

National Bargaining News

December 2020

News from EIS/FELA National Reps

WHY COLLEGES NEED LECTURERS?

As we enter the second week of the national **#CollegesNeedLecturers** ballot it is essential that **every** EIS FELA member votes and votes YES to industrial action.

Don't be fooled by management's spin...

"It won't happen here"

Think instructors are just a Forth Valley issue? Perhaps your Principal has reassured you that your college is safe, that they would never go down such a road? Colleges Scotland have stated explicitly at NJNC meetings that this will be coming to a college near you and the SFC also allude to it in a recent report on college funding. If this is allowed to spread, it will become 'the new normal' for Scottish FE.

"It can't happen in my subject"

Instructors are not limited to practical or vocational subjects – they will be

introduced wherever management think they can get away with it. In colleges affected thus far, subjects as diverse as care, engineering, sport, hairdressing and ASN have been targeted – no subject is safe.

"The law will be on our side"

You'd like to think so, wouldn't you? While the EIS will vigorously pursue legal action for members downgraded to instructors, the law only helps *after* the event – it can't prevent it happening. Nor can it prevent new roles being introduced to gradually erode lecturer professional standing, pay and T&C's.

"You'll get less money as an instructor"

Instructor roles are on support staff pay and T&C's – **they're paid significantly less**. Some Instructors have been required to work up to 35 hours *class contact* with prep,

marking and administration **being carried out in their own time**.

EIS FELA have a vision of the college sector of the future – with professional lecturers front and centre.

We believe that everyone who teaches in a college should be recognised as a lecturer, on lecturer pay and T&C's, supported to gain TQFE and registered with the GTCS. Is this unreasonable? Not at all – it's the case for every primary and secondary school in Scotland and it can't be changed when budgets are tight or on the whim of a Principal.

As college lecturers we need to defend our sector – vote!

Vote YES, YES in the ballot!

#CollegesNeedLecturers.

What it's like to be downgraded.

In our last Campaign News Issue 3, we highlighted the T&Cs which instructors have to work under. To illustrate the impact which these T&Cs have on people, just read the shocking testaments of affected staff. The following statements are from real individuals working under the instructor grade T&Cs.

"I've built up my department to make work more engaging and industry relevant, now I feel I'm being punished for supporting students. I am now off work with work related stress."

"I left industry to be a lecturer and wanted to get my TQFE. Now the management are refusing to let me get any teaching qualification and

they are treating me as if the stress is my fault. I've worked in some colourful places, but I have never experienced management like this. I have had to remove myself from this environment and am now off work with stress and anxiety."

"I feel totally strung out, Stressed, exhausted and demotivated, anxiety is through the roof, wake up most mornings with dread thinking about what the day will bring. I feel like I jump through emotions really quickly so can go from feeling sad, to angry, feel like I very rarely laugh in work anymore and I used to love being here. I'm ok with students and still make it a good experience but it's definitely all an act."

"The handling of this situation from the beginning has been to encour-

age staff to leave so they could be replaced at a lesser cost. Unfortunately, the real cost is stress for staff and students, loss of experienced staff, less or no time for student support.

Why would the college chose to raise contact hours during this time for face to face practical courses? That, in itself, is a lack of duty of care for the health and well-being of staff."

We have anonymised these statements for fear of retribution by management.