

RIISING TOGETHER FOR BETTER PAY

HIGHER EDUCATION PAY 2023/24



University of Brighton

UNISON | Branch Newsletter

January 2024

Welcome to this month's newsletter, the first of 2024!

We begin 2024, with many unresolved issues. We're in the middle of a pay re-ballot, because we're still looking to get something out of the current dispute. If you've been here a while, you'll remember we received between 5% and 7% in August 2023 (with an advance payment in February), depending on grade, but this was well below inflation at the time.

With RPI inflation now at 5.3% and CPI inflation at 3.9%, a superficial analysis would suggest that we've done ok with this, but that doesn't begin to address the massive drop in real-terms wages that's happened over the last 10 to 15 years in higher education. Like all public sector workers, we've seen pay fall and fall over the years and many members are struggling to pay for the basics, like rent, food, energy, travel and childcare costs.

Unfortunately, we're also seeing a real-terms cut in funding for universities, with the real value of the £9,250 tuition fee now in the region of £6,000. Universities charging the full fee to UK undergraduates (i.e. all of them) initially experienced a slight growth in income, which has now turned into a significant reduction, whilst the competition between institutions for students has seen a massive expansion of marketing alongside spend on cosmetic improvements. Staff wages have fallen as many universities now see next year's recruitment figures as a sign of how long they will survive.

Of course most Vice-Chancellors react to this by cutting courses and staff numbers, and the redundancies of a significant number of mainly academic staff last year were just one example. Sheffield Hallam, Coventry, Aberdeen have announced more job "losses", and there will be many more over the next few years unless something changes quickly.

With neither this government nor a future (probably, but not guaranteed) Labour government refusing to promise anything helpful, it looks as if working people will need to fight for the future of the sector as a whole, as well as for jobs and pay.

Our re-ballot is designed to keep up the pressure on the employers and allows us to take further strike action if we think it's necessary.

Please make sure you return your ballot paper!



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SCAN JOIN to

**VOTE YES
IN THE
RE-BALLOT**

RISING TOGETHER FOR **BETTER PAY** HIGHER EDUCATION PAY 2023-24

Ballot papers were posted to home addresses on 29 November.

As always, it's really important that we hit our 50% turnout threshold, so every vote will count.

Please make sure you return your ballot paper in the post as soon as you can.

If you can't find your ballot paper, you can request another one by calling **0800 0 857 857**. It's free and should only take a minute.

We will be contacting as many members as we can to check that you've voted, but you can help by letting us know when you have.

Please remember that non-members can join and have a vote, so let's use this as an opportunity to ask people to join.

If you've recently joined, you should still get a ballot paper, so please look out for it.

Are you in our WhatsApp Community?

Our branch has a group for messages to members. Ideally, we want all members to join it so that we can send out urgent messages when we need to.

If you'd like to join, just email your name and phone number and we'll add you to it.



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