

Thursday 21 March 2019

EIS-FELA Strike Action – Number of Lecturers on Strike Dwindles

Commenting on day four of the latest strike action taken by the EIS-FELA and the reduction in the number of lecturers out on strike, John Gribben, Director of Employment Services at Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, said:

“Support for the EIS-FELA strike action is dwindling. The number of lecturers out on strike has waned with each passing day of action and the 17% drop in support shows that lecturers are voting with their feet in response to the refusal of the EIS-FELA to engage in a two-way process or offer any compromises in the negotiation process.

“The college sector is gravely concerned by the EIS-FELA's ploy to withhold assessment results if they receive a mandate for action short of strike action, as this will have catastrophic consequences for students. Students would not be able to achieve their qualifications, meaning they would be unable to move on to other courses at college or university, finalise their apprenticeships or move into jobs, and this EIS-FELA ruse is an unacceptable and reckless gamble with students' futures.

“Lecturers in Scotland are by far the best paid across the UK, and the EIS-FELA has taken its members out on strike despite national average pay rises from harmonisation and the current offer from colleges equating to more than £5,000 – or more than 12% – over this three-year pay dispute period. The EIS-FELA is yet to formally take any of our offers to their members to see if they would accept or not.

“Lecturers have had significant financial gains and improvements in terms and conditions over the 2017-20 pay period and the EIS-FELA must realise that the current offer from colleges – costing over £10 million – is coming from cuts to college budgets. We urge the EIS-FELA to finally negotiate by engaging in a meaningful two-way process and compromise rather than continuing to demand more pay without offering anything in return.”

Notes to Editor:

Number of lecturers out on strike:

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|--------------------------------|-------|
| Day 1 (16 January 2019) | 4,220 |
| Day 2 (5 February 2019) | 3,783 |
| Day 3 (6 March 2019) | 3,675 |
| Day 4 (21 March 2019) | 3,337 |

These figures are initial returns from colleges and are not based on those who will receive strike pay deductions. Overall numbers are likely to drop further.

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. The combined pay rises from harmonisation and the current offer on the table increases the top of the unpromoted lecturer scale to £41,167.

ENDS

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