

**Tuesday, 23 March 2021**

## **Upcoming Industrial Action by the EIS-FELA**

The Educational Institute of Scotland Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) is taking strike action on Thursday, 25 March 2021 regarding the use of tutor/assessor/instructor roles.

The strike is going ahead on Thursday despite a request from the employers' representatives to suspend any action whilst discussions are ongoing.

We have agreed to meet the EIS-FELA again early next week (w/c 29<sup>th</sup> March) to continue discussions.

Shona Struthers, Chief Executive of Colleges Scotland, said:

“The strike action planned for Thursday by the EIS-FELA is extremely disappointing after what has already been a very difficult and challenging year for staff and students across Scotland. The EIS-FELA is taking unnecessary industrial action at a critical time when there is a need for stability and certainty within the sector as we deal with the impact of the pandemic.

“The EIS-FELA has accepted that there is no national plan to replace lecturers with tutor/assessor/instructor roles nor any other support staff roles yet have still pressed ahead with strike action. It appears that the EIS-FELA has not considered the impact that strike action will have on students who are trying to complete their courses by the end of the academic year in the midst of lockdown restrictions and risks having their learning further compromised by needless industrial action.

“We are still working through one detail of an agreement with the EIS-FELA, and the employers want to make sure that it recognises the complex and professional nature of the role that lecturers undertake. We also need to be confident that, in reaching a resolution, we don't agree a solution that could impact adversely on staff not within scope of EIS-FELA, i.e. support staff. As employers, colleges have a duty of care to all staff.

“The employers' representatives are meeting with the EIS-FELA early next week to continue discussions.”

**ENDS**

### **Notes to Editor:**

- The EIS-FELA national dispute “centres on the replacement of lecturer posts with other posts at colleges across the country, to carry out work the EIS believes to be equivalent to the work of lecturers”. The employers have given a clear commitment that there is no national plan to replace lecturers with tutor/assessor/instructor roles, nor any other support staff roles. This position is reflected in an eight-point statement which both sides fully support.
- The employers are clear that all roles, whether they be lecturing or support-staff, are equally valuable and necessary for the effective running of colleges and delivering the best learner experience. Each role is distinct and plays its own part in the successful operation of colleges. This position is reflected in an eight-point statement which both sides fully support.

- Both sides are supportive of a national role profile for lecturers. This profile has a number of core responsibilities and attributes which reflect the complex and professional nature of the role of the lecturer. The employers view is that this is a holistic role profile. The EIS-FELA view is that just one of the core responsibilities is necessary to deem someone a lecturer. This the outstanding issue still to be agreed and is the basis for today's industrial action and ongoing discussions.
- Tutor/assessor/instructor roles are not new to the college sector; they have been in place within colleges across Scotland for a considerable number of years to deliver a diverse curriculum and qualifications which best suits the needs of the learner and the subject matter being taught. For example, work-based assessors help people in work achieve Scottish Vocational Qualifications.
- The college sector is not unique in using a variety of different roles to deliver their services. Different sectors and professions also have a range of support staff roles which are required such as teachers and classroom assistants, solicitors and para-legals, dentists and hygienists, nurses and nursing assistants.

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