

HE: A FIGHT AGAINST INEQUALITY

HESC comes at a crucial time when the HE sector of UCU has just started a dispute over pay, the gender pay gap and casualisation and at the same time we are facing a government white paper which threatens to dismantle HE. However, as the successful campaign against academisation of schools shows, we can win.

Pay motions HE1 to HE5

We need to win the fight over pay, the gender pay gap and casualisation. This is crucial to trade union strength in HE and for the union as a whole. The inclusion of the gender pay gap and casualisation have been crucial to the mobilisation of members to strike and need to be central to any settlement. Our action with two days of strike, resignations of external examiners and the idea of a work to contract and wider ASOS have given a very successful start to our dispute.

However, we need to debate the industrial strategy to sustain momentum over the summer to be ready to

employers to engage in meaningful negotiations.

In addition, UNITE and UNISON in higher education are moving to balloting their members and in schools the NUT is now balloting for industrial action by the 5th or 6th July and EIS in Scotland will also be balloting. We have the opportunity for co-ordinated strike action across education which would increase the pressure on our employers still further.

Our successful two-day strike and the resignations of external examiners have proven beyond doubt that members are willing and able to take action over when they receive a lead from the union. Our HESC today needs to develop a clear strategy of how to increase the pressure on our employers and the government to win our dispute on pay, casualisation and the gender pay gap.

White Paper HE6 to HE18

The HE White Paper is a blueprint for allowing private corporations to create for-profit 'universities', to abolish academic freedom, institutional autonomy and academic quality control, and to let the market rip. The White Paper underlines that Tory focus on profits for profiteers rather than education as a right for everyone and a benefit to society as a whole.

The dispute at Newcastle University over academic 'performance management' is a foretaste of White Paper policies. Targets on grant income and journal publication are outside members' control and this type of short term approach both increases the stresses on members and damages longer term research. This is part of a market profit-driven approach which will lead to the sacking of lecturers who do not meet artificial targets and their replacement with

teaching only staff. The entire union needs to support Newcastle UCU to ensure these disastrous proposals are thrown out. Otherwise, we will see similar schemes elsewhere. We also need to support motion HE54 for a campaign against funding targets.

We need to organise campaigns to defend the public university alongside our pay campaign. Before the summer branches should organise open meetings on the White Paper and take copies of the Alternative White Paper to distribute. Contact the HE Convention for help with speakers. Invite members from Newcastle. Think big. We can build a powerful and effective movement, including staff who have not yet joined a union (recruitment opportunity), students, parents, our local communities and everyone who cares about higher education.

Prevent

Under the pretext of preventing 'extremism' and terrorism, Prevent targets Muslims and encourages staff to spy on students and colleagues. This undermines the trust needed for a safe and supportive learning environment and threatens free expression. It has already even led to the questioning of primary school children. Prevent has been criticised by staff who are asked to spy on students, students and other education unions. NUT policy demands the government withdraws the Prevent duty. At our Congress last year UCU agreed to boycott Prevent. We have produced detailed materials that outline the arguments against Prevent and how institutions can organise a boycott. However, UCU nationally needs to go further and actively campaign for the boycott to become a reality. For example, as part of the ASOS in our pay campaign we could target Prevent activities.

UCU needs to fully support staff and students who speak out against Prevent, challenge and do not participate in the racist 'training' programmes



increase pressure in the autumn. We need to recognise the variety of employment contexts and discuss how we can maximise effectiveness. We need action and sanctions which put pressure on the employers. There is no doubt that sustained and escalating strike action and Action Short of Strike (ASOS) including an assessment boycott will be necessary to persuade the



and staff threatened with victimisation or disciplinaries as a result. This campaign should be a central part of our political campaign against racism and Islamophobia. UCU should work with NUS, NUT and other groups like Students not Suspects, who are opposing Prevent.

Support these motions being put back onto the order paper:

- * B3 Stopping Prevent, Brunel University
- * B14 HE and Counter-Extremism Strategy, Prevent and Islamophobia, University of Dundee

Casualisation HE37-38 and 52 (Defend London Met) with amendments

Casualisation is a disgrace in our education system, which exacerbates existing inequalities. According to HESA data over half of academic staff are on casualised contracts. Casualisation is wasteful – for instance, two thirds of research staff on fixed term contracts spend on average 25% of their time seeking future contracts. Casualisation produces a two-tier educational sector,

with staff on casualised contracts lacking even basic terms and conditions. For instance, hourly-paid staff lack holiday and sick pay, don't receive a salary over the summer, and are often paid below scale and not paid for time spent preparing lectures and tutorials, meeting and emailing with students, and marking. Women on casualised contracts have no access to maternity leave. Career progression and promotion are almost non-existent for staff on casualised contracts.

Casualisation disproportionately affects women and black and minority ethnic staff as shown by two TUC reports. This exacerbates inequalities in progression throughout the system. At present, 77% of professors are male in UK higher education and there are only 17 black female professors. At a time when students are and university staff are fighting back against sexual harassment on campuses, the continual exploitation of women and BME employees is a fundamental issue. The fight against casualisation

and unequal pay is a fight for inclusive colleges and universities which are welcoming to all staff and students and where education represents the diversity of the population.

What can we do? The recent HE



strike showed that the focus on casualisation and the gender pay gap resonated with members. It recruited more members, including PhD student tutors, engaged with students and helped to solidify a growing new generation of younger activists. We need grass roots organization and to highlight and stand together against the injustices faced by staff on casualised contracts and to fight for our education system. As recent successful campaigns show we need both local and national action. Nationally, we need to maintain the centrality of casualization to the current pay dispute and work together with other unions and communities to fight for better working conditions and for our education system.

Please join the anti casualisation fringe meeting *Fighting for Fairness: Opposing Casualisation on all Fronts* on Wednesday 1st June at 1-2 pm.

**Racism,
Islamophobia
and Anti-
Semitism**
Refugees welcome here

Friday 3 June
1pm
Pullman Hotel
Kings Dock
Liverpool L3 4FP
(Opposite ACC)



Other important motions:

- HE 19 and HE 20 Support the defence of academic freedom
- HE 21 to 25 – the rate for the job –framework agreement and other pay and grading issues. These motions show the serious engagement of UCU local branches with issues of pay and conditions of service. They are about the rate for the job and basic aspects of control of the labour process, resisting deskilling.
- HE 31 – support Yorkshire & Humberside amendment which steers the motion away from creating more complaints processes
- HE 33-35 – support these 3 equality motions
- HE 40 – 43 and HE54 Workloads and performance management. These are vital issues for members, essential for building the union in the workplace. Newcastle is the primary example of these changes.
- HE 44-45 – support. NHS bursaries and health sector funding
- HE 46-47 – support. The HE Governance (Scotland) Bill shows that we can win greater democracy in universities
- HE 55 UCU Scotland – support. Work with post grad students is vital for the future of UCU
- HE56 – Oppose. We need a robust system of national ratification for locally agreed policies to ensure terms and conditions are levelled up not down.
- HE 57 Disabled Students' Allowance – support. This is essential to enable disabled student to participate in HE without disadvantage.

Election of Negotiators

- It's important who negotiates for us. Negotiators are accountable to HE Sector Conference. HESC elects four lay negotiators for pay negotiations with UCEA. This is the first HESC that members in University Superannuation Scheme (USS) branches (generally pre-92) will be able to elect the USS national negotiators. HESC will elect three negotiators plus two reserve negotiators.
- HE national negotiators – vote for Ron Mendel, Jo McNeil, Sean Wallis
- USS national negotiators – vote for Marion Hersh, Carlo Morelli