UCEA

SUPPORTING EMPLOYER ASPIRATIONS TO ENHANCE THE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE



UCEA's Strategic Plan:

Facilitating transformational change,
Enhancing the employee experience 2024-2027
will take forward work under five Employee Experience (EX) pillars

These build on work from our previous strategic plan (2021-2024), which considered EX to be an encompassing term, informed by the linked interactions that define how an employee experiences and feels about their work. The experience can be impacted both by major milestones in their career as well as smaller, more granular events and these large and small 'moments that matter' can impact individuals, specific groups and teams, as well as the whole workforce. The experience is formed by the full journey from the point a prospective employee applies to the point at which they leave an organisation, and covers all the steps in between, including not just pay and pensions but also an employers' commitment to wellbeing, inclusion and principles of ESG and other factors.

Under our previous strategic plan, UCEA delivered extensive EX resources, including guidance, toolkits, case studies, member events, infographics and blogs, in the areas of EX strategy, Employee Value Proposition, Total Reward, Wellbeing and EDI. Critically, through our work we made the link how, through the employee lens, these interact to inform the employee experience.

The next phase of our work will continue to focus on sharing and improving employment practices in the sector, supporting our members as employers of choice.



UCEA'S FIVE EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE (EX) PILLARS

1



Supporting work with members to promote **good employment practice** in the areas of **learning** and **development**, **safety** at work and **physical, mental health and wellbeing**

2



Supporting employers in their **transformation** and **organisational change** agendas, **building flexibility** into workforce models to meet their business needs

3



Promoting inclusion and sharing the steps HEIs can take to **reduce the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps**

4



Helping HEIs to foster a **whole workforce approach to employee voice**

5



Sector work to **promote good employment practice**, supporting **reward strategies** and promoting the **development of total reward** and **EVP** at all levels

#1

Supporting work with members to promote **good employment practice** in the areas of **learning** and **development**, **safety** at work and **physical, mental health and wellbeing**

Health, Safety and wellbeing are essential to shaping a positive EX; it is important to be embedded into every aspect of the workplace and decision-making. Here's why:

- It helps to attract staff and creates a culture where employees feel valued and motivated to stay, develop and thrive at work.
- It supports diverse workforce needs and at different points in the employment journey.
- It helps reduce accidents and injuries, lower stress levels and better support well-being at work, through open communication and support and by encouraging staff to seek help.
- It can go a long way in fostering engagement, reinforcing the message that the employer cares about the employee as a whole person rather than as 'a worker'.

What this pillar will deliver

- **Benefits of working in HE** - report and infographics
- **Intersectional pay gaps** - member reports, infographics, action planning, case studies, member events
- **Contract types** - member events, case studies, joint work
- **Workload** - member events, case studies, joint work
- **Health, safety, and wellbeing conference**
- **Sector-level Health Safety and Wellbeing Action Plan**
- **Annual sickness absence report**

#2

Supporting employers in their **transformation** and **organisational change** agendas, **building flexibility** into workforce models to meet their business needs

Organisational change can be positive, but can also be unsettling. Understanding and improving the end-to-end employee journey is key to successful change and transformation. This can be done through:

- Engaging, empowering and supporting employees through any change reduces the impact on negative employee morale and performance, thereby enabling employers to achieve objectives and successful transformation more quickly.
- Transparent communications that help facilitate confidence and trust in the rationale for change, thereby reducing resistance.
- Involving employees in decision-making gives a sense of empowerment and alignment with the rationale for change and organisational goals.

What this pillar will deliver

- **Support with workforce transformation** - including the role of AI
- **Organisational change forum**
- **Change management toolkit**
- **Case studies**
- **Workload** - joint work
- **Contract types** - member events, case studies, joint work

#3

Promoting inclusion and sharing the steps HEIs can take to **reduce the gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps**

An effective strategy on equality, diversity and inclusion is central to EX. It helps attract and retain diverse talent, ensure that employees feel supported and valued, and promotes a more inclusive organisational culture. Equality pay gap data, including those associated with gender, ethnicity, and disability, provide explicit metrics that shows the impact of specific EDI policies.

By taking an intersectional approach to pay gaps, organisations can identify success stories and areas for improvement across a diverse and overlapping set of staff groups. Calculating long-term trends for equality pay gaps demonstrates a commitment to tackling inequality in the sector and active progress toward a fairer workplace for all staff.

What this pillar will deliver:

- **Intersectional pay gap reporting and joint work**
- **Pay gap action planning / events / workshops**
- **Benefits of working in HE / promotion of family friendly / health and wellbeing policies**



#4

Helping HEIs to foster a **whole workforce approach to employee voice**

Effective voice at work is a fundamental aspect of EX. Established channels, including representation through trade union membership, are important; however, it is crucial to ensure that the whole workforce is heard.

Whilst traditional channels are important, effective engagement involves listening to the employee voice through many channels. Employees expect their input to influence decisions and feedback provides a diverse perspective, and more innovative and effective solutions to solving problems and decision making. Encouraging and acting on feedback is more likely to lead to job satisfaction. Work environments impact on how safe and confident individuals feel to speak and share ideas effective leadership is crucial to improving employee voice.

What this pillar will deliver:

- **Role of leadership in employee voice** - guidance and thought leadership
- **Alternative fora and communication structures** - good practice
- **Employee surveys / pulse surveys** - tools and key sector messages
- **Case studies**



#5

Sector work to **promote good employment practice**, supporting **reward strategies** and promoting the **development of total reward** and **EVP** at all levels

A robust reward strategy enhances employees' experience of work:

Holistic 'Total Reward' approaches, going beyond pay to include career development, recognition, and work-life balance, contribute to a compelling **Employee Value Proposition (EVP)**. Total Reward encompasses modern approaches towards motivation, including how to accommodate differing expectations for experiences at work, including intergenerational experiences.

Transparent Total Reward statements promote a sense of equity and regular review supports competitiveness in response to changing workforce expectations.

A strong EVP attracts, retains, and motivates whilst fostering a positive culture where employees feel valued. Reward strategies aligned with institutional and sector values strengthen HE's attractiveness and contribute to a thriving workforce. A collaborative sector approach and peer benchmarking will develop innovate practice to reflect the unique reward of working in the HE sector.

What this pillar will deliver:

- **Reward network**
- **Total reward (including the value of pensions)** - workshop, UCEA guide, case studies
- **Support in developing an EVP** - workshop, case studies, and our UCEA guide
- **Health, safety and wellbeing conference**
- **Case studies**

