



**ACADEMIES  
THE FACTS**  
**PAY AND  
CONDITIONS**

**Moving to academy status can pose a massive threat to pay and conditions. Even if no changes are imposed at the time a school becomes an academy, existing pay and conditions may come under attack later.**

### **ACADEMIES ARE A THREAT TO OUR PAY AND CONDITIONS**

The system of national pay and conditions for school teachers protects all of us. You know what pay or maternity rights you can expect if you move schools; schools cannot arbitrarily make changes to pay levels or working hours. It has served education and teachers well.

This system is now under enormous attack. Academies and free schools are, by legislation, outside national pay and conditions.

Some head teachers tell staff they are proposing no changes to pay and conditions as part of a switch to academy status.

But, crucially, there is no legal guarantee for this. Existing teachers will only have the protections they bring from employment in the predecessor school and the academy can do what it wishes with new teachers. Even the right to keep pace with national provisions may have to be fought for. As more and more new teachers join the school, the pressure to agree to leave the national framework can be enormous. Some academy employers will try to buy out existing rights or change job descriptions in order to move staff onto a new contract.

### **IS THE THREAT EXAGGERATED? THE LESSON FROM FE COLLEGES**

Over fifteen years ago FE colleges went through a process called "incorporation" – where they were removed from local authorities and became independent. This is very similar to the process outstanding schools go through if they convert to academy status. At the time Principals told their teachers, "we will be freed from the shackles of the local authority".

But what's the reality? Many FE colleges now ignore the national pay and conditions for FE lecturers and support staff. FE lecturers are now one of the most casualised of all professions and many of our FE colleagues cannot get permanent contracts at all. All lecturers have seen their pay levels fall further and further behind school teachers.

## AND IT'S ALREADY HAPPENING IN ACADEMIES

In many academies a significant worsening of conditions has already been imposed on new staff. For example:

- **Longer contractual working hours** – Some academies, such as those operated by the Thomas Telford group, require 1500 hours or more of directed working time.
- **Absence of any limits on working time** – The ARK academies chain currently has no contractual limit of any kind on working time in its academies.
- **Changes to sickness and maternity arrangements** – The Bexley Business Academy's maximum sickness and

maternity benefits are well below the Burgundy Book arrangements.

- **Pay** – The National Audit Office report in September 2010 showed that, on average, the number of senior staff per academy earning £80,000+ was 50 per cent higher than in secondary schools generally. The flexibility academies have on pay has been used to benefit a small number of senior staff instead of benefiting all employees.

## WHAT CAN WE DO?

The best route to defend our pay and conditions is for schools not to become academies. So we recommend you act with your colleagues to:

- Discuss and pass the NUT model resolution; inform your head and governing body of members' position regarding academies; inform your division/association secretary when you have passed the resolution.
- If your governors do propose a consultation on academy status, get in touch with your NUT division urgently to discuss how to try to influence the governors.
- If your school does become an academy, seek NUT support and advice on how best to try to protect your pay and conditions.

For more information on academies and the model resolution, go to [www.teachers.org.uk/academies](http://www.teachers.org.uk/academies)

