

UNISON Consultation on the National Pay Offer 2013/14

MEMBER UPDATE ON THE EMPLOYERS' FINAL OFFER



We have now received a 'full and final' written pay offer from the national employers' organisation the Universities & Colleges Employers Association (UCEA). This consists of a 1% increase to all pay points. The offer also includes continuing work on the recommendations of the equalities working group

UNISON believes that this offer does not reflect the increased cost of living and that this is the fifth consecutive year of minimal pay offers. Inflation is still consistently above 2% and we know that members are facing further real cuts in their standards of living.

For most HE staff the last four settlements have amounted to approximately a 2.2% increase in pay. When the annualised inflation increases (Retail Price Index – RPI) over this period are combined with the forecast RPI rate up to July 2013, cumulative inflation will have increased by approximately 15.5%. The result in real terms is a cut of over 13% in the value of take home pay for some of the lowest paid in the sector

In its review of higher education finance HEFCE reported last year 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.' We believe that this demonstrates that a decent award is affordable for most institutions.

The offer makes no significant concession towards UNISON's claim for a living wage for all higher education staff. The Living Wage is not addressed fully in this offer with over 4,000 staff still having incomes below the Living Wage. More and more funding is coming from non-government sources and settlements in the private sector are averaging around 2.5%.

UNISON believes that the offer is simply too low and we recommend that members reject the offer.

Consultation

The HESGE now believes that this is the end of the road for serious national discussions and so is now consulting with you the members to decide on the next steps.

Other HE unions

UCU and EIS have rejected the offer and UCU has decided to invoke the New JNCHES dispute resolution procedure. Unite and GMB are currently consulting on the offer.

Continued campaigning

UNISON has made it clear that we believe that the current pay policy in higher education is unsustainable. Many of the gains achieved by the implementation of the framework agreement are being lost. Members face greater job insecurity with more demands on flexibility and roles are being gradually being privatised across the sector.

Consistently high inflation has eroded the value of members' earnings. This cannot be ignored indefinitely by the employers. UNISON believes that pay matters to our members in higher education.

Whilst UNISON has opposed the implementation of the higher fees regime, it is estimated that it may result in a real increase in funding to the HE sector of around 10%. UNISON will continue to campaign to ensure that all staff in the sector benefit from any increase in income. It is UNISON members that work hard to provide a positive experience for students in higher education and they deserve to be valued and rewarded.

Consultation Question

UNISON wants to hear all members' views to inform our decisions. We urge members to make contact with their Branch to let them have your view.

We are asking members whether you are prepared to accept the employer offer of 1%, or are you prepared to or reject the offer and are willing to take part in sustained strike action?

Please contact your Branch before Monday 1 July 2013 with your view.

Not a member, but want to join in the consultation? Phone UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845 or join online at <http://www.unison.org.uk/membership/>

