

MARCH 2016



University and College Union
University of the West of England Branch



LISTENING TO, WORKING WITH, PROMOTING THE NEEDS OF MEMBERS AND STRIVING FOR A SECURE FUTURE.

Branch news: Advance notice of EGM

There will be an Extraordinary General Meeting of UCU-UWE on April 13 1.30-2.30pm in 3B067. This is to discuss the outcome of negotiations over UCU's pay claim for 5% and

UCEA's offer of 1% and the possibility of a ballot for further action. More information about the claim and negotiations can be found at: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/henews>



The Green Paper on the ‘Teaching Excellence Framework’

As part of the UCU’s national recruitment week, UWE-UCU Branch organised a meeting with UWE management on the forthcoming ‘Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)’ arising from the Government Higher Education Green Paper ‘Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice’. Speakers included UWE Deputy Vice-Chancellor Jane Harrington who shared much of UCU’s concerns and criticisms of the Green Paper and the TEF, UWE Academic and UCU local activist Kieran Kelly who set the TEF within an historical context of the affinity between research and teaching in higher education, and UCU national policy officer, Rob Copeland who identified UCU’s three strategic priorities in relation to the Green Paper. These were to ensure that there was a staffing dimension to the debate over teaching excellence, to attempt to disrupt the surge towards private provision of HE, and to ensure that the debate over research funding includes criticisms of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) to which UCU is opposed.

UCU’s policy positions can be seen in its submission to the consultation on the Green Paper which is well worth reading. It is available at:

<https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/7834/HE-green-paper-consultation-full-UCU-response-Jan-16/pdf/>

[UCU submission to BIS HE green paper consultation Jan16.pdf](#)

The submission argues the case for UCU’s ‘scepticism’ towards the TEF which the union regards as a means of ‘further marketisation of the higher education sector’. UCU is critical on the dependence on quantitative rather than qualitative measures of excellence and also of the failure to recognise that high quality learning and teaching and an excellent student experience depend crucially on the academic staff who work so hard to deliver them.





**March Quiz
Question:**

**Who is the highest
paid VC in a UK Post
-92 University?**

**Read all about it in
the Independent!**



Support your Union....Support your Branch.....

Be a local contact for your Union!

In practice, local contacts are already quite widely used in UCU. A local contact is someone who:

- **Agrees to put up UCU posters and distribute leaflets and newsletters round staff rooms and pigeon holes.**
- **Agrees to act as a point of contact between the branch and their department: passing information about issues in the department up to the branch and making sure they are taken up; distributing information from the branch to members and non-members.**
- **May be prepared to ask non-members to join, either by emailing them or leafletting their offices.**

These are activities that:

- **can be done in relatively little time, without requiring the commitment of time and effort of a traditional rep role;**
- **can build confidence, enabling the more successful development of future reps; have an inherent organising value – they are key concrete activities that boost participation in the union and raise its profile for recruitment.**

There will be new Branch resources delivered soon to support these efforts. Be a local contact and claim your UCU UWE Branch thermal mug.

Newsletter Editor: Nicky Goodall
UCU Rep/ Recruitment Officer
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UCU Results of Straw Poll on WAMS

Thank you for completing this survey – the results are really helpful and informative. From the qualitative comments it is clear that the main issue is the widespread confusion (amongst managers and staff) about the workload model and the bundle allocations that should be given. This supports the need for a clear articulation (tariff) of the baseline allocation requirements for pre and post graduate teaching, assessment and module and programme leadership and other academic roles. Workload workshops are needed in order to support both managers and staff. There is the need for clear tariffs is essential to underpin these workshops. Module leaders in particular need to know the baseline requirements for module allocation.

We have asked management several times for simple written information to explain the model but have been told that there is no need for this and that it is difficult to articulate when department managers use their discretion to allocate extra workload bundles. Management say that their intention is to use the workload model 'only as a planning tool' in the future. We plan to keep asking for clarity – would workshops or question and answer sessions be useful for staff? If you think this would be a good idea, please let us know as this would help to support our request. For workload model review

Survey findings

The survey has identified that **48 %** of respondents stated that they were over-bundled by an average of 60 Workload bundles (Range 4-250) – 14 respondents were uncertain as they did not know their allocation.

65 % of respondents are **not satisfied** with their allocation, Reasons given for not being satisfied with workload allocation:

- Bundle allocation does not reflect /is not sufficient to reflect workload (45 %)
- Managers have not responded to requests (25 %)
- Allocations are recorded inaccurately on WAMS (12 %)
- Model is confusing/ not understood (11 %)



65 % of respondents have not yet had their workload issues resolved despite raising it with management – the main reasons given for this are:

- Delays** – waiting for response, response delayed, answer delayed, further meetings needed (31 %)
- It was 'not possible'** –not in their gift, their hands were tied, it would be clawed back by the Dean of resources (27 %)
- Request ignored** –no response to or acknowledgement of email (22 %)
- Supportive** and helpful – managers helping to 'sort it out' and finding ways to help (14 %)
- Partial response** – some bundles found and some inaccuracies corrected but further problems remain (5 %)
- Threat** – of redundancy, increased teaching (5 %)

Overall the model does not appear to be being used effectively for planning – indeed the degree of inaccuracy reported suggests it would be a very unreliable planning tool! The effect of this model is that it is causing many staff to be overworked. Although evidence about staff location was not sought there are clearly local areas that are being poorly managed. Worryingly **54 %** of respondents regarded their management as unsupportive of them and this is suggestive of a management culture that does not value its staff.

UCU will be running workshops on how the WLM works in the near future.

