

FACT CHECKER



What you need to know about the EIS-FELA Pay Dispute

Colleges Scotland has consistently said that the EIS-FELA pay claims (and subsequent pay positions in negotiations) are unaffordable. What are the facts?

Costing and Affordability

FACT The EIS-FELA amended pay claim¹ (December 2018) and the college support staff settlement are similar – both being based on public sector pay policy for their periods of time and both comprising of consolidated increases – ie true pay rises which will continue year on year and not one-off payments.

FACT Colleges Scotland presented the costs of the EIS-FELA December claim **on a cumulative and consolidated basis** over the three year period.

FACT Colleges Scotland costed the EIS-FELA claim at £31.5m and stated that this was unaffordable.

FACT Colleges Scotland presented the costs of the support staff settlement on a different basis – on a non-cumulative basis, **ignoring the consolidated elements of the payments year on year.**

FACT It costed the support staff settlement at **£14m**, and stated this was affordable and an investment in the sector. **This was echoed by the Deputy First Minister.**

The result of these two different methods of calculation is that the support staff settlement appears to be half the cost of the EIS-FELA claim.

FACT The Scottish Funding Council has confirmed that if the EIS-FELA claim and the support staff settlement are calculated and compared on a like for like basis, then the support staff pay deal costs £31.2m. There is only £0.3m between the two. (Note that whilst the Support Staff deal is £0.3m cheaper, it covers a shorter period – 7 months less than the Lecturers pay claim.)

FACT The new pay proposal which the EIS-FELA made in February 2019² and which the Colleges Scotland rejected as unaffordable would cost £13.9m. – well under the cost of the support staff settlement on any method of calculation.

Yet Colleges Scotland state our amended pay proposal of £13.9m is unaffordable whilst the £31.2m support staff pay deal is affordable.

The role of the Scottish Funding Council

FACT After the 'Lessons Learned' exercise following the last FE dispute, the Scottish Government directed the SFC to exercise an 'enhanced role...in national bargaining to improve transparency in relation to the validation of financial and operational information'³.

FACT The Scottish Funding Council validated both Colleges Scotland's calculations – endorsing two similar claims, however these two claims were costed in a different ways, generating different results.

FACT The Scottish Funding Council did not highlight that the claims had been presented and costed using different methods, until questions were raised by the EIS-FELA.

The inconsistent costings allowed Colleges Scotland to state, of two similar claims, that one was affordable and one was not.

To present two similar claims in different ways misrepresents the amounts of the two claims – allowing Colleges Scotland to claim one £31m claim was affordable whilst another £31m claim was not.

¹ £425 consolidated for 2017/18; £1080 consolidated for 2018/19 and £1080 consolidated for 2019/20

² £200 non-consolidated payment for 2017/18; £200 non-consolidated payment for 2018/19 and £1,600 consolidated for 2019/20

³ Scottish Funding Council – Letter of Guidance 2018/19

What is the current offer worth?

FACT

Colleges Scotland's current offer amounts to two unconsolidated annual payments and a 2% consolidated increase for the majority of EIS-FELA members over a three year period.

FACT

The current Colleges Scotland pay offer (issued Jan 2019) is simply a redistribution of the April 2018 offer i.e. there is no extra money.

FACT

This is significantly below public sector pay policy for 2017-20 and recent settlements made across the public sector.

FACT

If you added what only two colleges put into Arms' Length Foundations (£3.4m) last year to the cost of Colleges Scotland's current offer (£10.1m), the EIS-FELA pay proposal could almost be met. Yet this has been deemed unaffordable...

Compare this offer with what has been offered to Local Government (3% consolidated increase in 2018/19 and 3.5% consolidated increase in 2019/20), the police (6.5% consolidated increase over 31 months) and the NHS (6.5% over three years).

Conclusion

FACT

EIS-FELA has sought to negotiate and has significantly reduced the value of its pay claim and made further suggestions through its recent pay proposal. This has happened twice in the last 3 months. The Employers have not changed the value of their offer. This has created an impasse.

FACT

It is clear that Colleges Scotland has adopted a different position in its negotiations with EIS-FELA to that which it has taken with the college support staff trade unions.

FACT

Colleges Scotland has sought to maximise the cost of the lecturers' pay claim whilst minimising that of the support staff.

FACT

Colleges Scotland has determined that the EIS-FELA pay proposal which costs less than half the cost of the support staff settlement is unaffordable.

FACT

Colleges Scotland has conflated equal pay with a cost of living pay rise, suggesting that 'pay is pay'. An approach endorsed by the Deputy First Minister – yet no such comparison has been made in the Glasgow City Council equal pay case.

FACT

The SFC, the independent body put in place by the Scottish Government, to improve transparency and build trust in the sector, failed to highlight this different treatment and in validating both claims, allowed Colleges Scotland to perpetuate its claims that the support staff £31m settlement was affordable whilst the lecturers' £31m claim was not.

FACT

The Support staff deal is double what EIS-FELA has offered to settle for and covers a shorter period of time. Yet there is no acknowledgement from the Scottish Government of the EIS-FELA moving its position. College lecturers are being treated differently from the rest of the public sector.

It is time the Scottish Government intervened to bring an end to this dispute and call management to account.

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