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## FAO College Principals

17 August 2023

I am writing regarding the ongoing EIS-FELA resulting boycott within colleges which, as you know, has the potential to impact student progression in academic year 2023/24.

Clearly, our hope is that the affected students will see their results processed without detriment to their student journey, and the numbers of students ultimately impacted may be small.

I am aware of the support and consideration that individual lecturers and wider staff members have offered, and continue to offer, to help students learn and progress and I extend my thanks to them. Nevertheless, I think it prudent that we take all necessary steps to be prepared and minimise any potential disruption to students.

I have been in regular contact with Universities Scotland, Colleges Scotland, Skills Development Scotland (SDS) and UCAS to gauge the scale of the potential issue and am grateful for the very strong collective commitment to ensuring that we mitigate the impact on students in this position as far as that is possible.

I am pleased to note that, to date, all feedback I have received regarding the measures put in place by individual institutions has been positive and I greatly appreciate the flexible approach being demonstrated by the college sector.

I am aware from the helpful and constructive engagement with Colleges Scotland that it will not be possible for colleges to apply a blanket solution given the broad range of subjects and that each college has put in place specific mitigations to support affected students depending on their needs.

However, it remains my expectation that colleges will take all reasonable steps to ensure that there is no detrimental impact on students who find themselves in this position.

Scottish Ministers, special advisers and the Permanent Secretary are covered by the terms of the Lobbying (Scotland) Act 2016. See [www.lobbying.scot](http://www.lobbying.scot)



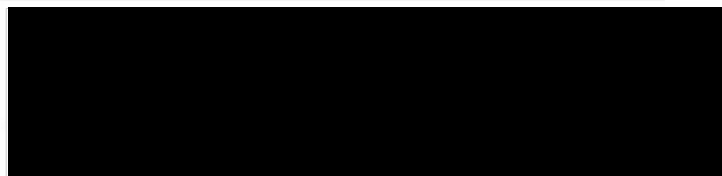
As you will appreciate, I am keen to obtain a full picture of the measures individual colleges are putting in place and so would be extremely grateful for an update on the specific actions being taken at your institution to ensure that any students impacted do not miss out on their educational progression, which they have worked so hard to secure. Where there are any specific challenges around any particular subject area, I would be grateful if this could be flagged.

I understand that colleges are working closely with College Employers Scotland to collate this data. I welcome this news and will be interested in learning more once the detail is collated, to better understand the effectiveness of the mitigations that have been deployed and the systems that have been put in place to monitor affected students.

Separately, I am also aware that the Scottish Funding Council have asked colleges for specific data to analyse the impact of the current industrial action.

Lastly, I acknowledge that pay and terms and conditions are for trade unions and college employers to negotiate. While the Scottish Government has no role in the national collective bargaining process in the college sector, I urge trade unions and college employers to negotiate in the spirit of collaboration and co-operation to reach a settlement that is fair and affordable. This will ensure that further disruption to learners is minimised, enabling them to receive just reward for their hard work and progress in their learner and professional journeys.

Once again, many thanks for your support and that of your staff in all of this.



**GRAEME DEY**