

# UCU UWE

Sept/Oct 2017

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

## *Branch news*

### **Priority Issue- Workload Update**

Last year it was agreed that UCU would take workload issues into discussion with Professor Gay Attwood. Gay has been working to resolve some of the inconsistencies and problems that we have highlighted and she has improved the workload guidelines in response to our request for further clarity. However UCU reps are becoming frustrated, with the difficulties in communicating with other key stakeholders beyond these discussions, with limited action following meetings and the failure to address or give us responses to the issues we raised at previous meetings. We are particularly concerned because the staff survey reveals exactly how important making progress about workload is to academic staff. It was agreed that the frequency of meetings should be increased and we hope that management will respond more effectively to these important concerns.

### **Overbundling statistics**

UWE statistics (that we requested) suggest that around 21% of staff were over-bundled in the year 2016/2017. Our position is that this figure is far too high as over-bundling should occur in exceptional circumstances only.

### **Additional activity payments**

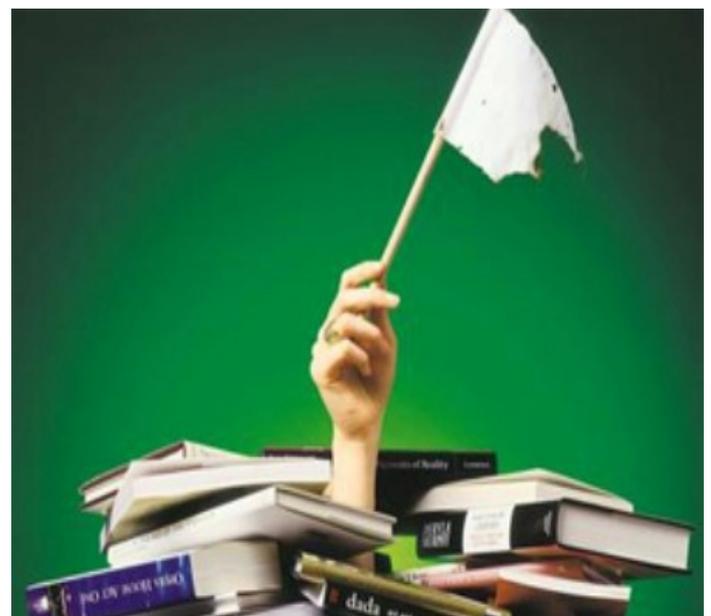
HODs and AHODs have three opportunities during the academic year to submit claims for over-bundled and over-worked individuals but this does not seem to have happened yet for 2016/2017 (only a couple of requests have been considered so far). We have consistently voiced our opposition to the scheme and our concerns regarding lack of clarity and lack of a robust procedure for dealing with over-bundling. We are unable to scrutinise the claims to identify any equality issues at present and we continue to urge staff not to take on additional workload without agreeing remuneration (in writing).

### **Other issues raised include:**

Sickness procedure (and inconsistencies in ensuring that workload is reduced following a period of absence)

Teaching and assessment allocations (the need for a clear baseline tariff to allow staff to check their bundle allocations)

Module leader bundles (to clarify how modules run more than once a year, or at different sites should be calculated)



This is one of the top priorities for the Branch this year.

Please do contact one of the Branch Reps if you need to discuss any of these issues.

## UCU Response to Staff Survey 2017

UCU are delighted with the increased engagement levels of Staff compared with the 2014 survey and the more positive experiences identified by our professional service colleagues. However the key issues for Academic Staff that we identified in 2014 (see table below) continue to be a significant concern.

**Key Indicators of Concern:** The following table indicates percentages of academics who **agreed** with the following statements.

<b>Key indicators (Faculty staff)</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2014</b>
<b>Employee engagement index</b>	<b>65%</b>	(57%)
<b>Q9 I think the Staff voice is being heard in the University</b>	<b>22%</b>	(18%)
<b>Q 13 I can meet the requirements of my workload without regularly working unreasonable hours</b>	<b>36%</b>	(29%)
<b>Q 15 I feel able to take my Annual leave</b>	<b>53%</b>	(46%)
<b>Q 23 My manager deals with poor staff performance effectively</b>	<b>37%</b>	(31%)
<b>Q 29 The University manages change effectively</b>	<b>22%</b>	(17% *)

\*2014 similar question

Excessive workload and the inability to take annual leave can cause ill health associated with increased stress. A feeling of disempowerment resulting from the staff voice not being heard, and from perceived ineffective management can also have an adverse effect on health as well as engagement.

**Team comparison** there is a considerable discrepancy between Academic (Faculty) staff and Service staff – particularly with regard to workload and management. These differences are normally found at academic institutions, however we believe the inconsistencies in the implementation of the workload model may be exacerbating the impact of excessive workloads in specific departments at UWE.

Key Indicator	Faculty	Services
Q 15 I feel able to take my Annual leave	53%	80%
Q 13 I can meet the requirements of my workload without regularly working unreasonable hours	36%	71%
Q 25 I have regular one to one meetings with my manager	54%	78%

### Managerial effectiveness - Why are our views so different?

Job role comparisons demonstrate enormous discrepancies between the way in which academic staff and managers view managerial effectiveness.

Key Indicator	Academic	Senior management
There is effective leadership within my faculty/service	48%	88%
The university manages change effectively	20%	70%
My manager deals with poor performance effectively	32%	74%
I have regular one- to one meetings with my manager	50%	93%

According to these staff survey results, management appear to be under the impression that UWE management is effective whereas academic staff do not believe this is true. This suggests a real lack of connection and shared understanding between management and staff which is not surprising when so many academics believe their voice is not being heard. Only 40% of academic staff believe it is safe to speak up and challenge the way things are done at UWE and only 50% agree that they regularly meet on a one to one basis with their manager.

We will continue to prioritise these issues in our communications with management. If you have any comments on the outcomes of the staff survey please contact: Sandy Thomas [sandy.thomas@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:sandy.thomas@uwe.ac.uk)

## Lecture Capture

UWE are using the PANOPTO lecture capture system and are encouraging staff to learn about and use this system to record lectures commencing this academic year (2017/2018).

UCU and Unison have been involved in the development of a policy related to this which is still under consultation. We are pleased that whilst this policy encourages lecture capture and identifies possible benefits from using this system, it also recognises that not all learning sessions will be suitable for capture, for example there may be confidentiality issues and some students may object. The policy therefore enshrines the principle that the person who delivers the session can decide whether or not to record and will have control over the editing and publication of the recording on Blackboard.

Access to recordings will only be possible while the student is registered on the appropriate Blackboard module run. Students should be informed in advance of the intention to record educational activities and are advised to inform the member of staff at the start of any activity if they do not wish to be recorded.

We expect this policy should be published within the next few weeks. In the meantime we would encourage you all to take a look at the Union advice regarding lecture and event capture on the UCU Web.



## After Brexit ...

UCU has been lobbying the government and the opposition hard at the national level to safeguard higher education and the interests of those within it after Brexit. UCU's aims are spelled out in its post-Brexit policy charter which is available at:

[https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8419/Brexit-post-Brexit-charter-Dec-16/pdf/ucu\\_brexitflyer\\_dec16\\_.pdf](https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/8419/Brexit-post-Brexit-charter-Dec-16/pdf/ucu_brexitflyer_dec16_.pdf)

Your branch has also registered its support for this charter and has been publicising it at meetings and stalls held outside Onezone. These events have been focused mainly on showing support for EU nationals. Despite the Government's announcements that the situation of EU nationals living in the UK is a priority, insecurity is still rife. We are aware of at least one member who has left UWE due to concerns about the rights of family members after Brexit. UCU will continue to work alongside other unions and the EU staff network in order to show its solidarity with EU nationals and to campaign for their rights.



**Dear Colleagues....**

**The next UCU National Recruitment Week is due in the week 6 – 10 November. This NRW marks some important changes to the recruitment offering two more offers to potential new members...**

**From October 1<sup>st</sup> UCU is offering free membership for up to four years in two categories of staff:**

**In higher education**, registered PhD students who are also engaged in paid teaching or similar work for their host university. These people are sometimes called Graduate Teaching Assistants or PhD tutors but can also be described in other ways.

**In further education**, staff who engage in teaching or related activity but who are NOT employed on a teaching or lecturing contract. These people are sometimes called instructors or assessors but can also be described in other ways.

There is a FAQ on the UCU website <https://www.ucu.org.uk/free#answer8917>



## Branch Away Day

The Branch held an Away Day in September to focus on defining our campaigning and negotiating strategy for this academic year....our Regional Support Official, Philippa Davey attended for the day....

### Key Issues include:

Workload– how to ensure fair workloads for all academics

Recognition of mental health and stress in the workplace

Brexit– what happens next?

Following up on the results of the staff survey– will we be heard?

Event Capture– how can we opt out if need be?

Building the Union

There will be more news on this work throughout the coming year...

Here are some photos from the day....



# Key Messages from Sally Hunt:

## 1. The future of our profession

During the election, I lost count of the senior staff who approached me to express concern about the fate of the next generation. Locked into exploitative employment with little or no job security, the current model used in FE and HE has high expectations of young staff but gives little back to them. They need UCU most, yet their membership density remains low. With your help, we want to do something about this. Let's work together and build a trade union culture in low security areas – a culture where the union stands up for staff rights, bargains for better pay and conditions, and helps young staff to get the best out of their careers.

Pushing for better conditions from the bottom benefits both established members and the profession as a whole. We all know that this exploitative employment model is creeping upwards.

Effective from 1 October 2017, if you are a PhD teaching in HE, or part of the teaching team without a teachers' contract in FE, UCU will make your union membership **free**. We think this covers around 70,000 (mostly younger) staff – the majority of whom are struggling at the start of their academic careers.

It is a big offer and valid for four years (or until a more secure job is achieved). We need to remove every possible barrier in the way of young staff joining our union in the hope that positive, valuable, UCU experience will spark a lifetime habit.

That is not all. I have heard first-hand how poorly many universities and colleges support their young staff. Too often in HE, you are thrust into the classroom with barely more than a couple of hours training. In FE, surveys show that 60 per cent of staff have no access to any CPD at all.

So – over the next year, UCU is going to put rocket boosters under our existing CPD provision to make it the best in the sector, useful to members at every stage of their career, and particularly so for those who are just starting out. I hope that the senior academics reading this will help with the project too – sharing tips on lecturing, research bids, interviews, surviving office politics, and so on – so we can make these courses as useful and real as possible. Over the coming months, we will also be putting together local claims to every employer on behalf of early career staff. We will argue of course for better pay and conditions, but we will also bargain for improved facilities, status, and support. This is about creating a culture where everyone is valued, wherever they are in their career, and I want UCU to be at the centre of it.

## 2. Effective industrial action

I promised members (if I won the election) I would try to ensure that when UCU calls for industrial action we follow a clear plan, and hit the employer where it hurts when necessary. At UCU Congress I announced a commission to examine effective forms of action which will report back by the end of the year. Over the coming months, whatever your role in the union, the commission will want to hear your views on what types of action you favour and see as the most effective. I hope that everyone takes this opportunity to participate in a debate central to the future of our union.

## 3. Effective representation

I promised that when it comes to negotiations the union would 'follow the money'. This does not mean we will abandon national bargaining - but it does mean we will enforce it. To do that, we must ensure that when the national employers refuse to negotiate, the union will take up the cause locally. Since the election, dozens of claims have been lodged by branches, seeking to improve conditions, end casualisation, and close the gender pay gap. But we now want to do more.

Your national executive committee (NEC) has agreed on a union wide effort that increases local capacity to bargain effectively. Specialist organisers will focus on bringing our smallest branches up to speed, so no one is left behind, while our regional officials will focus on supporting our largest branches. The aim is simple – improve members' pay and conditions. Alongside the substantial investment we are making in improving training for your branch representatives, this marks a sea change in UCU's approach. I hope you will get involved.

## 4. More opportunity to participate in UCU

I promised that I would try and make it easier for you to participate in the union. Progress has been made already. Get the vote out (GTVO) plans, agreed by your NEC, ensure that consultation with members is now a fixture of our action campaigns – giving you a real say. This has helped to create a more engaged membership, with the average turnout in all ballots 10 per cent higher than last year. Changes in the law mean that a 50 per cent turnout is required in order to take action, so this is something we will need to continue to protect your right as trade unionists to take action when necessary. Increasing consultation also means seeking your views on professional issues and matters of education policy. I know that members' appetite for this is strong, based on the thousands of responses I received when I asked for help developing our policy on the Stern review, and again with our FE transforming lives campaign.

## 5. Standing with international staff

**Fifth**, I highlighted the concern across UCU about the plight of EU colleagues during the election. Brexit, and then the U.S. travel restrictions put in place by Trump, created much uncertainty and UCU has led the way – the extra support agreed by the NEC provided hundreds of individual members with legal advice on their immigration status.

The union cannot rest on its laurels. I have asked staff to put together a further package of measures aimed at supporting international staff to feel welcome, safe and unafraid of standing up for themselves at work.

**[If you are an international staff member, kick-start this process by filling in this survey and sharing it with international colleagues if they are in the union yet or not.](#)**

***I HOPE ALL OF THIS SHOWS THAT UCU HAS BEEN BUSY.***