

Joint Statement by Heriot-Watt University and Heriot-Watt University UCU in relation to the Pay and Working Conditions Dispute - 30 June 2023

### **National Collective Bargaining**

At Heriot-Watt, both parties remain strongly committed to National Collective Bargaining and, whilst recognising that we hold different positions in relation to pay, believe it is essential that national talks resume and seek to go beyond the progress made at the ACAS talks. Working conditions interact with pay and we believe that there is scope to develop the four Terms of Reference further based on common goals of attracting and retaining staff within the sector.

We were disappointed that a resolution to the dispute over pay and working conditions did not emerge from the recent talks at ACAS. We recognise the discussions at ACAS at a national level resulted in some changes to the pay offer and the four draft Terms of Reference relating to: reform of the pay spine, use of contract types and improving job security, workload and gender, ethnicity and disability pay gaps in the sector. However, the outcome was rejected by UCU members and we recognise that the level of pay increases over a number of years, not keeping pace with inflation, remains a key factor at the heart of the dispute.

Positive work on the matters set out in the four Terms of Reference is already being progressed at Heriot-Watt and many institutions across the sector, demonstrating that this is both desirable and that positive national level sector norms should be possible. We believe it is vital for UCEA and UCU, despite our differing positions on the resumption of pay negotiations, to return to the table, without preconditions on either side, to continue these national level discussions with a view to settling the dispute, allowing the marking boycott to be lifted and bringing an end to the annual cycle of disputes.

We further believe that there is merit in the Unions and UCEA discussing wider financial matters and seeking to identify areas of common concern and interest in relation to sector finances and the proportion of money allocated to pay within the current funding models. Through such joint understanding and sense of common purpose at a sector level we believe future national negotiations relating to pay would be more constructive.

### **Heriot-Watt University Joint Working**

We reaffirm our commitment to work together locally to make further improvements, recognising that some elements (such as the grade/pay spine mapping) are now strongly linked to potential work at a national level. In June 2022 we published a joint statement which is available on the [University website](#). Since publishing our joint statement work has continued in each of these areas to address the matters identified. Both parties acknowledge there is still more to be done in these areas to make sustainable and meaningful changes to the working lives of staff at Heriot-Watt.

The statement contained a number of actions which are being tracked via our joint negotiating committee. We will agree an update report on each of these actions by the end of August 2023 identifying what action is ongoing and what further action is required or planned, noting where they interact with national initiatives. We will work together with the other recognised Trade Unions to establish a timeline for progression for each outstanding action, and then issue an agreed update every quarter to all staff.