

# **The Educational Institute of Scotland**

## **E-learning Initiatives**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 The following resolution was approved by the 2016 Annual General Meeting:  
*"This AGM instructs Council to investigate and report on the work load and contractual implications for teachers and lecturers of e-learning initiatives."*
- 1.2 In its initial consideration of the resolution the Committee agreed to seek further information from Western Isles Local Association the resolution was moved and seconded by members of that Local Association.
- 1.3 The LA Secretary provided a committee paper "e-Sgoil nan Eilean Siar" (November 2015) and a response from Western Isles Local Association incorporating members' views of the initiative.
- 1.4 The Committee noted an EIS-FELA paper setting out policy and guidance for branch negotiations on "Blended Learning, Online Learning and e-Learning" (issued December 2011).
- 1.5 The context for this paper is guidance for all Local Associations since it is likely that e-learning initiatives will become more prevalent in senior stages in the future both within Scottish Councils and across Scottish Councils.

### **e-Sgoil nan Eilean Siar**

- 2.1 The Council's paper set out the context and background for the initiative, identifying a number of barriers to equity of access to courses/certification in the Western Isles. The Council aimed to deliver subjects through direct teaching input or an on-line platform.
- 2.2 The Council's initial focus would be on
  - Courses where it had not been possible to recruit staff
  - Advanced Higher
  - Subjects only available at one school at Senior Phase
  - Gaelic Medium Education
- 2.3 However, the pilot also committed to develop Developing Young Workforce and Initial Teacher Education, in partnership with Lewis Castle College-UHI. The initiative also provides capacity for working in partnership with other Councils.
- 2.4 To facilitate the programme e-Sgoil nan Eilean Siar established education staffing including a Headteacher, adult education staffing, multi-media and IT staffing along with seconded staff from school as required.
- 2.5 The Council determined that across its 4 secondary schools a common timetabling structure would be in place.

## **EIS Western Isles Members' Views on e-Sgoil Initiative**

- 3.1 While the Local Association welcome and support initiatives that improve and enhance learning experiences and opportunities for young people the LA also identified a number of concerns.
- 3.2 The LA identified two models in practise. A teacher was delivering remote lessons to pupils within the Council area. Another teacher in the Council area was delivering Gaelic lessons remotely to pupils in another Council area.
- 3.3 The LA raised a number of key issues with the Council. These included a demand the programme should be piloted before being further developed and that it should be funded from additional budget with additional IT support including high quality technological infrastructure. It also demanded that teachers involved should participate on a voluntary principle with backfilling on that part of the post which is required for e-learning. Finally, the LA wished the e-courses piloted to relate to the senior phase but was opposed to common timetabling across schools.
- 3.4 In addressing the terms of the resolution the Committee recognise that a number of broad principles should be set out since e-learning may evolve in different way across Councils. Therefore, the Committee has resolved that this paper should form guidance to assist all Local Associations.
- 3.5 However, there is one comment to set out in relation to the programme in Western Isles. The Council's proposal sets up a staffing structure led by a Headteacher. The additional staffing structure is welcome and educational leadership is welcome. However, any such promoted post although covered by SNCT terms and conditions is not likely to be suitable for job sizing and the salary should be determined on a felt fair basis with reference to the advice set out in Joint Secretaries' letter relating to non-school based promoted posts (October 2004).

### **Principles to be addressed**

- 4.1 E-learning initiatives in schools are likely to relate to online learning supported by video conference to class sets or to distance learning where a teacher will lead self-directed learning of students working at their own pace.
- 4.2 One of the major issues to be considered by Councils is the organisation and management of timetable arrangements. At a time when governance arrangements are under scrutiny by Scottish Government it should be recognised that e-learning will require communication across schools and a budget commitment at Council level to support staffing and technology to promote the development.
- 4.3 The EIS is clear that extant individual statements of particulars and locally agreed job descriptions and remits should not be varied and that teacher staffing for e-learning should be on the voluntary principle. However, it is recognised that when recruiting new members of staff a Council may have a requirement to appoint on the basis that part of the role will be to deliver e-learning. LNCTs will have to agree the specific job description and remit.

- 4.4 The teachers' contract has to be observed and any e-learning involvement has to be capable of being delivered in the 35-hour working week and within the Working Time Agreement of the host school of the e-learning teacher.
- 4.5 Delivery of e-learning through video conferencing to timetabled classes is class contact time and class size maxima as set out in the SNCT Handbook must be honoured.
- 4.6 Where distance learning packages are developed and require few, if any, video conferencing arrangements the WTA for that teacher should reduce maximum class contact time to allow additional time for preparation and correction. This should be clearly "costed" at the offset and set out in writing.
- 4.7 The e-learning teacher is solely responsible for the delivery of education. The health and safety of pupils receiving lessons remotely and the management of discipline is the responsibility of the school and not the e-learning teacher. The supervision of classes can only be undertaken by registered teachers.
- 4.8 The frequency, timing and nature of reports should normally be governed by the arrangement in the e-learning teachers' host school. That may lead Councils to give greater thought to coordination across secondary schools.
- 4.9 Provision should be made for video conferencing to facilitate parental liaison. This must take account of the hours for parental liaison set out in the Working Time Agreement in the e-learning teachers' host school.
- 4.8 There has to be clarity on line management for the e-learning teacher for that part of their role when delivering e-learning.

### **Recommendation**

- 5.1 This policy should be issued to Local Association Secretaries/Branch Secretaries for information and provided on the EIS Website.