

10 KEY POINTS ON THE AUT DISPUTE

1. The Framework Agreement is the result of 2 years of national negotiations involving representatives of all HE trades unions, including the AUT president and officers – it did not appear overnight.
2. The 2 year pay offer from August 2003 provides an average 7.7% uplift, and potentially more for many AUT members.
3. The AUT position is at odds with that of other HE trades unions. Over 50% of HE staff have already fully accepted the Framework and want to work in partnership to achieve positive change. Additionally, NATFHE members voted overwhelmingly for conditional acceptance of the Framework.
4. The Framework aims to unify pay arrangements across the sector and address equal pay concerns. It specifies a single national pay spine for all staff and requires common grading across staff groups.
5. The AUT appears to be balloting all members (except heads of institutions and clinical academic staff) on industrial action. Some, such as professors, will be largely unaffected by the Framework Agreement. Others, such as those in post-92 HEIs will be untouched by the concerns AUT has raised (which are not shared by NATFHE as regards its members).
6. New pay structures will be underpinned by job evaluation – which all modern employers and trades unions believe is the best means of securing equal pay for work of equal value.
7. The Framework Agreement includes an illustrative '*model*' pay structure, but makes clear that variants and alternatives can be negotiated in partnership locally to meet the varying needs and circumstances of different universities and colleges.
8. The Framework sets out important national parameters, but it is in the detailed application at institution level that AUT concerns about particular aspects of the '*model*' can be addressed. A number of universities have offered to work with the AUT to prove that it's fears are unfounded.
9. The Technical Group set up to develop a library of academic role profiles has the capacity to recommend changes to the '*model*' if there is evidence suggesting the need for this. By declaring a dispute and ruling themselves out of the Technical Group, AUT is missing the opportunity to influence further change.
10. The '*model*' in the Agreement is just that, it is not the only way forward and the AUT has every right to pursue a variant with individual HEIs if it judges that would be preferable for its members.

PROPOSED HE PAY FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT - THE FACTS

BENEFITS FOR ACADEMIC AND RELATED STAFF

- * Pay increases totalling at least 6.5% by August 2004, with a further 1.2% on average where universities and colleges can introduce the new pay spine by that date.
- * Additional increases for some staff resulting from regradings associated with the introduction of new pay structures, which collectively are likely to increase average earnings by another 3%-5%.
- * New pay progression opportunities for many staff (especially in post-92 HEIs), with higher grade maxima related to contribution.
- * Active steps to deliver equal pay for work of equal value, via the introduction of new pay structures which are rooted in job evaluation and have common grading across different staff groups.
- * Retention of a national framework for pay determination in HE, with a single national pay spine but scope for locally negotiated flexibility to meet the varying circumstances of universities and colleges.
- * Detailed implementation of new pay arrangements to be negotiated in partnership between HE institutions and their recognised trades unions.

PAY INCREASES FOR ACADEMIC STAFF

If universities implement the model pay structure in Appendix C of the Framework Agreement (without locally agreed variations) from August 2004, pay for academic staff who are confirmed in broadly equivalent grades* will increase as follows:

Pre-92 universities			
	July 2003	August 2004*	increase
Lecturer A			
Minimum	£22191	£24886	12.1%
Standard maximum	£25451	£28009	10.1%
Contribution maximum	[£25451]	£30607	[20.3%]
Lecturer B			
Minimum	£26270	£28850	9.8%
Standard maximum	£33679	£36546	8.5%
Contribution maximum	£37629	£41133	9.3%
Senior Lecturer			
Minimum	£35251	£37643	6.8%
Standard maximum	£39958	£43638	9.2%
Contribution maximum	£43067	£46296	7.5%
Professorial minimum	£40841	£44947	10.1%
Post-92 universities and colleges			
Lecturer			
Minimum	£22191	£24886	12.1%
Standard maximum	£27669	£29715	7.4%
Contribution maximum	[£27669]	£30607	10.6%
Senior Lecturer			
Minimum	£25708	£28850	12.2%
Standard maximum	£34191	£36546	6.9%
Contribution maximum	[£34191]	£39935	16.8%
Principal Lecturer			
Minimum	£32125	£37643	17.2%
Standard maximum	£40394	£43638	8.0%
Contribution maximum	[£40394]	£46296	14.6%

* Job-evaluation/role-analysis is likely to lead to upward regrading for numbers of staff and, overall, to increase average earnings by an additional 3%-5%.

AUT MISINFORMATION

In recent weeks the AUT has made a number of inaccurate claims based on misleading information. The following rebuttals seek to set the record straight:

AUT claim – The employers have refused to negotiate.

The facts – The Framework Agreement was the result of two years of detailed negotiations with representatives of all HE trades unions, including the President and officers of the AUT. Since it was negotiated in July, employers' representatives have had frequent meetings with the AUT making clear their willingness to address concerns raised by the union but not to renegotiate fundamental parts of the Framework. The Framework Agreement has now been formally ratified by all four unions representing support staff (Unison, Amicus, TGWU and GMB), and has been endorsed in principle by 75% of those voting in a ballot of NATFHE members.

AUT claim – The Framework Agreement means the end of national bargaining.

The facts – On the contrary, the Framework is intended as a means of retaining national bargaining whilst providing for elements of local flexibility to meet the varying needs and circumstances of over 160 HE institutions. It provides for a single nationally-negotiated pay spine and specifies the principles and parameters within which the detail of pay structures can be negotiated locally. The alternative could be wholly local negotiation of pay – especially given the pressures on universities and colleges to meet HEFCE's criteria for access to their share of the £220m Rewarding and Developing Staff initiative (rising to £287m in 2005-06).

AUT claim – The Framework Agreement means imposition of local pay arrangements which will be worse than current provisions.

The facts – The Framework specifically requires: that new pay structures and progression arrangements are negotiated in partnership with recognised trades unions; and that present pay agreements remain in force until new arrangements are so negotiated.

AUT claim – The pay offer amounts to a real terms pay freeze.

The facts – The increases of at least 3.44% from August 2003 and 3% from August 2004, with an additional 1.2% when staff move to the new national pay spine, are significantly above the increase in RPI over the last year and the expected increase over the coming year. They are also more than has been offered to other groups in the public sector. For instance, pay for schoolteachers was increased by 2.9% from April 2003 and will rise by a further 2.5% from April 2004. As an added guarantee, HE employers have offered the prospect of increasing the 2004 rise so as to match inflation in the unlikely event of that exceeding 3%.

AUT claim - The Framework Agreement will break the link between academic and academic-related staff.

The facts – The Framework explicitly requires common grading across all staff groups, relative to evaluated job weights; which, inter alia, means common grade structures for academic and academic-related staff. This will strengthen the links between grading for the two groups, prospectively eliminating the present AR4 grade which has no academic counterpart.

AUT claim – The Framework Agreement may lead to 1 in 6 staff being downgraded – as confirmed by job evaluation of academic-related staff at one university.

The facts – The actual outcome of the job evaluation exercise at the university concerned was that over 1 in 6 (17.8%) of the academic-related staff have been upgraded, whilst only 1 in 36 (2.8%) have had their post downgraded but continue in those posts with protected pay.

AUT claim – UCEA’s estimates of the cost of implementing the Framework Agreement mean that only 5% of staff will benefit.

The facts – All staff will benefit from the 7.7% increase in pay rates. Some will gain additionally from regrading following job evaluation. The cost of implementing these pay restructuring elements of the Framework is estimated to be between 3% and 5% of the total paybill. If this was directed to only 5% of staff, those individuals would virtually double their salaries!! The real expectation is that a much wider proportion of staff will benefit.

AUT claim – Porters, plumbers and cleaners will be graded higher than lecturers, as shown by a pilot job evaluation exercise at one university.

The facts – This is manifest nonsense. All job evaluation exercises undertaken to date have found lecturers to have a significantly higher job weight than manual staff. The claim seems to have originated from a “typo” in the initial draft of a table reporting findings from HERA pilots at 12 universities in early 2002 – an error that was quickly corrected.

AUT claim – The Framework Agreement will significantly reduce career earnings: for academic staff by £4,300 over 10 years; and for academic-related and research staff by £17,300 over 9 years.

The facts – Projections of likely career earnings depend on assumptions about the detail of how pay structures will be applied at each university and about the starting pay and promotion and progression prospects for individuals. Over a decade such projections are very sensitive to small changes in these assumptions. The AUT’s calculations are based on generally pessimistic assumptions which would not apply to the vast majority of staff. For example:

- The AUT’s projections for academic staff assume that new lecturers start at the bottom of the present Lecturer A grade or its future counterpart. In fact, most new lecturers start higher up the scale and can be expected to do so in future;
- The AUT assumes that new academic-related staff will be promoted to a bigger job in a higher grade after 8 years. At present such promotions normally occur within 3 years, and on that basis these staff would gain between £6,300 and £8,900 under the Framework rather than lose £17,300 as claimed by the AUT.

Importantly, the Framework Agreement requires that the details of pay structures and progression arrangements are developed at each university in partnership with the recognised trades unions. Is it likely that local AUT representatives will agree to new pay arrangements detrimental to their members? There are a myriad ways in which the detail of such local agreements could differ from the AUT’s assumptions to avoid the loss of earnings claimed by the union. For instance (without any other change in the AUT’s pessimistic assumptions):

- Setting the contribution threshold one point lower than in the model illustrated in the Framework (a proposal which the AUT rejected last July) would turn the claimed loss of earnings for new lecturers into a gain of £2,100.

AUT claim - Research, approved by HESA, shows that locally-determined pay for academics is lower, particularly for female staff.

The facts – This research by AUT – which HESA denies approving – compared data on earnings by grade under present national pay scales with data which they claim to be comparable except that the pay rates were determined by individual HEIs. Detailed analysis shows that the latter dataset includes, for at least some universities: professors (whose pay is set locally above a nationally-negotiated minimum); part-time hourly-paid lecturers; lecturers on national FE scales; academics whose HEI has consolidated London weighting payments; academics on former FE64 contracts in Scotland; lecturers in nursing and other health studies on national NHS pay scales; lecturers in pre-92 universities who retain post-92 pay rates following HEI mergers; as well as staff at the very few HEIs which do have locally-determined pay scales for lecturers generally. It seems unlikely that comparisons with such a miscellany will produce meaningful conclusions.