



## Annual Conference 2021

### Resolutions

1. That this Annual Conference reaffirms its opposition to lecturer appraisal in whatever form it arises, and calls on branch secretaries to report any attempts at introducing appraisal to the National EIS-FELA executive for information and support.
2. That this Annual Conference instructs EIS-FELA national negotiators to seek a 'No Detriment' clause (covering all EIS-FELA branches) in future national negotiations.
3. That this Annual Conference calls upon the FELA Executive to investigate the depth of the impact of the pandemic on staff absence due to stress, insecurity, increased workload, lack of IT training and the lack of Scottish Government support. This investigation will produce a strategic plan to support members with the clear objective of reinstating confidence in their future.
4. That this Annual Conference reaffirms the long-standing EIS-FELA policy of opposition to any involvement in job evaluation schemes at national or local level. Conference requests EIS Branch Officials to remind members of this policy, offering support to any member opposing and resisting any form of job evaluation, appraisal, lecturer rating or similar schemes. Conference also instructs EIS branch officials to lodge an immediate collective grievance on behalf of a branch should any member be subject to investigation or disciplinary action as a result of supporting this position.
5. That this Annual Conference notes, with concern, the length of time taken by the lack of transparency and absence of feedback provided by the Scottish Funding Council (SFC), in relation to their consultation process on college governance. This conference therefore calls on the EIS FELA Executive to urgently clarify what the SFC responsibilities and related timescales are, in relation to consulting with members on college governance arrangements.
6. That this Annual Conference calls on EIS-FELA to investigate and report to uncover the true cost effectiveness and overall impact of recent restructures on both staff and students. Further, conference instructs FELA Executive to seek an agreed National Policy on how such restructures should be carried out ensuring that they are grounded firmly within an educational rational.
7. That this Annual Conference recognise the attack on Lecturer positions within the sector as is the case at Forth Valley College, and the detrimental impact this will have to the overall quality of educational provisioning Scotland, devaluing qualifications, the assessment process and delivery of high value training by an educated and skilled workforce. This conference calls upon FEIS-ELA to

- a. Write to The Scottish Government insisting that it publicly states its position on this matter. This conference also asks that a zero-tolerance approach to the Forth Valley attack on terms and conditions due to such actions and a motion for national dispute be brought forward.
  - b. Write to all Branch Negotiators reminding them of National Policy for EIS-FELA locally to ensure all those carrying out lecturer duties within a college are remunerated as lecturers.
  - c. Instruct local EIS branch officials to lodge an immediate collective grievance on behalf of the branch should management continue to diminish the professional standing of lecturer terms and conditions.
- 8.** That this Annual Conference agrees that all lecturing staff should have the nationally agreed pay, terms and conditions. In pursuit of this, Conference instructs its national executive committee to support branches by:
- a. Ensuring that the national agreements are being implemented fully and consistently in every FE college in Scotland.
  - b. Demanding that SFC and where applicable Regional Boards, put in place mechanisms for monitoring how colleges are meeting their requirement to implement the outcomes of national bargaining and that SFC/Regional Boards publish what these mechanisms are and how they are intended to work.

## **Education and Equalities**

- 9.** That this Annual Conference endorses the 'Agency' proposed by Prof Donaldson in his GTC Keynote address and would be keen to promote this within Scotland's Colleges with no caveats.
- 10.** That this Annual Conference calls on both Professor Donaldson and John Swinney Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills to conduct an urgent review of the effect on the educational merit and impact on staff and student morale of the Forth Valley changes in the light of the idea of Agency and Professionalism.
- 11.** That this Annual Conference seeks to have branches work with EIS organisers to advertise and highlight the need for Equality reps in each FELA branch, in recognition of the essential role they play within the Branch in engaging and supporting members in equalities issues and taking forward the Equality agenda.
- 12.** That this Annual Conference asks that FELA Executive initiate a campaign to highlight the need for extra funding to be provided to support funded TQFE places for those working in the sector, in recognition of maintaining a highly qualified workforce and in consideration of forthcoming mandatory GTCS registration.
- 13.** That this Annual Conference requests that the EIS FELA National Executive write to the SQA to request the SQA to issue a statement allowing at least 25% of assessment requirement for all units to be reduced this academic year and at least 50% of assessment requirement for all practical units now not to be required, all at the discretion of course teams. Also, for the SQA to provide a bank of prior-verified assessments authored by lecturers across Scotland to be made available to all colleges via their secure administrative download site to assist with sharing of assessment resources and avoid unnecessary repetition of lecturer work.
- 14.** That this Annual Conference requests the EIS/FELA National Executive to issue a public statement on behalf of conference to read "conference notes the lack of clear helpful practical direction, co-ordination and relevant action by the SQA to

assist lecturers and ultimately students across FE in Scotland, in relation to reduction of assessment requirements during the pandemic crisis that has led to huge restrictions upon time and resources known since the first lockdown” and “conference, on behalf of the membership across Scotland intimates the lack of support from the SQA has caused widespread anxiety and stress that would have been preventable had the SQA implemented a more structured and effective plan of action from the outset”.

- 15.** That this Annual Conference asks Branch Secretaries of every branch to investigate and compile information from grassroot member level pertaining to any changes to college provision over the past 10 years. Information to include student numbers, curriculum delivery, lecturer numbers, support staff numbers in comparison, per college and per campus. Conference requests the information to be collated and a report published by the EIS-FELA National Executive as to the past, present and possible future of Colleges across Scotland based upon Branch Secretaries information received from the membership via informal meetings, departmental discussions, surveys, and any other means.
- 16.** That this Annual Conference notes the importance of access to Industry Standard technology and equipment for high quality learning and teaching. We instruct EIS FELA Executive to:
  1. investigate and report on the current provision in colleges and
  2. lobby the Scottish Government for adequate capital funding to meet the needs of staff and students in relation to this and ensure equipment is fit for purpose.
- 17.** That this Annual Conference believes that the advice, guidelines and support issued by SQA and the Scottish Government, in response to the Covid 19 pandemic, have not met the specific needs of the college sector. This conference instructs EIS FELA Executive to:
  1. Call for a review of the advice, guidance and support issued with respect to the college sector.
  2. To request a meeting with the SQA to investigate the possibility of college sector specific guidance and advice in future.
- 18.** That this Annual Conference believes that there was a lack of strategic planning measures to deal with the pandemic in relation to students with Additional Support Needs. This has resulted in inequality of education, a lack of proper risk assessment and a failure to provide adequate resources for these students. The lack of appropriate provision has been the subject of previous agreed conference motions.

This Conference calls on the EIS to work with the Scottish Government to develop a national strategy to ensure appropriate strategic planning for adequate and appropriate educational provision for ASN students.

## **COVID-19**

- 19.** That this Annual Conference recognise the negative impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the mental health of FELA members, students and the public, and that it would acknowledge that restrictions are due to the inability to suppress the virus and transmission rates. Further this conference calls upon the FELA Executive to write to all college management teams and to Colleges Scotland urging them to increase their vigilance of workplace hygiene and cleaning practices with consequences for those in breach of government guidance.
- 20.** That this Annual Conference resolves to ask the EIS/FELA Executive to write to Colleges Scotland to request they ensure a national return to pre-pandemic crisis

normality for face-to-face teaching, when it is safe to do so and no H&S threat exists to lecturers or students. Further that the Executive writes to Colleges Scotland seeking to ensure a return to 'normality' means no changes to working practices and no imposed changes to delivery methods or cuts to delivery. The use of technology and the benefits identified could be useful for individual lecturers, the pedagogics could be altered at the discretion of the professional lecturer for enhancing the student experience as opposed to any consideration of imposing Learning & Teaching adaptations implemented during the pandemic emergency to increase class sizes, reduce quality, or to reduce lecturer hours.

- 21.** That this Annual Conference resolves to seek letters to be sent by the EIS/FELA National Executive to the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government Minister for F&HE to request students who do not complete their course of study this academic year due to the pandemic do not suffer loss of funding in the pursuit of finishing their current course of study. For the current student funding/bursaries/college placement to continue into next academic year and no detriment to students as a result of dislocated course delivery, disruption of learning or any personal experience impacting upon learning, attributable to the pandemic. To allow for students to return next academic year to catch-up, re-attempt, redo and fully complete their studies from this crisis-laden era.
- 22.** That this Annual Conference recognises and wishes to thank all essential workers, especially health care workers for their heroic dedication to helping others during the Coronavirus pandemic. Furthermore, we continue to acknowledge the importance of Cleaning Staff and H&S Representatives within our colleges. Conference asks for the EIS-FELA National Executive to pass this message onto the STUC for a public statement.
- 23.** That this Annual Conference believes that Further Education plays a key role in tackling poverty and calls on the EIS-FELA to campaign for additional funding aimed at addressing the impact of the Covid 19 pandemic on our local communities.
- 24.** That this Annual Conference notes that there is an ongoing disproportionate impact of the pandemic on students and staff who had little or no access to technology. We call on the Scottish Government to work with EIS-FELA to develop a national strategy to ensure appropriate strategic planning for adequate and appropriate provision of ICT equipment, broadband connection and training.

## **Miscellaneous**

- 25.** That this Annual Conference notes that it has lost confidence in the ability of the SQA and Education Scotland to ensure a standard of education which is both quality focused and current. To ensure Scottish Further Education is fit for purpose we call on the Scottish Parliament's Education and Skills Committee to immediately review the SQA and Education Scotland and their respective senior management.
- 26.** That this Annual Conference notes the significance of the Black Lives Matter protests around the world, the continuing danger of racism, and supports both the UN antiracism day activities organised by Stand up to Racism and the involvement of EIS-FELA members.

- 27.** That this Annual Conference calls on EIS-FELA to organise participatory on-line meetings open to all FELA members, with break-out rooms and reports from the branches during disputes and while the pandemic continues. The timing of these meetings to be determined by the EIS-FELA Executive.
- 28.** That this Annual Conference believes that Scotland must have TUC Education courses and training delivered by a range of colleges throughout Scotland. Conference believes that TUC Education Courses must be delivered in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Fife, and other locations in order to be accessible to as many workers as possible.
- 29.** That this Annual Conference instructs The EIS Executive to investigate, and report on, the impact of the refusal to agree reasonable time off for Trade Union activities on both national and local officials and to mount a campaign to:
- a. Publicly highlight the poor practice in the sector to the Scottish government
  - b. Lobby the Scottish Government to put pressure on the Employers association to agree proper facility time and related remission for the sector
- 30.** That this Annual Conference notes the international movement demanding urgent action on climate change, recognises the role trade unions can play in this and notes the United Nations 26th Conference of the Parties taking place in Glasgow in November 2021. This conference instructs FELA Executive to:
1. remind EIS FELA branches of our policy of support for trade union and movement events to mobilise for COP26
  2. continue to work in solidarity with other trade unions, campaigns and educational organisations to enhance climate change education, training, public awareness, public participation and public access to information.
  3. include action on Climate Change in any EIS FELA Scottish Election materials where relevant
  4. organise a national EIS FELA seminar on Climate Change
- 31.** That this Annual Conference notes the rising misuse of students' academic appeals/complaints procedures as a means of harassing and disciplining teaching staff. Conference instructs FELA executive to seek a meeting between FELA Officials and the NUS to discuss the creation of a national academic appeals process and a national student complaints process to be operated by all Scotland's FE colleges, that will have the confidence of both the student body and the teaching staff.
- 32.** That this Annual Conference opposes the use of publicly funded college courses to generate "commercial" income for colleges. Further, conference condemns the use of students as cheap/free labour in many these ventures and the forcing of teaching staff to ignore educational requirements in order to assist in the generation of profits, from courses that are designed for educational purposes. Conference instructs the FELA Executive to demand that the government urgently investigates the use of public funds, mistreatment of teaching staff and abuse of students involved in these ventures and ensures that such practices end immediately.
- 33.** That this Annual Conference notes the People before Profit Emergency programme (<http://peoplebefore-profit.com/>). In line with this, to protect the health, safety and livelihood of EIS-FELA members this Conference calls for:

- a. a continuation of the furlough scheme while some lecturers may require it due to on-campus restrictions
- b. no return to unsafe campus working, backed up if necessary, by declaring disputes or supporting those who invoke Section 44 of the Employment Rights Act 1996
- c. Publishing guidance on the rights of members who are homeworking while looking after school-age children.