



UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES
EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATION

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NEWS RELEASE

Final negotiations meeting concludes with employers asking the trade unions to consider a real-terms improvement in pay

The fourth and final New JNCHES* negotiating meeting of 2015-16 took place today (Tuesday 12 May) with employers representing 147 HE institutions making a final offer that exceeds all the current indices of inflation**. The 1% final offer, with the lower paid receiving an increase worth up to 2.65%, provides all staff with the highest real-terms base pay improvement seen in recent years**.

The additional payments on the lower points, and the offer itself, recognise the challenges facing the lower paid as well as the uncertainties now facing the sector. In addition to the offer, employers discussed all other core components of the trade unions'*** joint pay and pay equality claims**** and have offered some further joint work on the gender pay gap and casual staffing at a national level.

The trade unions' pay claim doesn't refer to an actual figure but seeks an offer that addresses the cost of living, 'real terms' pay erosion and delivers the 'Living Wage Foundation' rate. Employers have been pleased to make this final offer that addresses all these aspects of the claim. However, it will be testing for many HE institutions alongside increasing pension and NI costs. The 1% increase also needs to be funded together with the pay progression which around half of employees covered by these negotiations will be eligible to receive. This will take the average cost of the pay increase to 2.5%, with up to 4% increases for some individuals.

The 'pay equality matters' section of the claim seeks further work on the gender pay gap and on HEIs' approaches to casual staff employment. Two major pieces of joint work agreed as part of the 2014-15 HE pay agreement do already consider gender pay gap and hourly-paid and casual employment issues, and this work is progressing positively with substantial joint reports to be published in the coming weeks.

Professor Paul Curran, Chair of UCEA, said: "These New JNCHES negotiations have been constructive, with the employers sharing the trade unions' desire to achieve a fair and sustainable pay outcome that also addresses specific concerns around the lower paid. We believe that trade unions should be in a position to recommend this offer to their members as it addresses all aspects of their pay claim in spite of the ever-increasing challenging sector environment. We now look to trade union colleagues to consider carefully the real value of the offer being made."

* Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff, whose negotiations cover HE non-senior staff.

** Annual inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), was 0.0% in the 12 months to March 2015. There was a 0.3% increase in alternative inflation indices CPIH and RPIJ. The Retail Prices Index (RPI) is no longer a National Statistic, but it increased by 0.9%. Analysis also showing last year's 2% increase:

Inflation indicator	March 2014 (%)	2% 2014-15 award (real-terms) (%)	March 2015 (%)	1% 2015-16 offer (real-terms) (%)
CPI	1.6	0.4	0	1
CPIH	1.5	0.5	0.3	0.7
RPIJ	1.8	0.2	0.3	0.7
RPI	2.5	-0.5	0.9	0.1

*** EIS, GMB, UCU, UNISON and Unite

**** UCEA's 'Current pay negotiations' website page includes details of the trade unions' linked joint claims: www.ucea.ac.uk/en/empres/paynegs/current/index.cfm

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Notes to Editors

The New JNCHES negotiating timetable is a process that usually runs across meetings in March, April and May. This year's timetable allowed for four meetings. The uplift in base pay covered by these negotiations is due from 1 August 2015.