

Dear colleague,

I am writing with a vital update on our higher education (HE) fair pay campaign.

The consultation on the employers' latest offer closed last Friday and you can see the full results [here](#).

By a margin of 57% to 43% members voted not to undertake further industrial action at this time.

By a margin of 52% to 48% members voted that the offer provided a sufficient basis for the union to begin "detailed joint work aimed at tackling the gender pay gap and casualisation.

This means that UCU is now standing down the current work to contract industrial action as well as our call to external examiners to boycott those duties. It does not mean that UCU accepts the imposed 1.1% pay uplift.

The above voting margins are relatively close reflecting, in my view, both the uncertain times we are living through and a real scepticism among members about whether the employers at a UK level are serious about their offer of joint work to make pay fairer and jobs more secure.

The truth is that our scepticism is justified. Over recent years the employer representatives at the University and College Employers Association (UCEA) have failed to participate in our negotiating process in good faith, and as a result the new joint negotiating committee for higher education staff (JNCHES) has failed to make any real progress when it comes to making pay fairer and providing secure employment.

In 2016, women are still paid a little over 12% less than men. More than half of all teaching staff plus close to 70% of research staff do not have permanent contracts. Set against that the employers' offer to jointly examine and report on best practice in the sector, while useful, will not by itself win equal pay or a secure future for one single UCU member.

So, while we will be entering these national discussions in a positive spirit we will also be taking nationally supported local action to hold every individual employer to account. The Higher Education Committee has decided that nationally backed local claims on gender pay and the reduction of precarious employment should be made with every HE institution.

Guidance and resources will be provided to your branch as will regional and national support to achieve these twin aims. However, what is most important and decisive is YOUR work to campaign and negotiate in your institution. We face a real challenge to get your employers to take the issues of fair pay and secure employment seriously, and it could be that in some cases we will need to take industrial action to concentrate your management's mind.

We must also continue our political campaign to highlight these abuses. As I write more than 31,000 students and staff have used UCU's fair pay calculator to see if their institution pays fairly and offers high levels of job security. This gives us useful ammunition and allies in our campaign. [Find out about your workplace and take action by clicking here](#).

Thank you for your support.

Paul Bridge
UCU head of higher education