

Minute of the National Negotiating Committee (NNC) – Lecturing Staff Meeting held on Thursday 11 June 2026 (1215-1400), at Colleges Scotland Offices, Argyll Court, Stirling.

In Attendance	
Robin Ashton	Management Representative
Sue Clyne	“ “
Susan Elston	“ “
David Watt	“ “ (Chair)
Chris Boyce	Staff Representative
Thora Hands	“ “
Anne-Marie Harley	“ “
Dan Holland	“ “
Pete Woods	“ “
Steve Farrell	Management Joint Secretary
Sarah Collins	Staff Joint Secretary
Jillian Cheape	Secretariat
Louis Martin	Note Taker

29/25 Welcome and Apologies

The Management Representatives were in the Chair for this meeting. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting.

Apologies were noted from Alan Ritchie, Management Representative and Charlie Montgomery, Staff Representative.

30/25 Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minute of Thursday 19 March 2026 was agreed.

31/25 Associate Trainers/Outsourcing of Lecturers

The Management Joint Secretary provided an update following discussions at the latest College Employers Scotland (CES) meeting. It was reported that CES had considered the issues raised by the Staff Representatives and had reached a unanimous position that the use of associate trainers, instructors and related arrangements was not a matter for national negotiation. The Management Representatives advised that, given the range of roles and arrangements referenced, these matters were for individual colleges to determine locally, taking account of their own operational requirements and financial sustainability.

The Staff Representatives expressed disappointment with the response, particularly in the context of recent constructive and transparent engagement between the parties. They stated that the position did not move the matter forward and questioned the rationale that the issue should be treated as a local operational matter, noting that similar arguments could be made in relation to other national matters. The Staff Representatives also raised concerns regarding reported arrangements at North East Scotland College, stating that, in their view, there appeared to be a multi-tier structure where individuals undertaking similar work were engaged on different contractual arrangements. It was noted that such arrangements could have significant implications for individuals, including financial security.

The Staff Representatives stated that, in their view, the arrangements described did not align with Fair Work principles. They reiterated that there were individuals undertaking lecturing duties who were not employed on lecturing terms and conditions and advised that they could provide evidence in support of this position.

The Staff Representatives also raised concerns regarding agency workers, including whether individuals engaged through agencies for longer than 12 weeks were receiving appropriate pay and conditions.

The Management Representatives advised that colleges were operating in a highly challenging financial context and that sustainability was a significant concern across the sector. They stated that there were distinct differences between roles, which was reflected in the different contractual arrangements in place.

The Staff Representatives referred to the previous referral at Forth Valley College and noted that the process had resulted in a circular seeking to clarify the distinction between lecturer, instructor and assessor roles. They stated that, in their view, the referral protocol had worked in that case and should be capable of being used more widely across the sector. The Staff Representatives further stated that their concern was not limited to North East Scotland College and that similar arrangements were being used elsewhere. They reiterated their position that outsourcing should not be used in place of lecturing roles covered by National Bargaining arrangements.

The Management Representatives noted that, in their view, Circular 02/21 related to circumstances where lecturer roles had been replaced by instructor roles, and that this was distinct from the wider issue of outsourcing and associate trainer arrangements.

The Staff Representatives stated that their position remained that individuals were undertaking lecturing work without being employed on lecturing terms and conditions.

The Management Representatives requested an adjournment.

Adjournment

Following the adjournment, the Management Representatives reaffirmed that Circular 02/21 remained in effect and should continue to be applied. The Management Representatives acknowledged the concerns raised and advised that, while there had been clear feedback from CES, there was a wish to continue engagement on the specific issues raised. The Staff Representatives were asked to provide a further paper, underpinned by evidence and examples, setting out the areas of concern in more detail. It was agreed that the Management Representatives would respond to this outwith the scheduled cycle of meetings.

The Staff Representatives advised that they were content to provide further information. They highlighted an example at City of Glasgow College where, in their view, a lecturer had been at risk of redundancy and subsequently had no class, while an outsourced individual had been brought in to undertake the same work. The Staff Representatives stated that their objective was to ensure that individuals were placed on the correct terms and conditions, and that issues should be resolved constructively in order to avoid escalation or industrial action.

The Management Representatives advised that there was a circular in place which should be adhered to and stated that there should not be situations where staff are replaced inappropriately. The Management Representatives confirmed that, if the Staff Representatives provided further information, a response would be provided outwith the scheduled meetings.

The Staff Representatives stated that they were seeking an outcome by September 2026, rather than the matter simply being picked up at the next meeting. They noted that sectoral disputes on related issues had previously led to industrial action and reiterated their wish to secure a resolution.

32/25 College Transformation Framework/Tripartite Alignment Group

The Management Representatives advised that any matter involving ongoing National Bargaining should involve the appropriate National Bargaining leads and be discussed through the NNC structures. It was noted that the Tripartite Alignment Group had not been established for the purpose of discussing National Bargaining matters and that the NNC remained the appropriate mechanism for consultation with EIS-FELA on national policy matters relating to collective bargaining.

The Management Representatives advised that CES was comfortable with the tripartite arrangement between Colleges Scotland, the Scottish Funding Council and the Scottish Government. It was also noted that trade unions would have their own separate engagement with the Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council, and that the published minutes of the Tripartite Alignment Group provided transparency around those discussions.

The Staff Representatives sought clarification on what discussions had taken place between College Employers Scotland and Colleges Scotland regarding the remit of the Tripartite Alignment Group. They noted concern that National Bargaining-related matters, including DIA, had appeared on the Tripartite Alignment Group agenda under Any Other Competent Business. The Staff Representatives stated that their concern related to the relationship between Colleges Scotland and College Employers Scotland and the risk of discussions taking place, or information being shared, without appropriate clarity between the respective roles of the organisations.

The Management Representatives advised that Colleges Scotland was an influencing and membership body, while College Employers Scotland was responsible for National Bargaining discussions. It was noted that any discussions on the future of the college sector should involve trade unions where appropriate. The Management Representatives indicated that their understanding was that the Tripartite Alignment Group primarily concerned financial matters.

The Staff Representatives queried the reference to a National Bargaining workshop within the Tripartite Alignment Group agenda and asked what had been discussed.

The Management Representatives advised that they had not been involved in those discussions and were not aware of the detail. It was noted that, from a review of the public minute, the reference to DIA appeared to relate to discussions on why colleges were excluded from those arrangements, rather than negotiations. The Staff Representatives stated that, while they accepted there may be separate discussions, a National Bargaining workshop should not take place without trade union involvement.

The Management Representatives confirmed that they would raise the matter to establish why the workshop had taken place and what had been discussed. They reiterated that they had not been involved in those discussions and stated that matters should be progressed in a joined-up way to support lobbying for the needs of the sector.

33/25 Circulars – Management Update

Circular 02/17

The Management Representatives advised that CES did not support the full revised circular as drafted. However, it was proposed that Appendix 1 should be extracted as a standalone document for colleges to use as guidance and issued by way of a circular. The Management Representatives advised that Appendix 1 was already operating effectively in a number of colleges and that it provided helpful clarity on the relevant role criteria. It was noted that the original circular had been drafted for a particular point in time and that CES did not support the further detail proposed within the wider circular.

The Staff Representatives queried the position in relation to the simplified circular. The Management Representatives advised that the simplified version had not been considered by CES and that only the full version had been discussed.

The Staff Representatives stated that, provided Appendix 1 remained in place, they were content with that position at this stage. It was agreed that the Joint Secretaries would take this matter forward offline.

Circular 01/18 and 04/18

The Management Representatives advised that the principal issue for CES was the absence of exemptions within the proposed revised circular. It was noted that CES was content with the wider position only if exemptions were included. The Management Representatives stated that, in practical terms, colleges required provision for exceptional circumstances.

The Staff Representatives stated that this was a difficult issue, as members understood that they should have a right to additional hours where applicable. They noted that a response from colleges that additional hours would not be granted could have a negative impact on morale.

The Management Representatives gave examples of circumstances where exemptions may be required, including where temporary cover related to successive periods of maternity leave. It was noted that, in such circumstances, there may not be an ongoing substantive role once the temporary cover arrangements ended.

The Staff Representatives raised concerns that, in some colleges, individuals had been employed for extended periods without being moved onto permanent contractual arrangements. They noted examples where breaks in service had been relied upon to prevent permanency and stated that this was not acceptable. They also noted that, even where teaching hours were not available, there may be other work that could be undertaken, such as curriculum planning.

The Management Representatives stated that colleges were not seeking loopholes to avoid permanency, but that appropriate wording was required to allow colleges to manage genuinely exceptional circumstances. The Management Representatives noted that, where fixed-term funding or specific projects came to an end, there may be no ongoing funding to sustain a role and that colleges had to consider the potential risk of redundancy in affected areas.

The Staff Representatives stated that, while they accept that the original intention was not to create loopholes, some colleges were using the wording in that way. They referred to examples where staff were released at the end of term and re-engaged at the start of the following year, with the break then being used as a reason not to grant permanency.

The Management Representatives stated that this was not an approach they supported and advised that the intention was to identify a limited number of clearly defined exceptions for exceptional circumstances. It was suggested that the Joint Secretaries should consider whether a form of discretion could be developed which would take account of the circumstances of each case.

The Staff Representatives stated that they did not wish the matter to become solely an offline Joint Secretary issue. The Staff Representatives requested that Management Representatives provide a short and focused list of proposed exceptions in advance of the next meeting.

The Management Representatives agreed to provide this.

Circular 02/21

The Management Representatives advised that they were content with the direction of travel and noted that the Joint Secretaries had drafted a proposed process to support the resolution of outstanding referrals relating to Circular 02/21.

It was noted that meetings were being arranged with relevant colleges to discuss the proposed panel process as a test case, which would help establish whether the process was workable and useful before next steps were agreed.

The Management Representatives advised that the meetings with colleges were intended to provide an update and discuss the process with them as a matter of courtesy.

The Staff Representatives stated that it should be made clear that participation in the process was not optional. The Management Representatives confirmed that this was the case.

34/25 Grievance Policy and Procedure

The Management Representatives advised that they considered the Grievance Policy and model Procedure for Lecturing Staff to be in a position to be ratified and issued more widely across the sector.

The Staff Representatives advised that formal ratification through the EIS-FELA Executive was still required and that this would take place in the coming weeks.

The Management Representatives noted the position and agreed that work on the associated circular could progress in the background, subject to formal ratification by the EIS-FELA Executive, to allow it to be issued to colleges in advance of the implementation date of 1 August 2026.

35/25 Calendar Drift

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed and will be brought forward to the next scheduled committee meeting.

36/25 Class Sizes

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed and will be brought forward to the next scheduled committee meeting.

37/25 Class Contact

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed and will be brought forward to the next scheduled committee meeting.

38/25 Health and Safety

Due to time constraints, this item was not discussed and will be brought forward to the next scheduled committee meeting.

39/25 School-College Partnership Guidance Update

The Staff Joint Secretary provided an update following a meeting with the General Teaching Council for Scotland (GTCS). It was noted that GTCS was not yet in a position to provide formal written instruction, however a verbal update had been provided. It was noted that GTCS was reviewing its guidance and that, subject to GTCS Council approval, this was anticipated to be ready for issue around September/October 2026.

The Staff Representatives noted that there had been an increase in school pupils attending colleges and lecturers delivering in school settings. It was reported that, lecturers should not be teaching in schools without a GTCS registered schoolteacher present. The Staff Representatives stated that this message required to be communicated to members.

The Staff Representatives also raised concerns regarding outsourced lecturers and the potential lack of opportunity for such individuals to access professionalisation arrangements. It was noted that GTCS had confirmed that both the local authority and the college had responsibility for ensuring that lecturers had the correct registration for the teaching being undertaken. The Staff Representatives stated that further discussion was required in order to protect members and ensure compliance with registration requirements.

The Management Representatives noted concern that the relationship between schools and colleges should not be undermined. The Staff Representatives stated that the rules had to be understood and followed, and that the parties needed to consider how the sector could operate within those requirements. It was noted that the requirement appeared to relate to the institution in which the individual was teaching, even where the class being delivered was a further education class.

The Management Representatives confirmed that colleges would be reminded that, where there was any doubt regarding GTCS registration requirements in school-college partnership arrangements, they should contact GTCS directly for guidance.

40/25 Date of Next Scheduled Meeting

The date of the next scheduled meeting is **TBC**.

Action Monitoring Log

Thursday 11 June 2026		
Action	Owner	Status and Completion Date
Staff Representatives to provide a further paper setting out evidence and examples in relation to the use of associate trainers, outsourcing, and individuals undertaking lecturing duties while not employed on lecturing terms and conditions.	Staff Reps	September 2026
Management Representatives to review the further Staff Representatives' paper on associate trainers and outsourcing and provide a response outwith the scheduled cycle of meetings.	Management Reps	September 2026
Management Representatives to seek clarification from Colleges Scotland on the National Bargaining workshop referenced in relation to the Tripartite Alignment Group, including why it took place and what was discussed, and report back as appropriate.	Management Reps	September 2026
Management Representatives to provide a short and focused list of proposed exceptions/exemptions in relation to Circulars 01/18 and 04/18 in advance of the next meeting.	Management Reps	September 2026
Staff Representatives to seek formal ratification of the Grievance Policy and Procedure through the EIS-FELA Executive.	Staff Reps	In Progress
Joint Secretaries to progress work on the circular for the Grievance Policy and Procedure in the background, subject to formal ratification by the EIS-FELA Executive.	Joint Secretaries	In Progress
Calendar Drift to be brought forward to the next scheduled Committee meeting for discussion, as the item was not discussed due to time constraints.	Joint Secretaries	September 2026
Class Sizes to be brought forward to the next scheduled Committee meeting for discussion, as the item was not discussed due to time constraints.	Joint Secretaries	September 2026
Class Contact to be brought forward to the next scheduled Committee meeting for discussion, as the item was not discussed due to time constraints.	Joint Secretaries	September 2026
Health and Safety to be brought forward to the next scheduled Committee meeting for discussion, as the item was not discussed due to time constraints.	Joint Secretaries	September 2026

Management Representatives to remind members that, where there is any doubt regarding GTCS registration requirements in school-college partnership arrangements, colleges should contact GTCS directly.	Management Representatives	September 2026
Thursday 19 March 2026		
Action	Owner	Status and Completion Date
Management Representatives to review circulars 02/17, 01/18 and 04/18 and provide a response.	Management Reps	Complete – June 2026
Management Representatives to review the issues raised in relation to associate trainers and agency staff and provide a response.	Management Reps	Complete – June 2026
Staff Representatives to bring forward a formal paper on class size maxima for consideration at the June meeting.	Staff Reps	Complete – June 2026
Staff Representatives to bring forward a formal paper on class contact for consideration at the June meeting.	Staff Reps	Complete – June 2026
Staff Representatives to prepare a paper outlining proposals for a national health and safety forum for consideration at a future meeting.	Staff Reps	Complete – June 2026
Management Representatives to provide a factual paper outlining the remit and activity of the Tripartite Alignment Group for consideration at the June meeting.	Management Reps	Complete – June 2026
Management Representatives to consider the issues raised in relation to calendar drift and provide a response paper at the next meeting.	Management Reps	Complete – June 2026
Joint Secretaries to discuss the workplan.	Joint Secretaries	In Progress
Thursday 4 December 2025		
Action	Owner	Status and Completion Date
Further develop the draft process and flowchart to support Joint Secretaries in determining Circular 02/21 referrals for consideration at the next Side Table meeting in March 2026.	Joint Secretaries	In Progress
Draft a revised Circular (based on Appendix 2 of Circular 02/17) for consideration at the next Side Table meeting in March 2026.	Staff Side	In Progress
Staff Side to reflect on and clarify its interpretation of the Management Side's feedback on the revised glossary for the Hybrid Working and Learning Practices Working Group, identifying any areas requiring clarification ahead of further discussion.	Staff Side	In Progress

Review the Staff Side response to determine a more consolidated response to the revised glossary for the Hybrid Working and Learning Practices Working Group.	Management Side Joint Secretary	In Progress
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