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UK Staff Bargaining Perspectives: HE Employers' View - Handout

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AN INTRODUCTION TO UCEA

Consultation
Promoting equality  Representation
Professional advice  Research
Lobbying  Pay modernisation
Pensions  Health and safety
Negotiation
The Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA) represents UK Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and provides advice and guidance on pay and other employment issues and human resources practice.

Our aim:
UCEA aims to be a valued representative of, and adviser to, Higher Education (HE) sector employers on the delivery of excellence in human resources management.

We seek to:
- advise our more than 165 university and college subscribers promptly, accurately and helpfully
- consult effectively with our subscribers
- engage in regular and constructive dialogue with our wider stakeholders
- deliver effective services to a range of HEIs with different needs
- embed equality and diversity in all our activities.

We do this through:
- delivering effective representation and negotiation on behalf of HE sector employers
- providing accurate and timely advice to HEIs on employment, reward and human resources issues
- promoting pay modernisation in HE via the Framework Agreement
- consulting on and developing longer term pay strategies
- developing an effective long-term pensions strategy for the HE sector
- commissioning applied research and surveys to support HEIs and underpin UCEA representation and advice
- supporting HEIs that employ doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals as academics
- supporting HEIs to deliver a healthy workforce and a safe working environment
- lobbying statutory and other bodies for improved resources within the HE sector
- providing programmes of seminars and events
- catering for the varying, ever-changing needs of different types of HEIs throughout England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.
OUR SERVICES

UCEA's services for subscribers and the HE sector as a whole include:

Professional advice
UCEA's highly experienced HR advisers respond to enquiries from across the HE sector. From part-time pension queries to employment law amendments and health and safety issues, advice is based on up-to-date knowledge, experience, extensive research, expert input and access to a broad range of relevant networks.

Updates
UCEA Updates provide the primary information resource to subscribers. These regular bulletins to heads of HEIs and HR directors cover quick updates on new developments (e.g. in pay negotiations), notification of forthcoming events, and further advice on a range of employment matters. More than 140 Updates were issued in 2006, categorised as follows: Clinical and Healthcare Academics, Employment and Policy Law, Health and Safety, Pay and Negotiation, Pensions, and Seminars and Events.

Research
All of UCEA's services are underpinned by rigorous research, either in-house or commissioned from external providers. Recent research has included progress surveys on implementation of the Framework Agreement; analysis of recruitment and retention patterns and trends; our annual survey of senior staff remuneration; a review of joint working and partnership working principles and practice; and a survey of clinical and other healthcare academics. UCEA also provides access to an on-line ‘pay club’ which covers salary data on all the various roles across the HE sector. Our research also includes regular analysis of earnings and other economic data to inform pay negotiations and our other policy advice and lobbying activities.

Negotiation
As the employers’ representative on the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES), UCEA negotiates with the six trade unions active within the HE sector on a range of issues, chief amongst them being pay and reward. The unions are Amicus, EIS/ULA, GMB, UCU, Unison and TGWU. Most HEIs now have new local pay and grading structures in place, and many have made consequent changes in their local bargaining machinery to facilitate this move locally.

Joint Working Project
UCEA continues to take positive steps to encourage cooperative working with the recognised HE trade unions. The Joint Working Project provides training and consultancy to those HEIs seeking to develop more positive relationships with local trade union representatives.

Lobbying
On the HE sector's behalf, UCEA lobbies Government and other organisations on relevant funding and employment issues. UCEA's lobbying reflects HEIs’ determination to see staff rewarded and treated appropriately for the work they carry out. It also aims to ensure that any changes in employment law take account of the HE sector’s particular circumstances.

Pensions
UCEA is assisting the sector to devise a pensions strategy over the next ten years, responding to recent and prospective demographic and organisational changes. UCEA informs HEIs about particular pension scheme developments, consults them on possible changes and represents their views.
OUR SERVICES

Briefings and External Relations
UCEA provides regular briefings to HEIs, professional organisations and sector bodies on a wide range of issues. We are committed to supporting employers through effective communications and online services. UCEA responds to subscriber and media enquiries and conducts proactive awareness campaigns on behalf of employers. Our website (www.ucea.ac.uk) aims to provide subscribers and other users with easy navigation to the information they need.

Consultation
UCEA's negotiating role is underpinned by ongoing and specific consultation with our subscribing HEIs. The views of the sector are sought prior to pay negotiations, as well as on a range of other issues. UCEA also seeks the sector's views before responding to Government consultation exercises, for instance on changes to employment law.

Health and safety
UCEA has lead responsibility within the HE sector for the development of advice and guidance on health and safety. UCEA's Health and Safety Committee acts as a forum for the cross-fertilisation of ideas across the interested professional groups. The committee, which includes representatives from the Universities Safety and Health Association (USHA), develops and publishes best practice guidance on a range of health and safety issues as well as an Annual Report.

Project management
As opportunities and needs arise, UCEA submits funding bids for, and subsequently manages, projects which aim to increase capacity and promote good human resources practice within the sector. The most recent example of this work is UCEA's management, on behalf of JNCHES, of the Joint Working project.

Seminars and events
A varied programme of seminars and events is arranged every year. There are 26 in our current programme, catering for a wide range of staff and aiming to meet specific needs of employers. Many of the seminars feature experts in their fields and case study speakers from HEIs who share their practical experience. Subscriber HEIs are invited to send as many staff as appropriate. A moderate attendance fee is charged and early booking is always advisable.

Promoting equality
UCEA takes every opportunity to promote equality and to help employers move forward from simply complying with legal requirements to ensuring that the principle of equality of opportunity for staff underpins all activities within HE. Recent work in this area has included negotiating the Framework Agreement on pay modernisation – a key principle of which is equal pay for work of equal value – as well as the Race Equality Communication and Consultation Report and Toolkit, published through JNCHES and in partnership with the Equality Challenge Unit, and updating of the JNCHES guidance on equal pay reviews. The development of sector-wide advice on tackling age discrimination and disability discrimination continues.