

EDUCATION SECTOR

Our Ref: MJR/VT/HE/17/10

21st May 2010

To: All Workplace Reps and Branches

Colleagues

2010 Pay latest

The third New JNCHES negotiating meeting took place on the 5th May.

UCEA opened by advising there was increasing pessimism on their side about finances and budgets within HE. The trade unions countered that with inflation at 4.3% their members were also pessimistic about the way their pay has been eroded by inflation and the absence of a decent offer from UCEA.

UCEA did advise it was interested in one aspect of the joint trade union side claim and that was in relation to training, career development and apprentice proposals. A document had previously been tabled for the TU side that showed with the new statutory right for staff to request training coming into force on the 6th March some workplaces had introduced agreements on how to promote and handle this important aspect. In particular Unite and Unison had been instrumental in achieving an agreement at University of Birmingham. In FE the Employers Association, AoC, had also signed up to a joint agreement with the trade unions and this was presented to UCEA as a good example of true co-operative working.

Another Unite initiative was less well received and that was the proposal for fee remission for children of staff working at universities. Unite provided examples outside of the UK to show what other countries were doing. UCEA felt this was unhelpful towards equal access for all. I look forward to working families being given equal access to Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, Cardiff, Trinity Dublin and Queens Belfast.

The joint unions again reiterated the aim of getting a workable job security agreement. UCEA still seem to be unable to grasp why this issue will not go away.

After the inevitable adjournment UCEA returned to advise that they had no mandate to move on job security. They were still interested in the trade union ideas on training, career development and apprentices and would come back on this perhaps through one of the new sub committees set up after the 2009 pay discussions.

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In an earth shattering move UCEA increased their 0.25% offer on pay to 0.4%. This was still less than the then prevailing 4.3% inflation rate and is worth only £52 per year to anyone on the lowest grade. The offer is unconsolidated which means salary scales would not alter. UCEA urged trade union negotiators to accept the offer quickly because with an impending election things could only get worse. How right they were.

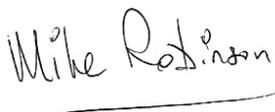
The joint trade unions noted the offer was still a pay cut and advised it was not enough to protect inflationary pressures especially for low paid staff. UCEA advised they were prepared to weight the 0.4% to lower paid grades if staff at the top of the grades would take less. Needless to say our academic colleagues are not in favour of this idea.

In the end negotiations concluded with agreement to meet again on the 28th May. I expect this to be the final meeting and with UCEA and the trade unions so far apart I cannot see a solution resulting in acceptance by the joint unions.

Last year I warned everyone to get their membership records up to date. This still applies. One of the reasons is to avoid any complications that could appear if we go to a full national ballot. As my colleagues covering British Airways have discovered the High Court is not renowned for its pro trade union sympathies!

A further report will be sent out after the next meeting on the 28th May.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mike Robinson'.

Mike Robinson
National Officer
Education Sector