

## University and College Union

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**To** Branch and regional committee secretaries

**Topic** **On-line interim higher education sector conference, Tuesday 15 December 2020: AGENDA**

**Action** **For debate and decision at HE conference 15 December 2020**

**Summary** A higher education sector conference takes place on Tuesday 15 December, to deal with the HE sector conference business that would have been taken at the cancelled interim on-line Congress and sector conferences 28-30 October 2020

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### **On-line interim Higher Education Sector Conference**

**15 December 2020**

#### **AGENDA**

An on-line interim higher education sector conference meeting takes place on Tuesday 15 December 2020.

This will deal with the business that had been ordered into the agenda for the HE sector conference on Thursday 29 October (which was cancelled).

Set out in this document:

**Late motions, conduct of business, timetable p. 2-3**

**Motions for debate p. 4-10**

**Appendix 1: Motions not ordered into the core agenda p. 11-23**

**Appendix 2: Late motion not ordered into the agenda p. 23**

**Appendix 3: Original text of composited amendments p. 24**

**Appendix 4: Principles for the conduct of the on-line interim Congress p. 24-26**

## **1 Late motions and amendments**

CBC met on 8 December and ordered one late motion into the agenda (L1, ordered after motion HE2).

One late motion was not considered to meet the criteria for late motions and is set out at the end of the agenda for information (B1, appendix 2).

One amendment submitted to motion HE1 was re-ordered as an amendment to motion HE2, and composited with another amendment to HE2, to form composite amendment HE2.2. The original text of these amendments is set out at the end of the agenda (C1-C2, appendix 3).

## **2 Principles for the conduct of business and conduct of votes**

The temporary set of principles previously put forward for the on-line interim Congress will, as far as practical, apply to this sector conference. Those principles are appended at the end of this circular. Point 17 on voting will not apply.

Voting will be conducted by an on-line ballot, for which members will be emailed with a secure link. Before the start of the conference, delegates will be asked, using this method, to adopt the agenda, and the principles for the conduct of business.

After the close of the conference, delegates will be asked to vote on all motions moved at the conference, by the same means.

Delegates were asked to register in advance their requests to speak. The chair will call speakers based on those requests received.

Motions not ordered into the 'core agenda' are set out in appendix 1. The process for creating the agenda was summarised in the initial circular of arrangements, [UCU/1051](#), which follows the arrangements put in place for the interim on-line Congress originally scheduled for October, [UCU/1038](#).

## **3 Conduct of business: on-line meeting format**

This meeting will be conducted using Zoom. Registered delegates have been emailed directly with information about joining and participating in the meeting, including a link to a session at which delegates can test their connection if they wish. If you are a registered delegate and do not think you have the information you need to join the meeting, please contact Sue Bajwa in the first instance [sbajwa@ucu.org.uk](mailto:sbajwa@ucu.org.uk)

#### **4 Timetable**

Note: Recognising the difficulties that can be presented by long unbroken periods in front of a screen, additional short breaks will be taken within each session.

#### **Tuesday 15 December 2020**

##### **Interim on-line higher education sector conference**

- 11:00 Welcome and opening business including
  - Report of the conference agenda committee
  - Update from Paul Bridge, Head of higher education
- 11:25 Debate of motions (HE1-HE13)
- 13:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 Debate of motions, continued
- 16:00 Close of conference

## Higher education sector conference

### Motions for debate

#### **HE1 USS Higher education committee**

HE sector conference notes the report and approves the recommendations of the Superannuation Working Group contained in [UCUBANHE74](#).

#### **HE2 Defend our USS pensions: put pressure on employers Yorkshire and Humberside regional committee**

Conference deplors:

1. An unnecessary valuation taking place during Covid and the proposed total contributions of 40-66%.
2. The flawed valuation approach.
3. The employers not (yet) standing up against USS to defend pensions.
4. The risk of scheme closure due to spiralling costs.

Conference instructs HEC to:

- a. campaign for employers to join UCU in pressing for changes in the valuation, including 30 years for 'deficit' recovery, at least 65% growth assets, a cash flow approach and reasonable prudence. Or alternatively, for employers to cover the increased costs.
- b. call a dispute with employers if they fail to deliver a) above
- c. organise a December/January Special HE Sector Conference to discuss the campaign. This should be fully accessible to disabled members and those with older browsers and computers, including phone dial in.
- d. initiate an industrial action ballot if employers fail to deliver on a) above.

#### **HE2A.1 University College London**

Under conference instructs, add new bullet point a. (renumber subsequent bullet points):

- a. campaign for employers to commit to not raising but instead reducing DB employee contributions to 8% while preserving existing benefits.

#### **HE2A.2 Composite Lancaster University, University of Dundee**

Add to 'Conference deplors', and renumber:

3. Requests by UUK to USS for benefit modelling, implying they will propose benefit reductions

Under conference instructs, replace a) with:

- a. campaign for employers to agree not to propose benefit reductions and require employers to join UCU in pressing for revisions to the proposed valuation. Potential ways currently include a) setting “the level of prudence” at 67% in the 2018 valuation, b) an increased e.g. 20-30 years 'deficit' recovery period, c) retaining the current investment plans of around 65% “growth assets”, d) updating mortality assumptions in light of COVID-19, e) updating asset values in light of experience, and f) a higher discount rate.

**L1 No solid basis for a resolution over USS University of Sheffield**

Conference notes the consultation response from Universities UK published on 13 November which shows deep dissatisfaction among our employers for USS's approach to the 2020 valuation, with many criticisms echoing those made by UCU.

Conference believes that the dispute over the future of scheme will only be resolved through constructive negotiation over a valuation outcome that all parties can trust, and that the valuation that was sent for consultation with employers falls far short of this.

Conference calls on the General Secretary to write to Universities UK, USS and the Pensions Regulator articulating this point and making it clear that the pre-92 sector is heading towards a crisis caused by a failure by USS to deliver a valuation that commands trust and provides a sound basis for negotiation, and calls on the HEC to develop a pressure campaign to effect change.

**HE3 HE Pay Higher education committee**

HE Sector conference notes the report and approves the recommendations of the national negotiators contained in [UCUBANHE75](#).

**HE4 Vulnerability of post-92 institutions Queen Margaret University**

Noting Audit Scotland’s report on the relative fragility of the modern universities within the higher education sector in Scotland

Noting the value of a diverse higher education sector, and the respective Governments’ responsibilities to ensure the survival of the smaller universities without jeopardising the larger universities,

Conference

1. notes that members in many post-92 institutions involved in the ‘4 fights’ dispute (including both in Scotland), advocated that the collective bargaining strategy in this dispute should be clearly distinctive from that of the USS dispute
2. notes with concern that the HEC agreed a strategy of industrial action which does not recognise the distinctiveness of the two disputes.

Conference resolves to ensure that the diversity of contexts of HE governance

across the nations of the UK are considered, and the distinctive interests of post-92 universities are protected in industrial disputes.

## **HE5 Multi-year pay bargaining University of Sheffield**

Conference notes:

1. the major successes of our Four Fights campaign in bringing together issues of pay and equality, and crossing the anti-union threshold in many branches
2. that, nevertheless, staff in HE have seen over a decade's decline in real-term pay
3. that timelines for annual pay negotiations mean that these almost inevitably extend into the next bargaining round, potentially limiting options and leverage.

Conference believes:

- a. that there is a continued need to demand better pay and conditions and confront inequalities through UK-wide negotiations
- b. that a medium-term strategy would allow for improved flexibility in our negotiating and bargaining response.

Conference resolves:

- i. that UCU should actively explore options around multi-year bargaining with the other New JNCHES trade unions, in advance of the 2021-22 bargaining round
- ii. that the baseline negotiating position should include sustained above-inflation pay rises and concrete benchmarks for addressing pay inequalities, workload and casualisation on a UK-wide basis.

## **HE6 Local agreements Higher education committee**

Conference notes:

1. UCU's strategy to prioritise issues relating to casualisation, intersectional inequality-driven pay gaps and workloads
2. resistance from employers towards progressing these issues in a consistent way at UK level
3. improvements achieved through local bargaining on some of these issues.

Conference reiterates the UK-wide priority status of these issues and calls on HEC to:

- a. work to support and empower our branches to implement any UK or sector level agreements
- b. pursue local claims in relation to casualisation, the gender and race pay gap and workloads

- c. ensure bargaining guidance and campaign packs are integrated into all appropriate training resources
- d. ensure the delivery of interactive branch briefings and training events tailored to these priority issues
- e. ensure that agreements and success stories are shared and publicised widely by the union
- f. ensure locally achieved gains on these priority areas are used as examples to strengthen negotiations in an appropriate way at sector level.

**HE7 End the use of short-haul/domestic flights for work-related activities  
Manchester Metropolitan University**

Conference notes:

- 1. that in a time of climate crisis, there is no justification for taking domestic or short haul flights for worked related activities to anywhere in the UK or Europe that can be arrived within 24 hours using alternative modes of transport
- 2. that University sustainability/environmental rankings do not include the environmental impact of the carbon emissions produced by air travel.

Conference resolves:

- a. to campaign for sector wide ban on the use of short haul/domestic flight for any trip that can be made within 24 hours by alternative modes of transport.
- b. that any employee travelling within Europe for work-related reasons should be given appropriate, work-loaded time to make their trip using alternative modes of transport
- c. to lobby employers to record and monitor the environmental impact of staff air travel and to offset their flight carbon footprint.

**HE7A.1 University of Sheffield**

Replace '24 hours' with '8 hours'.

Add to notes:

- 3. that one outcome of the COVID-19 crisis is greater familiarity with digital solutions to meeting and conferencing.

Replace resolves a. with:

to campaign for a sector wide ban on the use of short haul/domestic flight for any trip that can be made within 8 hours by alternative modes of transport, except for staff with disabilities or other circumstances that make alternative transport impractical.

## **HE8 Ensuring ARPS staff representation in branches and local negotiations Academic related, professional staff committee**

This HESC recognises:

1. the hard work of ARPS members in committee roles and local negotiations across the sector
2. the wide range of local agreements on a variety of issues such as intersectional pay gaps and workload models
3. the need for consistency in ensuring ARPS staff are fully represented in all local agreements.

The HESC instructs the HEC to:

- a. set policy which calls for national oversight of all local agreements to ensure all staff groups are equally represented
- b. develop guidance on how to include ARPS staff in negotiations on local issues.
- c. continue to raise the profile of ARPS staff at all levels within UCU.
- d. amend the model branch rules to require branches, where applicable, to elect an academic-related and professional services staff representative to their branch committee.

## **HE9 Love Our ARPS, continued      Academic related, professional staff committee**

This HESC notes:

1. the vital contribution made by academic related and professional services (ARPS) staff to Higher Education, and to UCU
2. that ARPS staff still often feel 'erased' from the profile of HE and the union
3. that UCU is the stronger for the active participation of ARPS staff.

This HESC agrees that UCU should hold a UK-wide week of coordinated action, focused on academic related and professional services staff. This HESC resolves that Love Our ARPS Week will:

- a. highlight the demands in the ARPS Manifesto
- b. boost recruitment of ARPS staff to UCU
- c. launch and lodge local model branch claims to bargain and negotiate for improved working conditions and opportunities for career progression and CPD for ARPS staff
- d. require the production and distribution of ARPS resources to branches
- e. require to be highlighted as a significant campaign by union officers and activists.



## **HE10 Commission a UCU Research Concordat to increase security of employment      Anti-casualisation committee**

HESC notes:

1. the revised Research Concordat was published in 2019 partly in response to concerns related to increased precarity in the sector.
2. the poor treatment of Research staff, often facing years of short-term contracts with no career development in HE is becoming more recognized
3. that HESA data on HEIs 'open-ended/indefinite' contracts are misleading because many contracts have the clause 'subject to funding'.

HESC believes that the 2019 Concordat is superficial and does not sufficiently address the issues facing research staff offering no concrete proposals

HESC resolves to

- a. commission its own Research Concordat reflecting the experiences of research staff
- b. highlight the issue of research staff in the current dispute with specific reference to UCU's model policy on research staff management and avoidance of redundancy
- c. demand accurate figures on numbers of FTCs from HEIs, including those styled as 'open-ended'.

## **HE11 COVID-19 exposes the scandal of casualisation      University of Cambridge**

Congress notes:

1. COVID-19 exposes the scandal of casualisation: those who are less financially secure will be discouraged from self-reporting or self-isolating
2. people with pre-existing medical conditions (such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease) are more likely to become severely ill with the virus
3. the alarming rise in racist abuse and attacks on East Asian people, including university students and staff, since the outbreak of COVID-19.

Congress resolves:

- a. to demand that employers ensure that there is no detriment, e.g. in terms of lost pay, to any member of staff, regardless of contract type or visa status, as a result of virus-related closures, cancellations, or isolation
- b. to demand that staff who are at higher risk of contracting the virus suffer no detriment for taking extra precautions
- c. to stand in solidarity with all staff and academics facing escalating racial discrimination following the outbreak of COVID-19.

## **HE12 Campaign against increased TPS contributions Winchester**

**University of**

In light of the financial damage that the increased employer contribution to TPS has inflicted upon post-92 institutions, which has been used a pretext for redundancies and other attacks on working conditions, conference:

1. condemns the government's continued refusal to fund HEIs to mitigate the impact of increased employer contributions
2. calls on the government to reverse its decision
3. regards any refusal to reverse this decision as a direct attack on the long-term viability of post-92 HEIs.

While government refuses to reconsider, conference instructs HEC to:

- a. support action, up to and including strike action, in any HEI threatening attacks on pensions, jobs or working conditions under the guise of savings demanded by pension contribution rises
- b. organise a high-profile national campaign to demand the government funds HEIs to meet the increased employer contributions

## **HE13 Black researchers      Black members standing committee**

Black researchers are under immense pressure to do work outside of their remit and are expected to do work for free without any pay compared to white colleagues. They do not receive recognition for the work that they have produced.

1. call on UCU to produce the data on the number of Black researchers in HE institutions
2. data on those doing paid and unpaid work
3. more formalisation of the type of work they are doing and ensure that they are paid for such work on a par with work of similar grade
4. UCU to push that HE institutions provide Black researchers with mentorship/sponsorship to ensure progression and recognition for work done and develop avenues to ensure that Black researchers gain permanent contracts within their HE institutions
5. UCU to hold universities responsible for producing annual report tracking the number of Black researchers and their progression showing explicit commitment to equal opportunities.

**Appendix 1: Motions not ordered into the core agenda: Higher education sector conference (as ordered in [UCU/1043](#), D43-D67)**

**D43 USS: Regaining control of our pensions and trustees Higher education committee**

HESC notes:

1. establishment of hybrid DB/DC scheme in 2016 with DC covered by disadvantageous mastertrust legislation
2. UCU (and UUK) have lost the right to dismiss and replace their nominated trustees.

HESC instructs negotiators and HEC:

- a. obtain advice from First Actuarial to show that DB is cost competitive with DC
- b. draw on financial and legal advice to determine the best means to separate USS DB and DC components and withdraw main DB scheme from mastertrust legislation.
- c. put pressure on USS and employers to ensure point 2 is implemented
- d. campaign to move all pension to DB (possibly initially at a lower accrual rate) with members having the choice about legacy DC and able to opt up to 7% of their pensions into and out of DC scheme.
- e. campaign for an option similar to the previous Prudential additional voluntary contributions (AVC) scheme for additional pension years.

**D44 USS: Separating DB and DC and ending mastertrust status Higher education committee**

HESC notes:

1. USS scheme changes in 2016 which led to the establishment of a hybrid scheme with a DC component above a salary threshold
2. hybrid schemes are covered by the master trust legislation which is disadvantageous
3. the recent changes in scheme governance leading to USS becoming a mastertrust and UCU (and UUK) losing the right to dismiss and replace their nominated trustees.

HESC recognises the advantages in ending mastertrust status and that this will require separating the DB and DC components of the scheme.

HESC agrees:

- a. to obtain legal, actuarial and other relevant advice on separation of the DB and DC components of the scheme, ending the mastertrust status for the DB

scheme avoiding any negative consequences of doing this

- b. to obtain modelling and actuarial advice on options for bringing benefits above the threshold into the DB scheme in a cost-neutral way.

**D45 Pension Scheme Bill proposed Higher education committee**

HESC notes the

1. Pension Scheme Bill currently going through parliament
2. success of action by CWU in influencing this bill.
3. the potentially damaging nature of some of the proposed statutory funding requirements, such as a long term funding and investment target, and that they could increase costs.

HESC instructs HEC to campaign against these changes, including by

- a. using the coming USS industrial action.
- b. putting pressure on MPs and ministers.
- c. media campaign
- d. working together with students and other trade unions.

**D46 USS: strengthening UCU, gaining non-member support Open University**

Conference notes the JEP2 report stated concerns regarding USS (the 'Scheme'), including:

1. UCU's ability to reflect "the views of all Scheme members and potential members" (p38)
2. differences in attitude between employees with and without experience of alternative schemes (p73)
3. 'noise' about the valuation leading people to question its value (p73).

Conference holds:

- a. USS is a key element motivating HE employment, and UCU membership.
- b. USS produces responsibilities and opportunities for UCU that go beyond UCU's membership.
- c. USS opt-in by UCU non-members benefits UCU.
- d. The member benefits of UCU include independent financial advice (IFA) from 'Lighthouse Financial Advisers'.

Conference resolves that UCU should investigate:

- i. whether and how UCU could benefit from more intensive promotion of IFA to UCU's HE members and non-members

- ii. whether this promotion to HE members should be of Lighthouse, solely.

**D47 Composite: USS divestment University of Cambridge, Goldsmiths University of London**

HESC notes that:

1. USS is one of the largest pension schemes in the UK and invests our contributions in a range of unethical companies. These prop up problematic industries, including arms, tobacco and of course, fossil fuels. This includes millions in defence companies Raytheon (£243M), Thales, and Wells Fargo (£150M), a top banker for US gun makers.
2. USS investment in fossil fuel remains over a billion pounds, including a rising level of investment in Shell.

USS itself is clearly aware of the unethical nature of its investment portfolio, given that it offers a specific "ethical lifestyle" pensions package option, which explicitly excludes not only the arms trade but also fossil fuels, tobacco, gambling and pornography, available only for additional contributions in the USS Investment Builder. However, USS appears to see the arms trade, fossil fuels, tobacco, gambling and pornography as legitimate areas for its standard investment.

Conference believes that it is unacceptable that our future livelihoods should be tied to the success of industries which promote war, disease and climate chaos.

HESC resolves to:

- a. bring this to the attention of local UCU branches
- b. launch a campaign calling for USS divestment from arms, tobacco and fossil fuels and other unethical companies, including those involved in environmental destruction, and to call on USS to develop a comprehensive ethical investment policy which is the default for all scheme members and not an opt-in only accessible to a minority.
- c. demand that UUK also calls on USS to undertake this divestment.

**D48 'Taking new JNCHES forward' Higher education committee**

Conference notes:

1. the continuing difficulties in making the New JNCHES framework deliver the promises and potential of our original framework agreement
2. the need for pressure, and adequate resources at branch level to get our claims on issues such as the gender pay gap, casualisation, workload and zero hours implemented locally in parallel with our UK campaign claim on pay.

Conference believes that this will help pressurise UCEA into incorporating these aspects of our demands into the UK bargaining framework.

Conference supports further discussion of how well New JNCHES delivers for UCU in practice.

Conference also notes the need for measures to be taken for an earlier adoption of the core aspects of the UCU claim in order that we are pro-active in setting a joint claim with the other unions rather than being reactive, as is the current situation.

**D49 Widening the franchise and remit of the national disputes committee  
North West regional HE committee**

HESC notes the success of the national disputes committee (NDC) in steering the USS dispute, but recognises that the NDC remit did not allow it to include the Four Fights Dispute.

HESC resolves to widen the remit of the NDC to include all HE institutions.

HESC resolves to organise a democratic election which would ensure that any NDC includes representatives of pre and post '92 institutions.

**D50 Inclusive strike action UCU Wales (HE)**

HESC notes that HE strikes are often planned around the disruption of teaching. Guidance related to the 2019/20 strike was primarily relevant to teaching staff, with little advice for academic-related and research-only staff. As a result, UCU members who do not teach may feel marginalised both by the organisation of, and the communication surrounding, industrial action.

HESC notes that more needs to be done to include all UCU members when planning strikes. Developing more inclusive guidelines on striking would enhance the effectiveness of striking, and engage the wider membership.

HESC calls on HEC to establish a working group to develop new strike guidelines, and ballot wording, that are inclusive of all categories of UCU members, and explore more creative forms of industrial action. This working group should draw upon the diversity of UCU's membership, engage in broad consultation, reporting back to HEC by end of September.

**D51 Solidarity and strategies for future industrial action University of Exeter**

Conference stands in solidarity with members across the country in support of the recent industrial action in our disputes over pensions, pay and working conditions.

Conference notes:

1. the support and sacrifices of members
2. the hardship experienced by many members
3. the undue pressure exerted on members by senior management to mitigate the impact of action

4. the progress made in negotiations as a direct result of industrial action.

Conference believes we have a duty to support members to take effective industrial action, and that effective industrial action:

- a. must be sustainable
- b. asks members to contribute differentially according to how they can have most impact
- c. should take account of local factors relevant to the dispute.

Conference resolves to consider additional strategies for industrial action, including:

- i. rolling strikes nationally and locally
- ii. asking members to contribute differentially to maximise the impact of action
- iii. differential action at institutions, recognising and encouraging local progress.

#### **D52 #UCU Strikes Back: External Examiners Birmingham City University**

Conference notes:

1. the sacrifices made by branches taking action to defend HE in the Four Fights
2. the crucial role which has been and can be played by external examiners in supporting UCU members in striking institutions
3. UCU guidance for external examiners.

Conference resolves:

- a. to actively consider the key role external examiners can play at the start of any future HE dispute
- b. to mobilise to engage and give full solidarity to external examiners supporting colleagues in action.

#### **D53 Peaceful protest and assembly West Midlands regional HE committee**

Conference asserts its full support for the right to peaceful protest on University campuses.

Conference recognises the right to peaceful protest and assembly under the HRA 1998 and the 1997 UNESCO definition of academic freedom. We recognise the right of staff and students to enter our campuses and note that this right cannot be removed or deemed to be 'trespass' without legally adequate justification.

Conference notes that picketing during strike action may take place at or near the entrances to our workplaces, which may be within the boundary of our employer's property if this is a public space.

Conference resolves:

1. replace reference to 'trespassing' in our guidance on picketing to clarify our

legal right to peaceful protest on our own campuses

2. ensure that full support under the UCU legal scheme is provided to any UCU member victimised for participating in peaceful protest.

**D54 Progress on increasing security for teaching staff    Anti-casualisation committee**

HESC notes:

1. employers are increasingly replacing full time secure posts with insecure teaching-only contracts
2. while some branches have negotiated improvements, progress remains patchy
3. the increasing use of students to carry out core teaching has expanded to include studentships where teaching is expected but not paid
4. a worrying trend of HE leadership failing to acknowledge that teaching employees who are also PhD students are due to the same employment rights and protections as those who are not
5. teaching associates often perform the work of teaching fellows.

HESC resolves to:

- a. increase pressure on HE institutions to address increased insecurity and workload
- b. call for insecure teaching staff to be shifted onto permanent academic contracts
- c. campaign for clearly delineated career progression pathways for insecure teaching staff, including a review of spinal points and grade structure
- d. build a network for teaching staff on precarious contracts in HE.

**D55 Employers should not pocket strike deductions from fixed-term researchers    University of Durham**

Conference notes that:

1. fixed-term research staff are often precariously employed on short-term contracts
2. currently, it is possible for employers to re-appropriate strike deductions from fixed-term researchers for purposes other than paying the fixed-term researchers
3. some research funders have accepted requests to re-allocate strike deductions to “no-cost extensions” of the relevant fixed-term research contracts on a case-by-case basis.

Conference believes that:



- a. employers should not pocket salary deductions of striking fixed-term research staff
- b. salary deductions from striking fixed-term research staff should be re-allocated to extend the contract of the fixed-term researcher by use of “no-cost extensions”
- c. use of “no-cost extensions” benefits fixed-term research staff, external research funders, and the employers
- d. delayed research is a meaningful consequence of industrial action.

Conference resolves that UCU should engage with external research funders to ensure that employers re-allocate strike deductions from fixed-term researchers to “no-cost extensions” of the relevant fixed-term research contracts as standard practice.

**D56 Building UCU in private HE ‘pathway’ colleges                      University of Sheffield International College**

HESC notes:

1. the rapid expansion of private HE providers such as Kaplan, Study Group and OnCampus
2. that universities collaborate with these providers to secure profitable international students while sidestepping UCU-negotiated terms and conditions. In the vast majority, UCU is not even recognised
3. that the expansion of these providers (which are outside of sector pension schemes and where staff are highly casualised and overworked, often working evenings and weekends) normalises shocking working conditions in our sector
4. that although Congress 2019 resolved to “organise campaigns through local branches to recruit private providers’ staff and support them in building new branches” this is a massive challenge and little progress has been made so far.

HESC resolves to initiate a serious campaign of recruitment and organising in private provider institutions, aimed at building branches and securing local recognition agreements, as a step towards national collective bargaining in each provider.

**D57 Composite: Universities under attack: we fight back                      Goldsmiths University of London, Yorkshire and Humberside regional HE committee**

HESC notes that:

1. the emergence of a higher education ‘market’ has destabilised the sector and pitted institutions against each other; hundreds of UCU members across the sector have faced and are facing threats of redundancy

2. the government is committed to an instrumentalist 'value for money' approach to higher education that prioritises future earnings over the wider contribution of a university degree
3. while the sector as a whole makes a large surplus, one in four universities were in deficit in 2018, compared to one in 10 in 2013
4. recruitment freezes, redundancy programmes, unreasonable workloads and increases in precarious contracts are common at many institutions
5. the proposed cuts in programmes and budgets at, for example, SOAS, Goldsmiths and Sunderland are illustrations of a destructive market logic that needs to be challenged
6. UCU lacks a UK-wide approach that would provide support for branches facing collective redundancies and a forum for branches to share strategies
7. branches have been successful in fighting redundancies when they have organised industrial action, for example Leicester Uni, Brighton Uni.

Conference resolves to establish the following support for members:

- a. training on relevant legal rights, including but not limited to redundancy law, relevant case law, pay in lieu of notice
- b. more effective UK-wide resources that support the development of industrial action strategies to counter collective redundancies at branch level
- c. organise a UK-wide meeting on redundancy so that branches can share practice
- d. organise a high-profile campaign to oppose cuts and redundancies in higher education, including national and regional conferences, lobbies, publicity material and activist resources.

### **D58 Alternative vision for higher education UCU Scotland**

Conference notes the ongoing work of the UCU Scotland education committee writing 'an alternative vision for Scottish higher education' and its proposed launch at a conference looking at the future of Scottish higher education later in the year. Conference further notes that this builds on the work of UCU branches across the UK producing manifestos and papers setting out alternatives to the current dysfunctional model. Conference commends the work carried out by branches and bodies of the union setting out an alternative where our universities work for all stakeholders including staff and students, and where knowledge exchange and scholarship are not secondary to profit and the market.

Conference encourages branches to consider their own vision for their institution and higher education generally, noting that employers and government take the absence of progressive statements and alternative visions as an acceptance of the situation as is.

**D59 Migrant, right to remain and institutional racism University of Glasgow**

Conference reaffirms its commitment to opposing racist immigration legislation and supporting internationalism of universities.

HESC deplores:

1. the continuing institutional racism in many universities.
2. the fear and uncertainty about their future experienced by many EU colleagues and students.
3. the discrimination and racism experienced by many international colleagues and students.

Conference instructs HEC to campaign together with students, other TUs and community groups to put pressure on UK government to:

- a. give all EU and international colleagues and students who want it an indefinite right to remain
- b. remove cap on international student numbers and commit to no future caps
- c. remove visa restrictions which can cause international students to miss the start of term and prevent international colleagues participating in project meetings, conferences and academic exchanges
- d. strongly encourage universities to actively support EU and international colleagues and students, including by not increasing fees for EU students.

**D60 Confronting surveillance cultures in HE Migrant members standing committee**

Conference notes:

1. that the Home Office places the requirement to monitor migrant workers and students on universities and colleges
2. that guidance from the Home Office is vague, results in huge variation, and in overreach by employers beyond formal requirements
3. that migrant staff and others caught up in the monitoring and surveillance of migration status report high levels of stress and anxiety
4. that HE increasingly relies on fee income from foreign students so monitored
5. that private companies are being hired for immigration processing and rule enforcement.

Conference resolves:

- a. to oppose surveillance of the migration status of Higher Education staff and students

- b. to map the variation in interpretations and implementation of Home Office rules across the HE sector, including reliance on private companies
- c. to take legal advice on how HE branches can resist surveillance of migrant staff and students, and develop clear guidance for HE branches, ahead of Congress 2021.

**D61 Disability inclusive science careers                      UCU Scotland**

While UK universities have made some progress towards ensuring disabled students receive appropriate support, there are far fewer resources available to disabled staff. HESC recognises that disabled members of staff in UK universities often experience marginalisation and discrimination at work, and that this discrimination is materially and socially detrimental to workers. Disability Inclusive Science Careers (DISC) is a two year project led by Heriot Watt University, partnering with a number of organisations including UCU Scotland.

HESC expresses its solidarity with disabled members and is committed to disability inclusion in the union’s own practices, including case work and policy development.

HESC believes that improving the support for disabled staff, including the routine provision of workplace adjustments, is essential for an inclusive working environment and a fulfilling working life.

HESC awaits the findings of the DISC project and is committed to engaging with the recommendations.

**D62 REF 2021    University of Liverpool**

Conference notes:

1. REF relies largely on the goodwill of UCU members across the sector, and at the highest levels of implementation, including as REF panellists
2. that REF output scores allocated by colleagues as part of REF preparation are now used across the sector for disciplinary purposes
3. the use of REF output scores is subjective, gives those who control the process more power to vary working conditions arbitrarily, and exacerbates inequalities.

Conference resolves to:

- a. launch a national claim with employers to demand the end of the use of internal REF scores for appointments, performance, progression or disciplinary purposes
- b. as part of this claim, withdraw members, including REF panellists, from all REF activities, until those demands are met
- c. launch a national ‘abolish REF’ campaign.

### **D63 Performance management Queen Margaret University**

Conference

1. endorses the professional integrity and academic freedom of academic and academic-related, professional support and technical staff in higher education
2. condemns the growth of performance management and other new public management techniques in higher education, which use 'appraisal', 'performance enhancement', 'professional development' and similar euphemisms, to legitimise top-down managerialism, micromanagement and unnecessary manager intervention in professional decision making
3. acknowledges that university employees, as professionals, are entitled to reflective, self-generated professional development and appropriate support from their institutions, without manager interference in their professional work
4. supports branches which are challenging performance management and other forms of managerialism
5. agrees to provide resources for, and campaign to challenge performance management in higher education.

### **D64 Wage theft in higher education University of Liverpool**

Conference notes:

1. the creation of a number of roles in HEIs that are being categorised as support roles while the day-to-day duties of these roles fit HERA profiles of PMSA staff
2. that these employment practices are stealing wages of university staff and potential subscriptions from UCU.

Conference resolves:

- a. that support in HERA scoring is provided to branches through regions and nations
- b. that a sector-wide campaign against wage theft which pressurises employers to adhere to agreed role profiles is launched.

### **D65 Late motion: Defend our USS pensions: put pressure on employers University College London**

Conference deplores the unnecessary valuation during the Covid crisis with proposed total contributions of 41-68% (potentially, member contributions of 14-20%).

Conference notes:

1. USS's DB scheme can pay pensioners from income for 25-30 years
2. USS has recovered from past stock market falls
3. Closing the scheme to new entrants forces staff into risky DC schemes

Conference resolves UCU will campaign for employers to:

- a. commit to not raising but instead reducing DB employee contributions to 8% while preserving existing benefits.
- b. join UCU in pressing for valuation methodology changes, including 30 years for 'deficit' recovery, at least 65% growth assets, cash flow approach and reasonable prudence - or, alternatively, for employers to cover increased costs.

Failing this, Conference instructs HEC to call a dispute with employers, initiate an IA ballot and call a December/January SHESC to review campaign progress and wider impact on HE pensions and the sector.

**D66 Late motion: USS: Government underwriting without control  
University of Glasgow**

Conference deplores spiralling costs and the threat of further jumps in costs in the recently released consultation on the 2020 valuation.

Conference believes that:

1. Urgent action is necessary to defend our pensions.
2. Government underwriting in extreme situations without control is a possible solution to excessive pessimism and reckless prudence of the valuation assumptions and methodology, but needs to be part of a multistrand approach.

Conference mandates the USS negotiators and HEC to endeavour to obtain an agreement from UK Government to underwrite USS in extreme situations, but without obtaining any control of the scheme. This should include the involvement of members and branches e.g. lobbying MPs.

Conference mandates the USS negotiators to use the agreement to put pressure on USS to abandon self-sufficiency as a valuation aim and all metrics based on it.

**D67 Late motion: LGBT+ International Working      LGBT+ members standing committee**

Working globally including establishing campus internationally, cross-border partnerships and chasing higher fees from International students are employed as a form of marketisation of HE that puts profit before people

Covid19 restrictions have significantly increased the amount of work done online

with students and HEIs internationally.

Many countries still have colonial era laws from European imperialisation projects.

International working can discriminate against LGBT+ staff, and sometimes LGBT+ students

Staff shouldn't have to hide their protected characteristics at work, including when working internationally either online or on campus.

Conference resolves to

1. work with organisations both UK and international in campaigns to dismantle oppressive anti LGBT+ laws
2. work with the TUC in efforts to undo colonial laws
3. do everything possible to ensure HEIs make working at international campuses optional, particularly for LGBT+ staff, and that staff working internationally are safe.

## **Appendix 2: Late motion not ordered into the agenda**

### **B1 Effects of postponement of promotions round on equality pay gaps Newcastle University**

HESC notes that many institutions have postponed the promotions round for 2020 – 2021 and UCEA have made a 0% pay 'offer'. This will further exacerbate the gender, race and disability pay gaps.

HESC instructs the HEC to

1. start a campaign immediately for a national pay claim that both delivers an above inflation pay rise for everyone and addresses the above mentioned pay gaps
2. initiate a ballot for national industrial action in January/early February which ensures that the ballot period is long enough to achieve a high turnout and that the ballot starts and ends in time for industrial action to take place in term time
3. organise grassroots GTVO campaigns for a YES vote in this ballot
4. call on UCU and HEC to actively engage with branches, speaking at meetings and producing local material.

## **Appendix 3: Original text of composited amendments**

### **Composite amendment HE2A.2**

#### **C1 Amendment to motion HE1 (re-ordered to amend motion HE2) University of Dundee**

Add additional resolves under 4.1:

Require employers to join UCU in pressing for revisions to the proposed valuation. Potential ways currently include a) setting “the level of prudence” at 67% in the 2018 valuation, b) extending 'deficit' recovery period, c) retaining the current investment plans of around 65% “growth assets”, d) updating mortality assumptions in light of COVID-19, and e) updating asset values in light of experience. Declare an industrial dispute if employers do not accept UCU proposals.

#### **C2 Amendment to motion HE2 Lancaster University**

Add to 'Conference deplores', and renumber:

3. Requests by UUK to USS for benefit modelling, implying they will propose benefit reductions

Under conference instructs, replace a) with:

a. campaign for employers to agree not to propose benefit reductions and to join UCU in pressing for changes in the valuation, including an increased e.g. 20-30 years 'deficit' recovery period, at least 65% growth assets, a cash flow approach, and reasonable prudence e.g. 67% and a higher discount rate.

## **Appendix 4: Principles for the conduct of the on-line interim Congress 28-30 October 2020**

The agenda

1. Motions for this Congress meeting are those submitted by branches by the original motion deadline of 13 March 2020, plus any late motions and amendments received by the deadline of 12 noon on Friday 2 October.
2. From these motions, a group comprising the chairs of the NEC's sub-committees, chair and vice chairs of its sector committees and the Congress business committee (the 'agenda group') will meet to identify a small number of motions from each sub-committee section of the agenda, plus a group of late motions, to create a 'core' agenda of motions which will be moved, debated and voted on at this on-line interim Congress meeting. The agenda group may also identify a small number of 'reserve' motions to be taken if all 'core' motions have been dispensed with and time remains on the agenda. As a guide, it is expected that not more than 12 core Congress motions will be identified, and not more than 12



core motions in respect of each sector conference.

3. No rule change motions will be taken by this meeting of Congress.
4. No late motions will be accepted after the deadline of 2 October 2020. No emergency motions will be accepted during the course of the Congress meeting.
5. Following the publication of the core agenda, representations about the ordering of motions can be made in writing in accordance with instructions issued by UCU head office, to be received not later than 12 noon, 22 October 2020. The chairs of NEC sub-committees, chair and vice chairs of sector committees and the Congress business committee will meet to consider such representations.
6. The conference will be asked to adopt the agenda as circulated by the agenda group, and any amendments to that agenda recommended by the agenda group as a result of any representations received.
7. No business that does not appear on the agenda will be brought before the conference.

The agenda will include addresses from the President and General Secretary and an update report from the Honorary Treasurer on the union's finances.

#### Conduct of business

8. The chair of Congress and the sector conferences shall be as set out in the Congress standing orders. The quorum for these conferences shall be as set out in the Congress standing orders.
9. All delegates who wish to speak in the debate of motions, including movers and seconders of motions, shall give advance notice of their wish to speak, including an indication of whether they will speak for or against a motion, in accordance with instructions issued by UCU head office, which will include a deadline for such notification. The submission of a request to speak in a debate does not guarantee that a delegate will be called to speak. The chair will order and call speakers with due regard to a balanced debate, the participation of different delegates across the conference, and the time available.
10. Movers of motions shall be allowed five minutes, and all other speakers three minutes. At the discretion of the chair these times may be reduced. Speakers shall introduce themselves by their name and the branch or other body that they represent.
11. The movers of motions shall have a right of reply which will be exercised at the close of the debate on that motion or group of motions.
12. No points of order, points of information, or procedural motions (that the question be now put; that the meeting proceeds to next business) or challenges to the chair shall be taken at the conference.

13. A motion to remit any motion on the core agenda or any reserve motion to the NEC (or HEC or FEC as appropriate) shall be taken only if advance notice of the motion to remit has been received in accordance with point 6 above.
14. The chapters of the NEC's report to Congress shall be moved formally.
15. Any questions on the annual report shall be submitted in writing not less than five working days ahead of the opening of the meeting and shall be answered in writing, ahead of the conference if practical.
16. It shall not be in order for any participant on the floor of, or addressing, Conference, to utter or display offensive language (including discriminatory language) or criticisms of individual Union employees or individual members who have no right to address Conference and complaints against whom should be pursued through properly established procedures. In the event that any of these occur, the Chair shall immediately ask the participant to withdraw the remarks and apologise to the Conference and the individual(s) concerned. If the participant refuses to do this, or persists thereafter, the Chair shall exclude that individual (or individuals) from the rest of the Conference proceedings. (Congress standing order 36).

#### Voting on motions

17. Voting on motions shall be conducted electronically within the on-line conference. The chair will allow not less than 30 seconds for votes to be cast. No decisions of the conference will be deemed to have been made without such a vote having taken place.

#### Technical issues

18. The decisions of the meeting shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual member's difficulty in participating for reasons of broadband, software or hardware failure.

#### Suspension of the on-line event

19. The chair shall have the discretion to suspend the on-line conference in the event of disorder or serious technical failure.

#### Election of the Congress business committee

20. A call for nominations to the Congress business committee shall be made and nominations dealt with in accordance with the standing orders of Congress, except that any ballot required will be conducted electronically shortly after the event among the relevant delegates who participated in the conference.