



Royal Conservatoire *of* Scotland

16 September 2024

Confidential - by email

Dear all,

RCS final offer – pay award 2024-2025

Following the Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee on 19th August 2024, the RCS management team have considered the request by the joint trade unions to reconsider the offer tabled at the meeting by RCS in response to the pay claim of 5.5% to all spine points on the RCS salary scale from 1st August 2024.

As previously outlined in the paper to the JCNC (Paper for Joint Consultation and Negotiation Committee – response to pay claim 2024-25), the RCS has a budget deficit for 24-25 of £731K. To achieve this budget outcome is highly dependent on meeting projected student recruitment targets, short courses and accredited programme targets and implementation of curriculum design changes that provide more efficient use of our staffing resource.

The RCS committed in its response to align its offer to that currently being proposed by UCEA in the New JCNHES letter of 3rd July 2024. The offer included a staged approach with uplifts ranging from 2.5% to 5.7%. The staged approach included an uplift of £900 to all spine points from 1st August 2024, followed by the application of the balance of the pay award from 1st March 2024.

The RCS agreed to consider the request from the trade unions and advised that it would await the outcome of the JNCHES dispute resolution process before confirming the final offer. The final offer from JNCHES has now been confirmed, and no change has been made to the offer of 3rd July 2024.

The CSMT has considered various options, all of which have a significant cost implication. RCS recognises and accepts that the cost of living has increased significantly for all staff, however those same cost pressures have also impacted RCS, to a greater extent than any uplifts in funding. Support has been sought from the RCS Endowment Trust to maintain an appropriate level of working capital whilst the strategy to deal with the structural deficit gains traction. The purpose of the Trust is to provide strategic support to RCS in pursuit of its objectives on a sustainable basis over the longer term. This additional support requires capital funds to be drawn down by the

Trust which weakens its overall financial position and should be viewed as exceptional under the circumstances. It does not provide financial resource to be used to supplement pay awards which would exacerbate the deficit.

The CSMT recognise that its staff are its greatest resource, and it is committed to improving the working environment in various ways and will use tools such as the output from the staff survey to inform areas for improvement. However, the CSMT also has a duty and responsibility to ensure the financial sustainability of the institution. The Scottish Funding Council at HE Sector level, and the Board of Governors at RCS, have set a clear expectation that we plot an efficient way back to financial sustainability. It would therefore be counter to depart from national negotiations, particularly where such an approach would only deepen our budget deficit beyond the next 12 months.

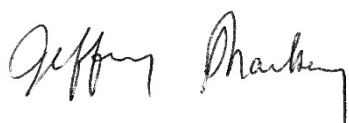
For these reasons, the RCS management team confirms that the original offer (aligned to the final offer made by UCEA) remains the final offer put to the trade unions for consideration by their members.

As detailed above, this would mean the application of £900 to all spine points, backdated to 1st August 2024. A further uplift from 1st March 2025 would be implemented, providing the balance to each spine point correlating to the appropriate percentage increase.

We understand that, should this be rejected by members, it will be necessary to enter into a dispute resolution process with the joint trade unions. Details of this process will be agreed with the joint trade unions if required. RCS has committed to maintain the status quo until any dispute resolution process is concluded, therefore no action will be taken at this time to implement any aspect of the proposed pay award.

For clarity of communication with staff, a table is attached which shows the current RCS salary scale, and the projected salaries for each spine point from 1st August 2024 and 1st March 2025, should the pay award be implemented. It will be necessary to communicate to all staff an update on the negotiations, and so I would ask that we arrange a meeting to discuss and agree a communication to ensure all staff are kept up to date.

Yours sincerely



Professor Jeffrey Sharkey
Principal