



JNCC Update – September 2025

At the September JNCC, UCU raised key concerns around employment security, workload, and transparency. Management confirmed that roles advertised as permanent were changed to fixed-term due to student numbers, with UCU requesting written justification. Union Facilities Time for fractional and adjunct staff is being formalised in our recognition agreement, and University Exec agreed to clarify moderation guidance.

Faculty pay progression remains frozen for 2025/26, though benchmarking data will be updated in consultation with UCU. Workshops on the workload model are being scheduled, and will include UCU and faculty input. Recruitment remains a strategic priority, with validation programmes expanding. UCU emphasised the need for better coordination between faculty and marketing. A follow-up meeting will be held in November to address unresolved issues.

Call to Action: If you've experienced issues with contracts, workload, or unpaid duties, or have concerns you'd like us to raise; please get in touch. Your input helps us advocate effectively. Email the Branch or speak to your Reps.

Samantha Bracey, Branch Chair

UCU's Review of University Policies

- *Catherine Dille, Branch Co-Secretary*

University policies may not seem like the most exciting topic, but clear and equitable policies have a real impact on our working conditions. The UCU Branch Executive regularly reviews new and revised University policies that affect our members' terms and conditions.

Over the past year, we have advised and suggested improvements on more than a dozen policies, including disciplinary and grievance procedures, induction and probation, alcohol, flexible working and various forms of leave. We have requested that HR communicate changes and updates on policies to all employees as they are implemented, and we encourage our members to stay up to date with these too.

Fighting for better pay: pay negotiations

After extensive discussions, the University made a final offer of a 1.5% pay increase for all eligible staff, including UET, effective 1 July 2025. Members voted to conditionally accept this offer, contingent on a minimum further 0.5% uplift in January 2026. However, this uplift will not materialise due to financial constraints and lower-than-expected Fall 2025 student enrolments.

Comparison with our claim: Our original pay claim proposed a multi-year reparation strategy totaling 11.3% over two years, including:

- 3.5% in July 2025
- 3.5% in January 2026
- 4.3% in July 2026

This was based on a 3.6% RPI increase (Jan 2025), a 37% real-terms pay devaluation since 2018, and sector-wide increases ranging from 2.5% to 5.7%.

Next Steps: Despite assurances, the promised October negotiation round did not resume. We have now been advised that next year's pay talks will begin in December. Management has agreed to revisit staff benefits, including career progression, leave entitlements, and broader structural issues affecting wellbeing and equity. However, given the lack of progress on pay, we have informed management that we must consult members on potential industrial action.

We share our members' disappointment that the final offer falls far short of addressing the long-term erosion of our salaries. As the cost of living continues to rise and our pay fails to keep pace, the burden on staff grows heavier. Richmond UCU remains committed to advocating for fair and equitable compensation.

- *Lucia Morawska, Co-Secretary*

Green Issues

- *Fiona Ffoulkes, Green Officer*

Exciting news about the creative interior design competition to 'bring the outside in', organised by UCU and Estates & Management, as we can announce that it is nearly ready to launch. This will be announced at the beginning of Sustainability Week when Inma Ramos will be running other activities including Carbon Literacy training. The aim of our competition is to raise awareness of environmental issues and improve the health and well-being of all staff and students.



Ham Common, photo taken by Fiona Ffoulkes (25/10/2025)

We will ask for people to submit their visual images of nature and wildlife - from Kew Botanical Gardens to anywhere in the world. There will be several winners (working as individuals or part of a group) and their image/series of images will then be displayed on walls and screens in different interior spaces, particularly the rooms without windows. To learn more, and know how to submit your images, look out for the launch on the 7 November.

UCU Unite Against The Far Right

- Shuna Neilson, Membership Officer

On 8 October, Shuna Neilson, Membership Secretary, attended a UCU special meeting online: Unite against the Far Right (FR). As you will know, 'Operation Raise the flag' has been creating an atmosphere of fear throughout the country, intimidating many and emboldening those expressing extremist views. It has also led to violent action: in my local area the Peacehaven mosque was firebombed. As well as joining a local Whatsapp group of resistance and distributing stickers and posters around the town with a message approximating 'Unity in Diversity', I looked to the UCU's Unite against the Far Right for ideas on how to resist.

UCU useful info and advice: The current economic crisis: poverty and lack of hope is making people angry. The FR is thriving on this (but the FR will not create better conditions). The major parties are allowing Reform to set the agenda with a rhetoric of scapegoating migrants. It's important to challenge with facts and show solidarity. A rally is good, a festival is better.

ACTIONS and key resources (see links in online version):

- Set up a local anti-racist group

- Host a joy-based community event that mixes food, music, action sign-ups.
- Create a local media contacts list and have 3 spokespeople ready for short-notice interviews
- Have a Whatsapp group for rapid mobilisation and solidarity alert.
- [Refugee Council](#)
- [UK Gov](#)
- [Migration Observatory](#)
- [Politics Centre](#)
- [Best for Britain](#)
- [Whatsapp group for UCU against Far Right if you want to join](#)

Recommendation: Richmond UCU should join the national UCU and other local UCU branches in affiliating with Stand Up To Racism (SUTR) for mutual support and a united resistance. In Solidarity!

Get Involved with your Union!

We are looking for volunteer Caseworkers and Departmental Reps to help build and diversify the voice of the Union. Please get in touch with us with any news, ideas, or concerns you might have.



UCU Richmond Branch Committee Officers

Chair - Samantha Bracey

Co-Secretaries – Lucia Morawska and Catherine Dille

Adjunct Faculty Officer - Piola Massarotto

Membership Officer – Shuna Neilson

Equalities Officer – Kandida Purnell

Treasurer - Emmanuel Okyere

Health and Safety Officer – Martin Brown

Green Officer – Fiona Ffoulkes

Staff Officer – Vacant

RIASA Officer – Molly Bettie

