

## What's in UCEA's offer on contractual arrangements; workload and mental health; and gender pay gap and ethnicity pay

A summary of what UCEA, on behalf of 147 university employers in the New JNCHES arrangements for 2019-20, is offering to the trade unions in its new modified offer with positive proposals presented on 27 January 2020. The proposals focus on the three important areas of employment: contractual arrangements; workload and mental health; and gender pay gaps and ethnicity pay.

### Sector level actions include:

For **contractual arrangements**, a new trade union/employer working group to examine the annual national staff record (HESA), looking for example at trends in 'zero hours' and 'hourly-paid' employment, and contractual arrangements across protected characteristics. The group will produce a report of the analysis and findings.

For **workload and mental health**, trade union/employer work to further develop the national Stress and Mental Wellbeing resources through our established HE Safety and Health Forum, Trade unions, Universities UK and UCEA involvement in advancing sector-level initiatives to address staff mental health issues.

For **gender pay gap**, trade unions and employers to develop an HE specific 'checklist' of suggestions to address blockages and enablers of women's career progression and balanced representation in gender dominated roles. There will also be collection and analysis of the overall data.

On **ethnicity pay**, trade unions and employers to examine and report on national ethnicity pay gap data and investigate kinds of actions and interventions being taken by employers. Both also commit to encouraging colleagues to disclose protected characteristics.

### Expectations for institutional level actions

As these issues are all matters for individual institutions to address in their own distinct contexts and recognising that many institutions already have a lot of this work in place, often developed in partnership with their staff and trade unions, UCEA is setting out a set of broad expectations and recommendations for institutions as follows.

#### For contractual arrangements:

- Indefinite contracts are the general form of employment relationship between employers and employees, with temporary and casual contractual arrangements being used where there are legitimate reasons.
- Employees on fixed-term or hourly-paid contracts, as appropriate to the length of their employment, are given access to staff development, training, appraisal and careers advice.
- There is institutional level review of policies and procedures for employees on fixed-term and casual arrangements.
- Examination, where used, of how 'zero hours' contracts can be limited or reduced. Also, a process enabling individuals on such contracts to request an alternative arrangement offering more certainty of hours.
- Arrangements for employees to raise a concern if they believe their hourly-paid engagement does not provide fair terms for the work expected of them.
- Clarity for doctoral students who are employed as to the work required and its remuneration.
- Where relevant, to sign up to the new researchers' Concordat and develop plans for implementing its employment principles.
- Arrangements to identify staff on fixed-term contract/s for more than 4 years and consider converting to an indefinite contract and for the avoidance of successive fixed-term contracts.

### For workload and mental health

- To have systems to enable individuals to raise concerns about their workload demands and to have these fairly examined.
- To develop procedures to assure at institutional level that employees have achievable work demands for their role expectations and level of professional discretion.
- To work with staff representatives and others to explore cultures and behaviours that may compound workplace pressures.

### For gender pay gap and ethnicity pay

- A commitment to the importance of understanding and addressing the underlying issues of a gender pay gap or uneven gender distribution.
- To work with their trade unions on their action plans, make them publicly available and have in place outcome monitoring and review processes.
- Undertaking regular equal pay auditing to confirm there are no pay inequalities, perhaps as a contributing factor to their gender pay gaps.
- HEIs to engage with branch trade unions in appropriate ways to provide trust in their pay auditing processes.
- To place a high priority on work to examine their BAME distribution in the workforce and data on ethnicity pay, and developing plans to address any issues.

## In summary, these proposals are significant and substantial because they...

- demonstrate unprecedented support and commitment from all 147 member HE institutions to addressing the employment issues raised in the dispute;
- affirm HE employers' commitment to provide work environments where all people feel valued, treated fairly and with respect;
- show UCEA being given the scope to go further than ever before as a national employer representative body;
- set out a series of clear expectations of individual HE institutions, including the importance of listening to their staff and trade union representatives;
- give trade unions a springboard to work constructively within institutions on the matters of highest importance for their members in each institution;
- provide for national level examination of data to look at the sector's progress, while maintaining the responsibilities of individual HE institutions to develop actions relevant to their specific circumstances.

## Looking back

2019-20 national negotiations with all the trade unions (UCU, UNISON, Unite, GMB, EIS) began in March 2019. UCEA has listened carefully to the trade unions and engaged with all 147 of the participating HE institutions throughout. On 26 November 2019 UCEA and UCU began two months of constructive dialogue aimed at seeking a resolution.

On 27 January 2020 UCEA presented this range of positive proposals to all five of the trade unions recognised in the national JNCHES arrangements. UCEA has the full endorsement of the institutions in addressing these important issues around employment in universities.

## Looking forward

These extensive proposals, alongside the pay uplifts applicable from August 2019, are the best offer from UCEA on behalf of the 147 HE institutions who have participated in the 2019-20 JNCHES collective negotiating round. The proposals complement the 1.8% headline pay increase which was made against a CPIH inflation rate of 1.7% in August 2019.

All those employers very much hope the modified offer provides a way for a positive conclusion of the 2019-20 JNCHES round, thus enabling a constructive engagement by both employers and trade unions in the 2020-21 round, due to commence in March.