



Tyne Coast College

National Plus Pay Claim

In line with [UCU policy](#), this is the submission of a pay claim to the College.

The claim is separated into sections, covering a number of issues that concern our members. The sections are:

- 1. Pay**
- 2. Collective Bargaining**
- 3. Working Conditions**
- 4. Annual Leave and College Closures**

In each section, part **A.** provides some background; while part **B.** provides detail of our claim.

The claim has been put together by UCU Representatives at the College, in conjunction with the Regional Office. Over the last week, members have been discussing it, commenting on it, and making suggestions. It has received a unanimous vote of endorsement.

We wish to enter into talks about all of the issues in this document.

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1. Pay

A. Background

i. Pay Award 2019/20

In March 2020, Tyne Coast College stopped the payment of a pay award which had previously been agreed by the Board of Governors. That cost of living pay rise was for the year 2019/20. Nothing has since addressed that issue.

According to data from [UCU](#), Tyne Coast College should have received a funding uplift of approximately £494,298 in August 2020. This followed national campaigning involving the trade unions and the Association of Colleges. That additional funding was given to colleges to spend as they wished, but staff pay was always supposed to be top of the list. UCU [wrote to all College CEOs/Principals](#) outlining our expectations for this additional funding and the national pay talks that were taking place at that time.

ii. Pay Award 2020/21

In July 2021, the College announced the following to all staff:

Pay Award 2020/2021

I am pleased to confirm that the Board of Governors have agreed to a 2% pay increase to all staff backdated to 1 August 2020. This will be shown in your July 2021 pay along with all backdated payments. We held a meeting with trade union representatives earlier this week to notify them and to discuss future talks on pay.

The trade unions were informed of this a few days prior to the announcement. There was no opportunity for this to be a negotiation.

iii. Pay Award 2021/22

In the same email (as above), the College also said:

Pay Award 2021/22

We have agreed to meet the trade unions in the Autumn term to plan a process and talks for the coming (and future) years.

And also, acknowledging the last 12 months, the College said:

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your hard work in what has been a challenging year.

iv. The national context

All trade unions rejected the offer from the AoC of 1% made at the end of 2020. [The unions made their disappointment clear](#), pointing out that college staff have suffered a real-terms pay cut of 30% since 2009 and that more than 24,000 teaching staff have left the sector. There are currently [some UCU Branches in the country in dispute](#) and taking industrial action over pay.

v. The local context

We do not have staff turnover figures at Tyne Coast College. We are requesting them as part of this process. Anecdotally, we hear that there are problems with both staff recruitment and retention.

vi. The cost of living is increasing

According to [data from the ONS](#), the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by **3.0%** in the 12 months to August 2021, up from 2.1% in the 12 months to July. The figure for RPI is **4.8%**

vii. The declining value of our pay

According to [data and research collected by UCU](#), a Lecturer at the top of the B1 scale on £30,328 should be earning at least £7k more per annum, if salaries had kept up with inflation since 2010.

B. Our pay claim for 2021/22 is for:

- A pay award that recognises the relative decline in pay over recent years, and the considerable number of staff who were put on furlough* during the pandemic;
- A pay award implemented as soon as possible in the start of the academic year, with a commitment to adopt a similar timeline in future years;
- An agreement with the trade unions on how pay talks will be conducted during this round, and into the future;

**This led to a cut in pay for some staff in the earlier months of the application of the furlough scheme.*

2. Collective bargaining

A. Introduction

It has been a source of frustration on the trade union side that the approach to pay talks has not always been constructive. On a number of recent occasions, we have been told that certain information is confidential. In principle, we have no issue with that. But there are times when, as representatives, we have a responsibility to report back to our members. Inserting unnecessary secrecy with no time limit is not helpful to good industrial relations.

We welcome the College's commitment to "*meet the trade unions in the Autumn term to plan a process and talks for the coming (and future years)*". We would expect the first meeting to lay down some ground rules and expectations for this process.

B. Our claim is for:

- The provision of information such that we are able to enter into negotiations with full financial and HR data;
- Specifically, data on staff turnover, staff absence (including absence for work related stress). Financial data which allows us to see trends in spending, previous and current costs of management and other staff, and assumptions about future costs;
- A framework for talks about pay and related matters which is agreed by both sides. This should include a schedule of meetings and an u;

3. Working conditions

A. Background

i. Duties other than teaching

In previous years, the contract for teaching staff had a degree of flexibility. In short, it allowed you to undertake some duties - such as preparation, marking and administration - from somewhere other than college premises.

After the significant amount of work that staff have had to undertake from their own homes during various coronavirus restrictions, we had hoped for a return to a time when you would not have to be sitting at your desk at all times when you are not in the classroom. Work can be done elsewhere, as has been amply illustrated over the last 18 months. Sadly, recent experiences of *some* of our members has shown that this is not the case.

In some parts of the college, our members are being told that they have to schedule and timetable "desk time". When we have asked for clarification, we are told that this is time when you are not teaching but you should be at your desk working (or on call to undertake another activity) for every hour of your working week, other than when you are in the classroom teaching.

UCU believes that such an approach is unhelpful, and does not acknowledge both the professionalism of the staff, nor the range of duties that they have to undertake.

B. Our claim is for either:

- An insertion into the teaching contract (or guidelines) which expressly gives staff the ability to undertake a number of hours of work from somewhere other than college premises – e.g. from home;

Or

- A direction from the College to all managers which instructs them not to micro-manage staff time, nor make assumptions that staff can only undertake work and fulfil their duties whilst sitting at their desk on college premises.

ii. The proliferation of non-teaching duties for teaching staff

A full-time contract for a Lecturer has a working week of 37 hours. Depending on the type of contract, the range of teaching hours per week could be as many as 30. This means that in some cases, the amount of

time left in the working week for preparation, administration and marking for each hour in the classroom is under 15 minutes. Less than that should there be meetings or training that you have to attend that week – including familiarising yourself with the changing technology and tools that staff are being given to do the job.

We hear about an increasing number of additional duties that teaching staff are being asked to undertake. At times, this is with very little notice and with very little planning. Sometimes, there is no compensation (time back – TOIL, or release from other duties) for the additional hours of the week that our members are being asked to work. Such duties include, but are not restricted to, marketing events, open evenings, IAG, taster events, liaising with external partners, Internal Verification, and more.

In particular, we received a significant number of complaints about how busy May and June were this year, with little acknowledgement from managers about the tasks that staff were having to undertake, as well as the additional ones which they were being asked to do on top of an increasing number of other duties. More detail of this is in **Appendix One**.

At the start of this academic year, our members have been telling us about the additional workload that is created for them through the following: the merger of classes with very little notice; cover for absent colleagues or where a post is vacant; “catch-up” created by the pandemic; the pastoral model; dealing with safeguarding; monitoring of student attendance. This list is not exhaustive, but captures the concerns where we have had multiple reporting of the same issue.

B. Our claim is for:

- An acknowledgement that when additional duties are being requested of staff, that there has to be an appreciation of that additional workload, with compensation for that work;
- A timetable with plenty of notice for any additional duties such as marketing events. Communication and discussion about the staffing of these should be undertaken in a collegiate and consultative manner, with the emphasis on volunteering and compensation for duties undertaken;
- A process to address the increasing workload of staff;

4. Annual Leave and College Closures

A. & B. Introduction and our claim

Winter Closure

As part of our claim, **we seek a recurring full College closure for a two-week period over the Christmas break**, at a time that coincides with the holidays that are observed by schools in the South Tyneside and North Tyneside area. To avoid any doubt, this will be the days prescribed by the relevant local authority/ies. If a point comes when they cease to be prescribed by the LA, this will be discussed with the trade unions to seek a new framework. The closure will include the three public holidays that are observed over the Christmas period, a maximum of three days to be taken from the annual leave allowances of staff, with the remainder being granted as efficiency days.

A full college closure ensures a number of things:

- A proper break for all;
- Clarity to employers, learners, and the whole community about the availability of staff and the importance of rest, recuperation, and time spent away from the workplace;
- Some savings due to efficiency and a full closure;

To avoid any doubt, this proposal is not about impacting negatively on anyone's existing annual leave entitlement. It is about increasing the number of days that staff are away from the college and not undertaking any work. Regardless of the type of contract that someone is on, our intention is that everyone would benefit from this proposal.

Annual Leave in the Summer

An increasing number of members are coming to us about the narrowing of the windows in which annual leave can be taken. This is particularly the case in the summer holidays, but there are also concerns at other times of the year when, traditionally, students are not in college. For example, at half terms and Easter.

We are told, at times, that when staff request three days of leave over a half term, they are told that they must take five. Or, conversely, when they ask to take all five, they are told that they cannot. Our members are often told by their line managers that this has come from "the top".

This culture of top-down senior management is unhelpful and does not allow for the professional judgement of staff and line management to be taken into account.

Our claim is to re-assert the following points, and to seek agreement on a framework for the future:

- The ability of line management to have discretion over annual leave requests;
- That it is a “minimum” of four weeks of annual leave that can be taken over the summer, rather than it being seen as a maximum;
- The professionalism of staff being able to make judgements over how to organise their time during periods of leave for students. For example, staff may need to work during some half terms in order to complete tasks associated with their courses;

A considerable amount of time and emotion is being used up by staff simply trying to assert their right to take annual leave. To avoid this, **we suggest that any management guidelines or guidance on the taking of annual leave are subject to consultation, in good time, between the College and the trade unions.**

Appendix One

To support the issues that we are referring to in section 3 – **Working conditions** – and in particular, **the proliferation of non-teaching duties**, please find (below) a selection of comments that illustrate the concerns that have been expressed to us. All have been sent to us by members over the last six months.

Open Days/Evenings

Concerns have been expressed about both the lack of planning of events like these, as well as an absence of a proper review of their worth. This is one of a number of very similar comments that we have had on this issue.

"Although there were fewer last year due to the lockdowns, there is supposed to be one open evening the first Tuesday of every month. All A Level staff are expected to cover them all. Sometimes, these are poorly attended (especially first Tuesday after Christmas – when they can't even be marketed properly because of the time of year) but they still go ahead. Or the ones on Bonfire Night/Valentine's Day – no one seems to check the standard UK calendar. There is no review on which are most effective, which leads to demoralisation and a lack of faith in what we are doing."

Another comment reflects what appears to be a lack of consideration in the timing of these, as well as not giving thought as to what other duties staff are having to perform at certain times of the year:

"On a Saturday, in the middle of the demands of examinations and assessments, staff were asked to come into college for a virtual open day, following training on the previous Wednesday. However, the new system was pretty much the same as the old with a different interface, so we had lots of comments about time being wasted. Also, there was only one visitor across the Sixth Form, although we also had a senior manager who decided to mystery shop under a pseudonym. Staff did not appreciate this taking place as it shown a profound lack of trust. This was taking place when we had other competing demands – the deadline for coursework which had been planned for some time."

The lack of a review of experiences, and taking into account what staff have said and how things might be improved, has come across in a number of comments:

"We had a similar experience in March when we were all asked to put on evening class tasters at short notice. Most staff only had

one student attend, if any. We all put a lot of work into preparing those."

Another said:

"We can predict what is going to happen. We have been accused of not having faith or being pessimistic. However, I feel it is a realistic prediction. Sadly, staff often feel that they are vindicated. But nothing is done to work with us and our suggestions to change it."

Another member said to us:

"Marketing don't check workloads with curriculum but set dates. There is no consultation on strategy. Staff are struggling to take time back this year, be it holidays or lieu. Whilst curriculum have to review our efforts every year, the support functions seem not to, and don't involve us if they do."

Others commented on the fact that there are certain things which have to be done and need to take priority, while other tasks are simply landed on them with no realisation of competing demands:

"We're in the middle of trying to put assessment files together now (having set, invigilated and marked the work). It's far more time consuming than the usual end of year routine. Some staff also have other assignment deadlines in the same week, which were pre-agreed before changes in government decisions and deadlines. So it's manic."

"I am fuming that marketing have arranged taster days without consulting us. It is the last weeks of the qualifications and we are extremely busy. I have learners sitting an exam and others finishing tasks on the days they have scheduled for these tasters."

"The main concerns I have is the constant last minute requests coming at staff left right and centre - in particular with regards to marketing. Marketing need to respect lecturing staff and not dictate dates and times which are not considerate of current learners or lecturers time constraints. I have been asked to do tasters this week, but with everything else that I have to do to ensure that the students get through, I simply do not have the time."