# JCNF item – International Study Centre and third-party providers

The International Study Centre (ISC) at Cardiff University is a privatized provider operated by Study Group Limited. Over the last few years, people employed by ISC have raised concerns to Cardiff UCU in relation to employment practices. A recent case has revealed potentially discriminatory recruitment processes and as such we would like to discuss how Cardiff University ensures that ISC/Study Group conducts itself in accordance with CU’s policies and procedures.

We have been unable to find equality policies for Study Group online or on CU’s staff intranet, but their [gender pay gap reporting](https://gender-pay-gap.service.gov.uk/EmployerReport/Q4JcTD7R/2022) reveals concerning pay gaps that are greater than CU’s – the median pay for women is 28.8% less than men; the mean pay is 20% less; women are concentrated in the lower pay quarters; and shockingly their median pay bonus is **73.8%** less than that of men’s.

As you may be aware, Study Group and its iterations at other institutions have been resistant to recognizing trade unions voluntarily.[[1]](#footnote-1) Union recognition is a key factor in reducing unequitable practices, and public institutions now have a duty to uphold partnership working since the Social Partnership and Public Procurement (Wales) Bill has come into law. Cardiff University is the only Welsh institution to partner with Study Group and as such they may not be aware of the new legislation.

We believe that CU should only work with organisations that demonstrate clear policies and processes that reflect its own, particularly where employment matters are concerned. As such we hope you can answer the following questions, in relation to both Study Group/ISC and all other third-party providers:

* What due diligence did CU undertake when giving Study Group this contract, given that their policies do not seem to resonate with CU’s?
* How does CU assure quality control over the outsourced provision/partnership and defend standards?
  + Does CU have copies of Study Group/ISC’s policies, and can we have access to these?
* What is the timetable for CU’s compliance with the statutory duty to perform and publish impact assessments in respect of race, disability and gender?
* Will CU require that ISC recognise relevant trade union(s), in line with incoming Welsh legislation?

1. For instance, the UCU branch at the University of Sussex International Study Centre had to apply to CAC despite a petition being signed by over 50% of the proposed bargaining unit: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cac-outcome-ucu-and-sussex-international-study-centre/application-progress> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)