

# Recommended voting HESC

WITH A MERE four hours for HESC it is extremely unlikely that there will be time to debate all motions and amendments.

The first two hour session deals with pay and USS, the second two hour session with as much of the rest of the agenda as can be accommodated.

This raises questions about the impact of having only a two-day conference and appears to reflect a view that debate among elected members is time-wasting.

The following recommendations do not include any late motions, which may be ordered into the debate.

## HE1 Report of National Negotiators on HE Pay

We should support this, even if we do not like some parts, so that we can have a pay campaign in 2014/5.

## HE2 Composite Motion of Censure on HEC from Leeds Met and Brighton

Support

## HE3 Lessons from the 2013/14 Pay Campaign Y&H Regional HE Cttee

Support only if not amended by amdt HE3A.1

HE3A.1 HEC – oppose

HE3A.2 Derby – support

HE3A.3 London Met – support

## HE4 Pay Strategy Essex

Oppose (this would be a move away from national bargaining)

## HE5 National Pay Negotiation timetable – LSBU

Support regardless of what happens to amendments

HE5A.1 South East Regional HE

Committee- listen to debate

HE5A.2 HEC – listen to debate

## HE6 Pay Campaign and Multi-Year Deals – Brighton

Support regardless of what happens to amendments

HE6A.1 Leeds Met – support

HE6A.2 falls if Amendment 1 carried

– oppose

## HE7 Strategy for Industrial Action – Hull

Support unless amended by HE7A1.

HE7A1 – HEC – oppose

HE7A2 – SE HE Sector Committee

– support

## HE8 Victimisation – Glasgow

Support

## HE9 Members on Casualised Contracts – ACC

Support regardless of what happens to amendments

HE9A1 – listen to debate

## HE10 USS – HEC

Oppose (There may be a late alternative motion).

## HE11 USS and the principle of buy-cott – Warwick

Support regardless of what happens to amendments

HE11A1 – Birmingham – support

HE11A2 – HEC – support

After this point there is a range of other important motions, for example on casualisation. Most of the motions can be supported with the following exception;

## HE21 Abolish REF – Queen Mary University of London

Support regardless of what happens to amendments

HE21A – HEC – oppose

Official fringe meeting  
**After the Euro elections...  
Fighting racism  
and anti-semitism**

Friday 30 May, 1pm  
@ Exchange 4 & 5

Speaker: Weyman Bennett  
(Unite Against Fascism)

## Building the UCU Left

IT HAS NEVER been more important to build networks of activists within and between institutions and in regions to build solidarity and to organise a fight back against the unprecedented attack on the jobs and working conditions of those in universities.

More widely we are engaged in a

struggle to defend our institutions against an assault on public education.

Join the UCU Left and come to our conference in October where we will debate; Where now for pay? How to fight casualization? Strategies for defending public education.

For further details contact; Jane Hardy (janeannhardy@gmail.com)

Join UCU Left at [www.uculeft.org](http://www.uculeft.org)

Or fill in this form

Name.....

Address.....

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Institution & UCU branch.....

Send this form to: UCU Left c/o 17 Barfield Road, Leytonstone, London E11 3AF

# Fighting on pay: where do we go from here?

**U**CU members have put up a brilliant fight on pay. This was in the face of the ineptitude of the current majority of the Higher Education Committee (HEC) in not following through on the decisions of our annual conference and the hostile and aggressive tactics of employers.

The 2 percent offer for next year would not have been achieved without industrial action this year – and it does break through the 1 percent public sector pay freeze.

In addition, project work is to be established with JNCHES on the gender pay gap and on casualisation (including zero hours contracts). This is a significant achievement.

However, the 1 percent imposed this year represents another 2 percent cut in real incomes, and the 2 percent for next year is also below the current RPI at 2.5 percent.

We are still a long way from achieving the catch-up we fought for. Therefore we must learn the lessons of this year's campaign and develop a strategy to fight on pay for next year.

## The ballot result

Members voted by 83.7 percent to 16.3 percent to accept the 2 percent pay offer. Some activists may be disappointed by such a large vote for acceptance, but this outcome is not surprising under the circumstances:

- The decision by the majority on the Higher Education Committee (HEC) to postpone the marking boycott in January when it could have



Portsmouth lecturers striking in January. Photo: Jon Woods

been a sharp and effective tool

- The complete absence of an industrial action strategy, and a reliance on the courts, to counteract the intimidatory threats made by many employers to deduct 100 per cent of pay for partial performance
- The failure of the HEC to recommend rejection, despite recognising the offer fell far short of our demands

All combined to undermine the confidence of members to reject the offer. Members were left in an invidious position in deciding whether to vote for continuing with a poorly led dispute or accepting a poor deal.

However, in spite of this, it was right that branch activists argued for rejection and 4,902 members were prepared to face down the employers' draconian threats even in the absence of a national lead.

## The price for backing off in January

The ballot outcome is the price paid for the disastrous decision by the same majority group on the HEC to postpone the marking boycott in January and to postpone the escalation from single day strikes to a programme of regional multi-day strikes.

Many members and activists were confused, angry and frustrated that the momentum of the Autumn strikes was lost and our carefully considered strategy of escalation to our most powerful weapon was dumped in favour of three two-hour strikes. These had a very mixed and uneven success.

In some places, they mobilised some members who had previously not been involved in picketing, but as a whole they represented a significant retreat for UCU. This hesitation and retreat gave the employers confidence that the dispute could be seen off.

It enabled them to regroup and prepare their counter moves. It allowed a number of employers to test their strategy of 100 per cent pay deductions for 'partial performance' and to note the failure of the union nationally to adequately respond to this.

## A lack of leadership

After six sets of strike action, with some institutions deducting a full day's pay for each of the two-hour stoppages, members expected some leadership from the people that they

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elected to the HEC.

However, in April, the majority of the HEC voted against recommending rejection of the pay offer and agreed that the argument should be put in a 'neutral' way.

In particular, the failure of the UCU to give a national response to the employers' threat of 100 percent pay dockings for partial performance left many members hesitant and fearful of entering the marking boycott - significantly at a time when many had completed teaching for the academic year.

A robust response and a strategy for countering the employers' offensive would have given members much more confidence that we could face down that threat. Such a robust response would have included national industrial action and solidarity actions between institutions.

## Where do we go from here?

Wage cuts and falling living standards remain a real issue for our members - some lower paid members are facing real hardship.

The dispute has strengthened many local branches, in terms of numbers and activity. New and younger activists have got involved. Many of our members are angry and smarting from the threats from employers, which have exposed the iron fist in the velvet glove.

This is a starting point for organising to win real catch-up. We need to discuss how we build a campaign for fair pay and the sort of action that will be effective.

We need to argue that future campaigns are kept under the democratic control of members and not derailed by the HEC.

We need to ensure that all aspects of our claim - such as an end to casualisation, zero-hour contracts, and the gender pay-gap, are adequately highlighted and vigorously pursued. Ballots and recommendations in national campaigns must be decided by special Higher Education Sector conferences.

**Vote for motions:**  
**HE2, HE3 (if not amended),**  
**HE5 and HE6.**

# VCs on the offensive - but members fight back



Pickets at KCL last October. Photo: Guy Smallman

THE DECISION by the HEC (won by only one vote) to make public the voting figures for individual institutions on the pay offer was dangerous.

It has handed ammunition in some institutions to VCs to isolate and victimise activists and to push through redundancies. However, the vote to accept the pay deal does not mean that members are demoralised or not willing to fight.

## Fighting redundancy at Dundee University

Despite a huge amount of opposition from staff, trade unions across the country, local MP's and councillors, the University of Dundee is now trying to rush through compulsory redundancies.

Between 80 and 120 redundancies are being planned amongst academic staff, amounting to around 1 in 10.

Staff in medicine, dentistry and life sciences are currently being selected for redundancy while others are having to apply for their own jobs.

Management intend to follow this up with cuts across the University that will have appalling effects on staff wellbeing and student experience. The campaign to stop the staff cuts at Dundee University is gathering momentum. There is an online petition that already has over 1,400 of signatures.

Dundee UCU is also balloting for strike action where they expect both a

high turnout and a large majority for strike action.

Members recognise that these cuts will not be stopped without sustained strike action, token stoppages will not stop management.

While the University senior management continue to pay themselves exorbitant salaries, the Principal is paid £223K, they tell staff they are too expensive and do not create a big enough surplus.

## King's College London: 120 redundancies planned to fund estate development

King's College London has announced that it intends to cut teaching and research costs to fund hundreds of millions of pounds worth of building projects.

Over 700 staff in the College's prestigious health schools have been put at threat of redundancy. Those who subsequently fail to meet arbitrary criteria imposed by management, relating to research grant income and teaching hours, will be sacked.

Managers intend to issue dismissal notices to 15 percent of academic staff in the health schools - 120 lecturers - by 8 August.

Other cuts are planned to the Department of Education and Professional Studies and it is likely that reviews underway elsewhere in the College will result in further cuts.

Staff have been offered only the legal minimum of 45 days consultation to contest the proposals.

The College waited until students had completed the National Student Survey and were busy sitting exams before announcing its plans.

KCL UCU has called an Emergency General Meeting for 28 May to take decisions on their collective response.

# The fight against casualisation

**H**igher and further education are the second most casualised in Britain. Many contracts give no job security and minimal access to sick pay and opportunities for professional development. They cause staff miserable insecurity, poverty and precariousness, despite their qualifications, expertise and teaching experience.

The campaigns at SOAS and London Metropolitan University show how workers can organise against these pernicious contracts.

Edinburgh University have managed to get a better deal for their casualised workers.

Beyond the glaring injustice and need for solidarity between those on permanent and less secure contracts - it is critical that the UCU recruits, supports and campaigns for these workers.

## SOAS: Fractionals For Fair Play

The Fractionals For Fair Play Campaign (FFFP) at SOAS University in central London started six months ago when it was discovered that fractionals at SOAS are, on average, working over 50 percent of unpaid hours.

The university refused the campaign's proposal and has been unwilling to offer any alternative contract proposal since.

In response fractionals started working to contract (an end to office hours, responding to student emails or



Striking at SOAS in January Photo: Guy Smallman

attending lecturers before seminars).

All three unions on campus (UCU, UNISON, and NUS) passed motions of support with FFFP. Still management has refused to offer any alternatives, which has led to an escalation with fractionals refusing to perform unpaid labour and therefore not marking any essays.

SOAS has continued to refuse to negotiate and has instead decided to enter mediation with ACAS. The campaign is well organised and full time staff members in several departments have refused to pick up the unmarked essays.

Over 200 final year students have signed a petition calling on management to pay their staff instead of cynically playing with their students' futures.

The ACAS talks are on-going, but SOAS management is isolated on the question and hope that they can wait long enough to disarm the campaign. The SOAS campaign exposes the exploitation of workers on fractional contracts and is an important lesson in these workers can organise to win.

# More attacks on USS

THE LATEST attack on USS members is the threat of moving all future pensions from final salary to Career Revalued Benefits.

However, we need to remember that increasing numbers of members already have significantly worse CRB pensions.

The strategy for fighting these attacks

therefore must be based on unity and equal treatment for all members by supporting final salary for all USS.

We need an emergency motion calling for a negotiating strategy based on final salary pensions for all members.

We need to demand that any increased costs

are paid by the employers not members.

Winning these demands will need to be backed by serious industrial action in the autumn.

A recall conference needs to be called to debate and discuss how USS pensions can be defended from this latest attack.

## Organising at London Metropolitan University (LMU)

In part inspired by the victory of the Hovis workers against zero hours contracts and the progress at Edinburgh University, the UCU at LMU launched a campaign to stop the use of zero hours contracts and to get staff onto fairer terms.

A hugely successful meeting was held in November 2013 supported by London region UCU, LMU Unison and the Students Union aimed at launching the campaign.

Speakers included Jeremy Corbyn (MP), President of BFAWU (a Hovis striker), Liz Lawrence (then UCU President-elect) and Angela Lamb (UCU Edinburgh University).

The LMU UCU branch has been engaged in meetings with management to negotiate a fairer staff development model and a variable hours contract, including such improvements as guaranteed hours and career progression. This shows the massive potential for organising staff on casualised contracts to get a better deal.

### UCU Left fringe meeting

## Building a campaigning union, building national action, building the fightback

**Thursday 29 May, 7.30pm**  
@ Mechanics Institute, 103 Princess Street, Manchester M1 6DD

Chair: Liz Lawrence  
UCU president elect

Speakers:

- Mandy Brown  
Lambeth College UCU and UCU FEC
- Lesley McGorrigan  
Leeds University UCU and UCU HEC
- Carole Duggan  
Justice for Mark Duggan campaign
- Egyptian Solidarity Initiative
- Care UK UNISON striker
- NUT speaker

Speakers appear in a personal capacity