

Higher Education Noticeboard

Last update: 23 Jun 2025

Latest Bulletins

VOTE TO REJECT THE MISERLY OFFER

Posted on: 23 June 2025

GMB entered negotiations determined to protect our members' pay, jobs and working conditions.

We met the Employers Association three times. GMB was represented by Kevin Brandstatter, National Officer and Sandi Vennell, GMB branch secretary at Nottingham Trent University.

The Employers Association pleaded poverty, citing the financial chaos in Higher Education as an excuse.

The sector is now under investigation by Parliament and GMB will provide evidence to the Select Committee. GMB holds the employers and successive governments responsible for the situation. We blame governments for insisting tuition fees must remain and for wrecking international student recruitment by imposing ridiculous conditions on potential students. We blame the universities for gambling millions on investment in new buildings and accommodation blocks to entice overseas students to the UK, who may now never come. We blame them because university management teams have grown as well, while support staff roles are axed and Vice Chancellor pay is now average over £300,000 per annum. In contrast, the average debt of a student leaving university now is almost £60,000.

Despite the responsibility for the financial disaster being partly caused by the universities themselves, we will work collaboratively with UCEA (ii) to call on the government to address the crisis in the sector and to avoid the catastrophic redundancies in our universities. We are putting our members working in universities first and recognise that because universities and government are both culpable in the financial disaster, only a re-set of university funding can resolve the situation. We will argue for:



- Universities to be recognised as part of the public sector (at present they are not);
- The end of the visa restrictions on overseas students;
- For a new settlement for the sector based on an end to tuition fees, financial support for students to study, secure well-paid employment and contribute to a successful society.

The joint unions' (i) negotiators are united in our strong disappointment and opposition to the final offer from the Employers Association of 1.4% which represents a real terms pay cut of 1.8% (relative to RPI). The joint negotiators recommended a rejection of the offer. Following a series of meetings with reps for universities, an almost unanimous decision was made by GMB reps to recommend that members reject the 1.4% offer.

Higher education is central to the economic success of our cities, regions and nations, yet it is falling drastically behind in terms of pay and conditions.

Low pay is a symptom of how little the work of staff in higher education is valued by those running universities. Year on year pay erosion has not saved jobs, prevented the use of insecure contract types, excessive workloads, or equality pay gaps.

Excessive workload is the issue most often raised by GMB members. Since the latest rounds of redundancies in many universities, remaining staff complain about being assigned the work of redundant colleagues.

Despite proclaiming their support for addressing inequities in the sector, UCEA have shown a lack of commitment to meaningfully address these issues.

We know that there is no trade-off between job security, pay and equity in work. These are all symptoms of a failure to properly value HE staff. We are committed to working to create a positive vision for the sector which properly values the role of staff and students in H.E.

- The joint trades unions are GMB, Unite, Unison, Universities and Colleges Union and the Education Institution of Scotland
- UCEA is the University and Colleges Employers Association representing around 140 Universities

VOTE TO REJECT 1.4% – YOU ARE WORTH MORE

Kevin Brandstatter



Higher Education Pay Update May 2025



Posted on: 16 May 2025

The Higher Education joint trade unions (i) entered into this negotiation united in our aim to protect our members' pay, jobs and working conditions.

We have set out to work collaboratively with UCEA(ii) to call on the government to address the crisis in the sector and to avoid the catastrophic redundancies in our universities.

The joint union negotiators are united in our strong disappointment and opposition to this offer of 1.4% which represents a real terms pay cut of 1.8% (relative to RPI). We will all be recommending rejection to our respective executive committees.

Higher education is central to the economic success of our cities, regions and nations, yet it is falling drastically behind in terms of pay and conditions.

Low pay is a symptom of how little our work is valued by those running universities. Year on year pay erosion has not saved jobs, prevented the use of insecure contracts types, exploitative workloads, or equality pay gaps.

Despite proclaiming their support for addressing inequities in the sector, UCEA have shown a lack of commitment to meaningfully address these issues.

The joint trade unions know that there is no trade off between job security, pay and equity in work. These are all symptoms of a failure to properly value HE staff. We The joint trade union negotiators are committed to working together as part of the New JNCHES process and beyond to create a positive vision for the sector which properly values the role of staff and students in H.E.

(i) The joint trades unions are GMB, Unite, Unison, Universities and Colleges Union and the Education Institution of Scotland

(ii) UCEA is the University and Colleges Employers Association representing around 140 Universities

GMB workplace reps in Higher Education will meet to decide whether to support the rejection of the pay offer soon. A further bulletin will follow after that meeting.



Higher Education Pay Claim 2025/26



Posted on: 9 April 2025

Dear Members,

Please click here to read the Higher Education Joint Union Claim for 2025/2026:

[2025-joint-union-claim-final-he.pdf](#)

Higher Education Update March 2025



Posted on: 5 March 2025

The trade unions for higher education support staff, GMB, Unite and Unison met Jacqui Smith MP, Minister for Higher Education last week. Kevin Brandstatter, GMB National Officer, Sandi Vennell, lead rep at Nottingham Trent University and Kevin Quinn, lead rep at the University of Arts London made up the GMB delegation.

We wanted to show that the higher education sector is in crisis and how this is affecting employees everywhere, with universities seeking redundancies and closing valuable courses including nursing degrees. 10,000 jobs have been lost in the previous year.

We pressed the case for a new long term financial settlement for higher education which was not based on the enormous increase in tuition fees some universities are saying would be necessary to rebuild the sector. The Minister accepted this would not support access to higher education for working class and disadvantaged young people.

We also highlighted that the government's plans for economic growth would not be fulfilled without the active participation of UK universities. Universities were not simply sites of learning but were leading the way in research and development in collaboration with industry and/or because of funding from Government through research grants.



Universities could also play a considerable role in the growth agenda at regional level, providing expertise and knowledge to support further education colleges in delivering positive impacts at a local level, particularly with the development of the new apprenticeship programmes which a new organisation, Skills England would be leading. The Minister responded positively to our contributions.

The unions did propose a measure which would support universities in the short term and the future, and that was for the government to abandon the visa restrictions introduced by the last government on the recruitment of overseas

students. It has led to a 10 to 20% reduction in applications which had a direct impact on university funding, as students from overseas pay £20,000 per year.

After listening to the trade unions' points about the severe problems in many universities, the Minister said that during the summer the Department for Education would release a broad statement about reform of the higher education sector and a longer-term funding model.

Kind regards,

Kevin Brandstatter (National Officer), Sandi Vennell (GMB rep) and Kevin Quinn, (GMB rep)

Higher Education Update February 2025



Posted on: 14 February 2025

GOOD NEWS

GMB **WIN** weekend enhancements for Ancillary Workers at **Sheffield Hallam University**.

In September 2024, the GMB registered a dispute with the Senior Management Team (SMT) at Sheffield Hallam University. While the dispute primarily focuses the SMT's decision to defer the national HE pay award until July 2025 and not backdate pay (stealing around £1,000 from worker's pockets), it also included a demand on behalf of workers in catering, domestic and sports services that their weekend enhancements be reinstated.

Over fourteen years ago, the university took the decision (as part of a cost saving exercise) to remove weekend enhancements (time-and-a-half on Saturday and double-time on Sunday) for workers in the above services.



Following negotiations between GMB and the SMT in December, we are pleased to confirm that from the 1st Jan 2025, workers in Domestic, Catering and Sports Services are now entitled to weekend enhancements. This is a victory for the workers who have raised their voices in public protest outside the main campus, distributed leaflets among their colleagues and made their voices heard!

GMB Regional Organiser, Joe Wheatley, said: "This win is a testament to workers standing together for what they deserve."

GMB Workplace Rep, Jessica Faulkner, said: "It's fantastic that in just a few short months of engagement, activism and campaigning that workers have recognised their power and are taking steps to improve their working terms and conditions"

This news shows how important it is to have good workplace organisation on every campus and how strong GMB members can be. Other universities have taken local action to cut weekend enhancements either by attacking terms and conditions directly, or by setting up companies they own themselves or by outsourcing essential activities such as catering, cleaning, security or facilities management.

If you and/or colleagues work in a university and do not get weekend enhancements, whoever you work for, whether university or contractor, contact GMB at publicservices@gmb.org.uk. GMB may be able to help you campaign and negotiate for better pay at weekends.

Bad News

The University of Cardiff has become the latest university to contemplate job cuts and course closures as the result of a financial crisis in the Higher Education sector. 400 jobs are threatened on top of over 100 which have already disappeared.

Other universities in the UK have also declared financial difficulties, but it is believed that this is the first of the elite Russell Group of universities to declare a significant problem.

Other universities delayed the implementation of the 2024 pay award, but some others are contemplating redundancies and course closures.

Why is this happening?

Many universities are struggling, and many have said one of the reasons for this is due to overseas students not being able to enrol because of visa restrictions.

After the UK left the European Union student applications from our near neighbours in the EU began to fall and many universities decided to recruit new students from overseas. At first China and then India were targets, with thousands enrolled and then universities found a third target – Nigeria. Overseas students can pay up to £50,000 for a UK degree.



Visa restrictions were brought in by the last Government on what students could do after graduation, whether they could bring dependents with them or work while studying. Applications from overseas have dipped considerably.

The rush to recruit thousands of overseas students did see massive investment in new buildings and facilities in universities throughout the UK which included new accommodation blocks for students whose numbers are dwindling. The interest payments on loans taken out to invest in these facilities will have added to the financial pressure in some universities.

However, the root cause of the crisis goes back to when the previous governments abolished maintenance grants in favour of student loans. Maximum fees were set and have not raised for over decade and there are variations in the devolved nations. Some universities attract research income from charities, private companies and the government body UK Research and Innovation (UKRI) but much of this is short term (one to five year grants), does not offer job security for research assistants and other employees and is not a long term solution.

The government's drive for growth in the economy cannot be achieved without a thriving university sector delivering world class education and research and development. The new organisation "Skills England" will have an impact on Further Education and should drive the recruitment, education and training of new apprentices but the role of universities will need to be clarified once Skills England has an appointed Chief Executive.

The answer

The sector needs fundamental reform. Universities are not classed as part of the public sector, but each is a registered charity, unlike Further Education colleges which were brought **back** into the public sector after the election.

There needs to be a thorough overhaul of university funding, including the impact of current the funding regime and possible alternatives. Any GMB member or workplace organiser is invited to contribute information about the impact of the current funding regime on your university and suggest ideas about how funding for the sector can be improved.

Email your contributions to: kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Higher Education Update January 2025



Posted on: 16 January 2025



Higher Education Pay 2024/25

GMB members voted 67% to 33% to accept the 2024/25 Pay offer, including the creation of working groups (see below). The pay rise itself was unilaterally implemented on the advice of the Employers, except in a number of universities which deferred for financial reasons.

The working groups planned to jointly review issues around:

- A new pay spine
- Workload
- Equal Pay
- Contract Types

Sandi Vennell, GMB Rep at Nottingham Trent University offered to take part in the working groups as well as undertaking the role of GMB National Rep for Higher Education.

However, three sister unions; Unison, University and College Union (UCU) and the Education Institution of Scotland (EIS) informed the employers that their committees had voted to ballot members for strike action. As a result of these decisions the employers decided they would undertake work on the above issues without trade union involvement and advise universities of what they needed to do.

The employers wrote to the General Secretary of UCU with this decision and did not inform other trade unions.

Unions met with the employer on 8th January. The three unions explained that their national committees of elected reps had each agreed to let members decide if they wanted to take industrial action.

Unite and GMB told the employers we would consult reps about the situation. The employers' view is not helpful and it is not down to them to decide how each union consults its members and when.

What is worse is that a unilateral approach to the four issues will only lead to the views of the employers taken into account, rather than the members and reps in the workplace who deal everyday with the issues around overwork, pay discrimination around gender and race, outsourcing of important work to private companies who are only there for the profits, and use a variety of contract types which are detrimental to the workers who are forced to take them.

In late 2023, GMB conducted a survey to determine member priorities. Reaching agreements with the employers about issues such as workload, discrimination and poor pay were reported as top priorities



GMB will shortly undertake its 2025 survey around pay and work issues and this will be used to develop the joint union pay claim. A meeting of GMB Union reps from around the UK will also be held in early February to discuss the current situation and pay for 2025.

Higher Education Pay Offer 2024/25



Posted on: 13 November 2024

This is a summary of the Higher Education pay offer made by the Employers Association (UCEA). The formal offer is quite long and detailed and can be accessed here: [ucea-full-and-final-offer-27-august-2024.pdf](#). The pay spine can be found here: [2024-08-27-full-and-final-offer-model-to-scp41-final.pdf](#). The ballot is underway and will close on 6 December.

- An increase from 1 August 2024 of £900
- A further increase from 1 March 2025 of £300.

This equates to increases of 5.7% for the lowest pay point to 2.5% for the highest over the period.

Some Universities may defer the increase until May 2025 for financial reasons but **must consult local trade unions and provide financial information to explain why this is needed.**

There will be joint reviews of the following:

- Pay spine points

Four spine points cannot be used as they fall below the National Minimum Wage

- Contract Types

There are many different contracts including zero and near zero, fixed term, part time and term time only with no rationale for their use

- Equality Pay Gaps



Trade unions have identified pay differences based on gender, race, disability and between those directly employed by Universities, those indirectly employed through wholly owned subsidiaries and those employed by private companies on outsourced contracts.

■ Workload

The GMB survey carried out in 2023 provided evidence in work overload caused by the rising level of vacancies, the failure to fill vacancies quickly and redundancies.

These reviews will take place from December 2024 to May 2025 and recommendations will be made for universities to implement in consultation with local trade unions.

Higher Education Pay 2024/25 Update



Posted on: 18 October 2024

After a final round of negotiations with Employers on Higher Education pay for 2024/25, GMB and sister Trade Unions will begin ballots of members in universities affiliated to the University and Colleges Employers Association.

GMB will ballot members without a recommendation to accept or reject the offer, to give you the choice.

If you are working with a colleague who is not a GMB member please let them know what GMB is doing. New members who join during the ballot will be able to vote.

To conduct the ballot we need your contact details:

- Mobile phone number for SMS messages
- Private email address (wherever possible as Employers can access individual staff accounts)
- Current home address

If your personal information held by GMB needs updating, for example because you have changed phone number, please contact your GMB Office or update your details by logging in at [Make Work Better | GMB Union](#)



Following the ballot, the Unions and management will have working groups to deal with:

- Pay spine – a pay spine which has four points lower than the National Minimum wage cannot be used.
- Contracts – currently there is a range of contract types, from zero hours to full time hours, term time only and short-term contracts with little reason or justification for them.
- Equal pay gaps where there is evidence of pay differences according to gender, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation.
- Workload – increased workload is a common feature in universities where there have been redundancies, unfilled vacancies and work transferred all leading to overwork.

GMB will have one Rep involved in each group at national level. These Reps will report to GMB forums made up of Reps from across the union.

More detail will follow but if you want to get involved, please contact your Regional Organiser.

Higher Education Pay 2024/25 Update



Posted on: 23 August 2024

Dear Members,

HE Trade Unions and UCEA yesterday (22 August) completed the meetings under the New JNCHES Dispute Resolution Procedure for the pay negotiations of the 2024-25 negotiating round following two days of intense discussions.

UCEA has committed to write to the Unions with its final offer in the week beginning 26 August. The Trade Unions will consider the Employers' offer and both Parties will then discuss next steps.

Higher Education Pay Update



Posted on: 13 August 2024

NB This only applies to Universities involved in the Universities and Colleges Employment Association (UCEA).

Dear Members,

GMB has been made aware that some Vice Chancellors of UK Universities' have been circulating misleading messages that *all* trade unions have rejected a 2024 pay offer.

This is not accurate. UCU and Unison said the offer in its current form was not acceptable and they would advise members to reject it, The Education Institute Scotland are advising members to reject the offer in a ballot of members GMB and Unite have not formally rejected the offer as the process has not concluded.

The Employers invoked the Dispute Resolution Procedure, effectively raising a dispute with the trade unions about pay and meetings will be held on 19th and 22nd September.

An update will be posted on the noticeboard at the conclusion of the process.

GMB members will be balloted on any formal offer made by the employer.

Ask your colleagues to join GMB: www.gmb.org.uk/join

Higher Education Bulletin



Posted on: 29 July 2024

Background

The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) represents 140 UK Universities in the UK. There are five recognised trade unions – GMB, Unison, Unite, UCU and EIS. The Joint Body is the New Joint Negotiating Committee for the Higher Education Sector (New JNCHES). Those not involved in UCEA are autonomous and conduct purely local bargaining.

The negotiations concluded with a final offer from the Employers, which have been discussed by reps. One Union – the Education Institute for Scotland has recommended members reject the offer and two



Unions – Unison and UCU invoked the dispute resolution procedure to enable discussions to continue. However, the employers have also invoked the procedure, and all unions will be part of the procedure with the first meeting taking place in the week commencing 19 August.

Employer autonomy

While there is a single set of negotiations for those covered any UCEA, the implementation of any agreement reached at national level is subject to local negotiations at University level, because each Institution is a separate employer. For example, an affiliated University can opt to defer any agreed pay increase by up to 11 months for financial reasons. There are indications from the Employers Association that a number of currently unidentified Universities are in a precarious position, and some have already begun to consult local unions about potential redundancies.

Financial difficulties

The pay negotiations have been difficult given the complex financial crisis which is emerging. Student fees, on which student loans are based, have been set at £9250 for Universities in England and £9000 for Universities in Wales. The system in Scotland is considerably different, but many Universities in Scotland are contemplating redundancies. The fees have not increased for a decade and will remain in place for a further two years unless any new Government makes changes. Universities claim to be losing £2500 per student per year because of these policies. Hardest hit are those Universities which were Polytechnics (known as Post 92 Institutions).

In response to the financial issues, many Universities recruited Overseas students. Overseas students are not covered by limits on tuition fees, and can pay up to £60,000 in fees to a University over three years, to complete a degree, double the amount a UK student could pay for the same education. Prior to Brexit, many students were recruited from the European Union, but this has been in decline. Universities adapted by recruiting students from China, India and more recently Nigeria.

This led to a massive expansion of building of University accommodation for students both on and off campus. Both Universities and private sector contractors have been involved in building student accommodation in many cities and towns but with potentially declining student numbers these projects may turn out to financial disasters. In some cities these have seen contracts with building companies running into hundreds of millions.

Two issues have caused a crisis in the entire sector. Firstly, the Government changed the visa rules, which restricted the ability of students to extend visas after graduation and to bring dependents to the UK. This led to a 40% reduction in applications from overseas students in early 2024. The second issue was the collapse of the Nigerian currency. The Government decided to liberalise the economy, including ending price controls on fuel. Inflation rose to over 30%, the currency collapsed and savings were wiped out. There are over 40,000 Nigerian students in the UK, with worthless savings, and many face deportation because a failure to pay any instalment of fees is an automatic breach of visa conditions.



The new Government has plans for the sector involving a new body “Skills England”, to bring the post 16 education sector closer together which may have widespread impact on Higher Education and to invest in skills development throughout the sector in England. The devolved nations have their own structures for taking this forwards.

The new Government is not only developing new policy in the sector but also bringing forwards plans to strengthen the role of trade unions in the workplace and in sectors. Now it the ideal opportunity for your colleagues to join GMB.

Please forwards this to work colleagues and encourage them to join us by following this link:

www.gmb.org.uk/join.

If you would like a GMB visit to your University please email **kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk**

Higher Education Pay Negotiations Update



Posted on: 19 July 2024

Dear Colleagues,

On Wednesday 17 July 2024, GMB reps met with Kevin Brandstatter, National Officer, to discuss 2024 Pay negotiations.

The meeting noted that Unison and UCU had issues at the end of the negotiations process which are to be considered during a dispute resolution process. GMB and Unite will attend meetings as well. The Education Institute of Scotland position was not known.

In the circumstances, the Reps meeting agreed that at the end of the Dispute Resolution Process, a further meeting of reps will take place to consider a final offer from the employer, and members will be balloted.

As part of the negotiations, GMB has been actively involved in the establishment of working groups to review the following:

- The existing spine points – some of which are below the National Minimum Wage;
Workload – a recurring complaint from members;
- The Gender/Ethnicity/Disability pay gaps;



- Contract types – also raised by members including zero hours, near zero hours, terms time only, casual employment.

GMB reps will be involved in these groups when they get established.

Should you want further information please email kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Please encourage your colleagues to join at www.gmb.org.uk/join

Letter From Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson



Posted on: 10 July 2024

Dear Members,

Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson has written a letter to the education workforces to make clear the valuable role they will play in the government's agenda for change.

To all working in early years, children's services, schools, further and higher education,

It's a huge privilege to write to you today to introduce myself as your new Secretary of State for Education and to thank you for your vital work. I want this moment to mark a reset in our relationship: under this new government, education will once again be at the heart of change and the forefront of national life. I can't wait to start working together with you as we begin to transform our system so that young people get the skills, care and opportunities they deserve.

I know how hard you work to support our learners and families; you are key to breaking down barriers to opportunity and improving life chances for every child. You have supported our children and young people through a great deal of disruption – guiding their curiosity, building their resilience, and helping them achieve and thrive. You and your work are essential to the change this government wants to achieve across the country, and I want our renewed relationship to reflect that.

My commitment to the sector is deeply personal. I grew up in a family that knew the value of a good education. I was also fortunate enough to go to great local state schools filled with committed staff who saw the value and worth in each and every one of us. I'm so grateful for all the people in my life who nurtured within me a love of learning and the confidence to succeed – I would not be here without them.



I know that I was very lucky, but life shouldn't come down to luck. Lives are shaped by opportunity, but too many people simply don't have the opportunities to succeed.

I grew up on a council street in the Northeast of England. At that time in the 1980s and early '90s, it was a place with many challenges, where far too many children were held back by their background. But background should be no barrier to getting on.

I am determined that we will drive change together. Working with all of you, we want to build a fairer society with a government that delivers the best life chances for every child. That's what motivates me and that's why we will work tirelessly to deliver on our opportunity mission, tackling barriers like inadequate housing and child poverty that undermine family security and make it so hard for children to learn.

There's a lot of work to be done to realise this mission against some major challenges. A huge part of my role is to understand the scale of the challenges you are facing, and the support needed to fix them. The scar of child poverty, severe financial pressures squeezing all your budgets, high workload, climbing vacancy rates, strain on care, mental health and SEND services, among many other issues, have made your jobs increasingly difficult. This is a tough inheritance – none of these have quick and easy solutions but I will work with and for you to find practical ways forward.

Supported by your experience and expertise, this government will expand our early years education system, drive high and rising standards and reform curriculum and assessment. Work to recruit 6,500 new expert teachers for our schools and colleges starts now, and we will bring forward a comprehensive strategy for post-16 education, work with local government to provide loving, secure homes for children in care, provide support for children with SEND and their families, and create higher-quality training and employment paths by empowering local communities to develop the skills people need. We will secure the future of our world class universities as engines of growth, ambition and opportunity for all.

This change is simple to describe, but vast to deliver. Government can't do it alone – we will work with you as essential and valued partners to deliver our shared mission. I want to renew the trust and respect we hold for each other. My commitment to you is to listen, to draw on your wealth of experience and to act on your honest feedback.

As an initial step, I want to invite you to join me for a live event at 4pm on Tuesday 16th July where I'll share more about my vision for the education system, but I really want to hear from you too. There will be a chance for you to share your views and ask me questions in the live chat function.

I very much look forward to meeting as many of you as possible and working together to break down barriers to opportunity, give all children the best life chances and make sure there is no ceiling on the ambitions of our young people.

Yours sincerely,



Higher Education Update



Posted on: 21 June 2024

The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) represents 140 UK Universities in the UK. There are five recognised trade unions – GMB, Unison, Unite, UCU and EIS. The Joint Body is the New Joint Negotiating Committee for the Higher Education Sector (New JNCHES). Those not involved in UCEA are autonomous and conduct purely local bargaining.

While there is a single set of negotiations for those covered by UCEA, the implementation of any agreement reached at national level is subject to local negotiations at University level, because each Institution is a separate employer. For example, an affiliated University can opt to defer any agreed pay increase by up to 11 months for financial reasons. There are indications from the Employers Association that a number of currently unidentified Universities are in a precarious position.

The negotiations have been difficult given the complex financial crisis which is emerging. Student fees, on which student loans are based, have been set at £9250 for Universities in England and £9000 for Universities in Wales. The system in Scotland is considerably different, but many Universities in Scotland are contemplating redundancies. The fees have not increased for a decade and will remain in place for a further two years unless any new Government makes changes. Universities claim to be losing £2500 per student per year because of these policies. Hardest hit are those Universities which were Polytechnics (known as Post 92 Institutions).

In response to the financial issues, many Universities recruited Overseas students. Overseas students are not covered by limits on tuition fees, and can pay up to £60,000 in fees to a University over three years, to complete a degree, double the amount a UK student could pay for the same education.

Prior to Brexit, many students were recruited from the European Union, but this has declined since and continues to do so. Universities adapted by recruiting students from China, India and more recently Nigeria.

This led to a massive expansion of building of University accommodation for students both on and off campus. Both Universities and private sector contractors have been involved in building student accommodation in many cities and towns but with potentially declining student numbers these projects may turn out to financial disasters.



In some cities these have seen contracts with building companies running into hundreds of millions.

There have been two issues which have arisen recently which have caused a crisis in the entire sector. Firstly, the Government changed the visa rules, which restricted the ability of students to extend visas after graduation and to bring dependents to the UK. This led to a 40% reduction in applications from overseas students in early 2024. The second issue was the collapse of the Nigerian currency. The Government decided to liberalise the economy, including ending price controls on fuel. Inflation rose to over 30%, the currency collapsed and savings were wiped out. There are over 40,000 Nigerian students in the UK, with worthless savings, and many face deportation because a failure to pay any instalment of fees is an automatic breach of visa conditions.

Not all Universities face these pressures. The “Russell Group” of leading institutions (eg. Oxford, Cambridge and London) have large research portfolios supported by private industry and do not face the same pressures. On the other hand, however, a number of Universities in Scotland are reported to be considering redundancies.

Kevin Brandstatter, National Officer

June 2024

HE Pay Negotiations 2024/25



Posted on: 3 April 2024

The first meeting of the HE Pay Negotiations for 2024/25 took place on 26 March.

The Joint unions presented the headlines of their pay claim.

These are:

- An increase on all pay points of at least RPI + 2% or a flat rate of at least £2,500 whichever is greater and a commitment to restore lost pay.
- Equivalent rises to London Weighting and any other allowances
- A new minimum pay rate of £15 an hour.



- All institutions to become Foundation Living Wage employers and pay points below the FLW to be deleted.
- UCEA should commit to a comprehensive reform of the pay spine.
- On the pay-related elements from 2023/24: progression and resolution of those issues covered by the terms of reference, including joint agreements on workload, contract types, pay spine reform, and agreeing specific actions to tackle the gender, disability and ethnicity pay gaps to be implemented at institutional level, and implementation of actions that arise from that work.
- Joint reference to the New JNCHES Pension Forum of issues arising from gender inequalities in pension contributions.
- Negotiations to agree specific actions to move all staff onto a 35-hour week, with no loss in pay, to be implemented at institutional level.
- A national Green New Deal Agreement on a Just Transition for the sector which will include a Just Transition Commission in Higher Education
- UCEA to commit to the protection of national agreements relating to terms and conditions of employment including the Post-92 national contract and HE2000.
- To establish the Scottish sub-committee of New JNCHES as set out under the New JNCHES agreement.

The employers responded to the points raised but stated that they were not yet in a position to make a formal offer in response to the claim. The trade unions expressed their disappointment with the employers' position. The next set of negotiations are scheduled for 22 April when we hope to have further progress to report.

Posted on: 2 April 2024

On 27 March GMB Workplace Organisers and GMB Regional Officers responsible for Universities met online to discuss pay 2024, issues identified by members and activists and the plans for campaigns in the future.

Pay

There was a report about the first round of pay negotiations with UCEA (see below). A bulletin about pay will follow separately.

Sector Overview

GMB negotiates with the Universities and Colleges Employment Association (UCEA) which represents 140 Universities at National Level. Each University is a separate employer and not all Universities are in UCEA, so there are some that negotiate separately with trade unions locally. There are also issues covered by national negotiations which can be improved by local negotiations.

The employers body claims there is a funding crisis in the Universities because student fees have not been increased and because there has been a 40% cut in students for overseas applying for and securing places, although this was only based on the January 2024 intake, so is just a snapshot of a particular month and does not indicate a longer-term trend.

GMB identified quite a few issues which were common to more than one University, and they included

- **WORKLOAD**, with members being forced or expected to work above their grade with no extra pay, being expected to work unpaid overtime and just to take on more work because there were not enough staff. There was an acute shortage of skilled manual trades.
- **EQUALITIES**, with women being paid less than men for the same work and roles being downgraded and subsequently offered to women. Few workplace adjustments made for staff with disabilities compared to the adjustments made for the student population. Staff with caring responsibilities being forced back to the workplace and treated with a lack of respect.
- **OUTSOURCING** with members being transferred to private companies or into subsidiary companies owned a University, paying lower wages, having worse pensions, treating staff with disrespect and bullying especially if they were non white. Employing cleaners



from an agency rather than directly, so they had worse terms and conditions of employment than direct employees.

- **WORKING HOURS** with different Universities employing staff on working weeks where full time hours could be 35,36 or 37 or even 42 with some on shifts, and with members being expected to undertake unpaid overtime simply to get their jobs done.

All these points were raised directly by GMB reps working in universities and have been confirmed by GMB Regional Organisers with responsibility for the sector. At the next meeting each of the four issues will be discussed further. All of these issues can be tackled by members, GMB reps and Regional Officers at local level. Up to now unions have tried to reach agreement with the UCEA employers but this has not been successful partly because UCEA does not have a mandate from the employers to reach agreement with trade unions to tackle the issues, but also because as Universities are separate employers, they can be challenged by trade unions locally to resolve what are fundamental workplace problems.

In recognition of the inability or unwillingness of the employers at national level to resolve these serious issues, GMB will concentrate at tackling the problems at local level where it matters and where employers have the ability to listen to GMB Workplace and Regional Organisers to improve the membership levels, workplace organisation and wherever possible campaign for change.

What can you do to help:

The more information GMB has, including the name of any private company working in your University and what they do (e.g. catering, cleaning, security) the better GMB can campaign to improve the position of members in the workplace. Please let GMB know which private companies work in your University.

If you would like GMB to visit your University to discuss any matter affecting you and your colleagues, please contact your local GMB Office, if you are unsure which it is, www.gmb.org.uk, will have the details.

If you would like more information about becoming a GMB rep, please also contact your Regional Office.

If you have any examples of the impact of the four issues identified by GMB representatives, please email kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk as well as letting your Regional Office know.

GMB is not just a union for those working in Higher Education but is also a union for working students and those studying for qualifications as part of work placement (e.g. student nurses). Please let them know about us and please encourage them to join GMB.



Posted on: 18 May 2023

Raj Jethwa Chief Executive UCEA

Dear Raj,

Re: Your letter dated 11 May 2023

We are writing to you on behalf of the five joint trade unions in response to your letter dated 11 May 2023, following our meeting between the representatives of these unions last Friday.

We have repeatedly expressed our desire to re-enter negotiations in order to resolve the dispute. We note that you highlight the potential disruption to students from industrial action, and we have been willing throughout this process to negotiate in order to reach an acceptable agreement for our members and bring the dispute to a close. It is therefore disappointing that UCEA are refusing to enter negotiations unless trade unions call off their lawful industrial action, thereby prolonging the disruption to students. We would urge UCEA to reconsider its position and return to the negotiating table over pay and the pay-related issues including equality pay gaps, casualisation, workload, and pay spine reform.

On behalf of the joint unions, we are writing to ask you to set up the negotiating meetings agreed in the latter part of 2022 for further negotiations over these matters as soon as possible, in the hope that we can resolve the issues that exist and move forward with productive negotiations.

Finally, you have raised some issues around industrial action which relate to some unions and not others. This year is unusual in that we started with an agreement to separate out pay from pay-related items. The action your letter refers to relates to the 2022-23 dispute between some unions and UCEA which you have never sought to settle. A further industrial action ballot relates to the 2023-24 pay uplift only, not the pay-related items. We remain willing and able to enter discussions with you to settle these disputes and hope UCEA will reconsider its position.

You will also have seen UCU's separate and more detailed response to your letter surrounding the aspects which relate specifically to UCU's action.

Yours sincerely,

Ruth and Jon



Updates For HE Staff



Posted on: 2 March 2023



Talks between UCEA and the HE trades unions continue. Following progress on terms of reference for a review of the UK HE pay spine, the focus is now on terms of reference covering equality pay gaps, contract types, and workload. Work continues with a further meeting scheduled with ACAS on 14 March 2023.

A joint statement agreed by all five HE trade unions, 2 March 2023

Noticeboard Bulletin – 26-01-2023



Posted on: 26 January 2023



The Joint Unions met yesterday with employers to continue negotiations over pay for 2022/23 and 2023/24. Previously they had offered pay rises for staff of between 4 and 7%, with a portion paid in February rather than August. This offer had been rejected by the Joint Unions.

Eventually, the employers made a marginally improved offer which (compared to their original offer) provides an improved (but still below inflation) offer for those above spinal column point 42 and did nothing to address issues of poverty pay, pay compression, and of declining pay for all. The offer is described in more detail below:



The offer will be confirmed in writing (and will be split between February and August) but the overall percentage rises for both offers are shown below:

Original offer	Latest offer		
Spinal Points 3-5	7%	Spinal Points 3-5	8%
Spinal Points 6-14	7%	Spinal Points 6-14	7%
Spinal Points 15-25	6%	Spinal Points 15-25	6%
Spinal Points 26-42	5%	Spinal Points 26-42	5%
Spinal Points above 43	4%	Spinal Points above 43	5%

The Joint Unions responded that:

1. They were disappointed by employers continuing to insist on a real-terms pay cut for 2023/4 which fails to address the 2022/23 dispute.
2. We looked to employers to make an inflation-based offer backdated to August 22 as well as a commitment to resolve pay-related issues.
3. University workers have suffered year-on-year pay cuts and this offer fails to offer any improvement.
4. We remain committed to a negotiated settlement.

We reject any attempt by employers to divide university workers and we will continue to work together to put pressure on employers to address the crisis in the sector. We agreed that to not make an offer that meets inflation to those

university workers at the bottom end of the pay spine is particularly egregious while believing that all university workers are suffering year-on-year pay

cuts. To do this, employers must increase the total amount of funding being provided for the pay of university workers.



Update After HE Pay Negotiating Meeting



Posted on: 17 January 2023



Update after HE pay negotiating meeting on 16 January 2023: University employers fail to engage in serious negotiations

The joint unions arrived at today's meeting prepared to enter serious negotiations. We were disappointed that UCEA did not appear to share that approach. We presented our joint union claim for pay, which was RPI + 2% or £4K (whichever is higher) to address the need for a cost-of-living adjustment and begin to address the real terms decrease in salaries over the past decade. In response, this claim was described as an "April Fool's joke" by UCEA. UCEA indicated that there was no prospect of significantly improving their offer. However, after an adjournment they informed us that they were willing to go away and remodel their offer with the possibility of a very modest increase in the quantum of funding. We are meeting with UCEA next on Wednesday 25th January, and we hope that the employers will engage in serious negotiations with us. **A joint statement agreed by all five HE trade unions, 16 January 2023**

New JNCHES Dispute Update



Posted on: 11 July 2022

The Joint HE Unions (GMB, EIS, Unison, Unite and UCU) met with UCEA on 6th July, in the first dispute meeting over the 2022-23 pay round, and pushed the employers to improve their final offer that all five HE unions have rejected.

The two dispute meetings, on 6th and 14th July, take place in the context of an unprecedented cost of living crisis and cumulative sub inflation pay outcomes in recent years. As a result, the meeting focussed on the derisory pay offer of 3% for the majority of our members.



UCEA did not make any improved offer at the dispute meeting. This will be very disappointing news for members struggling to pay their bills, dealing with excessive workloads, working weeks in excess of 35 hours, contract insecurity, pay inequality, no incremental head room, nor a Scottish JNCHES committee.

The joint union negotiators pressed the employers hard. As a result, UCEA have committed to formally consult their members on an improved offer for negotiating at the next dispute meeting on the 14 July. UCEA will take the outcome of the employer's consultation to a meeting of their board, which will take place before the final dispute meeting.

The joint union negotiators are encouraging branches to use the short window between now and the meeting on 14 July to lobby their Vice Chancellor or Principal to feedback to UCEA that they should make an improved offer and avoid a damaging dispute this autumn.

Send on behalf of the Joint HE Trade Unions.

Noticeboard Bulletin – 20-07-2022



Posted on: 20 July 2022

The joint HE trade unions (GMB, EIS, Unite, Unison and UCU) have met the employer representatives at UCEA for the second and final New JNCHES dispute meeting. It was a very disappointing meeting.

One of the actions from the first meeting on 6 July was that UCEA would consult employers on improving the final offer. UCEA gave an overview of the outcome of that consultation in the meeting. What is particularly frustrating is that despite UCEA's acknowledging the cost-of-living crisis has got worse for staff, they failed to make an improved offer on pay.

Employers understand the significance of this decision and have chosen to fuel a sector wide dispute rather than make an improved offer that could have avoided huge disruption in the autumn and tackled the cost of living crisis for staff in a fair and reasonable manner.

The joint trade union's find this position completely unacceptable given that we signalled in negotiations that we were prepared to move from our headline pay demand. In short, the unions moved to try and genuinely negotiate a fair pay settlement as member's pay has not kept up with inflation, but UCEA chose not to do so.



The formal New JNCHES dispute process has now concluded. Whilst we remain ready and willing to meet UCEA any time any place if they have an improved pay offer to make, each union will now continue to implement their plans to either consult members on the position or move to statutory industrial action ballots in the coming weeks.

Sent on behalf of the Joint HE trade Unions.

Previous Bulletins

Joint Statement Between UCEA And HE Trade-Unions On Covid Testing For Staff



Posted on: 5 December 2022

The unions in HE and Employer's Group have made a joint statement going forward regarding **Covid 19 Tests**.

GMB Lodge Formal Dispute With HE Employers On Pay Offer



Posted on: 5 December 2022

GMB have written to the University and College Employers Association (UCEA) to lodge a formal dispute to the **pay offer** covering the 2020–21 period. This follows a meeting of our National Higher Education Committee on Tuesday 12th January, where the offer was considered by member representatives to have fallen short of **pay claim submitted by the joint unions**.

This is the first stage in the dispute procedure, the next will be to meet with the UCEA as stipulated in Annex A of the *Dispute Resolution Procedure of the New JNCHES Agreement 2013*. The outcome of that meeting will be reported on both the national committee, and to members.

A meeting between the parties was held on the 12th and a further is scheduled for the 19th.

[Read the dispute letter here.](#)



Posted on: 22 July 2020

The Joint Unions in Higher Education have made a pay claim for 2020/21 to the UCEA.

In brief:

- **An increase in all higher education salaries by the Retail Price Index plus 5%** on all 49 points of the national pay spine; for all pay related allowances including London weighting, to have same uplift;
- The minimum hourly rate of pay for staff employed by universities to be **£10.50 per hour**. This is to be applicable to staff at all HEIs whether the standard full-time weekly employment contract is 35 hours per week or above; In London, where the Living Wage Foundation rate will be **£10.75 per hour** this should be relevant minimum.
- Addressing compression of the pay spine, with the aim of **restoring the 3% differential** between pay spinal column points over the next three years;
- For **all universities to become Living Wage Foundation accredited employers** ensuring that outsourced workers receive at least the Foundation Living Wage rate;
- For **the standard weekly full-time contract of employment to be 35 hours per week** at all higher education institutions;
- **Ending pay injustice** – meaningful, agreed action to tackle the race, gender and disability pay gap; to take an intersectional approach to the ways in which intersectionality and protected characteristics impact on pay equality;
- Meaningful, agreed action to **address excessive workloads and unpaid work**; action to address the impact that excessive workloads are having on workforce stress and mental ill-health;
- New JNCHES to establish **working group/s to look at career development, progression issues and training opportunities** in higher education.



- To establish the Scottish sub-committee of New JNCHES as set out under the New JNCHES agreement; to review and **consider how the Scottish Fair Work Convention dimensions can best be applied at a UK level;**
- Agreeing a framework to **eliminate precarious employment practises and casualised contracts**, including zero hours contracts, from higher education; converting hourly paid staff onto fractional contracts; agreeing national guidance to end the outsourcing of support services in higher education and to bring staff into in-house employment.

Read the full claim & background, including detailed supporting argument, here:



Principles For Working Safely On Campus During The Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic



Posted on: 1 January 1970



This joint statement has been agreed between UCEA and the HE trade unions: GMB, EIS, UCU, UNISON, and Unite.

As lockdown restrictions begin to ease, UCEA and the joint trade unions have developed these joint principles to support HEIs in planning to keep their campuses as safe as possible and ensure the health and wellbeing of HE staff, students and visitors.

1. Use of Government Guidance for Safe Workplaces

HEIs will use government guidance and public health guidance (e.g. Public Health England and devolved nation equivalent) as the basis for their response to the Covid-19 pandemic. At an institutional level this response will factor in relevant local conditions and circumstances that employers and unions may need to consider. Unions will work with HEIs in the implementation of the relevant guidance for their institution.

2. Health and Safety Legislation

The government guidance does not supersede existing health and safety legislation. HEIs must continue to abide by statutory health and safety obligations relevant to their nation, such as the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977, which provide rights to recognised trade union safety representatives, and the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, which contains the legal duty on employers to conduct risk assessments. Health and safety legislation, coupled with the government guidance specific to Covid-19, should be seen as the minimum standards for HEIs to achieve.

3. Consultation with Campus Trade Unions

HEIs recognise the positive contributions that unions can make. UCEA HEI member institutions commit to consulting with recognised trade unions on staff health and safety, and about how the institution will manage risks from Covid-19 including regarding the re-opening of departments and services. HEIs should work jointly with trade union representatives, staff and students to resolve issues.

4. Risk Assessments

Plans for managing staff returns to campus will only be implemented when risk assessments have been completed. HEIs will undertake appropriate risk assessments and review them in consultation with trade union health and safety representatives. Unions will support a risk based approach to controls and will help to inform their members regarding the appropriateness of controls. As part of carrying out risk



assessments, HEIs will ensure that relevant advice and expertise is available and given appropriate weight and consideration.

The Public Health bodies have provided extensive guidance on what to consider in any risk assessments, and HEIs will consider the full range of preventive measures aimed at minimising the risk, and spread, of infection. Decisions on any measures, including the provision and use of PPE, will be based on the outcomes of risk assessments, based on what is reasonably practical for that workplace. A generic risk assessment for Covid-19 should also be conducted to draw out potential issues, considering both mental and physical health during the pandemic.

This should cover all staff and, depending on the size and complexity of the institution, may either be one single HEI-wide risk assessment or a series of different generic risk assessments covering different sites/departments.

5. Communication

HEIs will communicate regularly with all trade union representatives, staff and students on health and safety issues related to Covid-19. HEIs will be clear about what can and cannot be done to adapt practices relating to work and study and consider the provision of any training, as needed, for staff. Staff and students should have clear channels through which to raise with their HEI any concerns that they have or any suggestions which the HEI might not have considered previously.

6. Impact on Staff

Universities will assess how the transition back to campus will affect different cohorts of staff and take into account any equality considerations. HEIs will seek to identify reasonable actions to mitigate possible adverse impacts on specific group/s including those, or those living with, people who are shielding or vulnerable.

Noticeboard Bulletin – 02-06-2020



Posted on: 2 June 2020

The joint HE Trade Unions have met with and agreed a framework nationally on a proposed safe return for Higher Education Institutions.

You can download that full statement [here](#), or read it below:



Noticeboard Bulletin – 24-04-2020



Posted on: 24 April 2020

[Download PDF](#)

Higher Education Bulletin 1



GMB and sister unions have been discussing the current problems facing everyone in Higher Education with the Employers.

GMB continues to push for the best possible deal for workers in these extremely challenging times we are working with the employers to achieve this end. The employers association is the University and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), and covers the vast majority of Institutions involved in Higher Education.

Employers and Trade Unions have issued a joint statement on Covid 19 which reads:

UCEA and the EIS, GMB, UNISON and Unite have come together to agree this joint statement for the HE sector regarding staffing issues associated with Covid-19. We are aware that this is a fast-moving situation. The overarching approach in this statement is that institutions and unions seek to work together to help the sector navigate the staffing issues created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The parties to this joint statement are aware that HEIs have been working extremely hard to respond effectively to the risks posed by Covid-19. Given the diversity in the sector, it will be important for individual HEIs to develop their own local responses, tailored to their unique staff, student and operational profiles; however, we believe that all HEIs will benefit from partnership working between the employers and their recognised local trade union representatives.

In developing this joint statement, we have sought to collate the key issues that HEIs should consider, with reference to their local trade union partners, as well as relevant sources of information. The situation is changing on a rapid basis, and we understand that HEIs will want to be fully prepared to engage their staff.

In developing local plans in response to Covid-19, employers should continue consulting and following the latest guidance and advice issued by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and Public Health England (PHE), Health Protection Scotland (HPS), Health Protection Wales (HPW) and the Health and Social Care Public Health agency in Northern Ireland (PHA), as appropriate, alongside advice from local infection prevention and control specialists.

The issues for consideration below are subject to the availability of the relevant staff and may be revised in the light of developments or changes in Government advice.

Key issues for consideration:

- Ensuring that any communication channels that HEIs have established in respect Covid-19 reach all staff groups, including any workers employed by an outsourced services provider.



- Ensuring that all staff and representatives are aware of procedures for the care of, and response to, suspected or confirmed cases of Covid-19.
- Ensuring that relevant risks and Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) assessments have been reviewed to identify who may be at risk of harm, how this may arise and identifying what measures can be put in place to control the risks with reference to PHE (or devolved equivalent) guidelines. This should include, where necessary, the provision of gender-sensitive personal protective equipment.
- Ensuring adequate provision of soap, paper towels, hand sanitiser, tissues and bins.
- Organising an enhanced programme of cleaning, concentrating on “touch points”.
- Ensuring effective procedures are in place to allow staff and representatives to raise any concerns at the earliest opportunity in relation to facilities, policies and processes for managing Covid-19. Ensuring staff feel able to raise concerns without detriment, and that feedback is given to staff on the outcome. While the expectation is that staff should raise their concerns with their line managers / supervisors in the first instance, they should be made aware of alternative local routes for raising concerns.
- Where staff are being asked to work from home, or in other alternative locations, in response to changes in the way that the HEI’s operations are conducted due to Covid-19, appropriate consideration should be given to risk assessment, the provision of equipment, and the mental and physical health of staff working in alternative locations. Consideration should also be given to how staff can remain connected with each other, with regular opportunities for virtual contact.
- Where staff are parents or carers, consideration should be given to how staff can work from home when schools are closed. In addition to the ability to work from home, consideration may also need to be given to flexibility in working hours. This should be balanced against the need to ensure the delivery of operations and services.
- In line with Government guidance, identifying business critical roles to ensure only essential services are operating. Where staff working in those roles have underlying health conditions, ensuring risk assessments are carried out and official guidelines are followed accordingly.
- Where staff are suspected or confirmed to have contracted Covid-19, ensuring their personal details are treated as confidential, and that staff are reminded of their duty to



protect the confidentiality of other members of staff.

- Ensuring Government advice on staff travel is communicated widely.
- Where staff or members of their household are required to self-isolate, clearly communicating pay arrangements during this period of absence. Where staff are being paid under contractual sick pay arrangements, consideration should be given to treating any absence as related to compliance with national infection control guidance, rather than counting towards any sickness absence policy triggers.

Key Workers

If any Higher Education staff are formally in the key worker category, you will already have been written to, to confirm your status. If you have any concerns please contact your GMB Region.

Higher Education Pay

2020

Initial pay discussions had begun, but have been put into abeyance while the Covid 19 pandemic persists. The employers have agreed however that any settlement will be backdated.

Further bulletins will be issued shortly.

If you need any further information, please

email: publicservices@gmb.org.uk or kevin.brandstatter@gmb.org.uk

Higher Education Bulletin 2

GMB and sister unions have been discussing the current problems facing everyone in Higher Education during the pandemic. Nearly all Universities have moved any teaching on line, but many GMB members continue to work on campus providing essential services to remaining students and staff.

GMB has also been pressing the Employers to clarify whether the Governments Job Retention Scheme applies in the sector. This provides funding for employers in the private sector, to avoid the need for redundancies.

While Universities are public sector institutions, many receive funding from the private sector for specific projects. The Guidance below was circulated by Government on 17 April. This is an extract of the Guidance as it applies to Higher Education is set out below:



Higher Education

During and after the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, our aim is for Higher Education (HE) providers to continue to:

- deliver HE provision
- support the needs of students, both on and off campus

We will work with HE providers to help them access the range of measures on offer to:

- support financial viability and sustainability
- safeguard jobs (including those staff on casual, hourly paid or fixed-term contracts)

We have confirmed that the Student Loans Company is planning to make Term 3 tuition fee payments as scheduled.

We expect that in most circumstances, HE providers will be able to continue paying their staff as usual because HE delivery has largely moved online, and staff are maintaining key services, including those for students remaining on campus.

Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Schemes (CLBILS) and COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF)

If HE providers meet the published criteria for the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) or the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS), they should consider approaching their bank to apply for the scheme, if they judge that is needed. HE providers who do not meet the criteria, namely those with turnover exceeding £500m, may similarly wish to explore the COVID-19 Corporate Financing Facility (CCFF) and should liaise with their bank to discuss eligibility. If their bank does not issue commercial paper, UK Finance has published a [list of those banks that are able to assist](#).

Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS)

Where the above schemes are not appropriate, HE providers are eligible for the CJRS. HE providers should only furlough employees and seek support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme if they meet the following conditions:



- the employee works in an area of business where services are temporarily not required and whose salary is not covered by public funding
- the employee would otherwise be made redundant or laid off
- the employee is not involved in delivering provision that has already been funded
- (where appropriate) the employee is not required to deliver provision for a child of a critical worker and/or vulnerable child
- the grant from the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme would not be duplicative to other public grants that the HE provider receives and would not lead to financial reserves being created

Any grant from the CJRS should not duplicate other sources of public funding where these are being maintained, such as UK home student tuition fees. However, we do recognise the complexity of HE revenue and the role that cross-subsidy plays. If it is difficult to distinguish whether staff are funded through public or commercial income for the purposes of meeting the first 3 conditions as listed above, and some staff will be funded through multiple sources, as a guiding principle, HE providers should not seek to furlough a higher proportion of their wage bill than could reasonably be considered to have been generated through commercial income, including from non-public research grants and contracts. It is likely that decisions on whether to furlough staff will need to be taken on a case by case basis. To be eligible for the CJRS, when on furlough, an employee cannot undertake work for, or on behalf of, their employer.

Where research work has been paused (for example, where grant holders have requested a no-cost extension to UK Research & Innovation grants) and therefore providers are not able to receive payments towards staff costs for a period, resulting in a loss of income due to ceased or reduced delivery of research programs, providers should consider their eligibility and apply for the wide range of financial support that HM Treasury has already announced for businesses, including the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme in line with the above conditions.

The DfE is considering appropriate measures to monitor the use of these schemes in order to detect any duplication of funding, and will be considering potential options to recover misused public funding as required.

We will continue to engage with the sector and update this guidance, and provide further clarification as necessary.

Further bulletins will be issued shortly.



Noticeboard Bulletin – 17-06-2020



Posted on: 17 June 2020

The University & College Employers Association have written to the Joint Unions in Higher Education, indicating there will not be an uplift in pay accross the sector in the next financial year.

The joint trade unions, in response to the UCEA position, are calling for the following:

- Consideration to be given to increasing pay by, at least, inflation in order to ensure that staff don't suffer a pay cut from 1 August 2020;
- Consideration to be given to providing increases to address compression at the lower end of the pay spine along with increases in pay on the lowest spinal column points in order to meet the national living wage (and the Living Wage Foundation rates where that is followed);
- Anational higher education job security commitment;
- Acommitment to the New JNCHESnational bargaining structures for 2021/22, and future years, with HEIs signalling clear commitment to this process;
- A New JNCHES pay negotiation meeting to be held before mid-July 2020;
- For the New JNCHESautumn meeting to be convened as a higher education pay and finances review meeting;
- For discussion to continue on the equality and pay-related elements of the joint unions' claim including, but not limited to, tackling the gender and ethnic pay gap, casualisation of the workforce, workloads, Scottish JNCHES sub-committee.

READ THE EXCHANGE HERE:





