



Minute of the meeting of the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) – Side Table (Lecturing) held on Thursday 13 June 2024 at 1000 hours, via Video Conference.

In Attendance	
Angela Cox	Management Side
Angus Campbell	“ “
Debbie Kerr	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Chris Boyce	Staff Side
Lynn Davis	“ “
Anne-Marie Harley	“ “
Eileen Imlah	“ “
Karen MacKay	“ “
Charlie Montgomery	“ “
John Anderson	Management Side Joint Secretary
Garry Ross	Staff Side Joint Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Gavin Donoghue	Director of College Employers Scotland
Anne Davidson	Note Taker
Louis Martin	Zoom Administrator

40/23 Welcome and Apologies

The Management Side was in the Chair for this meeting. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Gail Dunn and Anne Campbell, Management Side. There were no apologies from the Staff Side.

The Staff Side advised that Andrea Bradley, General Secretary of the Educational Institute of Scotland (EIS), will attend the Side Table (Lecturing) meeting if it reconvenes in the afternoon as previously discussed outwith this meeting.

41/23 Minutes of Previous Meetings and Matters Arising

It was noted that a number of minutes were outstanding but that these would be reviewed outwith the meeting and presented at a future meeting. The Staff Side noted that it wished to raise matters concerning pay deductions and stated its intention to issue a Freedom of Information (FOI) request in relation to the minutes of a College Employers Scotland meeting and this aspect of the current disputes. It also noted that in its view, there is further dispute meeting outstanding that needs to be arranged to conclude discussions on this matter.

The minute of the meeting on Thursday 28 March 2024 was agreed.

The Management Side requested to rearrange the order of the agenda, beginning with discussions on Paper 2 – Draft National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) Agreement on Registration with the General Teaching Council (Scotland) before moving on to pay negotiations. The Staff Side was in agreement and stated that it would allow the meeting to begin on a very positive note as this has been a very successful piece of work.

42/23 Draft National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) Agreement on Registration with General Teaching Council (Scotland)

Both sides commented on the significant and collaborative work undertaken and were enthusiastic about the positive progress to date in developing the Agreement. The Staff Side confirmed that the paper has been approved by its Executive Committee and commented that it provides a clear path for onboarding staff going forward. The Management Side confirmed that the next steps are to draft and issue a Circular ideally by early July in advance of the proposed implementation date of 1 August 2024. The Management Side also welcomed the paper and thanked everyone involved in this work.

The National Agreement was agreed by both parties and noted a Circular will now be prepared and issued to the sector.

43/23 Pay Claim

The Management Side noted the positive progress and welcomed the revised claim of 5.3% from the Staff Side at the previous meeting. It also noted that the last offer from the Management Side was 2.75%. It confirmed that having considered the current position, it was making a further revised offer and that it would present this in a written form for clarity.

The Management Side advised that it has taken into account the previous points made by the Staff Side regarding their expectation of a starting point for negotiations being around 3%. Taking into consideration the recent Public Sector Pay Policy (PSPP) announcement, the management side has revised its offer. The revised offer comprises of a 2% rise for nine months from September 2025, with a further 1% rise effective from June 2026. This ensures that at the end of the pay year, all salaries will have had an increase of 3%.

The Management Side issued the revised offer in writing and requested that it be taken to Staff Side members for consideration and that all industrial action be suspended while negotiations are taking place.

The Staff Side asked for an adjournment to consider the revised offer.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Staff Side acknowledged and thanked the Management Side for the revised offer and, following lengthy discussions, it confirmed it was willing to reduce its claim for year four to 5.2%.

The Staff Side expressed concern about splitting a percentage increase across the pay year, as it would normally expect the full increase to be applied on 1st September of any given year. However, it stated that it was willing to revise its claim to demonstrate its willingness to progress negotiations by continuing the positive discussions.

The Staff Side welcomed the increased offer but noted that the higher element only applies to three months of the year and results in a very small increase, which is considered to be too low.

The Management Side stated that the revised offer is reasonable and enables the 3% figure to be achieved by the end of the year.

The Staff Side issued its revised claim for the Management Side to review. The Management Side requested an adjournment to consider the claim.

Adjournment

Following a lengthy adjournment, the Management Side advised that it had taken considerable time to consider the revised claim given the current financial position with significant deficits within the sector. It suggested a need for broader counsel and time to review any options. It stated it was not optimistic about any further revision of its offer being possible, given that the current offer had proved to be a challenging position to reach with its members.

The Management Side expressed its view that input from finance personnel is necessary given that the gap between the claim and the offer represents a sum of £15m. It stated that revising the EIS-FELA claim to 5.2% is not enough for negotiations to get closer to an agreement, given the scale of the deficit and the current backdrop of a number of colleges being on the brink of collapse.

The Staff Side stated that it is aware that colleges are considering giving higher pay raises to members of senior leadership teams.

The Management Side urged the Staff Side to consider the broader impact on the sector given the current dire financial predictions.

It was agreed to take an adjournment and reconvene the meeting at 1400 hours.

Adjournment

The meeting reconvened at 1400 hours. The attendees are noted below:

In Attendance	
Susan Elston	Management Side
Debbie Kerr	“ “
Alan Ritchie	“ “
Chris O’Neil	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Chris Boyce	Staff Side
Lynn Davis	“ “
Anne-Marie Harley	“ “
Eileen Imlah	“ “
Karen McKay	“ “
Charlie Montgomery	“ “
John Anderson	Management Side Joint Secretary
Garry Ross	Staff Side Joint Secretary
Andrea Bradley	General Secretary of the Educational Institute for Scotland (EIS)
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Gavin Donoghue	Director of College Employers Scotland
Anne Davidson	Note Taker
Louis Martin	Zoom Administrator

44/23 Welcome and Apologies

The Chair welcomed all to the reconvened meeting and thanked Andrea Bradley, General Secretary of the EIS, for joining the Staff Side for the second part of the meeting. There were no apologies noted.

45/23 Pay Claim

The Management Side reiterated the financial difficulties facing the sector with a £17m deficit overall. It again noted the significant challenges facing a number of colleges that are likely to run out of cash in this financial year. It also advised that almost every college board is forecasting a budget deficit, which makes pay negotiations very difficult.

However, whilst the Management Side appreciated the Staff Side movement to a four-year proposal as a means to progress negotiations, it has potentially resulted in further complications in reaching an agreement, given that budgets are not yet known. It advised that a real-term cut is possible and cited the problem of looking ahead to the Academic Year 2025/26 and trying to make promises based on unknown budgets.

The Staff Side acknowledged the Management Side's concerns but wanted to progress with negotiations instead of repeating the same conversation. It stated it is keen to reach an agreement on a four-year deal and conclude this pay dispute.

The Management Side emphasised that it is also keen to reach a resolution.

The Management Side requested an adjournment.

Adjournment

Following a brief adjournment, the Management Side invited Andrea Bradley to speak.

Andrea thanked everyone for being welcomed to the meeting.

Andrea advised of the Staff Side's willingness to resolve the dispute and acknowledged the financial challenges the sector is facing. It was also emphasised that it is important for the staff side members to be paid fairly in line with the standards of the public sector. The EIS-FELA proposed a four-year deal to break the deadlock in negotiations for a three-year deal and hoped that this proposal would benefit both the employers and the Scottish Funding Council. It was mentioned that the employers had increased its offer from a starting position of 1% to 2.75%, while the Staff Side had reduced its claim from 6.2% to 5.2%. However, it stated that further adjustments are necessary to reach an agreement. It was also highlighted the financial strain faced by lecturers, who have been on strike for 15/16 days, and the consideration of extending the dispute into the next academic year. The Staff Side believes that a resolution is achievable through collaborative efforts, considering both parties' commitment to the value of the college sector.

The Management Side thanked Andrea for the positive contribution and confirmed that it had welcomed the four-year proposal in that it would provide a period of financial stability, but this was also being considered without knowledge of budgets. The Management side advised that this was the reason for its preference to look at a three-year deal followed by a one-year deal. However, as this was not acceptable to the Staff Side, the Management Side then moved to a cautious offer of 1% for year four, reflecting the sector's financial position, which was considered derisory by the Staff Side and rejected.

The Management Side advised that following confirmation of the PSPP, it was able to increase its offer to 3%, structured as two increases across the academic year, which it believes is reasonable and reflects the employer's duty of care in relation to expenditure of public money. It noted that this offer was also rejected by the Staff Side as it did not meet its expectations.

The Management Side confirmed that those are the parameters it is required to work within but advised that it would be willing to move further and increase its offer to 3% effective from 1 September 2025 and no in-year split. It suggested that whilst it recognised this will not fully restore losses suffered over the period, it is an increase above inflation. It further advised that colleges are divided on this position, but it has been agreed to due to collective bargaining.

The Staff Side asked for written confirmation of the revised offer and requested an adjournment.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Staff Side thanked the Management Side for its increased offer and explanation of the figure, but it did not accept the offer as it believed it was too low.

The Staff Side also stated that it believes if both sides continue the commitment to negotiations, an agreement can be reached on a figure somewhere between the Staff Side claim of 5.2% and the Management Side offer of 3%. The Staff Side expressed its keenness to reach an agreement and bring an end to the strike action and resulting boycott. It confirmed it intends to put pressure on the Scottish Government and expects the Management Side to do the same.

The Staff Side suggested that the Management Side reconsider its offer and come closer to a figure that would allow the Staff Side to adjust its claim accordingly.

The Management Side asked for clarification as to why the Staff Side did not move in response to its revised offer.

The Staff Side confirmed that it did not see enough movement from the Management Side to make any revision to its claim. It did not accept the Management Side's view that PSPP gives the parameters to work within; its view is that this figure represents the starting point for negotiations.

The Management Side stated that any offer above PSPP is additional money the sector would need to find in its own right as no further funding is available from the Scottish Government.

The Management Side noted that it has moved its position twice during today's meeting and during previous meetings, and therefore, the onus is on the Staff Side to review its position.

The Management Side expressed disappointment at the lack of movement from the Staff Side as it had only reduced its claim by 0.1% today. The Staff Side, in turn, also expressed disappointment that the Management Side has indicated it had no further flexibility without additional funding from the Scottish Government.

The Management Side requested an adjournment to consider the discussion.

Adjournment

Following an adjournment, the Management Side again expressed its disappointment at the lack of movement on the claim from the Staff Side. Its view is that a reduction of only 0.1% was not a realistic counteroffer. It again requested that its revised offer of 3% be taken to the Staff Side members and that all industrial action be stopped while negotiations are underway.

The Staff Side confirmed it would not take the offer to its members for consideration and requested a further meeting be arranged as soon as possible to continue negotiations.

The Management Side agreed to arrange another meeting next week.

46/23 Date of Next Meeting

The next scheduled meeting will take place next academic year, although, an earlier meeting is to be arranged to continue discussions on pay.

The Management Side advised that a schedule of meetings is being prepared and is due to be issued shortly for agreement.

Action Monitoring Log

Thursday 16 June 2022		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Continue discussions on Draft Circular STL 01/22.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Thursday 30 March 2022		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
A response to circular 02/21 to be provided at a later date out with the meeting.	Staff Side	tbc
Continue discussions on multi-year pay offer.	Management Side & Staff Side	Complete
Further consideration on Transfer to Permanency Paper and any changes referred back for discussion at the next Side Table (Lecturing) meeting.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Thursday 8 June 2023		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Continue discussions on Transfer to Permanency and bring redrafted document for sign off at the National Joint Negotiating Committee (NJNC) Side Table (Lecturing) meeting in September 2023.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Provide feedback to the Joint Secretaries as to what items should be worked on jointly to bring to the Side Table meetings in the next academic year.	Joint Secretaries	Overtaken/Complete
Thursday 21 September 2023		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Continue discussions on Transfer to Permanency offline and consider the feedback given.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Continue discussions on the pay claim and consider a three-year option.	Management Side & Staff Side	Complete
Thursday 14 December 2023		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Revisit the guidance around Transfer to Permanency and issue a communication to the sector.	Joint Secretaries	In Progress
Schedule a meeting of the Hybrid Working and Learning Practices Working Group.	Joint Secretaries	Complete/Overtaken
Thursday 28 March 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
The Joint Secretaries to discuss and agree on a second dispute meeting on Deeming to take place after the Easter holidays.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Further discussions on the Pay Claim to take place offline between the Joint Secretaries in an attempt to break current impasse.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
The new Joint Secretaries to pick up and revisit the matter around Transfer to Permanency.	Joint Secretaries	In Progress

A schedule of meetings be set up for the Hybrid Working and Learning Practices Working Group.	Michael Boyd/Eileen Imlah	In Progress by the Secretariat June 2024
Thursday 16 May 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Provide a response to the Staff Side's revised pay claim.	Management Side	Complete
Schedule a further NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) pay meeting.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Thursday 23 May 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
The Management Side requested that a form of words, relating to job security, which is acceptable be provided by the Staff Side for consideration.	Staff Side	Complete – May 24
The Management Side to send the revised offer formally for the Staff Side to respond.	Management Side	Complete – May 24
Arrange an extraordinary CES meeting next week	Management Side	Complete
Arrange a NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) meeting following an Extraordinary CES Meeting.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Wednesday 29 May 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Reconvene the meeting and continue pay discussions on Friday 31 May 2024.	Management Side and Staff Side	Complete
Friday 31 May 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Arrange an extraordinary CES meeting next week.	Management Side	Complete
Arrange an NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) meeting following an Extraordinary CES Meeting.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Wednesday 5 June 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Arrange an NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) meeting as soon as possible.	Joint Secretaries	Complete
Thursday 13 June 2024		
Action	Owner	Completion Date
Arrange an NJNC – Side Table (Lecturing) meeting as soon as possible.	Joint Secretaries	Complete – June 24