

## **2015-16 full and final offer: Joint work proposals on pay equality**

### **Gender pay gap – joint work on the analysis of pay gaps in the higher education sector**

This paper sets out in further detail, the employers' offer to undertake new work with the trade unions to analyse data and trends related to the gender pay gap in higher education.

#### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The employers and trade unions have worked together to address gender pay gap issues in the sector on a number of occasions in recent years and produced case studies and other material to assist institutions in tackling pay gaps at their own institution and benchmarking their own practice in equal pay reviews.
- 1.2. Most recently the employers and trade unions worked together to review initiatives and actions taken by universities and colleges to address gender pay gaps that had been identified through an equal pay review. Shortly after the publication of the JNCHES report on that work, the government began a consultation on mandatory gender pay gap reporting for large employers in the private sector. Although higher education will not be covered by the new duty, HEIs are covered by the Public Sector Equality Duty and the introduction of mandatory reporting in other sectors can be expected to keep gender pay gaps on the employment and reward agenda for HEIs.

#### **2. The need to improve analysis**

- 2.1. Gender pay gap reporting is reliant on high quality data and, while individual HE employers regard their internal analysis as of prime importance, there is a need for good sector-level data and analysis. At the present time, gender pay gap analysis at sector level is not regularly published in a consistent and comprehensive way. The annual equality data report from the Equality Challenge Unit (ECU) provides basic analysis of gender pay gaps but does not provide any benchmarks outside the sector, provides no trend data and does not separate part-time and full-time populations. The joint pay data work produced annually by UCEA and four trade unions provides some high level indicators with comparisons, but not a detailed investigation of the data.
- 2.2. From existing data analysis, it is possible to assert that the gender pay gap in the sector is not primarily due to equal pay issues but is influenced by horizontal (occupational) and vertical (seniority) segregation. A more detailed investigation would look more closely at the data related to these issues.
- 2.3. HEIs are primarily interested in analysing their own data but we do know there is interest in the potential to benchmark against other HEIs and to benchmarks beyond the sector. However, we know that there is some confusion about which benchmarks are relevant and directly comparable and so further work and clarification in this area is likely to be welcomed.

### 3. Scope of the review

- 3.1. The proposed investigation would be significant and time intensive but it would be important to approach the review in a comprehensive way. The Equality and Human Rights Commission's report on employment and earnings in the finance industry<sup>1</sup> shows one level of detail and nuance that is possible, although we would not anticipate this level of detail or a 100+ page report as an output.
- 3.2. We are open to clarifying the precise scope of the report in collaboration with trade union colleagues. However, we would recommend that the report aims to cover:
- Differences in statistical reporting on the gender pay gap – e.g. ONS, OECD, EHRC
  - A review of existing datasets and their limitations vis-à-vis gender pay gap
  - The sector analysis and its comparison and with other sectors in the economy
  - Occupational comparisons with other occupations in the economy (1-digit level, HE teaching professionals – SOC 2311, and researchers SOC2119)
  - Changes over time
- 3.3. The report would additionally aim to identify a useful set of benchmarks for sector pay gap reporting, with a view to establishing data that it would be possible to update annually.
- 3.4. A steering group would be established to oversee the work to be done, comprising trade union and employer representatives and serviced by UCEA. A member of the UCEA research team would be allocated to undertake the desk work involved. It would be anticipated that the ECU would be invited to have a place on the steering group.

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[www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/download\\_finance\\_gender\\_analysis\\_research.pdf](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/sites/default/files/documents/download_finance_gender_analysis_research.pdf)

## **Engaging HESA on the collection of data on hourly-paid and casual staff**

This paper sets out in further detail, the employers' offer to establish a dialogue with HESA on the collection of data on hourly-paid and casual staff with a view to improving analyses and evidence for employment of these staff groups.

### **1. Background**

- 1.1. The New JNCHEs Working Group on Hourly-paid and Casual Staff concluded its work in July 2015 with the publication of its final report and accompanying case studies. There were several findings and recommendations in the report, primarily intended as prompts for reflection and action at institutional level. However, one of the conclusions of the report was a pointer to potential further action at a sector level and this related to improving the way data is collected for staff on casual and hourly-paid contracts. The exact text of the conclusion is as follows:

*The group considers that it would be useful to ask HESA, in its ongoing consultation with HEIs, to review the current approach to the reporting of data on atypical staff and to consider its recording and reporting framework to enable the identification of hourly-paid staff.*

### **2. The case for improving data**

- 2.1. The current approach to reporting on 'atypical' workers through the HESA Staff Record does not appear to meet the needs of all sector stakeholders despite the reporting burden it presents to sector employers.
- 2.2. Both the sector employers' body, UCEA, and the trade unions share the view that improving data collection in this area would enable reliable and ongoing monitoring of trends in the use of hourly-paid and casual contracts at a sector level. This is important in understanding the nature of the HE workforce and changes in the way that people are employed. Without accurate and fit-for-purpose data that is consistently collected every year it is difficult to assess whether or not there has been an increase or decrease in the use of casual contracts in the HE sector and how these are distributed, for example by occupation or subject area.
- 2.3. Many HEIs are introducing improved HR IT systems which it is believed may improve the ability for institutions to capture and report their use of casual contracts. It will be important, however, to ensure that HEIs are fully engaged with and consulted regarding the feasibility and desirability of changes to data collection, both in terms of system capability and administrative burden.

### **3. Engaging with HESA**

- 3.1. HESA collects the staff record annually using a consistent, albeit evolving, set of variables. The most efficient way to consider improving data collection and analysis is to work with the sector's data agency and to explore potential changes in the annual staff record collection.
- 3.2. Collection of data is complex and HESA regularly engages with stakeholders on the collection of data including the definitions of certain variables and the feasibility of

capturing certain characteristics. The collection of data on atypical contracts has historically been seen as burdensome on institutions, in some cases taking as long to compile as the substantive staff record, and this led to a shift to voluntary reporting. Any proposed changes made to the staff record would need to be consulted on with HEIs and other stakeholders.

- 3.3. A dialogue with HESA will need to acknowledge the complexity of its activities and the recent history of data collection difficulties in this area. However, there is a strong case for improving collection to make the casual staff data more useful for policy and institutional planning purposes. UCEA believes that such dialogue is important to progressing a better understanding of hourly-paid and casual staff employment and would be valuable to the sector.
- 3.4. It would be proposed that a group be established, involving trade union and employer representatives with some knowledge and interest in the area of data collection and analysis. The group would be tasked with setting out some ideas and approaches to then inform a discussion with colleagues from HESA.

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