

Written Ministerial Statement

The content of this written ministerial statement is as received at the time from the Minister. It has not been subject to the official reporting (Hansard) process.

Department for the Economy

FURTHER EDUCATION LECTURERS' PAY DISPUTE AND CURRENT PAY OFFER

Published on Thursday 8 May 2025

Dr Archibald (The Minister for the Economy): I would like to update Members on the current position with regard to the Further Education lecturers' 2024/25 pay and the pay offer made to Trade Unions.

You will be aware that lecturers in Further Education Colleges have not yet had a pay settlement for 2024/25.

My predecessor strongly acknowledged the vital role Colleges play in improving our skills base through his actions taken to facilitate a 2023/24 pay agreement. I share this assessment and concur that our Further Education lecturers should be recognised for the contribution they make to our learners and economy.

A draft budget allocation was provided to Further Education Colleges at the beginning of February which reflected the severely constrained budget position my Department faces for 2025/26. Since then a considerable amount of work has been undertaken within my Department and in partnership with Colleges on creating the conditions where a fair and affordable pay offer could be made.

I have worked to provide a budget envelope which allows for a pay offer to be made to Further Education lecturers. For 2024/25, a 5.5% increase is proposed which aligns to the offer accepted by teachers. In addition, I am pleased to report that a 3% pay increase offer has been made for 2025/26, providing much needed stability for lecturers and students alike.

I hope this pay offer means that action short of strike will be brought promptly to an end, removing any barriers to qualifications being awarded.

I remain firmly committed to supporting Trade Unions and Further Education Colleges, as employers, to expediate commitments made under the pay agreement, including a review of both workloads and into pay and conditions for Further Education lecturers, particularly to focus on parity with teachers. I also recognise the importance of the development of a revised Industrial Relations model in the context of strengthening the role of Colleges in line with my Economic Vision.

Dr CAOIMHE ARCHIBALD MLA
Minister for the Economy