

Joint Statement by Solent University and UCU

Joint agreement on UCU Trade Dispute and suspension of Industrial action

8 February 2021

Dear Colleagues,

The University and UCU are pleased to be able to issue this joint statement.

On 25 November 2020, UCU had registered a trade dispute with Solent University, concerning the approach of the University to redundancies. UCU members also voted for industrial action and action short of strike action in a ballot which closed on 20 January 2021.

Solent University and UCU have been engaged in intensive negotiations to resolve the trade dispute, and good progress has been made at reaching solutions on all matters within the trade dispute of 25 November 2020. A joint agreement has been reached in order to settle all points with the trade dispute.

Details of the full Agreement to Suspend the Trade Dispute between UCU and Solent University was reached in principle on 4 February 2021 between the University and UCU can be found in the Joint Agreement (please see accompanying document). The summary of the main areas of agreement reached are as follows:

- The University has given a written commitment to no compulsory redundancies or commence statutory redundancy consultations (including section 188 notifications) in the period between the date of this agreement and 1 February 2022;
- To continue to fully comply with the collective agreements reached with UCU on:
 - Academic Workload Planning
 - Academic Career Pathways - to include the introduction of an Annual Academic Progressions process
 - Solent University local framework agreement
- To review all policies and procedures in order to minimise any future redundancies which include the Severance Policy, including redeployment and pay protection arrangements. This will also include agreed provisions for disclosure of information to recognised trade unions. This work will be pulled together and agreed under a 'Redundancy Avoidance Agreement'.
- The trade dispute is suspended, and UCU will take no action to enact the current mandate for industrial action (please see clause 4). If the agreed actions, including those recorded in clause 6 and 8, are completed to the agreed timetable, UCU will formally write to Solent University to withdraw the trade dispute on 20 July 2021.

In addition to the commitments above as part of the discussions to resolve the trade dispute the University has also agreed to:

- Extend the pay protection arrangements for a small group of staff who have been redeployed in phase 1 for a period of 12 months. This will consist of full pay protection (i.e. at the grade prior to restructure) for 12 months. Solent University and UCU will also review these roles within 12 months (please see clause 5).

Progress on all these matters will be monitored reported on regularly at meetings of the Joint Staffing Group on a monthly basis and in addition to the Joint Negotiating Consultation Committee (JNCC) and joint updates will be published after each meeting.

UCU will be organising a ballot of its members at Solent University on this agreement. UCU will not enter into this agreement without the approval of members at Solent University. UCU will commence the ballot as soon as possible, and this will conclude on Monday 22 February 2021.

If a majority of UCU members vote for the proposed agreement, the trade dispute will be suspended, and UCU will take no action to enact the current mandate for industrial action. UCU and Solent University will work together to ensure that agreed actions in the proposed agreement are enacted and completed to the agreed timetable.

Signed: 
Professor Karen Stanton, Vice-Chancellor


Signed:
Dr Mark Farwell, Chair, Southampton Solent UCU
8 February 2021