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COMMENT ON THE EIS-FELA'S LAUNCH OF ACTION SHORT OF STRIKE AND A NEW RESULTING BOYCOTT

WRITTEN ON 12 FEBRUARY 2024.

Commenting on the EIS-FELA's launch of industrial Action Short of Strike (ASOS), including a new resulting boycott, Gavin Donoghue, Director of College Employers Scotland, said:

"It is deeply regrettable that the EIS-FELA is once again calling on lecturers to take part in a resulting boycott that could cause significant disruption to student outcomes.

"A similar resulting boycott last year was only mitigated thanks to the hard work of college staff and colleagues at partner organisations, who sought to minimise the impact on student progression.

“The priority of colleges is to protect the interests of students, and they are determined to avoid a repeat of last year’s situation. That is why college leaders have now made it clear to staff who may participate in a new resulting boycott that this would be considered a breach of contract and could lead to pay deductions.

“Deducting pay from staff is never a measure that colleges want to take. However, they simply cannot accept the risks that another resulting boycott would create for the awarding of qualifications, and the ability of students to progress in their learning journeys and careers.

“The Scottish Government is proposing to cut college budgets by £32.7 million, or 4.7%, in 2024/25, after an 8.5% real-terms reduction in public funding since 2021/22. Despite this, colleges remain committed to the full and final offer to the EIS-FELA of a £5,000 consolidated pay rise over three years.

“If accepted, this substantial offer would deliver an 11.5% average pay increase for college lecturers from September, keeping them as the UK’s best-paid college lecturers. Those at the start of the National Pay Scale would benefit from a rise of 14.2%.

“We urge the EIS-FELA to face up to the reality of the financial challenges facing colleges, cancel the damaging resulting boycott, and ballot its members so they have a chance to accept the full and final fair pay offer on the table from employers.”



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