

# **New JNCHES November 2007 Agreement**

## **AGREEMENT OF NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS REACHED 27 NOVEMBER 2007**

### **FOR THE NEW JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STAFF**

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#### **REVIEW OF NEGOTIATING AND CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS**

##### Preamble

1. The 2001 agreement which established the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) provided for review of the new and transitional negotiating arrangements in the light of experience. The JNCHES Pay Agreement 2006-09, agreed in June 2006, put this review in train with the aim of agreeing necessary changes to the negotiating arrangements by July 2007.
2. The HE employers and unions remain united in their view of the vital contribution which staff at all levels make to the continuing success of UK higher education, and the need for them to be rewarded properly. They share a continuing commitment to the benefits of working in partnership, to seeking effective and forward-looking national dialogue and agreement on remuneration and related issues, and to sustaining the improvements achieved since 2001.
3. To these ends the HE employers and unions have agreed on revitalised arrangements for national negotiation and consultation that are streamlined, flexible and provide a framework for strategic discussions. These are set out in the following paragraphs. They will take effect from December 2007 and will supersede the 25 June 2001 agreement from that date. Agreements made by JNCHES and predecessor negotiating bodies, which remain in force in August 2007, will be inherited by the reformed machinery.
4. The parties to this agreement – EIS/ULA, GMB, UCU, Unison, Unite and the UCEA on behalf of its subscribing HE institutions – commit themselves to proceeding in accordance with the arrangements set out below and to operating these in good faith.

##### Reformed negotiating machinery

5. The Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staff (JNCHES) will henceforth comprise:
  - 6 representatives of the employers, nominated by the UCEA;
  - 18 representatives of the HE staff unions, apportioned on a basis agreed between the unions and including a number of observers.

Meetings will be chaired alternately by a representative of the employers and a representative of the unions.

6. The JNCHES will be responsible for negotiation of those pay and related matters that are determined at national level, including specifically:

- regular review of the Framework pay spine;
- any further consideration of the provisions of the Framework Agreement for the Modernisation of HE Pay Structures (2004);
- any further consideration of those provisions in earlier agreements inherited by the JNCHES in 2001 and which remain in force in August 2007.

7. All matters will be negotiated within the JNCHES as a whole. Where certain issues are exclusive to particular staff groups, it is expected that the dialogue within the JNCHES will be principally between the employers' representatives and those unions representing the staff concerned. With the agreement of all parties, working sub-committees may be established to discuss specific issues for particular occupational groups (eg low pay, senior staff covered by the Framework Agreement, fixed-term and hourly paid contracts) and to report back to the JNCHES. Union representation at these fora will reflect membership numbers in the groups concerned.

#### Additional arrangements

8. To complement the above negotiating remit the JNCHES will convene:

- a strategic meeting, annually, with wider representation from the employers and unions to discuss the state of the HE sector and prospective developments. Representatives of other bodies, such as government departments and the funding councils, may be invited to these meetings;
- discussions across remuneration matters where the detail is determined locally in the context of the Framework and inherited agreements – allowing consideration of practice and potential developments across the sector as a whole;
- discussion of pay-related issues negotiated in other fora, such as pensions.

9. Where jointly agreed as appropriate, the JNCHES may establish time-limited or ad hoc working groups for particular purposes – such as the present Equalities Forum.

10. When necessary, the JNCHES will facilitate:

- discussion between employer and union representatives from institutions in the devolved administrations, about pay and related matters, if these are not taking place under other auspices;
- negotiations on matters concerning clinical academics' pay, if the translation of relevant NHS pay awards cannot be agreed between officials of the UCEA, BMA, BDA and UCU. Such negotiations will include representatives of these four bodies, on an agreed basis;
- discussions about particular groups of staff with professional equivalents outside the HE sector, such as in the field of healthcare.

## Procedures

11. The JNCHES will meet at least four times each year, normally: in October for general business; for the strategic discussion about the sector in December; and in March and April/May to facilitate effective and expeditious consideration of pay claims submitted prior to the March meeting. Dates for these meetings will be agreed in June of the preceding academic year. Whilst the aim will be to complete negotiations by the end of May so that agreed rates of pay can be implemented from August, additional meetings on agreed dates may be arranged if required. The March and April/May meetings may not both be needed if agreement can be reached rapidly, or when a multi-year pay agreement applies.

12. Agendas for meetings of the JNCHES and additional arrangements will be agreed in advance between nominated representatives of the employers and unions. These representatives will also agree on the wider attendance intended for the annual meeting and on any appropriate augmentation of attendance for the other meetings outlined in paragraph 8 (for instance to facilitate attendance of representatives, or independent bodies, with particular expertise).

13. Where meetings under the additional arrangements jointly identify scope for national agreement on certain matters or for a joint statement or guidance being issued to the sector, these matters will be referred to the JNCHES for confirmation or further consideration. In some instances it may be possible for such questions to be settled by correspondence, rather than by reference to the next scheduled meeting of the JNCHES.

14. All parties to negotiations in the JNCHES are committed to striving for agreed outcomes. If, exceptionally, these cannot be achieved, either the employers or union(s) may invoke the dispute resolution procedure described in Annex A.

15. The employers and unions are agreed in principle on sharing the provision of facilities for meetings. UCEA will provide secretariat services. Any detailed resourcing issues will be resolved between UCEA and union officers. If the JNCHES intends to commission any significant project from external contractors, arrangements for funding it will be agreed in advance between the employers and unions.

16. The arrangements set out in this agreement will be the subject of joint review by the JNCHES in autumn 2011, in the light of experience in the period to that date.

## **DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE**

The parties to the negotiations in the JNCHES are committed to striving for agreed outcomes. If, exceptionally, these cannot be achieved, either the employers or union(s) may invoke the following procedure:

- Where it appears that all scope for progress through normal negotiations has been exhausted, either the employers or any of the unions represented on the JNCHES may give formal notice to all parties that it is applying this dispute resolution procedure;
- Following receipt of such notification the parties will agree within 7 working days on dates for at least two meetings to seek to resolve the dispute. Unless agreed otherwise, these meetings will take place within the following 14 working days;
- Attendance at these meetings will normally include national officials and lay officers of the unions in dispute, together with senior UCEA officers and representatives of the UCEA Board;
- The focus of these meetings will be on reaching a settlement of the issue(s) in dispute. Such settlement should also seek to include recommendations on how similar disputes might be avoided in the future;
- Further meetings beyond this initial period may take place where that is agreed between the two sides;
- If it has not been possible to resolve the dispute through this series of meetings, the parties will consider whether third-party assistance – normally using ACAS for mediation and conciliation – would be helpful. A decision on this should be taken within the following 7 working days;
- Throughout the period for dispute resolution meetings, and for third-party assistance, the HE employers will not impose a resolution and the trade unions will refrain from taking any form of industrial action until the procedure has been fully exhausted;
- Outcomes from any stage in the procedure will be communicated jointly.