

Wednesday, 31 March 2021

Comment on Industrial Action by the EIS-FELA

The Educational Institute of Scotland Further Education Lecturers' Association (EIS-FELA) is taking further strike action on Wednesday, 31 March 2021 and Thursday, 1 April 2021, despite repeated requests to suspend action whilst talks continue.

During last week's industrial action (Thursday, 25 March 2021), the majority (59%) of lecturers across Scotland did not go out on strike.

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". **Both sides agree that there is no national plan to replace lecturers with tutor/assessor/instructor roles, nor any other support staff roles.**

Both sides are also 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 some of the core responsibilities are necessary to deem someone a lecturer. This the outstanding issue still to be agreed and is the basis for industrial action.

A spokesperson for the Colleges Scotland Employers' Association said:

"It is extremely disappointing that the EIS-FELA is taking unnecessary industrial action despite repeated requests to suspend any action while negotiations are ongoing.

"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.

"The EIS-FELA agrees that there is no national plan to replace lecturers' with other roles yet are still continuing to strike. There is also a consensus position on the content of a national role profile for lecturers.

"We are still working through one detail of the national role profile with the EIS-FELA, and the employers want to make sure 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 have agreed to another meeting with the EIS-FELA, and the date will be confirmed in due course."

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.

The college sector is not the only sector which uses a variety of different roles to deliver services, for example, teachers and teaching assistants, solicitors and para-legals, dentists and hygienists, nurses and nursing assistants.

ENDS

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