

JNC Enhanced Report, 14 January 2022

Attendees

Committee members	Observers
Judith Fish (Chair)	Dr Woon Wong, UCU observer
Phil Harding (UUK)	Professor Michael Otsuka, UCU observer
Stuart McLean (UUK)	Nicola Lee, UCU observer
Anthony Odgers (UUK)	Mike Shore-Nye, UUK observer
Margaret Monckton (UUK)	Russell Picot, USS observer
Dr Carol Costello (UUK)	Dr David Watts, USS observer
Dr Justine Mercer (UCU)	
Dr Deepa Driver (UCU)	
Paul Bridge (UCU)	
Dr Marion Hersh (UCU)	
Dr Sam Marsh (UCU)	

Update from the Trustee

A Trustee representative provided an update on the Sixteenth Deed of Amendment to [the scheme rules](#). The Deed will amend the rules to confirm that the last pension payment to the member covers a full month regardless of date of death. The amendment aligns the scheme rules with current operational practice. UCU representatives asked for more time to review the deed in detail, and it was agreed to return to it at a future date;

A Trustee representative provided an update on the [member consultation](#) including the volume of responses to date and their general themes. The group discussed how the data set will be analysed. The committee acknowledged the interim nature of the update and the importance of reviewing all responses after the consultation ends, within the window available to the JNC;

A UCU representative asked if the consultation modeller could be kept online after the consultation closes and Trustee representatives agreed to this;

A Trustee representative provided an overview of recent Trustee Board discussions including their consideration of future investment strategy, the upcoming [Statement of Investment Principles consultation](#) and the [Trustees Net Zero commitment](#);

A Trustee representative provided an update on the [Financial Management Plan](#), the group discussed a timeline for sharing information about the [most recent dashboards](#) and agreed to continue this discussion via email;

A Trustee representative gave the committee an update on the Seventeenth Deed of Amendment to [the scheme rules](#). The deed is intended to bring into effect the benefit and contribution changes actioned at the 31 August 2021 JNC meeting. The committee discussed the Deed in detail, and it was agreed that the conversation would continue via email after the meeting.

Stakeholder updates

UCU

A UCU representative highlighted [the escalation of ASOS](#) by UCU branches with a mandate for industrial action and the [reballoting of branches](#) who narrowly missed the threshold to win a mandate in the previous ballot;

They outlined the next steps in union decision making process on the USS dispute, including a branch delegate

Non-restricted (NR)

meeting and [a meeting of the UCU Higher Education Committee](#);

They noted that the current workloads for UCU JNC negotiators are challenging;

The representative noted the UCU wish to find a negotiated settlement, and for UUK to rescind their proposal.

UUK

A UUK representative provided the group with an update on the proposed timeline for reviewing member consultation responses, and highlighted their engagement with individual employers to help inform their formal response to the consultation output;

They noted their ongoing preparatory work ahead of the creation of a [working group to review scheme governance](#);

They provided an update on a recent informal briefing with [UNISON](#) on the member consultation.

Update on low cost benefits and conditional indexation working groups

The JNC Chair provided an update on the low cost working group, outlining the plan for surveying HE employees who had opted out of or declined to join USS to better understand their reasons for this;

A UUK representative noted the preparatory work and information gathering underway to support the conditional indexation group and expressed their hope that UCU representatives can join the group to develop this further. A UCU representative noted that there are some constraints for UCU around discussing conditional indexation because of the formal dispute on USS but also emphasised that where appropriate and reasonable UCU will input to the work of the group. They highlighted an upcoming briefing session on conditional indexation with an external expert as an example of an instance where they can be involved.

Additional matters covered at the meeting

- The group received an update on the recruitment process to appoint a permanent JNC Chair, noting that following a tendering process, a recruitment specialist has been appointed to manage the process. The committee also discussed the potential timeline for a handover.