



UNIVERSITIES & COLLEGES
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NEWS RELEASE

8 May 2006

Irresponsible academic unions reject final 12.6% pay offer

Higher education employers were left dismayed today as the academic unions plunged students' futures into further uncertainty by refusing to even consider the improved and final 12.6% three-year pay increase on offer. The AUT's and NATFHE's summary rejection means industrial action will continue because the new offer will not be put to their members.

Jocelyn Prudence, Chief Executive of UCEA, said:

"The AUT's and NATFHE's irresponsible decision to condemn students to further disruption and uncertainty is reckless. The improved offer we made today represents a major increase in pay for staff in our universities and colleges of higher education. It comes on top of average 3% - 5% increases due under the current Framework Agreement on pay modernisation, as well as large increases in employers' pension contributions. It greatly exceeds the academic unions' original demand for one-third of additional income from top-up fees. Their refusal to even put the offer to their members is inexplicable and shows a serious disregard for students.

The pay offer, the highest in the public sector this year, is staged over three years and comprises:

- 3% (or £515, whichever is the greater) in August 2006, followed by a further 1% in February 2007
- 3% in August 2007 and a further 1% (or £200, whichever is the greater) in February 2008
- 3% in August 2008, followed by a further 1% in February 2009.

As each increase builds on the previous one, the increase over three years amounts to 12.6%. The employers also agreed to recommend to HEIs that they carry out equality checks once the Framework Agreement is fully implemented.

Geoffrey Copland, Chair of UCEA, added:

"This pay offer is at the absolute limits of affordability for HEIs and, taken together with increases under the Framework Agreement and the increments that most will be entitled to, means that staff throughout higher education will see very substantial increases in their pay. This represents far more than the "decent offer" demanded by the AUT just a few days ago and there is no justification in the AUT and NATFHE continuing their harm to students' education and employment prospects."

The high-risk and unprofessional approach displayed by the academic unions contrasts sharply with that of the support staff unions' who will be putting the offer to their Executives. Once again these unions, representing the majority of HE staff, remain committed to negotiating in a responsible and constructive manner – without attempting to ruin students' education.

Ends

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Notes to editors:

HE employees would gain significant pay rises under the 12.6% offer with an average additional uplift of 3%-5% as a result of the Framework Agreement to be implemented by August 2006.

Examples include:

A support staff member, for example a cleaner or catering assistant, starting on Point 1 (the lowest) of the current salary scale will by 2008/09 have received an extra 15.1%.

An inexperienced lecturer paid on Point 33 of the new pay spine would receive £28,009 at August 2006 before today's pay offer is applied. Upon acceptance of the pay offer this figure would rise to £31,534 in 2008/09. In addition to this the lecturer will have climbed a further three incremental points up the spine to a salary of £34,459.

A senior lecturer paid on Point 44 of the new pay spine would receive £38,772 at August 2006 before today's pay offer is applied. Upon acceptance of the pay offer this figure would rise to £43,651 in 2008/09. In addition to this the lecturer will have climbed a further three incremental points up the spine to a salary of £47,698.

In addition to incremental progression and the gains that staff will make under the Framework Agreement (typically 3% - 5%), no member of staff will receive less than 12.6% as a result of today's offer.