

Queen's University Belfast (the University)
and
University and College Union, QUB Branch (QUB-UCU)

Interim Arrangement June 2023

Members of Queen's University Belfast University and College Union (QUB-UCU) are participating in a marking and assessment boycott (MAB) related to a national dispute on pay and other issues. The University restates its commitment to implement all pay awards notwithstanding the challenging funding issues and restrictions that pertain to higher education in Northern Ireland. QUB-UCU and the QUB University Management Board (UMB) have jointly identified the financial 'cost-of-living' pressure on staff due to the decline in real terms pay, and the continued rise of inflation and interest rates.

Accordingly, the University and QUB UCU, being committed to finding a resolution to the consequences of MAB and recognising the cost-of-living issue and staff demands for pay restoration, agree the following.

1. A restatement of the University and QUB-UCU commitments made in the Joint Agreement of 2022 with a clear timeline that the proposals around anti-casualisation, as they relate to fixed term contracts and QWork, are completed by the end of this calendar year. In relation to gender, race and disability pay gaps, the University will examine the trends and impact of new data being collected in this calendar year and develop a strategy designed to eradicate or substantially reduce them by 2030. Building on the data captured by Simitive, the University and QUB-UCU will redouble efforts to reduce workloads of academic, academic-related and professional services staff. The University will expedite progression development as per the Joint Agreement of 2022. The University commits to discussion at Joint Consultative Committee to understand where stress-related work pressures are resulting in high absence levels. All parties will then work collaboratively to remove those pressure points.

2. QUB-UCU and Students' Union (SU) will be invited to participate in the institutional governance review process recently agreed by Senate, as it relates to Academic Council only. Senate and the UMB together, will hold at least one annual open meeting to allow any member of staff to ask questions and engage with Senate, with continued open 'town hall' meetings with the Management Board,

which the Vice-Chancellor has led for some time. All three trade unions will be invited to participate in a University task and finish group to consider opportunities for local pay spine development.

3. Following discussion with UCU colleagues to identify the best approach, the University, in recognition of the increased cost of living, as part of the 2023/2024 pay round, will provide a pay supplement equivalent to 2% of pay, as calculated at the rates applying from 1 August 2023. This will apply to all staff including those in discretionary bands and/or who have a market uplift arrangement but excluding those on the Senior Salary Scheme. This will take effect from 1 September 2023 and will continue on an annual basis. However, if there is a further national pay award increase agreed between UCU and UCEA in the 2023/2024 pay round, the University will not be beholden to that unless it exceeds 7% in total (i.e., equivalent to the current 5% pay award plus a further 2% for grade 6 staff and above). Staff below Grade 6 will see a higher award in total as per the baseline of the national pay award plus the further 2%. This will have no bearing on the implementation of any further national pay award for the 2024/2025 (or beyond) pay round. In taking this local initiative, QUB management recognise the real terms pay decline experienced by staff and the need to address pay restoration. This is exacerbated by long-term under-funding of the Higher and Further education sectors, particularly in Northern Ireland. Recognition of this need should form part of developing a sustainable funding model for HE, towards which both QUB management and QUB-UCU will work.

4. QUB-UCU will discontinue participation in the MAB action, recognising the willingness of QUB's Vice-Chancellor to urge UCEA to re-open national negotiations and QUB's positive engagement in this innovative interim arrangement. Marking will be completed by 7 August to allow exam boards to progress in August. The salary deducted during participation in the MAB will be reinstated in the August payroll. QUB-UCU will hold an EGM to confirm or reject this interim arrangement. If the interim arrangement is accepted, then the MAB at QUB will end and QUB-UCU will cooperate with QUB management to ensure that all students are progressed in time for August exam boards.

5. QUB-UCU affirms its willingness to work with the University in making the case for the development of a sustainable funding model for higher education to political parties and, when in operation, the Northern Ireland Executive and Assembly. QUB-UCU remains committed to finding an HE funding model that does not increase student fees as its basis.

6. In the future the University and QUB-UCU will work in greater partnership to ensure that damaging industrial disputes, with negative impact on our students will be avoided through consultation and

agreement. -Both are committed to restore and deliver an optimum education and student experience at Queen's.

7. This interim arrangement was approved by an extraordinary meeting of the University Senate and an extraordinary general meeting of QUB-UCU, both taking place on Tuesday 27 June 2023.