

Joint Statement from University of Sussex University Executive Group (UEG) and University and College Union (UCU) Sussex

Sussex UEG and UCU Sussex have agreed:

1. Remuneration and working conditions are important to the recruitment and retention of staff at the University of Sussex.
2. A fair reward for staff must be balanced with the long-term sustainability of the University.
3. UEG and UCU must work together to secure the best outlook for the whole university.

This document comprises agreement on three issues to end the current disputes:

1. Four Fights
2. The USS pension
3. Local Size and Shape

Four fights

1. **Staff payment.** In recognition of the current contributions of staff and challenging national economic pressures on households, the University will make a one-off non-consolidated, non-pensionable prorated payment that is progressive, with a focus on lower grades and including Doctoral Tutors (Subject to final Council approval).

G1-6	£900
G7	£700
G8	£500
G9	£400
G10	£300

2. **Equalities.** We will establish a working group involving UCU representation, and chaired by the PVC Culture, Equality and Inclusion, that within 16 weeks will discuss and where possible reach agreement on:

- a) **Publish and codify the institutional process for Equalities Impact**

Assessments. Current guidelines and template (drafts from May 2020) will be updated.

- b) **Workload commitment and remuneration for equalities work.** This is in recognition that workload tariff needs be calculated for all university-set EDI work.

- c) **Action plans for elimination of all inequality pay gaps (gender, race, disability).** To draft plans that exceed the current targets and ambitions at the university within a defined timescale. This includes a commitment to examine previous UCU submissions on pay gaps.

- d) **Antiracist Sussex Pledge commitment.** To examine resources for understanding retention problems for Black and racially minoritised staff as part of action plan for addressing the race pay gap.

- e) **Student support services.** To ensure staff commitment to such services are adequately provisioned and there is specialist work in mental health support. This should include proper staffing resources for the student counselling service, and action to address the specific support needs of racially minoritized and international students.

- f) **Management antiracism and other equalities training.** To look at how to publicise and make use of training and how to make use of learning impacts in policies and practice.
3. **Pay, Fixed Term Contract Length.** We will establish a working group chaired by the Director of HR, and involving UCU representation, the Provost and the PVC CEI; and within 16 weeks will discuss and where possible reach agreement on:
- a. **Salary and redundancy payments** for staff who have worked on a continuous basis at Sussex in excess of three years, if redeployment or other options for continued employment are not successful.
 - b. **Employment over holiday periods** all staff on fixed term contracts.
 - c. **Renegotiation of 'Fixed-term appointments: management guidance (2012)'**, as a minimum revising point 8.2 to include: where an individual has three or more years' continuous service with the University and has been employed on two or more successive fixed term contracts for a continuous period of three years they may write to the University to claim indefinite status.
 - d. **Overtime pay.** Reach agreement on the proposal that overtime to be paid at time and half between the first and fifth day beyond pro rata hours of work, or time and three quarters on the sixth or seventh day beyond pro rata hours of work part time staff.
 - e. **Maternity pay,** to increase to full pay for 26 weeks during the period of Ordinary Maternity Leave, which will include any payments of SMP/ MA. Or SMP/MA alone where this is greater.
 - f. **Promotions process,** to examine UCU's involvement so as to achieve its incorporation at the earliest opportunity in all planning stages.
 - g. **Commitment that parental leave of more than two weeks will always be backfilled.**
 - h. **Increment points.** Examine the proposal to an additional contribution point on all scales equal to one incremental point and whether this would have an impact on any of the pay gaps.
 - i. **Working above grade** as part of the job families review, when determining responsibilities in job descriptions and robust training offered to recruiting managers for determining a roles grade.
4. **Doctoral Tutors' contracts.** Work together to renegotiate the Doctoral Tutor contract on baseline pay grade, redeployment options, contract length, paid training options, and sick-leave and bereavement-leave entitlement. New contracts incorporating any agreed changes would be in operation by September 2023.
5. **Workload.** Agreement to set up a working group chaired by a UEG lead, who would draft binding principles on workload tariff, including those used by Schools with respect to PAWS. Such workload principles need to be applied fairly and equitably across Schools, accurately reflect the work undertaken, and include doctoral tutors.
6. **Post-6pm teaching.** A working group will be established to draw up guidelines that are expected to be met regarding principles in evening teaching duties withing 16 weeks.
7. **Living Wages.** The Chief Operating Officer and the Director of HR will discuss and where possible reach agreement with UCU within 16 weeks on the following:
- a. **Introduction of £12 per hour minimum wage.**

- b. **Outsourced staff.** Commitment to introduce minimum living wage expectation on all major outsourced contracts, including renegotiation with SEF.

To complete this work within 16 weeks UCU will receive a temporary increase in Facilities Time of 0.2 FTE. For its part, the University agrees to commit appropriate resources to ensure that the negotiations can proceed at the necessary pace.

Pensions

The University Executive Group (UEG) and Sussex University and College Union (UCU) acknowledge:

1. The importance of providing a good pension scheme for the reward and retention of staff.
2. The recent cut to USS benefits has had a detrimental impact on the attractiveness of the scheme.
3. The USS approach to valuation and consultation has led to an erosion of trust with scheme members.

University of Sussex UEG and Sussex UCU agree to the following points and will jointly write to UUK and UCU calling for these to be supported.

1. **New valuation.** There should be an evidence-based, moderately prudent valuation at the best time to take advantage of recent improvements in scheme performance. We will encourage UUK to engage with USS to explore benefit-enhancing solutions short of a full valuation which might take the form of a change to the schedule of contributions based on an intermediate valuation in advance of a formal valuation.
2. **Improved benefits.** Positive changes resulting from the next valuation of the scheme's assets, liabilities and future service costs should preferably be used to improve member benefits and not to reduce employer or employee contribution rates from current levels.
3. **Covenant.** Scheme members should acknowledge the value of the employer covenant. Employers should continue to provide covenant support through the future valuation process and agree that this should be available to benefit proposals presented to the JNC by either UUK or UCU to ensure open and timely discussions.
4. **Inflation cap.** Given the recent announcements on the increase in inflation, there is an urgent need for the impact of the CPI cap to be examined, with a view to reviewing the level of the cap.
5. **Defined benefits.** The retention of a substantial defined benefit element of the pension scheme that is affordable and sustainable for employers and members, and at a contribution rate that will not discourage employees from participating, is an important principle for employers and members.
6. **EIA.** A sector-wide equality impact assessment should be carried out for all protected characteristics to understand any direct or indirect discrimination of future proposed changes to the scheme.

7. **Communications.** There is an urgent need for the national parties involved in the USS pension negotiations to rebuild trust through a transparent and evidence-based approach to communications.
8. **Pension working group.** The UEG and Sussex UCU will seek to establish a joint working group on USS with mutually agreed Terms of Reference to support the institution's decision making.
9. **Governance reform.** We agree to: negotiate on governance reform for USS that recognises the principles of joint management of the joint pension scheme; to support governance reform of USS in a way that adequately represents the views of employers and members; and to call for, as part of the governance reform of USS, bolstered transparency in the decision-making processes of the Trustee.
10. **Fossil fuels.** We call on the USS Trustee to develop a credible plan with targets for divesting from fossil fuels and implementing an Environmental, Sustainable and Governance criteria.

Size and Shape

The University launched the Size & Shape Programme in 2021 and immediately discussions began with all three Campus Trade Unions. Early within these discussions UCU went into a local dispute with the University because they wanted the threat of compulsory redundancies removed. The University Executive Group believed it was not possible to rule out compulsory redundancies linked to the Size and Shape programme.

Following over 6 months of continuing robust discussions between UCU and the University Executive Group a number of actions were agreed and these have resulted in us now being able to jointly announce the dispute has been resolved and there will be no compulsory redundancies as a result of the Size & Shape Programme. This outcome has been achieved through ongoing efforts across the institution to find cost reductions.

Both UCU and the University Executive Group want to take this opportunity to thank the community for their efforts to ensure that Size and Shape was delivered without the need for compulsory redundancies. The University Executive Group has now moved forward into implementing the changes with the intention that the Size and Shape Programme will formally conclude by 1st August 2022.

The process of ensuring we continue to work effectively will now be achieved through the robust annual business planning cycle. There are no existing plans similar to Size and Shape in review, despite the challenging external environment. The University now hopes we can focus our efforts on providing the best possible staff and student experience.

Declaration

Upon signature of this agreement UEG confirms that it will not deduct any pay from the period 23rd May, 2022 onwards as long as marking is completed in a timely way. It will endeavour to ensure that marking turnaround times are as long as is practical under the current circumstances.

UCU agrees that its members will use best endeavours to complete marking and assessment to the best of their ability to allow students to progress and graduate.

Following a vote of Sussex UCU members, the UEG's offer to end industrial action was accepted on 6 June 2022. This ends all industrial action under the current UCU mandate (to 7 October 2022), including the planned marking and assessment boycott and the threat of strike action.

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David J. Maguire'.

Professor David Maguire, interim Vice-Chancellor

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Pawlik'.

Dr Joanna Pawlik, President UCU Sussex