



EIS-FELA POSITION ON GTCS REGISTRATION AND NATIONAL DISPUTE OVER INTRODUCTION OF INSTRUCTOR POSTS

**EIS-FELA
Parliamentary Briefing**

Statement from EIS General Secretary

Three or four years ago EIS-FELA was looking forward to the Scottish Government passing legislation that would make professional registration mandatory for all staff who teach and manage the curriculum in Scotland's Colleges, thus fostering an enhanced professional environment similar to that existing in the primary and secondary schools sectors. At that time EIS-FELA understood that the Government, the GTCS and Colleges Scotland shared our enthusiasm.

Unfortunately, the proposed legislation did not make it to the final stage. Nonetheless, it continued to be the case that all four parties remained supportive of the same general principle. With that understanding, EIS-FELA welcomed Colleges Scotland's proposal to make professional registration part of the National Working Practices Agreement as an alternative way of achieving the same end. Again, EIS-FELA understood that all four parties were still supportive of the general principle of compulsory professional registration for all staff teaching in FE Colleges and have been working towards turning the principle into practice.

However, EIS-FELA firmly believes that Colleges Scotland has changed its attitude significantly recently, and rather than promoting GTCS registration, it is now actively seeking to undermine the principle, evidenced by its support of moves in a number of colleges to rename lecturers as 'trainers', 'instructors', or 'assessors'. and to subsequently downgrade their status, Colleges Scotland is clearly seeking to unravel the whole professional registration project and replace the principle of mandatory registration for all teaching professionals with a 2 tier system (lecturing staff and instructor staff), where only the lecturing staff will be required to be professionally registered.

Under a GTCS scheme, lecturing staff will have recognition of the need for adequate preparation time to develop and produce high quality learning materials and they will be professionally registered. Instructors doing the same job as lecturing staff will not be required to be professionally registered, however, and will not be afforded the same time and support to deliver high quality learning. EIS-FELA believes that such an approach will produce nothing of value to either the disadvantaged staff, or their students.

All interested parties, including the Scottish Government, need to impress on Colleges Scotland that professional registration works most effectively if all persons employed in teaching and managing the curriculum are part of the scheme. Seeking to circumvent professional registration by changing the job title should be prohibited. We wish to ensure that the registration process is one able to maintain and raise standards across Scottish further education.

If the professional registration project is to be as successful as it can be, the Scottish Government needs to intervene now.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Larry Flanagan". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Larry Flanagan

- **Use of Instructors, assessors and tutors in colleges**

EIS-FELA is campaigning at local and national level against the use of non-teaching staff (sometimes referred to as instructors, assessors or tutors) to deliver the curriculum in colleges in Scotland. We have ongoing disputes in Forth Valley, Fife and West Lothian Colleges and are deeply concerned by Colleges Scotland comments regarding the potential for this to be introduced across the sector in the near future. We have produced this briefing paper for MSPs to explain our concerns.

- **Why does this matter?**

We believe that the use of instructors, assessors and tutors devalues the role of Further Education, particularly vocational subject areas. A report by the Fraser of Allander Institute in 2017 found that college graduates generate an additional £20bn to the Scottish economy over their working lives – so why would we put that in the hands of unqualified and unsupported instructors?

We believe that the use of instructors, assessors and tutors has a negative impact on the quality of learning and teaching. Colleges are making decisions driven by a desire to cut costs and it is learners who will have to pay the price.

We believe that the downgrading of lecturer posts to that of instructors is a deliberate attempt to undermine the joint GTCS/Colleges Scotland/EIS-FELA/Scottish Government project on professional registration for all teaching staff in FE.

We believe that such moves presents us with a serious waste of public funds. Considerable sums have been spent on this project to date and attempts to derail this project will provide further examples of a waste of public expenditure.

- **Who are college lecturers and what do they do?**

College lecturers come from a vast range of professional backgrounds and have one thing in common – they have extensive professional experience and/or academic qualifications in their chosen field.

Most of the colleges seeking to introduce instructors are doing so in ‘vocational’ areas of the curriculum such as hospitality, motor vehicle engineering, hairdressing, nursing and construction. Lecturers in these areas all have extensive industrial experience, often training apprentices, holding senior posts or running businesses themselves before entering teaching.

College lecturers deliver all aspects of the curriculum, from welcoming learners on their first day through to guidance on progression to employment or further study. We develop teaching materials which reflect the needs of the learner and sound pedagogical strategies; we deliver classes, tutorials and practical workshops and assess our learners’ skills and knowledge.

In vocational areas, courses will cover a range of practical and theory-based units and it’s important that teaching staff can draw on a depth of knowledge and understanding across the curriculum to provide the best possible experience to our learners. This is not simply “instructing” someone on how to cut hair, build a wall, care for a patient or fix a car; it is about building a knowledge base and sound professional foundations in that vocational area – it is about education.

These vocational areas also include services which have safety critical components to them. You would expect a nurse to have received the best education possible in order to give the best level of care they can. The same would be expected of gas engineers, electricians, motor vehicle engineers etc, who are all expected to maintain a high level of professionalism and standards throughout their chosen career.

Staff employed as lecturers are covered by nationally negotiated agreements on pay and terms and conditions, including the number of hours class contact they can work per week, professional registration and observation of learning. Lecturers work to an agreed set of Professional Standards and have a commitment to ongoing CPD as part of their role.

- **What qualifications do college lecturers have?**

Unlike school teachers, not all college lecturers have university degrees – many do, and others have completed apprenticeships before working in industry or running their own businesses. Under the 2017 National Agreement, all new teaching staff joining the profession from 1 April 2017 onwards are required to complete a Teaching Qualification (Further Education) within two years of starting service, and all existing staff should be offered the opportunity to complete TQFE and supported to do so. This qualification is delivered by Scottish universities and is undertaken at SCQF level 9 (for staff without an undergraduate degree) or SCQF level 11 (for graduates).

This qualification is not typically contractually required for instructor posts.

- **Are college lecturers registered with GTCS?**

At present registration is voluntary for college lecturers. EIS-FELA is working with Colleges Scotland, the Scottish Government and GTCS through a College Registration Working Group to extend mandatory registration as part of the 2017 National Agreement. This process will only apply to lecturers and not to instructors, tutors or assessors. Once registered, lecturers are subject to the same regulatory standards as school teachers.

- **What about instructors, assessors and tutors?**

Instructors, assessors and tutors are employed by the colleges on non-teaching contracts at significantly lower wages than lecturers. They often have less experience and lower level qualifications than lecturers and have fewer duties. For example, they may be expected to deliver classes using material that has been produced as a pre-existing pack, rather than developing materials to meet the specific needs of their learners, or they may only 'assess' learners rather than teaching the underpinning knowledge. In some cases, they may have no limit on the number of hours they can spend in front of students each week, typically up to 35 hours, providing little or no time for preparation and marking. A number of colleges are seeking to downgrade lecturing posts to instructor posts in an attempt to cut costs and to undermine the GTCS project.

- **Are college lecturers – and Instructors/assessors – PVG checked?**

Yes, all college staff who work directly with young learners or vulnerable adults are PVG checked. However, this is simply a criminal records check – it doesn't mean that someone is qualified and experienced in working with vulnerable groups. We would not tolerate the use of unqualified instructors as a cheap alternative to teachers in schools, and we should not tolerate it in our colleges either.

- **What are EIS-FELA doing about this?**

We have lodged local grievances in several colleges in an attempt to prevent new instructors, tutors or assessors being introduced to the sector, and we have raised our concerns at national level with the Scottish Government.

Where tutors, instructors and assessors already exist in local colleges we are keen for them to be recognised as teaching staff and supported to move across into lecturer roles with further training and qualifications offered as required.

We have repeatedly sought to engage positively with Colleges Scotland over this issue to no avail. We have now declared a National Dispute and are in the process of consulting our members over actions to be taken in pursuit of this Dispute.

- **Contact Deborah Shepherd (EIS-FELA National Officer) for further information:**

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