



University and College Union

University of the West of England Branch

March 2019

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



## Why the UCU branch needs to protect the PEP agreement in order to protect the terms and conditions for all members...

In May 2018 the Branch were approached by HR to participate in a series of informal meetings to consider Academic Roles and Career pathways, with a view to formal consultation later; prior to discussing this formally at JERC (a joint union / employer negotiating group). We were genuinely interested in participating and immediately suggested that the other recognised Trade Unions were included from the very beginning but our suggestion was ignored. During the Career Pathways consultations, job descriptions for the I and J grades, spanning three areas (Research, Teaching & Learning, Knowledge Exchange)- were shared and there was some detail there, but not enough on the Teaching and Learning pathways which given UWEs prioritised focus on teaching excellence should have been far more clear. It turns out that there is very little agreement across the university as to what an Associate Professor or Professor of teaching and learning might look like. Jane Harrington said it would not be enough to 'just be good at teaching'- but through all the many discussions it was never firmly established what that actually translated into in terms of UWE expectations, which is a very great shame.

We have another really important question for you to reflect on... with about 1117 staff at or above H grade available to module lead....where was the need for G grade module leadership looking at the current academic demographic profile. Surely there were already more than enough staff available to do this. There is significant management frustration that the pay bill was too high and that it was hard to appoint to G Grade. Our thoughts were that perhaps it was too problematic to recruit to G grade because UWE does not pay enough to attract staff it wants at the grades it offers and after all, as a practice oriented university we do have to compete with industry over pay and conditions.

The staff turnover rate is currently 9%, but most new staff are not recruited at G grade. This leaves the thorny issue of literally 100's of staff stuck at H grade, which no prospect of development, progression or promotion, yet many of them are working incredibly hard to achieve the UWE ambitions through leadership of complex modules and programmes. An obvious solution to this is equitable opportunities to T & L progression pathways- but there are few tangible descriptions of what that would look like, even though the existing PEP agreement still refers to promotion rounds for Principal Lectureships- of course it was and remains a UWE decision to ignore that part of the agreement. The crucially important hard line here is the Pay Equality Project (PEP) clearly states that module leadership must sit at H grade at UWE. In order to change that **all three** recognised Unions at UWE would have to synchronously agree to that change, but currently **none of them** are in support of that. How interesting that the message from Jane Harrington only mentioned the UCU objections, yet again failing to recognise the mandate for joint union working, the concerns of and support from UCU's sister unions; who are in full support of our position. UCU were never in a position to unilaterally vary PEP, and UCU started negotiations by requesting the involvement of these unions from the outset. Game playing and division appeared to be the strategy from the university.

It didn't work.

The UWE Directorate standpoint is that they want G grade module leadership, this is clearly a position designed to save money in the medium to long term.

The Branch position was not unclear or complex at all...it did in fact involved conceding some ground- but with tangible, sensible safeguards. The suggestion was shared and supervised co-module leadership at G grade, with workload allocation to Supervisors:

The stress of having to write lectures is incredible and it takes a lot of preparation to be a designer of teaching materials.

Early career module leaders who are developing their skills in grade appropriate learning and teaching work, developing their materials, teaching and assessing skills, dealing with the complexities of academic and personal tutoring may well find the design and leadership of teaching/ modules very demanding indeed. These bright and valuable members of staff need nurturing not overburdening, while they build their research and knowledge exchange skills and develop their academic citizenship. It takes time and support.

**Beyond the rhetoric this is obviously a money saving exercise.**

**So what was our complex and unyielding suggestion...judge for yourself:**

(Now get ready for this... we had considered providing a helpline to help you understand how this might work but thought you'd probably get it as you are university academics. This is not complex or hard to understand is it?).

UCU proposed the additional safeguards as follows:

- a. 'G' grade module leadership opportunities will carry with it the title of co-module lead.
- b. 'G' grade co-module lead will assume responsibilities of the co-module lead in line with the following maximum workload restrictions:

<u>Spine point:</u>	<u>Workload and supervision safeguards:</u>
<u>33</u>	<u>no more than 25% Module leader workload and bundles</u>
<u>34</u>	<u>no more than 50% Module leader workload and bundles</u>
<u>35</u>	<u>no more than 75% Module leader workload and bundles</u>
<u>36</u>	<u>no more than 75% Module leader workload and bundles whilst staff member is on 'G' grade or 100% if member transferred to 'H' grade.</u>

- c. The 'H' grade module lead will receive a workload commensurate with the remaining module leader bundles.
- d. The 'H' grade module leader will receive no less than 6 bundles to support the development of the 'G' grade co-module leader.
- e. Module leader bundles are calculated on the same workload tariff / formula as in operation at academic year 2018/2019.
- f. Spine points refer to the spine points in operation as of academic year 2018/2019.

ALSO we noted the absence of the promotion criteria from H to I grade or the strategic and operational details of this process. UWE management have made it clear this is a pathway and they dictated/ controlled all features in order to extract an amendment to PEP that would allow G grades to be full module leaders. It is on this basis that these safeguards are needed, and we therefore assumed that this would be provided at the negotiating committee, we made our assumption explicit to the management side... it was not forthcoming. We were concerned that the promotion round seems to be uncoupled in the negotiation (maybe because they didn't want to get tied down by an agreement) at such a late stage, yet the management side reverted back to its position after it had rejected our safeguards. This is far from a clear and transparent negotiation.

While Jane Harrington's e-mail suggests that agreement could not be reached with UCU, it was the management side who walked away from the table that constituted them and ALL THREE UNIONS. It was and is the management decision to withhold the promotion rounds this year, even after they admitted that they already have the money, and that promotions were not funded by any financial savings made from the G grade module leader initiative. It is bizarre that they have done this.

It sends a clear message to staff...



# THANKYOU!

## Feedback from the Union Members briefing and consultation event (27/2/19).

Thankyou so much to all members who attended this event.. You are amazing. We're sorry that the room was cramped and there was standing room only, we were restricted in the technology for the link ups. We knew it was going to be popular due the e-mail traffic received after the release of Jane Harrington's e-mail. Thanks the supportive comments you gave. We realise that after 'that e-mail' some confusion and misunderstanding existed. We are glad that people approached us for clarification and we have responded to all queries personally: if there are more we are more than happy to receive them. Main themes:

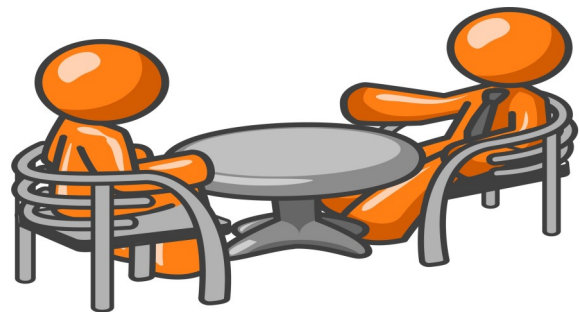
- Unanimous feedback from the room—UCU made the right stance in these negotiations: some felt we had been too generous: moving too much as opposed to being inflexible as implied by the e-mail.
- UCU to push the university for promotion opportunities across the grades.
- The legality of the 'no Principle lecturer roles' needs re-examining. We will take this forward.
- There are too many 'H' grades - because there is shamefully little development of H to I & J grades.
- Promotions need to be based on genuine Merit, benchmarked appropriately and subject to a transparent application process— with fair job descriptions and open competition.
- Consult the wider membership on submitting a claim and / or dispute with the university regarding lack of promotion opportunities and how it operates the PEP at UWE.
- Explore the mechanism by which so many Principle Lecturers were regraded.
- Dismay at the tone, timing and content of the E-mail from Jane Harrington and that the union should register this discontent with the university. Members feel it exposes poor practice and threatens conducive industrial relations in the future.
- UCU members to share this information with their colleagues to ensure accurate representations.
- The university can afford promotions. It chooses how it spends its money and supports its staff.
- Demand a right of reply to include all those that received the original e-mail from Jane Harrington.
- Take steps ensure that industrial relations are given proper regard and priority by the university.

# PROCESS FOR CONTACTING / WORKING WITH YOUR UCU REPRESENTATIVE

**Know who your local REPs are – find out now before you need them. Check the UCU UWE Branch web site for details. There will be Facebook group soon.**



**Phone or email- note date and time, if no response in 5 working days- contact Branch secretary: Nicky.Goodall@uwe.ac.uk**



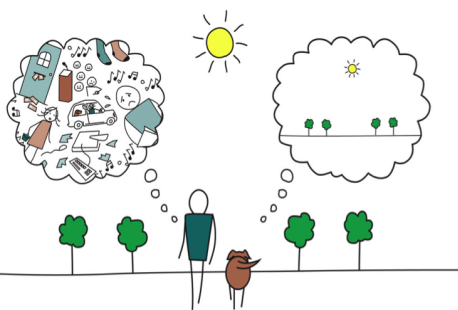
**Meet confidentially and make sure details are recorded on casework form. Keep a copy.**

**Share all of the important and relevant facts of the case with your REP**

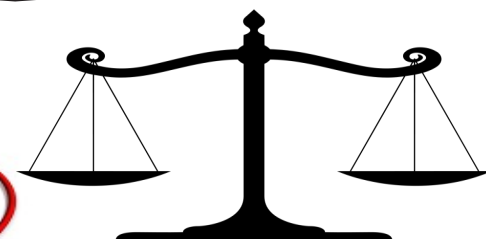
**GET THE FACTS**

**Maintain clarity and gather evidence**

**Share the responsibility for good record keeping, mindful of the GDPR**



Mind Full, or Mindful?



**Important Notice**



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