

Dear EIS ULA Member

Ref: DB/AS/ULAPayupdate
28 October 2015

Dear Colleague

I write to inform you of the current progress of the 2014-15 pay round. The full and final offer made by the Employers in May included a pay increase of 1.0 -2.7% for support staff (depending on where they were on the pay scale and 1.0% for academic staff. The EIS, UCU and Unite members rejected the offer over the summer, whilst Unison and GMB members accepted the offer.

The Employers and the Trade Unions entered the dispute process over the summer. The EIS and Unite have the sole aim of improving the pay uplift element and we were unsuccessful in doing so. Some "clarification" was obtained in relation to the non-pay elements of the pay offer.

The EIS-ULA Executive recently met and unanimously agreed that the best course was to ask the EIS Executive to authorise sustained strike action in pursuit of the 2015-16 pay claim. The Executive Committee believed that the UCU and Unite had moved to a position of "noting" that the pay round had concluded. The Executive Committee's reasoning is set out below:

- i. The dispute process had not improved the pay offer that 75% of members had voted to reject.
- ii. Previous actions short of strike action (ASOS) had not generated sufficient pressure on the Employers to restart negotiations. Furthermore, some ASOS notifications had led some HEIs to threaten individuals with pay deductions for carrying out the action short of strike action. The Executive felt that ASOS put excessive pressure on individual members and potential pay deductions made strike action a better alternative.
- iii. Previous one day strike actions had not created sufficient pressure on Employers to restart negotiations.
- iv. Writing off this year's pay claim, putting an early pay claim in next year would be doing nothing on behalf of members. The New JNCHES Agreement has an agreed negotiation timeline that begins in March (after the HEIs find out how much funding they receive for the following year). Furthermore the UK Government's Trade Union Bill would make industrial action more difficult next year since there would be a statutory turnout threshold.
- v. The settlement date for the 1% pay offer is August 2015, when RPI was at 1.1%; the offer should therefore be considered as a real terms pay cut.

- vi. The financial conditions of HEIs here in Scotland are more consistent and better (on the whole) to those in England since Scottish HEIs have received real terms increases in public funding over three of the last four years.
- vii. Finally, the Executive Committee agreed to recommend sustained strike action to members in a statutory ballot for strike action in light of the above so as to empower members to decide, since the EIS is a member led union.

I have written to Scottish HEIs participating in New JNCHES to advise them that the dispute still continues and that we are willing to talk to resolve the dispute. I have also informed HEIs that the EIS-ULA is seeking permission for a statutory ballot for sustained strike action.

UCEA, on behalf of all Scottish HEIs had emailed me to inform me that it had recommended that as four unions had noted that the pay round had concluded – all HEIs “implement” the 1% pay offer. I have written back to UCEA stating that imposing the offer despite no agreement at New JNCHES breaks the spirit of the New JNCHES agreement on collective pay bargaining – which states that all parties strive for agreed outcomes with partnership working. Only two of the five trade unions have actually agreed to the 1% pay offer. I also asked for talks at ACAS. UCEA has responded to confirm its recommendation to implement the pay offer but has now has offered talks with the EIS. The EIS is likely to accept the offer of talks but it will not stop the process of seeking a statutory ballot for strike action in support of the pay claim.

I shall of course share all progress with members.

This letter directly affects academic staff in all HEIs except SRUC, RCS and the UHI. Professors are technically outwith the scope of New JNCHES negotiations but there is a custom and practice within most Scottish HEIs to pay the outcome of the New JNCHES negotiations as the annual cost of living increase for professors.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any queries.

Yours sincerely



David Belsey
National Officer (F&HE)