

**Friday 29 March 2019**

### **Comment on EIS-FELA Striking During Exams**

Commenting on the EIS-FELA's decision to strike for three days in May during the exam period, John Gribben, Director of Employment Services at Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, said:

"It is extremely disappointing but not surprising news, as the EIS-FELA is constantly on strike and it is their idea of negotiating. The EIS-FELA is out of control and by also committing to withholding students' assessment results they have crossed a line which is recklessly gambling with students' futures.

"By announcing three days of strikes during the exam period, the EIS-FELA has compounded its attack on students and is trying to cause maximum disruption to the students, but colleges will do everything in their powers to mitigate the impact. This is the behaviour of an unprofessional, reckless body which is displaying contempt for college students. The EIS-FELA's conduct is in stark contrast to the EIS, which promised not to take teachers out on strike during exams had that pay dispute resulted in strike action.

"Lecturers in Scotland are by far the best paid in the UK, and the pay harmonisation rises from 2017 to 2020, combined with the current pay offer on the table from colleges, equate to a national average increase of over £5,000 – or more than 12% in three years – which exceeds public sector pay by far. The current unconditional offer on the table is a flat cash payment of £625 for all lecturers in years 1 and 2 plus public sector pay of 2% or 3% in year 3, and this is on top of the significant pay rises from harmonisation and improvements in terms and conditions.

"In October 2018, Colleges Scotland Employers' Association signed a two-and-a-half-year deal with the support staff trade unions, UNISON, Unite, and GMB, after both parties compromised, but the EIS-FELA is unreasonable and refuses to compromise. The EIS as a corporate body has agreed a three-year deal for teachers with the Scottish Government and COSLA which involved compromises on both sides, so we are calling for EIS General-Secretary Larry Flanagan to personally take control of the pay dispute talks and take over from the EIS-FELA as they have proved utterly incapable of negotiating or compromising."

**ENDS**

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