted to STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and clinical programmes. The government's intention is that the funding will be replaced by the new HE fees and loan system. For SFA funding, it has already been announced that all BIS funding for Level 3 and above programmes will go, to be replaced by a loan system similar to the one to be put in place for HE. UCU and indeed all FE stakeholders are appalled by this. Many FE teacher trainees are part time hourly paid lecturers and may well not be earning enough to pay off any loan. It will present yet another disincentive to enter FE teaching. Strong representations have been made to BIS and John Hayes, Minister of State for Further Education, Skills and Lifelong Learning. BIS have asked the AoC to conduct a review of FE ITT and AoC have contacted colleges to respond to a survey on FE ITT. We will contact FE UCU members working in FE ITT when we have more news. Let Dan Taubman

[dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk) know if the future funding for FE ITT is already being felt in your college.

### UCU Teacher Educators' Networks

The Policy Department has revived the UCU teacher educators' networks. A seminar was held for UCU HE educators of primary and secondary teachers (see

<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5020>). A similar seminar was held for UCU FE teacher educators ([http://www.ucu.org.uk/seminar\\_feteachered](http://www.ucu.org.uk/seminar_feteachered)). If you would like to join either or both of the networks contact Diana Hendry at [dhendry@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dhendry@ucu.org.uk).

### LLUK and the Review of Professional Qualifications

The FE seminar (above) was combined with a focus group run by LLUK on the review of FE professional qualifications, essentially a review of PTLLS, CTLLS and DTLLS. This Review has had 2 stages. The main proposals emerging from it are to slightly increase the units in PTLLS and CTLLS to enable more distinctive routes that match the various sub sectors in the FE sector such as ACL and WBL, to be followed. Reports on the Review at its two stages can still be obtained from the Lifelong Learning Sector web site at:

<http://www.lluk.org/standards-and-qualifications/current-reviews/learning-delivery-qualifications/>. LLUK will go at the end of March. Parts of its FE programme will transfer to LSIS. LSIS will dealing with FE standards and qualifications, labour market information, advice and information (the very useful LLUK Helpdesk is also moving to LSIS). As LLUK reaches its end and the end of the financial year a number of resources have been completed and available. Some of the support staff solutions are 'whole organisation' models and therefore apply to all staff. Links to the web documents and video clips:

[http://www.lluk.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Guidance\\_BoP\\_web.pdf](http://www.lluk.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Guidance_BoP_web.pdf);  
[http://www.lluk.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Guidance\\_SupportStaff\\_web.pdf](http://www.lluk.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Guidance_SupportStaff_web.pdf) ;  
<http://www.youtube.com/lifelonglearninguk>

Although all resources on the LLUK website will be migrating to the LSIS Excellence Gateway, LLUK advises that where you feel resources are useful that you download a copy for future reference.

## 7. Quality and Standards in Higher Education

The last few months have seen a plethora of consultations on the future of the quality assurance system in higher education. Probably the highest profile one is the requirement to publish a Key Information Set (KIS) (see:

[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10\\_31/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2010/10_31/)) for prospective students. New sources of information will include the cost of tuition fees, an overall total of weekly expected study hours and an average salary in the first year after completing the course. While students should have straightforward access to good, relevant information about HE courses and institutions, UCU is sceptical that the KIS will fulfil the objective of 'informing people about the quality of higher education'.

 **Public information about higher education, consultation response, UCU, Mar 11 (.pdf) [251kb]**

 **Public information about higher education, consultation response, UCU, Mar 11 (.doc) [189kb]**

Changes to the external examining system have also been proposed. A review of the system by Universities UK calls for national criteria for the appointment of externals and for students to be offered full access to external examiners' reports. UCU said the review had 'missed an opportunity' to offer external examiners decent support and recognition (particularly increased rates of pay) and warned that external examining would continue to be seen as a 'Cinderella service'. Read more here: *New review on external examiners is 'missed opportunity'* (<http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5465>) and in the *Times Higher*

(<http://www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/story.asp?sectioncode=26&storycode=415745&c=1>).

UCU's detailed response to the review is available at:

 **UCU's external examining report response (.pdf) [173kb]**

or  **UCU's external examining report response (.doc) [178kb]**

## 8. New Policy Briefing Available: English Baccalaureate

A new briefing on the 'English Baccalaureate' outlines, analyses and criticises this new school performance measure, and complements the April 2011 UCU Briefing on HE based Initial Teacher Education. Click here [http://www.ucu.org.uk/brief\\_ebac](http://www.ucu.org.uk/brief_ebac) to download a copy of the briefing.



## 9. Policy in Wales

Policy development has been limited recently given the Assembly elections (they have protocols in relation to releasing significant new consultations in the run up to election). The UCU office in Wales are in the process of responding to independent governance recommendations in both F& HE which will be picked up by the new government.

## 10. UCU Joins the Campaign to Reform the English Libel Law

Freedom to criticise and question is the cornerstone of argument and debate, whether in scholarly journals, on websites, in newspapers or elsewhere. The current libel laws in England, however, inhibit debate and stifle free expression. They discourage writers from tackling important subjects and thereby deny the public the right to read about them. That's why the UCU has signed up to The Libel Reform Campaign led by English PEN, Index on Censorship and Sense About Science. See the letter in support of the libel law reform campaign here: [http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/s/o/libelawletter\\_jan11.pdf](http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/s/o/libelawletter_jan11.pdf)

In response to mounting criticism of the current libel laws, the Government published its draft defamation bill on Tuesday 15th March. The Libel Reform Campaign have welcomed the Government's draft Defamation Bill as 'a great starting point' to ensure the first overhaul of our archaic libel laws, but calls upon Parliament to go further in key areas. You can read more here: <http://www.libelreform.org/>

## 11. 14-19 Education Policy

### ■ The Wolf Review on Vocational Education

The Wolf Review on vocational education was published in mid March and can be found at <http://education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DFE-00031-2011>. The question of 'what is education?' is posed at the start and end of this review but Wolf's answer seems to be only to prepare young people for the labour market. She treats vocational education as a self-contained silo, separate from A-levels. She ignores the impact that the abolition of EMAs will have on young people's continuing participation in education and training. Many of Wolf's solutions are not ones that UCU can support. UCU has a response and positions on Wolf's 27 recommendations. If you would like to see this or submit your views on the Wolf review then contact Dan Taubman at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk).

### ■ Joint NUT-UCU Work

NUT and UCU published a joint policy of 14 to 19 education and training 3 years ago. Since then there have been many changes to government policies in this area, especially since the last Election. Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove seems intent on taking the education and training of young people back to a fantasy of the 1950s. To re-work their joint policy, NUT and UCU are working with Professors Ann Hodgson and Ken Spours of the Institute of Education, among the foremost UK academics in this policy area, on a research programme into NUT and UCU members' perceptions and perspectives on 14-19 policies. The work includes:

- a **survey** for members of both organisations working with 14-19 year olds. If you work in with this age group and would like to complete the survey go to:  
[http://www.surveymonkey.net/14-19\\_Survey](http://www.surveymonkey.net/14-19_Survey)
- a **conference** on Wednesday 22 June to launch the first results of the survey. The conference will be free and UCU will pay travel expenses for our members. The first half of the event will bring us up-to-date on what is happening in 14-19 and the second half will consider how UCU and NUT can campaign against many of the government policies which are being forced on schools and colleges at local and national level. Contact Dan Taubman at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk) for more details and an application form.

## 12. Research Excellence Framework and the 'Impact' Agenda

In July 2010, David Willetts, the universities and science minister, announced a delay in the implementation of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) because of concerns about the rigour of the criteria for assessing 'impact' and its acceptance by academics. UCU's *Stand Up for Research* campaign was instrumental in questioning the credibility of the 'impact' agenda.

In March the UK funding councils announced a revised version of the original proposals. The assessment of impact will be included as part of the 2014 REF, though it will be given a 20% rather than a 25% weighting. See:

[http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/01\\_11/](http://www.hefce.ac.uk/research/ref/pubs/2011/01_11/). Despite these changes, UCU continues to have concerns about the rigour of the criteria for assessing 'impact' and the potential for the economic 'impact' agenda to undermine more critical forms of research. For more on UCU's response see <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=5346> for an article 'Government has broken promise to academics on research funding' and <http://www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=4207> for information on the 'Stand Up for Research' campaign.

## 13. Forthcoming Events

### ■ Monday 6 June 2011, 10.30–16.00 – Sustainable Development: Turning Policy into Practice - UCU Head Office

This workshop is designed to examine how the learning and skills sector can implement national low carbon policies. It will have the practical focus of contributing to action plans to help key players respond to the skills agenda. The workshop will take the form of a series of short presentations from each stakeholder followed by small group and plenary discussions on the actions needed to move the strategy forward.

This event is jointly sponsored by the Association of Colleges, City and Guilds, Learning and Skills Improvement Service, People & Planet and the University and College Union.

Email Graham Petersen at [gpetersen@ucu.org.uk](mailto:gpetersen@ucu.org.uk) for an application form and further details. £15 fee to cover lunch refreshments.



■ **Tuesday 21 June 2011, 10am to 3.30pm - Adult Career Guidance: Meeting Needs in a Changing Environment - SOAS, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG**

The adult careers service is poised to give way by 2012 to an all-age service for both young people and adults. NIACE and NAEGA are collaborating on this conference which will provide participants with an understanding of the changing policy context and its implications for adult career guidance policy and practice, identify what approaches to the provision of career guidance will be needed to support adults in learning, work and wider life across the life course and provide opportunities to learn about innovative models for the planning and delivery of integrated career guidance for adults in England and elsewhere. The joint NIACE / NAEGA policy position paper on integrated career guidance for adults will be launched at the conference. To reserve a place, visit:

<http://www.niace.org.uk/campaigns-events/events/adult-career-guidance>

Enquiries to NIACE Events Team, tel: 0116 204 2833, e-mail: [events@niace.org.uk](mailto:events@niace.org.uk).

■ **Wednesday 22 June 2011- Joint NUT/UCU Conference on 14-19 Education and Training**

As part of the on-going joint research work between NUT, UCU and the Institute of Education, we are hoping to organise a short series of seminars on various aspects of 14-19 education and training. We hope that most of these will take place outside London. To launch the first results of the survey research (see **14-19: Joint UCU-NUT Work** above), NUT and UCU are holding a conference for interested members on 14-19 education and training. This event will take place on 22 June. It's free and UCU will pay travel expenses for our members. The first half of the event will bring us up-to-date on what is happening in 14-19 education policy. The second half will consider how NUT and UCU can campaign against many of the government policies which are being forced on schools and colleges at local and national level. If you are interested in hearing more about this event and/or you would like receive an application form, contact Dan Taubman at [dtaubman@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dtaubman@ucu.org.uk).

## **14. Sign up for the International Policy Newsletter, Autumn 2011**

The policy team intend to produce and distribute a trial newsletter on international policy issues in autumn 2011. If you would like to receive a copy please contact

[dhendry@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dhendry@ucu.org.uk).

If you have any comments or feedback on PolicyNews, please send to Diana Hendry at [dhendry@ucu.org.uk](mailto:dhendry@ucu.org.uk).