

## EIS-FELA Pay Claim 2026/28

### Introduction

The [EIS-FELA pay claim for 2026-28](#) was received on Monday 9 February 2026. The pay claim includes:

#### **Year 1 – 1 September 2026 – 31 August 2027**

A consolidated Pay Award of 4.5% on all salary points for all unpromoted and promoted lecturer staff, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2026.

#### **Year 2 – 1 September 2027 – 31 August 2028**

A consolidated Pay Award of 4% on all salary points for all unpromoted and promoted lecturer staff, effective from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2027.

In addition to the consolidated pay claim above, it also includes:

- A commitment to no compulsory redundancies;
- Distant Islands Allowance to be payable to all unpromoted and promoted lecturers whose place of employment is any of the islands listed in Appendix 1. The currently agreed SNCT rate is £2,997 effective from 1st October 2025 and we are seeking 4.5% and 4% increase on this for 2026/27 and 2027/28 respectively. It is imperative the Distant Islands Allowance is funded for colleges where lecturers are working in these islands in order that they do not suffer disproportionately any cuts and are able to sustain further education for the local populations without staff's living standards decreasing as a result; and
- Any payment under the inflation guarantee will be referred to for the purposes of this agreement as "the inflation guarantee payment".

To ensure any uplift to salaries can be made within the relevant pay period, average RPI inflation, as defined by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) will be calculated over the calendar year. For the 2026-27 pay period, average inflation will be calculated from September 2026 to August 2027. For the 2027-28 pay period average inflation will be calculated from September 2027 to August 2028.

For 2026-27 the pay claim is 4.5%, therefore if RPI inflation in 2026/27 averages higher than 3.5% over the period September 2026 to August 2027, then pay will be adjusted by the inflation guarantee payment to ensure the uplift over the period is 1 percentage point above average RPI inflation. For 2027-28 the pay claim is 4%, therefore if RPI inflation in 2027 averages higher than 3% over the period September 2027 to August 2028, then pay will be adjusted by the inflation guarantee payment to ensure the uplift over the period is 1 percentage point above average RPI inflation.

The full costings of this request have been prepared by Alan Ritchie and are set out in **Appendix 1**, which also provides a comparison of what the actual costs were of the Support Staff (now Professional Services Staff Pay Agreement).

## Pay Principles

Ahead of negotiations commencing and before any offer can be made, clarification must be sought from the Scottish Funding Council (SFC) to ascertain the Indicative Funding Allocation for colleges. This is not expected until **26 March 2026**.

In preparation for negotiations commencing, and as agreed at the February 2026 CES meeting, the CES Team contacted the Chairs and Vice Chairs of all CES Advisory Groups and asked a number of questions to ensure CES can consider the sector's negotiating 'wish list' and agree a Proactive Pay Claim Strategy for the management representatives.

Based on feedback received, the following five **Pay Principles** have been developed for discussion by CES and to be used when making any response to the EIS-FELA pay claim:

- 1. A multi-year approach (preferably three years).**
- 2. Response should be grounded in realism around SFC funding.**
- 3. An initial offer below PSPP and a negotiated overall outcome that does not exceed Public Sector Pay Policy. This is 3% per year for 26/27 and 27/28.**
- 4. Aligning with the support staff settlement remains a defensible position.**
- 5. Provides a strong communications position.**

Before commencing any negotiations where an offer will be made, several options have been presented in Appendix 1 for consideration by CES.

### Comparator Data of Other Public Sector Pay Awards

The CES Team has produced evidence of [comparator initial pay claims and settlements](#) from across the public sector between 2025 and 2028

Public-sector pay outcomes across Scotland and the UK show a widespread, with annual uplifts (proposed or actual) ranging from around 2.5% at the lower end to 10-11% when multi-year or structurally enhanced packages are included. Although to note Pay Awards for 2026/27 have generally been lower than awards made in 2025/26.

Across 2025/26, most Scottish settlements cluster around 4-5%, with higher cumulative outcomes for some groups. For example, Scottish Water, lower-graded staff have received 10.67% over two years, and the combined package for resident doctors, lifts overall increases for 2025/26 to nearly 9.9%, when contractual progression is included.

Looking ahead to 2026/27, offers and settlements continue to vary. In Scotland, second-year uplifts generally remain in the 3.5-3.75% range for sectors such as local government, nurses, and teachers. For resident doctors, the 2026/27 headline uplift reaches 9.4% once pay-point acceleration is factored in. By contrast, some UK-wide outcomes are markedly lower – such as the 2.5% increase outlined for England's resident doctors, and the 3.3% imposed uplift for nurses in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland.

When set against CPI inflation of around 3-4% over this period, most 2025/26 Scottish settlements sit above CPI, while 2026/27 settlements tend to be close to, but still generally above CPI. This differs from the situation elsewhere in the UK, where uplifts are below inflation, particularly in 2026/27, and have contributed to continued industrial tension.

Taken together, the figures show that Scotland's public-sector settlements across both years outpace inflation more consistently than comparable UK-wide outcomes.

## Additional Pay Claim Asks – Areas for Discussion

### No Compulsory Redundancies

In line with previous pay claims, the EIS-FELA will be advised that there will be no agreement on their request for a no compulsory redundancy guarantee.

### Distant Islands Allowance (DIA)

The CES Team has met with the three UHI colleges (North, West and Hebrides, Orkney and Shetland) that currently pay DIA from their own budget allocations, with no reimbursement for this allowance from SFC, despite this being funded for Local Authorities and the NHS. In addition, despite UHI Orkney being part of the local council, the council is unable to access funding on their behalf, as college staff are not listed as workers who are eligible for this allowance, despite staying on the island.

The total costs of DIA are set out below:

UHI Colleges	Professional Services £'s	Lecturing £'s	Total
North, West and Hebrides	163,500	117,000	<b>280,500</b>
Orkney	211,500	181,800	<b>393,300</b>
Shetland	233,195	126,540	<b>359,735</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>608,195</b>	<b>425,340</b>	<b>1,033,535</b>

All colleges have confirmed the allowance is:

- paid at the rate set by the Scottish Joint Council for Local Government Employees – COSLA – currently £2,997, and does not increase in line with Pay Awards
- paid to employees who actually reside on an island and not to employees who live remotely on the mainland
- pensionable
- to support the additional cost of living on an island and with recruitment and retention.

The CES Team has set out options for consideration in response to this request:

1. **CES agree to discuss DIA as part of the pay negotiations with the EIS-FELA, subject to being fully funded by the Scottish Government, noting it would not be increased in line with sector Pay Awards.**
2. **Agree to CES and the trade unions (EIS-FELA and Professional Services) jointly lobby the Scottish Government on funding for DIA but exclude from pay negotiations.**
3. **Remove the DIA from pay negotiations and ask Colleges Scotland to work with the three colleges on this matter.**

### Inflation Guarantee

CES is asked to consider, in response to this ask, that any offer is made with a re-opener clause in Year Three if a third year is agreed by CES. In Year Three, if inflation went above the pay agreement percentage, then the re-opener would be invoked. However, there would be no commitment to increase from the originally agreed position. To note, [COSLA agreed](#) a re-opener clause with teaching unions if mean inflation is above 3.75% CPI in the 12 months up to 31 March 2026.

It should also be noted that the EIS-FELA request for an inflation re-opener has been calculated using RPI inflation. However, RPI has been described as a “very poor” measure of general inflation, with a tendency to overestimate and underestimate price changes. In previous [guidance](#), the Office for National Statistics stated: “In 2013, the RPI lost its status as a National Statistic. Our position on the RPI is clear: we do not think it is a good measure of inflation and discourage its use. There are other, better measures available and any use of RPI over these far superior alternatives should be closely scrutinised.”

## Sector Asks

In addition to the Pay Principles above, the [feedback](#) from the CES Advisory Groups has requested that pay negotiations should not be separated from Terms and Conditions. Key areas of feedback include:

- A commitment to workforce transformation and flexibility
- Flexibility from lecturers locally on when they take annual leave
- Flexibility on working hours e.g. evenings and weekends
- Class Contact ideally increased or annualised to allow local flexibility
- Increase in notice period for unpromoted lecturers
- TQFE Remission Time
- Strong desire for rationalisation and reduction of lecturer annual leave
- Geographic and Role Flexibility e.g. moving campus location and class sizes.

## Management Representatives Bespoke Negotiation Skills Training

The management representatives and members of the CES Team will use the feedback from the sector in its Bespoke Negotiation training with Scotwork on **Monday 16 March 2026**.

## Lecturing Staff Committee (LS-Com) – Thursday 19 March 2026

The first LS-Com to commence discussions with the EIS-FELA will be on **Thursday 19 March 2026**. The management negotiating team is mindful that at this meeting, we will not yet have received the SFC Indicative Allocations for colleges, as this is not due until **26 March 2026**.

As such, it is the intention to discuss at this initial meeting the wider Terms and Conditions matters proposed by the EIS-FELA in relation to the areas highlighted in this paper.

During this meeting, we will look to schedule a further meeting following the SFC announcement – potentially **Thursday 2 April 2026** and explain that this will allow the management representatives to make an informed decision on the pay elements of the claim before making any formal offer.

Please note, that two LS-Com meetings will take place on 19 March 2026, the first will be a standard business meeting where work already commenced will be discussed, but the EIS-FELA has included a number of additional items, including class contact time and class sizes, which may need to be considered during pay discussions. The second LS-Com will be focused on the pay claim only.

## Next Steps

CES will receive an update following the meeting on Thursday 19 March 2026, thereafter separate meetings will be scheduled with the EIS-FELA once the SFC Indicative Funding Allocations are made, where at this meeting, it is anticipated that the management representatives on behalf of CES will make a formal offer in line with the five pay principles and what has been agreed by CES.

## Recommendations

CES is asked to:

- discuss Paper 2.1
- discuss and agree a pay mandate for management representatives
- discuss and agree a response to the EIS-FELA additional asks.

CES Team  
March 2026

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## EIS-FELA Pay Claim Costings: EIS Claim and Different Models

## Aggregate cost to sector

			2025-26	2026-27	2027-28	2028-29	Total
			£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Teaching Staff</b>							
Base Cost			333,074	348,062	361,985	361,985	
	4.50%	EIS Claim		14,988			
	4.00%	EIS Claim			13,922		
	0.00%	Not in EIS claim				-	
<b>Teaching staff sub-total</b>				<b>14,988</b>	<b>13,922</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>28,911</b>
<b>Professional Services Staff</b>							
Base Cost			260,513	271,585	280,819	289,243	
	4.25%	Settled figure		11,072			
	3.40%	Settled figure			9,234		
	3.00%	Settled figure				8,425	
<b>Professional services staff sub-total</b>				<b>11,072</b>	<b>9,234</b>	<b>8,425</b>	<b>28,730</b>
<b>Total Cost</b>				<b>26,060</b>	<b>23,156</b>	<b>8,425</b>	<b>57,641</b>

### Model (1): 2025-26 as agreed then PSP

<b>Teaching Staff</b>							
Base Cost			333,074	341,168	349,458	349,458	
	4.14%	Settled figure	13,789				
	2.43%	EIS Claim		8,094			
	2.43%	EIS Claim			8,290		
	0.00%	Potential Settlement				-	
	<b>9.00%</b>						
		<b>Teaching staff sub-total</b>		<b>8,094</b>	<b>8,290</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,384</b>
		<b>Difference to EIS claim</b>		<b>(6,895)</b>	<b>(5,632)</b>	<b>0</b>	

### Model (2): PSP ignoring 2025-26

<b>Teaching Staff</b>							
Base Cost			333,074	343,066	353,358	363,959	
	4.14%	Settled figure	13,789				
	3.00%	Model 3 year offer		9,992			
	3.00%	Model 3 year offer			10,292		
	3.00%	Model 3 year offer				10,601	
	<b>13.14%</b>						
		<b>Teaching staff sub-total</b>		<b>9,992</b>	<b>10,292</b>	<b>10,601</b>	<b>30,885</b>
		<b>Difference to EIS claim</b>		<b>(4,996)</b>	<b>(3,631)</b>		

**Model (3): PSP(9%) plus 1.65 offered to Professional Services Staff**

<b>Teaching Staff</b>							
Base Cost			333,074	344,898	357,142	369,821	
	4.14%	Settled figure	13,789				
	3.55%	Model 3 year offer		11,824			
	3.55%	Model 3 year offer			12,244		
	3.55%	Model 3 year offer				12,679	
	<b>10.65%</b>						
	<b>Teaching staff sub-total</b>			<b>11,824</b>	<b>12,244</b>	<b>12,679</b>	<b>36,747</b>
	<b>Difference to EIS claim</b>			<b>(3,164)</b>	<b>(1,678)</b>		

**Model (4): As above but over 2 years and taking 25-26 into account**

<b>Teaching Staff</b>							
Base Cost			333,074	343,916	355,110	355,110	
	4.14%	Settled figure	13,789				
	3.255%	Model 3 year offer		10,842			
	3.255%	Model 3 year offer			11,194		
	0.00%					-	
	<b>10.65%</b>						
	<b>Teaching staff sub-total</b>			<b>10,842</b>	<b>11,194</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>22,036</b>
	<b>Difference to EIS claim</b>			<b>(4,146)</b>	<b>(2,728)</b>		<b>(6,784)</b>

### EIS Pay claim if applied to each lecturer pay point

Request 2026-27	01/09/2026 Theoretical	% Increase	Average	Overall Average	Request 2027-28	01/09/2027 Theoretical	% Increase	Average	Overall Average		
£ 1,883	£ 43,721	4.5%	}		£ 1,749	£ 45,470	4.0%	}			
£ 1,978	£ 45,943	4.5%				£ 1,838	£ 47,781			4.0%	
£ 2,074	£ 48,171	4.5%			£2,074	£ 1,927	£ 50,098			4.0%	£1,927
£ 2,170	£ 50,397	4.5%	}	4.5%	£ 2,016	£ 52,413	4.0%	}	4.0%		
£ 2,266	£ 52,625	4.5%				£ 2,105	£ 54,730			4.0%	
£ 2,449	£ 56,869	4.5%	}		£ 2,275	£ 59,144	4.0%	}			
£ 2,596	£ 60,283	4.5%			£2,596	£ 2,411	£ 62,694			4.0%	£2,411
£ 2,743	£ 63,696	4.5%				£ 2,548	£ 66,244			4.0%	