

AUT Newsletter

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What the Competitors Are Paying

A competition is opening up between UK universities on pay. **The table on the page 3 gives the details of those pay agreements at various universities that have been publicly announced.** Near the middle of the table you will see the top part of the 51 point national pay spine which was set up by the Framework Agreement. (Most local agreements have extended this spine upwards.)

To the right of the spine is the present pay structure for academic and related staff, and it has been aligned as closely as possible with the points of the spine. As explained to the top right of the spine, there is not an exact match. Apart from anyone whose duties will be changed by the restructuring, you should be given your new grading this summer. See the last Newsletter for the process. If your new grading matches your present grading, you would move to a pay spine point greater or equal to your current pay, and you ought to move up to at least your grade maximum in at most the number of steps that this would take on your present scale. The exception is if someone is down-graded compared to the present, but even these will have salary protection for 4 years. **However, the pay scale for each grade and the method of assimilation have to be negotiated locally.**

To the left of the spine are some models for pay scales and actual agreements reached in various universities. The Framework Agreement contained only UCEA's suggestion for pay scales. These were detrimental to many staff in terms of scale maxima and/or the number of years taken to reach them. For this reason AUT launched national industrial action which secured the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AUT and UCEA. This said that pay scales should not be detrimental in the way described. Despite the fact that the MoU spoke of scales and that they did not raise the issue at the time, **some employers (including QUB) are suggesting that the no detriment applies only to existing staff and that they can devise scales with these bad features for new staff. AUT does not accept this interpretation. Nor does it make sense for the employers to offer worse pay progression to new staff if they want to recruit good staff.**

The MoU did not uniquely define pay scales, but it did have several implications for pay scales and these are set out in the column headed "MoU Applied to UCEA Scales". Scales with these features comply with the national agreements, although a feature could be traded for something else as part of a better overall deal negotiated locally. The "AUT Recommended" scales are the most generous interpretation of the MoU. They have been adopted by The School of Pharmacy (London). Loughborough University is phasing them in over a couple of years starting from August 2004 and has added two points to the top of the spine.

Manchester University has also extended the spine and, because they have used fewer pay scales further down, their professorial pay band is called Grade 9. It is expected that Senior Lecturers, Research III's and ALC grade 5's will map onto the new Grade 8, the main part of which extends to point 51 (£46,296). Lecturer B's Research II's and ALC grade 3's will map onto new Grade 7; Lecturer A's, Research IA's and ALC grade 2's will map onto new Grade 6. All this is subject to verification by job evaluation. The minimum salary for Lecturers is £27,194 (point 33) and they have the expectation of rising smoothly to point 51. The deal runs from the birth of the merged university, October 2004. The position of Teaching Assistants, Research 1B's and ALC grade 1's will be considered after job evaluation, and it likely that many of these will share a pay scale with technicians and clericals.

This problem is being treated differently by the Open University. They hope to offer research studentships rather than use Research IB, and they have a 3-year Trainee Grade 7 for recruits to Admin, Library and Computer staff. Their lecturers are also appointed at point 33 at least and have the expectation of moving smoothly to the next grade. Their title of Lecturer includes staff in the provinces doing work similar to our Teaching Fellows. Open University also has extended the spine by one extra discretionary point for Senior Lecturers. This deal is back-dated to August 2004.

The deal at Leeds is not public yet, but it has ground-breaking features for academic-related staff. The proposal is that the normal expectation for progression of academic-related staff is to a new Grade 8, which is the equivalent of the old ALC 3 and has £36,546 as the maximum, with three discretionary points above. The same applies to all teaching and/or research staff, and Lecturers will be paid a minimum of £26,401. Recruits to Admin, Library and Computer staff will spend three years in new Grade 6 on a training plan with the expectation of then moving onto the new Grade 7 which starts at £24,886. The same applies to research assistants with PhD's or equivalent experience, and grant applications will be costed to allow for this.

The offer at Lancaster also is not public yet, but the scales under consideration are equal to or better than those for Leeds and considerably better than those in "MoU Applied to UCEA Scales".

Southampton (from whence came our V-C) were so keen to be competitive that their pay deal was backdated to May 2004. They also extended the scale to a point 59 and raise the top of the main part of the new Senior Lecturer scale to £47,335. All scales have a considerable number of discretionary contribution points. Some spine points are skipped over by existing staff. The question of whether new staff would also skip these was postponed for a year, to see what other universities did. We now hear that Southampton is moving to accept the AUT view that the MoU applies to new as well as existing staff, and that the management is thinking of revising the scales upwards to remain competitive with offers elsewhere.

What's the Offer Here?

We do not have an offer yet, but AUT has been told to expect one in mid April. Mind you, we have been expected to see pay scales since mid November, and Belfast AUT Officers have decided to halt work on job evaluation and other negotiations until we see acceptable scales and have a number of issues addressed. Our patience is beginning to run out, and we expect that yours is too.

The first issue that needs to be resolved is the application of the Memorandum of Understanding to new staff. On 4 April 2004 Paul Hudson wrote to George Bain that the MoU principles "apply to new pay structures for all current and future staff, not just protection for existing staff." On 7 April 2004 Sean McGuickin wrote to BAUT: **"However, I would reiterate the University's commitment to implement and abide by the principles clearly set out in the Framework Agreement and the Memorandum of Understanding."** If it was clear then, why are QUB management now disputing its application to new academic and related staff?

The second issue is that of back-dating. The Framework Agreement says: **"Institutions will be expected to use their best endeavours to introduce these pay arrangements from 1 August 2004** or as soon as practicable thereafter, and complete implementation by 1 August 2006 ...". All the UCEA publicity about the Framework Agreement calculated pay increases as though the new pay spine was in use from August 2004. **In January AUT Officers were told by senior managers that to expected back-dating was "Whistling in the wind."** The Belfast AUT Officers have the impression that QUB management wants to save money from back-dating to buy in new staff.

The third issue is the payment of market supplements. Such extra payments are allowed under the Framework Agreement "where difficulties in attracting and retaining high quality staff can be demonstrated ..." and, if this can be demonstrated, such payments do not violate equal pay law. The Framework Agreement says that: "Institutions should adopt appropriate policies and procedures with an emphasis on equity and transparency, as developed in partnership with their recognised trades unions." The procedure requires eight steps including: "decide which employees are eligible for each attraction and retention premium, including existing staff." Some QUB managers give the impression that they think that they can make such payments secretly to just new staff. BAUT Officers firmly believe that the law requires such payments to be made to all staff in an area, and we are willing to take a test case. If you have evidence, please contact us.

Although no pay scales have been offered yet, we have seen indications of QUB management thinking. Even if other faults were rectified, it could be summarised as the most miserly interpretation of "MoU Applied to UCEA Scales", and so would be the worst pay around. **How can QUB aim to be a world class university, while offering bottom-of-the-class salaries?**

Second Phase of the “Vision”

Belfast AUT Officers met with the V-C on 10 March to discuss the second phase of his “Vision”. The documentation has changed somewhat since then. In particular, the management are again proposing to drop the requirement that candidates for Heads of School achieve a level of acceptability and breadth of support amongst relevant academic colleagues. As explained in issue 2 of the *Newsletter*, both George Bain and Belfast AUT attached great importance to this requirement. Academic Council on 2 February agreed with us and the proposal was deleted. Now it has mysteriously appeared again, and we will have a meeting with management about it.

The paper deals with the grouping of research units into research clusters, the amalgamation of some Schools into bigger Schools, and the assignment of Schools to the new Faculties. These are all designed to make Queen’s a research-driven university. After phase one, this level of detail raised few AUT issues, although doubtless the reorganisation will give rise to personal cases. We asked if there was an associated early retirement or severance package for those who would feel unhappy in the new set-up including superfluous former Deans and Heads of School. There was surprise at the suggestion that anyone would want to leave, and no package is planned.

It was claimed that the plans were the result of widespread consultation. However it is doubtful if this could have gone far below the level of Heads of School since they were forbidden to photocopy the paper. Certainly the members who contacted AUT did not feel that they had been heeded. Many of the proposed subject amalgamations are marriages that have been tried before and which ended in acrimonious divorce. We asked the V-C why he thought that these would work this time. The reply was that the “Vision” would completely change the attitudes of staff. Time will tell.

Clear Communication

We have also discussed with the Registrar the “Vision” plans for Academic Support Restructuring. Apart from the proposals for multidisciplinary units (see later) the Directorates of Estates, Finance, Human Resources, Information Services (*i.e.* Library and Computing), and Research & Regional Services are left virtually unchanged. With an added emphasis on marketing the functions of the other four Directorates are to be reshuffled into four new ones. All nine still report to the Registrar.

There will be a new Commercial Services Directorate covering Bars & Entertainment, Childcare, Hospitality Services (*i.e.* catering and students residences), Sport & Recreation and the Visitors Centre. The rest of Students Services will be added to the Academic Registry to form Academic & Student Affairs. Most of the present Communications Directorate will become Marketing and Communications, but with an added senior position in marketing. There is to be a new emphasis on marketing throughout the University. However, the International Office, which markets Queen’s abroad, is to be grouped with the Development & Alumni Office to form the Foundation, Graduate & International Affairs Directorate.

To try to make the Administration more responsive to the needs of Schools there is a proposal that: “In future, such services will be provided by a small number of multi-disciplinary units which will be aligned to appropriate School groupings and will be physically located in one of the Schools they will be servicing.” This idea has yet to be fleshed out, but it could involve finance, personnel and Research Services staff working directly for a group of Heads of School.

The paper sells some interesting ideas short because it is mostly written in type of management and public relations speak which turns academics off. The “Vision” requires clear communication.

Possible Merger with NATFHE

A copy of *AUTLook* with details of the proposals will be mailed directly to you in mid-April. These were approved by the AUT National Executive subject to the AUT Trustees being satisfied about the finances. Due to delays in obtaining information and assurances they have not yet reported. The proposals will be debated at the 20-22 April meeting of AUT Council (the delegate body). This is likely to recommend a membership ballot in the summer. For more information ask AUT Officers.

