



Tuesday, 14 May 2019

EIS-FELA Dismiss Tenth Offer and Demand Four-Day Week for Lecturers in Colleges

Representatives for colleges held the 19th dispute meeting with the Educational Institute of Scotland Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) in Stirling on Monday, 13 May 2019, where the EIS-FELA rejected calls to suspend strike action and action short of strike action.

Colleges have tabled a substantially improved offer and asked the EIS-FELA to put the overall package on pay, terms and conditions to their members to see if they will accept it, but instead of doing that they are paying for their members to go out on strike and they have gone out to ballot their members on the terms and conditions alone.

The EIS-FELA stated that their latest industrial action – scheduled for Wednesday, 15 and Thursday, 16 May 2019, following the suspension of strike action planned for Wednesday, 8 May 2019 – will go ahead unless colleges agree to their demands to allow all lecturers to only work a four-day week in college and get paid almost £42,000.

Colleges have offered flexible working arrangements which give the right for lecturers to request working outwith colleges, subject to operational business needs. Colleges would never agree to giving this as an automatic entitlement as that would be unsustainable for the sector and lead to a reduced service to students.

Regrettably, the EIS-FELA is unscrupulously telling its members that the working arrangements section in the terms and conditions would grant them an automatic right of up to seven hours a week working outwith the college, which is absolutely not the case and nor will they ballot their members on the full package, despite knowing the pay, terms and conditions are inextricably linked.

Commenting on the decision by the EIS-FELA to resume their strike action this week, Interim Director of Employment Services for Colleges Scotland Employers' Association, Heather Stevenson, said:

“The EIS-FELA is continuing with its strike action and action short of strike action and is demanding that lecturers have an automatic right to a four-day week in college and get paid almost £42,000. Colleges have put a generous package on the table which would take over 90% of unpromoted lecturers to £41,426 and provide all lecturers with the right to request flexible working arrangements, but colleges could never grant this an automatic entitlement for up to seven hours a week for all lecturing staff. That would be simply unsustainable for the college sector and adversely affect students.

“Colleges are doing everything we can to end this dispute for the sake of students, who are being deliberately targeted by the EIS-FELA. Progress has been made in recent discussions, so it is incredibly disappointing that the EIS-FELA has rejected our calls to suspend the strikes and take our offer to their members for the first time in this dispute, as we believe they would recognise it is a good deal and accept it.

“The EIS-FELA should not be attacking students in this way by striking during exams and withholding students' assessment results, but colleges are mitigating the impact of their action and we are confident their attempts to cause maximum disruption will not succeed despite them paying their members to go out on strike.

“The number of lecturers out on strike has waned by almost a quarter since the first strike action, and that is because lecturers in Scotland are by far the best paid in the UK, and the pay

harmonisation rises from 2017 to 2020, combined with the improved pay offer on the table from colleges, now equate to a national average increase of over £5,000 – or more than 13%. Lecturers have also had significant improvements in terms and conditions over the same 2017-20 pay period, including an enviable 62 days' holiday per year and a reduction in class contact time to 23 hours per week.

“Some progress has been made in recent dispute discussions and we hope to resolve the outstanding issues on the total package of pay and conditions of service and we will continue to meet with the EIS-FELA until their latest industrial action is resolved for the sake of the students.”

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 as this current pay dispute, 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 new offer on the table increases the top of the unpromoted lecturer scale to £41,426.

ENDS

For further information, please contact:

Will McLeish, Head of Communications and Public Affairs:

Tel: 01786 892063

Mobile: 07712 404 397

Email: will.mcleish@collegesscotland.ac.uk

Joanne Buchan, Communications and Public Affairs Officer:

Tel: 01786 892012

Mobile: 07590 229 707

Email: joanne.buchan@collegesscotland.ac.uk