

National Claim Campaign

Introduction

The following communication will give members an overview of the key elements of this year's national claim and also advise you that the Higher Education Committee meets on 27 April and will consider the next steps in developing the campaign.

As reported inUCUHE147 this year's negotiations are already shaping up to be frustrating and unacceptable in terms of the inadequate responses from the employers representatives at UCEA on the headline pay element as well as the woeful progress being made on key UCU equality matters.

Pay

UCEA made a slightly improved offer of 0.8% at the New JNCHES meeting on 20 April. This was unanimously rejected by the trade union side. For most staff the increase in pay over the last three settlements has amounted to approximately 1.4%. During the same period, the RPI index has increased by over 12%, resulting in a real terms cut of over 10% in the value of take home pay for staff.

The compounded loss in pay 2009 - 2011

Pay Spine Point	Total Shortfall Aug 2008 - July 2011	Loss per calendar month
22	£ 1601	£ 133
29	£ 1969	£ 164
34	£ 2282	£ 190
36	£ 2422	£ 202
43	£ 2979	£ 248
49	£ 3556	£ 296
51	£ 3773	£ 314

The forecast for RPI inflation during the 2012 -13 pay round is averaging around 3.5 %. The UCEA offer of 0.8% goes nowhere near keeping pace with the real cost of living.

VC, Principal and Senior Staff Pay

Affordability of pay increases hasn't been an issue for all staff in HE in recent years. HESA data shows that pay for Vice-chancellors has increased at almost double the rate of other staff groups since 2002 and according to a recent report in both the Times Higher and Daily Telegraph, the number of staff earning over £100,000 in higher education has increased to over 1,300.

Pensions

Changes to the sectors pension's schemes will see further increases in employee contributions. This will result in further reductions in the take home pay of staff. Staff in the USS have already seen an increase of 1.15% in contributions and staff in the NITPS, STSS and the TPS will see increases of between 0.6% and 2.4% of pay from April 2012.

Affordability

The Hefce report, 'Financial health of the higher education sector' published in March 2012 reported that, 'the majority of the key financial indicators are the best on record, with the sector reporting strong surpluses, large cash balances and healthy reserve levels.' They also state that the financial outcomes reported for 2010/11 are much stronger than the sector's forecast for the year.

When staffs costs are considered as a percentage of total expenditure, HESA data from 2010- 11 shows a figure of 56.2%, an historic low.

In January 2012, UCAS commented that demand in the sector will continue to outstrip the supply of places.

Equalities

Gender Pay Gap

Despite improvements in recent years, the gender pay gap in higher education is still much greater than in the wider economy and across the public sector. The JNCHES Equality Working Group identified that the HE full time gender pay gap was 17.3% compared to a UK workforce average of 10.2%.

The gender pay gap for higher education teaching professionals identified by ASHE in 2011 was 14.4%. Progress on this issue has been woefully slow. The gender pay gap for teaching staff in higher education is substantially higher than in other areas of the teaching profession ; Secondary Education 11.8%, Primary and Nursery Education 10.4%.

The Professoriate

The pay gap for the professoriate persists and increases at key points in the research assessment cycle and could well be a feature of the REF without policy intervention and action. There is a serious problem in many institutions over the lack of transparent grading and promotion procedures for professors and senior staff. The failure of UCEA and institutions to address this leaves institutions open to legal challenge and undermines their role in promoting transparency and equality.

The Review of HE Governance in Scotland recommended that the New JNCHES salary spine be expanded to cover all University employees. The trade unions share the views of the report that such a move would aid transparency, accountability and equality.

It is the trade union view is that the bulk of the pay gap in higher education is due to structural issues that should be addressed through active policy intervention and enforcement.

Assimilation of Hourly Paid Staff

UCU has clear policy on the assimilation of hourly paid staff onto the pay spine at the appropriate rate for the job, and for fractional pro rata contracts for all hourly paid staff. This position is entirely consistent with the principles set out in the National Framework Agreement as well as equality and transparency principles.

Disability Leave

The Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) published its report 'Enabling equality: furthering disability equality for staff in higher education' in September 2011. The report identifies that higher education institutions are failing to meet their duties under the Equalities Act by failing to provide disability leave as a reasonable adjustment for disabled staff despite guidance being available since 2006.

Conclusion

Without widespread membership support and a campaign, significant improvement on the key elements of the national claim this year will be difficult.

The HEC will provide the direction and it's important that members via their branches are engaged in the details. Members are encouraged to feedback .