

Industry Profile

Employment:

The Higher Education and University Sector has historically maintained a steady workforce. At the present time however the employment environment, although reasonably stable will in the future be feeling the effects of a proposal where there would be mergers especially in cities where there are 3 – 4 universities. If this trend takes off there will be implications for existing workers as departments can be merged and staff reduced.

- **Total income of £14,490,875**
- **Total expenditure £14,426,537**
- **A workforce of 300,000**

Trade Unions:

Amicus has 13,000 members in academic, non-academic support, professional, technical administration and skilled estates grades. The other main unions in this sector are AUT, NATFE – academic grades, UNISON – admin grades & GMB – manual and security grades.

Employers:

The main employers are Universities or Institutions in every major City and large town across the UK.

Current Issues and Activities

Regrading:

As a consequence of the Bett report all posts in the Higher Education sector are to be regraded in a process similar to that which is currently happening in the NHS with Agenda for Change. The Government and EOC are pressing for all posts to be equality proofed. The Government has set aside funds to assist with the costs of moving to a transparent pay system and has made it quite clear that any HE institution that has not implemented equal pay systems will not receive funding in the future. National bargaining remains until 2006 after which employers and unions can develop local bargaining.

Training and Recruitment:

Amicus members are pressing for union funded training to assist them in understanding the job evaluation process and the changes this will encompass. Amicus is encouraging and negotiating with employers to take responsibility for this with the unions support. With a potential of a third of all lecturer and technical staff eligible to retire in the next five years Amicus will be seeking Government assistance in the training and recruitment of the people that will be needed to replace those retiring.

Research:

There will be an increase in issues regarding the types of research undertaken by universities. Amicus will have to balance competing arguments about protecting jobs and those pressure groups demanding an end to certain types of research (animal testing, genetically modified foods, production and uses of DNA).

Organising and Industrial Relations:

Further Education Colleges

With a high proportion of female employees but with relatively low union density, these workplaces will be targeted using the equal pay issue as an organising tool.

Universities:

Even with a larger proportion of female academics, academic related and administration staff, Universities still appear to be dominated by men. Amicus will seek to make progress towards equality. There are gains to be made under our equal pay campaign. Other unions involved (with a predominantly male membership) are not keen to pursue this option, as it will unsettle their existing membership, this is where we are intend to campaign and believe we can make significant membership gains.

Job Evaluation Process:

Amicus has 30 years of experience in the original 'blue book' job evaluation process. That places Amicus as the leader in job evaluation experience in the higher education sector. This will be our national campaign for the next two years. We anticipate that the re-grading process will assist Amicus to make serious membership gains across the sector. Our message to non-members has been simple "in order to maximise staff wage rates during the job evaluation, all staff will need the support of a union experienced in that process. With every post being re-graded, Amicus has the longest experience in how to handle job evaluation to the benefit of our members. We will represent members at appeals, as well as offering advice before the re-grading takes place. We have trained reps and full time Officers, as well as a mass of information on job evaluated pay rates for comparison – so join Amicus!"