

National Bargaining News

September 2017

News from your EIS NJNC negotiators

NEW COLLEGE YEAR - SAME COLLEGE PROBLEMS

Employers leaving the job half done?

Most lecturers are now in their fourth week back after the summer break—over three months since the May 2017 NJNC Agreement was signed.

There are several outstanding issues to address—especially around terms and conditions (T&Cs). The outstanding areas were meant to be agreed by 1 June 2017, but was frustrated by the Employers finally refusing to meet us at the end of last academic year.

The NJNC has a standing agreement to meet monthly, and the EIS sought to arrange the August meeting—but the Employers refused. The EIS also asked the Employers asked for two NJNC meetings with Employers in September—but the Employers refused and only agreed to meet once in September—the 21st. Due to the Employers refusal to meet us, we shall be six weeks into the new year before our first meeting! Management do not seem in a hurry to resolve the outstanding parts of the May NJNC Agreement...

Much work has been done behind the scenes over the summer in writing and issuing three NJNC Circulars—

http://www.eis.org.uk/NB_Outputs/CircularsNJNC.htm

The first circular sets out how unpromoted lecturers' pay will be harmonised, the second how promoted lecturers' pay will be harmonised via job matching and the third deals with new lecturing staff.

EIS FELA Branch Secretaries have received EIS training on the circulars, and much Branch work will be required to implement the circular on promoted lecturers.

Ironically, whilst the Employers have refused to meet us they have been engaging with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council in their NJNC review to 'learn lessons' from the events before the summer...

There is little sign of management learning any lesson—instead, they seem to wish to frustrate progress on

T&Cs into the long grass and postponing meaningful talks, both on the outstanding elements of the May 2017 agreement and on our outstanding 2017/18 pay claim.

During their refusal to meet us, we have asked them for written submissions—such as a 2017-18 pay offer to try and maintain NJNC progress and momentum, but we have received nothing...

This is simply not acceptable. We spent hundreds of hours in meetings with management between Easter and summer.

While the strike centred on the failure to honour the deal (i.e. implement the March 2016 NJNC Agreement) those meetings did not focus on pay. In fact, the pay scales and migration rules for unpromoted staff were signed off by the NJNC back in December 2016, and the job role profiles and mapping processes for promoted teaching staff just a few weeks later.

Our dispute arose because **management** insisted that they wanted to make pay conditional on changes to our T&C.

National negotiations: what is at stake for terms & conditions?

We have long sought to have a common set of T&C for all lecturers across Scotland.

We have already participated and reached provisional agreement—subject to ratification by both sides—on several key areas, detailed below:

We believe that we are very close to agreement on the key areas outlined in the May agreement, including class contact time, holidays and conservation.

The management side are seem want to frustrate progress—as if national conditions are not important to them.

We wouldn't accept a half finished assessment handed in months late from our students—we can't accept it from management either!

Class contact time

This is a key issue which for most teaching staff, determines our workload and prep time.

The May 2017 Agreement states that unpromoted staff will move to a '23+1' model with a cover arrangement which limits the amount of cover which can be carried out.

However, it fails to explain what the 23+1 consists of, and while there is a 'no detriment' clause, without a proper definition of what constitutes class contact time, non contact time and the 'plus one', members are left vulnerable.

We want to recognise the full range of duties that we undertake as teaching professionals, including the expectation that we will be available to students by email and via VLEs outwith class time—a key part of our role, but not recognised by any college.

The 23+1 model is designed to protect vital prep and non-teaching time to ensure the highest quality provision, with flexibility to provide class cover rather than timetabling to the hilt and leaving vulnerable learners to flounder when staff are off sick.

Management have flip flopped on the content of the 23+1 hours, and have made no effort to progress this issue before the start of this college year.

Similar issues exist for promoted staff class contact time—there is huge variation in practice in the sector, and 'no detriment' will be a key part of any agreement.

Other elements of the May 2017 Agreement

The May 2017 Agreement covers a number of important areas including conservation, annual leave and scope of the agreement.

We have seen a move away from management's initial, untenable argument that we should agree to a **cut** in annual leave for teaching staff, and recognition that the sector average for unpromoted staff is

62 days, with less than a third of colleges imposing a differential for promoted staff.

We believe we are close to agreement on all of these elements—but management have avoided discussing or progressing these items before and after the summer break.

Other 'agreements in principle'

The May 2017 agreement also 'gives effect to all NJNC agreements in principle' (i.e. NJNC outputs), so what are these agreements?

The cited NJNC outputs cover the transfer of temporary staff to permanent contracts after 2 years. This would be a huge step in reversing the casualisation of our sector.

The May 2017 Agreement also covers national provision for time off for TOFE. Numbers of TOFE qualified staff have tumbled in recent years. The national pay scale includes a TOFE 'gateway' and the agreement sets out the expectation that lecturers will be provided with the opportunity to complete TOFE within two years, with paid time off

Keep the pressure on

Continue to contact your MSPs and Further Education Minister Shirley Anne Somerville. Hold branch meetings, pass branch motions, lobby your college board and invite national negotiators to speak. Tweet us using #preptimematters @EISunion