

Dear members

UKSU still does not have a 'straight' answer from management on a variety of issues that need to be resolved forthwith.

It is extremely disappointing that issues are raised and responses are either non-existent or extremely slow. The UKSU Executive is 'tired' of meeting, after meeting, after meeting, after meeting where absolutely nothing is resolved. UKSU raised this as a problem with the Vice Chancellor when he started in an acting capacity and on numerous occasions since then. We sit with the same problem two years later.

There are a number of issues that UKSU needs to update members on, these will be addressed in a series of messages. The matters are:

- 1) Response / assurance regarding the re-opening of campuses;
- 2) Leave forfeiture;
- 3) JCF and JBF matters outstanding;
- 4) Car Scheme Arbitration;
- 5) Moderation of 2019 PM outcomes;
- 6) Performance based pay PbP - PM awards;
- 7) Performance pay progression PpP - PM awards;
- 8) Performance management 2020.

Stage 1 Implications – re-opening of campuses

A meeting was held on 23 September as requested by UKSU, to clarify issues related to the opening of the campuses to students (Notice of 21/09/2020). The questions raised could not be answered and the unions were promised that the concerns would be taken to the Campus Readiness Task Team and for answers and a response would be received in a few days. Two weeks later, management had still not responded. Consequently a message was sent collectively from NEHAWU, NTEU & UKSU on 4 October. To date no response has been received. It is almost a month.

Issues of concern:

- the app was still referring to 14 days isolation, whereas this was reduced to 10 days months ago and management had been reminded of the change previously too;
- the staff attendance on campus on a rotational basis, should also include rotation within a working day, i.e. staff should not be expected to be at work all day for their rotation but rather for a block period within a day;
- students seeking to meet with academics should primarily do so via electronic means but if required to be face-to-face, then a booking system should be in place;
- staff members are also considered vulnerable when they have a family member living in the same residence who have an underlying health condition;
- schools had instructed staff >60 years of age and with comorbidities to return, despite this being certified by a medical practitioner;
- sanitizer availability;
- mask availability for both staff and students;
- notice to students that they must wear their masks at all times and most definitely whilst interacting with staff;
- air conditioning systems;
- distances for work stations in common work areas.

Leave forfeiture

Any annual leave balances from the 2019 allocation, not taken by end November 2020, are due to be forfeited.

Where there is a credit balance in transitional leave and the annual 10 days have not been taken, these will be forfeited at the end of 2020.

This matter was raised with the EDHR as far back as April and is still not resolved.

The national restrictions on movements made it impossible for staff to move for leisure travel. Academic staff have found it mostly impossible to take any leave due to the changing requirements for online teaching. These staff were constantly being asked for information and continuous changing circumstances at the outset. More recently, things have settled and online teaching is reported to be more stable. However, due to the changes arising from lockdown, there were only a few days break between semesters and with the extension of semester 2 the situation has not changed regarding the possibility to take leave.

UKSU will continue to put pressure on management to abandon the 2020 forfeiture requirements – it is the right and only thing to do under these circumstances.

JCF & JBF Matters Outstanding

UKSU has just completed a schedule of matters that remain unresolved in the JCF and JBF and will forward this to the VC, as it provides support for the frustrations reported:

- 14 matters remain unresolved in the JCF - nine matters from 2018, five matters from 2019;
- 8 matters remain unresolved in the JBF - three matters from 2018, three matters from 2019 and two matters from 2020.

Car Scheme Arbitration

Message 2020:076 provided the last update following the arbitration scheduled for 7 and 8 September, when on the first day the University's attorney indicated that the University was considering agreeing to the full IEMAS offerings. UKSU agreed to allow the University 30 days to enter into the agreement with IEMAS, failing which UKSU would apply to the CCMA to resume the arbitration.

It appears to have taken two weeks for any process to commence, as this was when UKSU was asked for the IEMAS contact details, although HR should have been readily able to provide them! A meeting was held on 1 October between IEMAS representatives and representatives of Legal Services. In the words of the University's attorney after this, "UKZN commenced the review process", this is after the meeting of 1 October and the requested documents had been received from IEMAS on 5 October. UKZN Legal services responded to IEMAS' legal representative on 15 October, who promised a response by 19 October. Although, this is already two weeks over the deadline, your Executive will wait until the end of this week before contacting the CCMA.

Next Message

The next message will deal with the performance management issues as listed above.

Regards
UKSU Executive