

UNISON HIGHER EDUCATION SERVICE GROUP CONFERENCE 2003

RESOLUTIONS

PAY AND GRADING 2003

This conference welcomes the progress made in the Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education in helping to pave the way to modernising pay and staffing arrangements in the sector, including steps to ensure equal pay for work of equal value and to address issues of low pay

Conference believes that it is crucial that the program agreed by the JNCHES to deliver new pay and grading arrangements by 1 August 2003 should be adhered to.

Conference reaffirms its policy of seeking to achieve;

- A single nationally agreed pay spine covering all employees
- A single national grading structure for all jobs
- Annual incremental progression within grades for all employees
- A nationally negotiated and agreed mechanism to establish how jobs and grades will fit onto the spine.
- Decent pay for all groups of employees, the elimination low pay and annual pay increases which ensure that the value of pay is maintained
- A minimum wage of £11,000
- Equal pay for work of equal value including conditions of service

HIGHER EDUCATION NATIONAL NEGOTIATORS

Since the establishment of the new Joint Negotiating Committee for Higher Education Staffs, there have been agreements reached by the union negotiators that have not been the subject of referral or consultation with branches.

These have been issues by joint agreements between unions and employers. Such agreements include:-

The new single pay spine
HERA Job Evaluation scheme.

Therefore, conference is urged in the interest of democracy to request the National Secretary to take immediate steps to ensure branches are consulted in a timely manner on all reforms of pay and conditions of service.

MANUAL WORKERS HOURS

This conference instructs the Service Group Executive to make the reduction of manual worker hours (currently 38 hours in pre' 92 universities and 39 hours in post 92 institutions) a priority in this years pay and conditions negotiations. The objective should be to make the basic working week the same for all non-academic employees, with an equivalent adjustment in the hours for part time staff.

A national campaign be developed with branches in support of this objective

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO INDUSTRIAL ACTION

Submitted by Nottingham University, Nottingham Trent University, and the University of Teeside

At the Higher Education Conference in 2001 a motion was adopted which instructed the Higher Education Service Group Executive (HESGE) to limit all future industrial action ballots to a single question on "whether or not they were prepared to take part in strike action" and removed reference to the question of "action short of strike action".

Now this option has been removed, the support and options for taking industrial action in the event of a claim or dispute have diminished. We are convinced this had a direct and adverse effect on the pay claim consultation ballot for 2002.

During the Conditions Critical campaign, the Nottingham Trent University branch ran a very successful and widely publicised campaign using all forms of industrial action available to them under the action short of strike action mandate, such as 'work to contract'. The campaign caused widespread disruption in the university and the majority of members took action in their own workplace as well as supporting others taking part in collective action.

As Local Government have demonstrated in pursuit of the London Weighting claim the ability to develop a strategic and wide ranging approach to industrial action is one that can be more effective against an employer.

We urge Conference not to restrict options for ensuring decent pay and terms and conditions for our members. We also recognise that each dispute will have to be considered separately on their merits and accordingly to membership support. Our experience shows that when organised effectively action short of strike action can succeed without members having to lose a day's pay. We are not saying that all disputes can be resolved without the need to take strike action, but it removes a valuable tool in our arsenal against employers if we do not even consider balloting on action short of strike action, at the same time as asking members whether they want to take part in strike action.

This branch calls upon conference to instruct the HESGE to develop a more strategic approach to industrial action in support of any future disputes, exploring a range of options that will gain maximum support from members during any consultation process and lead to a greater chance of success in challenging the difficulties that the sector faces.

HERA

This Conference notes that at its Conference June 2001, we unanimously passed the following amendment:

“Furthermore this Conference instructs the Higher Education Service Group Executive, before agreeing to the implementation of HERA across the sector to present the details of the HERA scheme for agreement to either the next annual Higher Education Service Group Conference or a specially convened Higher Education Service Group Conference.”

This Conference condemns the Service Group Executive for not enacting this resolution and demands that in future any resolution passed at Conference will be strictly adhered to.

TIME OFF AND FACILITIES FOR TRADE UNION REPRESENTATIVES

This conference is concerned at the lack of adequate time off and facilities for trade union representatives in Higher Education Institutions.

It calls on the HESGE to survey branches to determine the current arrangements within institutions on time off and facilities and to draw up a model claim which might be used by branches to negotiate proper time off and facilities.

The above should be monitored nationally and supporting publicity be produced to assist the campaign.

WORK RELATED STRESS

This Conference recognises that work related stress is increasing in higher education because of the excessive pressures and demands placed on staff due to increasing workloads, dwindling resources and funding pressures.

Conference urges branches to negotiate effective work related stress policies at institutional level in accordance with UNISON's guide 'Stress at Work – A guide for Safety Representatives'.

This Conference supports UNISON's Health and Safety Committee campaign which seeks specific Regulations on work related stress and agrees to take the campaign forward in Higher Education.

HIGHER EDUCATION SEMINAR

Conference notes that the make up of Higher Education Seminar is not proportional to the size of Branch membership and resolves to change the delegation structure to a minimum delegation of three members per branch to a maximum of the number of delegates authorised to attend Higher Education Conference.

The following motion was referred to the Higher Education Service Group for further consideration.

IMPROVING COMMUNICATIONS

In an attempt to maximise the available resources within UNISON to the benefit of members within the Higher Education service sector. In addition, assisting members and branch officers by improving communications, this conference is asked to support the following motion:

The circulation to branches of reports of business considered and agreed by the HE National Executive.

The publication of a quarterly HE/FE News Bulletin with a membership contributions facility.

The early publication of HE Conference Business/Decisions electronically or hard copy.

Improved press coverage of key issues considered within the HE sector both nationally and in a region.

The establishment of a Joint Regional Forum. Providing an essential Link with the National Executive and regions. The forum would meet on a quarterly basis to establish an essential Two Way Forum.

These requirements re-seen as essential to improve communications in the rapidly changing situation within HE.

The following motions from the final agenda were either lost or fell:

- Motion 2: Pay
- Motion 3: Pay
- Motion 4: Pay Award 2003
- Motion 10: Sexual Orientation Equality
- Motion 13: Vote of No Confidence