



Richmond UCU Pay Claim 2026–2027

1. Introduction

This 2026–2027 pay claim is submitted on behalf of Richmond UCU members, who continue to face severe real-terms pay cuts driven by inflation, rising living costs, and below-sector salary levels. Real-terms income losses since 2018 now range from £11,849–£21,561, depending on grade and level.

Members have also expressed a strong desire for pay justice across the institution. Accordingly, our claim includes the expectation that staff earning six-figure salaries should voluntarily forgo any pay increase in 2026–27 to demonstrate solidarity and shared sacrifice.

2. Context and Rationale

2.1 Inflation and Real-Terms Pay Devaluation

Using RPI-indexed changes from 2018 to 2025, cumulative real-terms salary losses remain extreme:

- Assistant Professors: £11,849–£13,879
- Associate Professors: £14,291–£16,556
- Professors: £16,598–£21,561

2.2 Cost-of-Living Pressures

Faculty face continuing cost pressures, including steep increases in food, energy, commuting and housing, alongside pension and NI changes.

2.3 Comparison with the HE Sector

Pay differentials continue to widen, despite the 1.5% uplift in 2025-2026 keeping pace with UCEA's 1.4%:

- Assistant Professors: £2,869–£5,467 below sector
- Associate Professors: £5,684–£6,721 below sector
- Professors: £8,375–£8,830 below sector

3. Pay Claim for 2026–2027

3.1 A cumulative 10.8% uplift over three years, beginning with a 3.5% increase in July 2026

This figure reflects inflation (using the most recent published RPI figure of 4.3% (2025)), accumulated pay losses, and sector catch-up.

3.2 Multi-Year Restoration Plan

A three-year framework:

- 2026: +3.5%
- 2027: +3.5%
- 2028: +3.8%

3.3 Structural Adjustments

Restoration of progression pathways will go some way to improve pay for some, but will not fully address the scope and breadth of the issue due to the 3 year suspension and budget constraints, nor will it address pay compression.

4. Additional Requests

4.1 Workload and Well-Being

Past survey findings show unmanageable workloads, dissatisfaction with pay, and concerns about health, safety, and well-being. UCU plans to reissue the stress survey in Fall 2026 (a full year after portfolio rationalization and the changes to the operational model). Pending the Autumn 2026 stress survey, initial feedback shows that workload pressures remain high. Addressing pay meaningfully at this stage would help mitigate financial stress, which has consistently been identified as a key factor amplifying members' workload concerns.

4.2 Transparency and Solidarity Measures

- Publish senior leadership pay data annually.
- Freeze six-figure salaries for 2026–27.
- Direct savings toward faculty pay uplift.

5. Alignment with Strategic Plan

This claim supports commitments to a properly remunerated, diverse workforce in the 2021-2026 strategic plan. Further, we encourage the University to reaffirm its previous strategic commitment to ensuring staff are appropriately remunerated, as this principle is essential to delivering the ambitions outlined in the 2026–2030 Strategic Plan

6. Conclusion

Richmond UCU urges the University Executive Team to engage meaningfully with this pay claim to address long-term pay erosion and ensure a sustainable, competitive academic environment.

Richmond UCU Branch

April 2nd 2026