

SPHERES OF INFLUENCE AGREEMENT BETWEEN UCU AND UNISON

The Further Education Sector

UCU and UNISON have always enjoyed productive and mutually beneficial relations in the further education sector. The trade unions bargain at national level with the Association of Colleges in single table arrangements together with ACM, ATL, GMB and Unite. The local recognition agreement, which all FE unions signed in December 2009, makes it clear that UCU is recognised for lecturers and UNISON for support staff.

The lines should be clear other than for a growing group of staff which have job titles such as instructor, trainer or associate teacher, which both unions hold in membership. There has never been a formal protocol between the two unions on criteria for determining to which union those staff should belong. This level of determination was never deemed necessary as neither union mounted a targeted campaign to recruit them.

Teachers are in a clearly demarcated professional group but there are various roles undertaken by the rest of the workforce which may require teaching related skills, for example, technicians, librarians and learning support staff. UCU does not seek to recruit those staff into membership.

There may be college restructuring situations where UCU members who are employed as lecturing staff are moved onto support staff contracts, without a diminution of teaching duties. Both unions deplore this practice and UNISON vouches to support UCU in its action to defend members facing this injustice. UNISON would not seek to recruit this specific group of staff, even if on support staff contracts.

The advent of the sector skills council LUK and qualification regulations for FE teachers in 2007 has led to a definition of an associate teacher role. These are defined as staff who teach but do not have the full range of teaching responsibilities, like curriculum development, or need extensive knowledge. They are required to gain appropriate teaching qualifications, register with the Institute for Learning and undertake Continuous Professional Development. Both unions agree that representing the interests of these members is of paramount importance and are committed to working together to improve the pay, conditions and status of this group of staff

UNISON and UCU agree to ongoing talks on associate teachers and to publicise this agreement to its respective members, activists and officials.

Agreed by UNISON and UCU National Executive Further Education Committees October 2010