

Confirmed Notes of Meeting_- UCU JOINT NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (JNC)

Date: 08 December 2022

Present: Damian McAlister (People & Culture); Paul Davidson (People & Culture); Mark Latuske (People & Culture); Tina Gallagher (People & Culture); Paddy Mackel (UCU); Linda Moore (UCU); Aisling O'Beirn (UCU); Adrian Grant (UCU); Paddy Mackel (UCU); Stephen Baker (UCU); Norman Hagan (UCU).

In Attendance: Christine Irwin (People & Culture).

Apologies: Kathryn Wills (People & Culture);

Format: Meeting held via Microsoft Teams.

22.20 Welcome

Mr McAlister welcomed all to the meeting.

22.21 Minutes of JNC 19 May 2022

The draft minutes of the JNC, 19 May 2022, were confirmed as accurate.

22.22 Matters arising

Minute 22:15 relates to bilingual issues. It was noted that the meeting referred to in minute 22:15 has not yet taken place. Mr McAlister advised that the meeting will be arranged. Mr McAlister also noted that plans are being made to have degree certificates published in both English and Irish for those students who have either a major or minor in Irish.

22.23 Workload Allocation

Mr Davidson introduced paper UCUJNC/22/01. He advised that at the JUCNC & HSW Policy Sub-committee meeting on 28 November 2022, the employer side noted that they had not yet received the names of UCU representatives to progress the discussions on academic workloads. At the Sub-committee meeting UCU requested a briefing on previous discussions on this issue. The purpose of paper UCUJNC/22/01 is to summarise the previous discussions at JNC on this issue. Mr Davidson summarised the content of the paper and advised that Management were keen to move into formal negotiations on academic workloads and welcomed discussion on how best this can be achieved.

UCU indicated that their preferred approach is to focus on the areas where it is known that workload pressures are most acute. UCU also advised that they wish to retain a 'principle-based' approach and would not wish to see a 'metrics-based' approach to workload allocation. UCU advised that they were not interested in discussing a metrics-based model as a principle-based model better suits the diversity of activity in the University. A discussion followed on the relative merits of a principle-based approach versus a metrics-based approach. It was also noted that workloads form part of the current national dispute.

Discussion also took place in relation to the linkage between workload pressures and the use of casual workers. UCU noted that there are issues with hourly paid staff being used to plug gaps.

UCU stated that given the levels of work-related stress and associated illnesses it is clear that everyone is working too hard and there is a need to increase resources. UCU proposed a workload survey to include fractional and hourly paid staff.

Mr McAlister noted that circa 80 new academic posts have recently been approved.

UCU advised that they would respond in writing to the University's request for local negotiations on academic workloads.

22.24 Review of Academic Promotion Schemes

Mr McAlister requested that UCU provide the names of UCU representatives to progress negotiations on the review of the academic promotion scheme. He advised that the employer side negotiating team would be Professor Seawright, Professor Curran, Professor Hutchinson and Mr McAlister with Mr Davidson in attendance. UCU advised that their negotiating team would be Dr O'Beirn, Dr Moore and Mr Mackle with Dr Baker in attendance.

It was agreed that Mr Davidson and Dr Baker should liaise to make the necessary arrangements.

22.25 Follow up on the negotiations on casual and fixed-term staff

It was agreed that agenda items 6 and 7 should be addressed together (item 6 relates to casual staff and item 7 relates to fixed-term staff).

Both the employer side and UCU acknowledged and welcomed the progress that has been made in the negotiations.

UCU suggested that there are issues outstanding including the use of hourly paid staff and their pay and conditions; career development; the Concordat; and flexibility and independence for research staff. It was agreed that further meetings are required to deal with these issues.

Discussion also took place in relation to those staff who did not come under the scope of either of the two existing agreements e.g. externally funded staff who are not researchers. Mr Davidson suggested that one possible approach is to consider which of the two existing agreements these staff are more closely aligned to, and then apply that agreement rather than seeking to create a third agreement. It was agreed that further discussion on this issue is required.

Ms Gallagher updated the meeting on the number of staff made permanent under the agreements. In May, 19 University funded staff across UCU and Unite categories had been offered permanency. At least 5 had declined the offer of a permanent role. 14 research staff had confirmed acceptance of permanency.

UCU requested further discussion on PhD students who teach. Mr McAlister noted that UCU do not have recognition rights for this category. Representation rights are with UUSU. UCU stated that it was disappointed with this response and noted that it has increased its membership from among PhD students.

Mr Davidson advised the meeting that the University has reviewed the hourly rate for PhD demonstrators and has decided to increase it to £13.36 (it was previously £12.57) with effect from 1 December 2022.

22.26 Academic related issues

This agenda item was proposed by UCU. Unfortunately, there was not sufficient time to discuss this item, and after brief discussion, it was agreed that a special JNC should be arranged to discuss this issue early in the new year. Mr Hagan advised that UCU wished to discuss a range of issues including career progression/promotion, workloads, unfilled vacancies, maternity leave cover and the Hybrid and Flexible Working Framework.

Mr McAlister left the meeting at 2pm.

22:27 A.O. B

22.21 - *Human rights*. UCU indicated that it is deeply concerned in relation to the University's partnership with CUC Qatar given the well reported human rights abuses in Qatar. UCU stated that it will formally write to the Vice-Chancellor on this issue.

22.22 – *email to all staff to update records on CoreHR*. Mr Davidson advised that the University intends to write to all staff to ask that they update their personal contact details on CoreHR. This is in response to a recent incident where a member of staff collapsed on campus and no next of kin details were held on CoreHR.

22.23 – *meeting with management in the Library*. Ms Gallagher advised that the planned meeting has had to be postponed due to a close family bereavement suffered by one of the leadership team in the Library.

The meeting ended at 14:17.