

Wednesday, 19 December 2018

Comment on EIS-FELA Strike Action Ballot

Commenting on the announcement by the Educational Institute of Scotland–Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) that their members have voted to support industrial action, John Gribben, Director of Employment Services at Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, said:

“It is extremely disappointing that colleges are once again facing disruptive industrial action with the EIS-FELA looking to take lecturers out on strike for the third time in four years.

“At the heart of this dispute, is that the EIS-FELA will not accept that the pay increases from National Bargaining are increases in pay. They also want more pay for cost of living. The employers' view is that a pay rise is a pay rise, irrespective of where it comes from, and the EIS-FELA has rejected a combined pay offer which would increase lecturers' pay on average by more than 12% over three years – this is the best pay offer anywhere across Scotland's public services.

“Lecturers in Scotland are already being offered a better pay deal than Public Sector Pay Policy in Scotland from the combined pay rises and are paid significantly better than their counterparts in the rest of the UK.

“Finances are extremely tight for colleges and all of the 1.3% real term increase in revenue funding for colleges – £18.3 million – announced in last week's 2019-20 Draft Budget will be used for National Bargaining.

“The employers' final pay offer would increase lecturers' average pay from £36,125 in April 2016 to £40,522 in April 2019 – an increase of 12.2%. This is a very generous offer.

“During the ballot period the EIS-FELA submitted a revised pay claim. Whilst we welcome that the EIS-FELA position has moved, it is disappointing that the claim was not received prior to the ballot commencing. Affordability issues remain key and the revised pay claim requires to be costed. Once this is done, we will continue our dialogue with the EIS-FELA.”

Notes to Editor:

Colleges' pay offer to lecturing staff:

Year 1: 1st April 2017 – 31st March 2018

All lecturers who received less than £600 during the first 25% of National Bargaining harmonisation will receive an additional unconsolidated payment to ensure that every employee will receive a minimum of £600.

Year 2: 1st April 2018 – 31st March 2019

All lecturers who received less than £1,000 during the second 25% of National Bargaining harmonisation will receive an additional unconsolidated payment to ensure that every employee will receive a minimum of £1,000.

Year 3: 1st April 2019 – 31st March 2020

Immediately following the final 50% National Bargaining harmonisation payment, a consolidated award of 2.5% for all lecturers.

Outline of improved terms and conditions agreed for lecturing staff through National Bargaining:

On top of the 9% national average pay increase from harmonisation over the same three-year period, lecturers are also receiving annual leave increases to 62 days' holiday, a reduction in teaching hours to 23 hours weekly contact with students, salary conservation ensuring the retention for four years where a member of staff is currently in receipt of existing local salary conservation arrangements, paid provision of 150 hours remission time within existing paid hours for approximately 1,500 lecturers who don't have formal teaching qualifications to gain a TQFE, plus other terms and conditions either safeguarded or enhanced.

ENDS

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