

Agreed Minute of the meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Lecturing) held on Monday 4 September 2023 at 1000 hours, via Video Conference.

In Attendance	
Lynn Davis	Staff Side
Anne-Marie Harley	“ “ (Chair)
Eileen Imlah	“ “
Garry Ross	“ “
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Angus Campbell	Management Side
Sue Clyne	“ “
Liz Connolly	“ “
Gail Dunn	“ “
Alan Ritchie	“ “
David Watt	“ “
Stuart Brown	Staff Side Joint Secretary
Katrina Daly	Management Side Joint Secretary
Gavin Donoghue	Director of College Employers Scotland
Louis Martin	Zoom Administrator
Catherine McCreath	Note Taker

Welcome and Apologies

The Staff Side was in the Chair for this meeting. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting. Apologies were noted from Charlie Montgomery and Donny Gluckstein, Staff Side.

Pay Dispute

The Staff Side outlined its current position that it has rejected the current pay offer and before it moves to strike action was keen to understand the latest Management Side position.

The Management Side confirmed that it has made a full and final offer of £2,000 for 2022/23 and £1,500 for 2023/24 and would encourage the Staff Side to take the offer to its members. Given the financial and operational challenges faced by the sector, there could not be any further movement on the offer. It also stated that the current offer is comparable to the Public Sector Pay Policy (PSPP). The Management Side also questioned the validity of the link between this offer and job losses.

The Staff Side confirmed its refusal to present the offer to its members, stating that it was predicated on job losses and that year two does not meet PSPP minimum for the majority of EIS-FELA members. It also stated that other PSPP agreements do not involve job losses. The Staff Side advised that its members were being re-balloted for continued industrial action regarding pay and how it is linked to job losses. The Staff Side requested both sides convey to the Scottish Government the need for increased funding to the sector, as any funding cuts to the college sector is and would continue to hinder the growth of the local and wider economy.

The Management Side acknowledged that the sector is suffering from funding reductions and assured the Staff Side that the Management Side do not want job losses and is in regular communication with the Scottish Government about the sector's size and funding. The current pay offer is already a challenge and there is no more money in the sector's finances.

The Management Side requested an adjournment to consider the points raised.

Adjournment

After the adjournment, the Management Side agreed with the Staff Side on the sector's declining investment and the impact this was having on staff, students, facilities, and materials (including investment for the future). The Management Side expressed its willingness to jointly write to the minister to discuss funding concerns. It also acknowledged there had been previous communication, shared with EIS-FELA in May 2023, that indicated there would be potential job losses given the pay offer and this would vary across the sector, as a significant portion of sector funding goes toward salaries. The Management Side proposed involving ACAS in further discussions to help facilitate resolution to the dispute.

The Staff Side expressed reservations about ACAS, based on previous experiences from the Support Staff Side, and given the lack of capacity to compromise on both sides from the current positions. The Staff Side sought clarity on the objectives and parameters of involving ACAS. It also stated it would inform its members about the potential job losses and requested another adjournment for consideration.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Staff Side expressed its willingness to collaborate on a joint approach to the Scottish Government Cabinet Secretary to address the pay dispute and funding gap in the sector. It also outlined its campaign strategy, which encompasses fair pay, fair work, quality of learning, and workload which it wishes to focus on once the pay dispute is resolved. It requested clarity from the Management Side on the objectives and parameters for an ACAS meeting.

Following lengthy discussion, where both sides explored opportunities to move matters forward, which included a joint approach to the Scottish Government to raise the need for additional funding and investment into the sector and involving ACAS, as mediators, to help find an urgent resolution to the current pay dispute.

Both sides agreed that the Joint Secretaries would have a discussion with ACAS around the feasibility to help with the current dispute and consider the merits of ACAS in moving this dispute forward. It was also agreed the Joint Secretaries would draft a joint letter requesting a meeting with the Minister for Higher and Further Education and Veterans and copy in the Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, highlighting the sector's pressing funding issues and advocating for increased financial support.

Date of Next Scheduled Meeting

The next scheduled NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) meeting is on Thursday 21 September 2023.