



RESPONSE TO:

Proposal for the registration of further education teachers with the Education Workforce Council

Contact Details:

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1. The University and College Union (UCU Wales) represents more than 7,000 academics, lecturers, trainers, instructors, researchers, managers, administrators, computer staff, librarians, and postgraduates in universities, colleges, adult education and training organisations across Wales.
2. UCU Wales is a politically autonomous but integral part of UCU, the largest post-school union in the world: a force for educators and education that employers and government cannot ignore.
3. UCU was formed on the 1st June 2006 by the amalgamation of two strong partners – the Association of University Teachers (AUT) and the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education (NATFHE) – who shared a long history of defending and advancing educators’ employment and professional interests.
4. We welcome the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the proposal for the registration of further education teachers with the Education Workforce Council.

Question 1 – Do you agree that the description of a service provider working at a further education institute as set out at paragraph 7.3 provides a sound basis for an exemption to register with the Education Workforce Council?

Agree		Disagree		Neither agree nor disagree	x
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Supporting comments

There will be occasions where the work of FE teachers will need to be supported by guest speakers and/or outside trainers to provide a small input to the syllabus, in order to improve the quality of provision. To require such persons, whose day to day role is not teaching, to register as FE teachers would only serve as a barrier to this valuable addition.

However, we have concerns over the ambiguity that may occur with the use of exemptions and would prefer a clear definitions of who is 'in' rather than 'out'

Question 2 – Are there any other service providers not captured under the description at paragraph 7.3 who should also be exempted from registering with the Education Workforce Council?

Those *not* employed on a lecturer’s contract.

Those who do not hold a relevant FE teaching qualification.

Those working in FE institutions on Instructor/demonstrator contracts.

Those who may hold a relevant teaching qualification, but who have not practised for more than 3 years

However, we feel that a better approach would be to state clearly and unambiguously who *should* be included in the register of FE teachers and suggest that appropriate guidance could be provided to employers and prospective registrants in order to make the identification of those required to register a much clearer process.

Consideration would need to be given as to where to place those on management spine contracts, who still have teaching responsibilities.

Either way, categories of registration may be subject to change as the education sector continues to develop, but from our point of view it would be preferable to have clear rather than vague definitions at the outset.

Question 3 – We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

We note that the overall aim of the Education Workforce Council is to improve the standards and quality of teaching and we agree that this is an important element to promoting professional standards and increasing public confidence. However, we are of the opinion that creating a register of persons, based on vague definitions of who should be exempt, will not achieve these aims.

The nature and remit of FE is far wider than that of maintained schools and accordingly the professionals engaged in delivering teaching and learning in FE have a wide range of skills, knowledge and qualifications. We acknowledge that this is perhaps why it is considered necessary to use exemptions; however the new common contract for FE lecturers in Wales provides a clear definition of the role of the lecturer and suggest that this would provide a clearer starting point.

In terms of registering teachers in maintained schools, there are clear criteria for registration, one of which is that teachers will hold a recognised teaching qualification. Currently the criteria for FE are not so clear cut. Care needs to be taken that the line between FE teachers and FE support workers is not so blurred that it is difficult to make a distinction.

We are concerned that this could lead to the exploitation of some members of the education workforce, who fall into this grey area. This would be detrimental not only to individual employees, but also to the overall quality of FE provision. It would not improve public confidence or safeguard public interest if vague definitions of categorisation effectively enabled the use of assistants to replace teachers.

Our issue is that in order for the Education Workforce Council to achieve its aims with regard to Further Education, there needs to be an established qualifications framework for FE teachers in Wales. The current dismantling of this framework in England is eroding and undermining the professional status of FE teachers and needs to be addressed in order to clarify the classification of the Education Workforce in Wales.

Responses to consultations are likely to be made public, on the internet or in a report. If you would prefer your response to remain anonymous, please tick here: