

EIS Response to recent e.Focus Communications and Press Statement on EIS Dispute at FVC



The Educational
Institute of Scotland

Principal's e.focus issued 30 th September & Media Statement	The EIS FELA Response
<p><i>You may be aware that EIS-FELA have made the decision to hold a statutory ballot in response to the introduction of our new Instructor Assessor role....I want to be clear that any future strike action will have major implications for the College and our students.</i></p>	<p>The EIS has decided to hold a ballot for industrial action short of strike action, not strike action.</p>
<p><i>Now more than ever is the time for all staff to come together in a collective effort, due to the huge challenges we are already facing in light of significant financial pressures and economic uncertainty due to COVID-19.</i></p>	<p>The EIS has long called for the FVC management to come together in a collective effort to avoid redundancies and stop the introduction of Instructors Assessors – but the management has refused our entreaties.</p>
<p><i>We are confident that the Instructor Assessor role will enhance the learner experience for our students. It will align with the delivery model for industry and ensure the organisation is fit-for-purpose, sustainable and importantly, meet the needs of the next generation of learners and their employers.</i></p>	<p>The College's confidence that the new Instructor Assessor will enhance the learner experience is remarkable given that they will not be required to get a recognised FE teaching qualifications, will not be required to meet planned GTCS Professional Standards, and be support staff not lecturing staff and have a contract with fewer holidays and greater class contact.</p> <p>However, the College does admit that FVC will be more "sustainable" with Instructors Assessors, i.e. the college will over time make financial savings by paying less to a group of lecturing staff.</p>
<p><i>It is a role which is now established at the College – there is no going back and we must move on.</i></p>	<p>The College is stating that it will not engage with staff on this issue and that staff should simply 'suck it up' and accept something that a majority have objected to. The EIS believes that staff should have a 'voice' at work and have the right to take lawful industrial action over actions that undermine their profession and colleagues' livelihoods.</p>
<p><i>There is a link within the e.Focus to the media statement in which the principal says:</i></p> <p><i>"The action by EIS is hugely disappointing and I want to be clear that any future strike action will have major implications for the College and our students. This attack on learners by the EIS following a difficult period in</i></p>	<p>This is not a ballot for strike action.</p> <p>Workers protecting workers should not be characterised as an "attack on learners", all workers have the right to take industrial action in furtherance of any lawful dispute. Furthermore, the EIS is clear that defending the lecturing profession support learners since lecturers have GTCS registration standards, fewer teaching hours and teaching qualifications.</p>

<p>education is not something that Forth Valley College can endorse or accept as reasonable...</p> <p><i>“Financial stability, whilst improving learner experiences, is at the heart of the decision making process for the college. We wish to assure all our learners that we will endeavour to maintain our services and continue to provide the high quality delivery that they have come to expect.</i></p> <p><i>“The Instructor Assessor role has been introduced to strengthen our delivery model and align to industry standards..... This new role brings real value to the student experience and will maintain our strong focus on vocational learning and training.</i></p> <p><i>“From the beginning of the consultation, our goal was always to retain as many staff as possible and we were pleased when all those at risk were either accepted for our Voluntary Severance Scheme or were guaranteed an offer of employment. I would stress that there were jobs available for all those at risk. We understand that change can be challenging at any time, however, we have been committed to managing this process with staff and have been doing everything we can to support them throughout.</i></p> <p><i>“Now more than ever, is the time for all staff to come together in a collective effort, to support each other, our students, our local communities and the economic recovery</i></p>	<p>The College is seeking to portray itself as the defender of learner experiences. This is remarkable since the College is seeking to pay existing staff less to do a different job title with greater student contact time and fewer holidays. Surely, if the College was really focussed on the learner experience it would keep lecturing posts – since they have recognised teaching qualifications, professional standards and fewer teaching hours enabling a focus on quality.</p> <p>The College has never explained to the EIS how replacing lecturers with instructor assessors will improve the “delivery model”.</p> <p>What the College did was to say to a group of lecturers, take a redundancy package or accept this lower paid job with fewer holidays and greater teaching time. The College effectively forced some staff to choose between having no job or a worse job.</p> <p>This is disingenuous in the view of the EIS. If the college wanted to bring staff together in these challenging times then it should not have threatened staff with redundancies and inferior jobs.</p> <p>The irony is that lecturing staff are making a collective effort to support each other, and we believe that this is in the best interests of the learner experience i.e. students. Students deserve to be taught and trained by lecturers in colleges, not support staff.</p>
<p>Vice Principal’s e.Focus issued on 1st October</p>	
<p><i>“Following the Principal’s e.focus on Wednesday (30 September 2020), I want to reiterate to all EIS members that we have no plans to make any further changes similar to the Instructor Assessor role, and I hope that EIS FELA reconsider their position.</i></p>	<p>This “we have no plans” statement is worthless in the view of the EIS.</p>
<p><i>“Our core values at the College are all about supporting our learners. Unfortunately, the actions of EIS FELA puts the future plans of our learners at risk, and we must therefore plan for the eventuality that there will be some staff who will take action short of strike</i></p>	<p>The College states in the press statement on this issue: <i>“Financial stability, whilst improving learner experiences, is at the heart of the decision making process for the college.”</i></p>

	<p>The core value driving the introduction of the instructor assessor seems to be saving money by paying staff less.</p>
<p>As a result, any colleagues contemplating strike action need to be aware, that actions including not marking registers correctly, a marking boycott, and failing to cover classes within the contractual agreement, contravenes contractual obligations. Any member of staff who contravenes their contractual obligations in a way covered by the industrial action ballot, will be deemed to be taking action short of strike action, and this will result in relevant deductions of pay for each instance of action taken.</p>	<p>The College is responding in a way of a typical aggressive employer in seeking to intimidate staff against acting collectively in order to protect their interests.</p> <p>No other employer in Scottish education in recent history has taken pay deduction from EIS members carrying out ASOS.</p> <p>If the College does make pay deductions, then the well-established trade union response to such an employer is to move to a ballot for strike action.</p>

Colleges need Lecturers.

Now more than ever, is the time for all staff to come together in a collective effort, to support each other, our students, our local communities and the economic recovery by protecting the role lecturers in Forth Valley College. Vote Yes in the statutory ballot!