



HIGHER EDUCATION

Our Ref: MJR/VT/HE/11/06

26th May 2006

**To: All University Reps and Branches
Regional Officers for Information
Sue Sharp NEC for information
Dave Trafford NEC for information
Doug Collins AGS for Information
Gail Cartmail AGS for information**

Dear Colleague

Pay Talks

Amicus has just heard that ACAS talks with Academic unions and UCEA were adjourned today (26th May).

There is a planned meeting for HENIC on the 7th June. The Academic unions have been in talks through ACAS on 3 occasions this week so a potential settlement was in the air. If UCEA get close to a settlement there is a possibility that they would want to revise the offer to PTAAS. Amicus expectations are that any offer would be the same for both negotiating committees. You may recall that the original offer from UCEA at JNCHES was for a 3 year deal. PTAAS unions have never sought a 3 year deal although the Academics have pushed hard for this in their talks. The main complication for PTAAS is getting sufficient protection in any third year as inflation and other relevant data may be out of sync with the current third year offer of 3%. PTAAS favoured a two year deal provided the figures were high enough but received the current offer of 3 years from UCEA .

If future ACAS talks or settlement resulted in a lowering of expectation for the Academic unions but in a different offer than the current offer to PTAAS, Amicus would insist on a reconvened JNCHES meeting to discuss maintaining the integrity of the national single pay spine.

In the event that this happens the planned HENIC meeting (7th June) would need to be moved to receive any different offer.

Equality and Hours

The latest position is that PTAAS unions have been trying to pin down some wording for consideration on both equality and reduced hours.


Hours

The issue on hours is that some HEI's settled on 35 hours quite early on in the Framework discussions. Some others following on after have settled around 36-37 hours. As part of reaching a settlement on this years pay talks PTAAS unions are trying to get acceptable wording that would commit HEI's to a move towards or negotiating 35 hours by 2009. This would create a level playing field and maintain national arrangements. So far the draft wording is not enough and we are pressing for more.

Equality and MoU

On Equality many HEI's failed to monitor the impact of the Framework. Some have adopted the same assimilation polices for all staff and this has also followed through on advancement in similar steps on increments. In a few HEI's HR managers and with the support of some academic unions have agreed arrangements that are different. There is a potential sex discrimination issue on different schemes for different grades of staff and a potential breach of statutory duty on any failure to monitor and review. PTAAS has been seeking a statement and commitment from UCEA and its subscribers that full monitoring and reviews take place. Also that common systems would apply for assimilation and advancement within grades. Currently the wording of the drafts is not acceptable but Amicus negotiators are hopeful acceptable wording can be agreed soon.

Yours sincerely



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Higher Education