



The Educational
Institute of Scotland

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14 February 2024

To College Principals
By email only

Dear Principal

I write on behalf of the EIS to express our outrage at and unequivocal condemnation of, the threats issued towards EIS-FELA members in colleges across Scotland who are carrying out lawful industrial action in pursuit of a fair pay settlement. The EIS demands that all such threats are withdrawn.

As notified to all college employers by the EIS, EIS-FELA members, having taken part in a national statutory ballot, have achieved a legitimate mandate to carry out industrial action short of strike (ASOS) in the form of a working to rule and withholding of results, from Monday 12th February, with strike action to follow from a later date.

Despite the legitimacy of this action, the EIS has been informed that EIS-FELA members at many colleges have been threatened with pay deductions for participating in ASOS, in what the EIS believes to be a blatant attempt to stop them from taking part in this industrial action in pursuit of the pay settlement that is ridiculously long-overdue and that they should have received in September 2022.

Any lecturer being subject to intimidatory behaviour from any college employer is completely unacceptable and will be strongly challenged by the EIS. Any threat to EIS-FELA members' democratic and human right to take part in legitimate industrial action will be robustly defended.

On behalf of the EIS, I call on those Principals who have been doing so, to cease and desist from seeking to undermine EIS-FELA members' legitimate right to take industrial action short of strike, by threatening to withhold their wages, either in full or in part. If employers wish an end to the ASOS, rather than resort to vindictive, punitive, vengeful anti-trade union actions, they should undertake what is required to come to the negotiating table promptly with an improved pay offer that comes at no cost to jobs.

Further, we have learned that at least two colleges have stated that whilst they will deduct 100% of salary for any lecturer carrying out the ASOS, "any work they do perform will be performed voluntarily". Such an approach is akin to feudalism, not the Fair Work principles that colleges, as public bodies, are bound to uphold in 21st century progressive Scottish society.

Aggressive, vindictive anti-trade union tactics like this that threaten further detriment, not only to lecturers but to their children and families, have no place in a progressive society, in principle; in practice, they will merely serve to intensify and escalate the current long-running dispute, when every effort should be being made to negotiate an acceptable resolution and one which the EIS believes to be within grasp.

I have copied this correspondence to the Minister for Further and Higher Education, the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, and the Cabinet Secretary for Fair Work, in addition to College Employers Scotland, for their information. Should there be any continuation of the shameful, anti-trade union threats towards EIS-FELA members, college employers can expect a heightened industrial and political response from the EIS and EIS-FELA, with the matter of bullying of lecturers by threats or actual docking of wages, being raised directly with the Scottish Government at the highest level.

I urge that all threats of deeming made to EIS-FELA members at every college where they have been levelled, are withdrawn, and that all college employers concentrate their collective efforts productively on seeking to improve the pay offer to Scotland's lecturers who have waited more than long enough for this.

Yours sincerely



Andrea Bradley
General Secretary