

Organising and campaigning for the professional team

UCU: Organising the professional team: Lecturers, instructors, trainers, trainer assessors, learning assistants and many more...

Introduction

The term instructor demonstrator is used to define those roles which colleges use to support learning carried out by staff other than lecturers.

There is growing concern amongst branch officers about the misuse use of instructor/demonstrator (ID) contracts within FE colleges in Wales. This matter has been raised with officials and in conversations in the Further Education Sector Committee (FESC). The main concern is that these contracts are being used by some colleges for staff who are being required to deliver teaching.

Recent years have seen a significant growth in the numbers of practitioners who are obviously educators yet are not granted the status of lecturers. They have a wide range of educational duties and a bewildering array of titles – instructor, trainer, trainer assessor, learning assistant, tutor, and tutor assessor and so on. There is inconsistency across workplaces over the use of such job titles but one thing most of them have in common is they teach students without receiving the professional recognition or the pay of a teacher.

Most are employed on support staff contracts with no, or unacceptably high, limits on direct student contact, holiday entitlements equivalent to those of pure administrative or technical staff and pay which has no link with teaching scales.

UCU is clear that we act to defend professional standards and staff terms and conditions wherever we believe that they come under threat. For that reason, we actively campaign to prevent or to mitigate explicit attempts to substitute lecturing jobs with such posts.

However, in many colleges the use of instructor/demonstrator contracts has become commonplace. In addition, we are seeing a growing trend toward attempt to introduce these posts as part of restructuring or redundancy situations.

Wherever these posts are established or are introduced, UCU must act by organising these staff and improving their terms and conditions. The UCU position in Wales is clear; If Instructor Demonstrators are teaching they should be suitably rewarded.

We cannot allow our employers to drive down terms and conditions for teaching staff and as long as we sit back and allow associate teachers to work on inferior contracts, we are undermining our own case for professional standards and professional working conditions in further education. If we only defend those parts of the teaching team on traditional lecturing contracts, we are weakening ourselves critically. Who will stand with us when our employers attempt to generalise these contracts?

At the FESC meeting at Wales Conference this year a motion was agreed which stated that UCU Cymru should consider teaching as:

'The delivery of any new knowledge contained in a syllabus'

It is recognised that the role of IDs within FE colleges in Wales is required by some institutions to support the delivery of learning and/or training, although some institutions do chose not to use this role.

It was agreed as a part of the introduction of the pay scales in 2005 that from the 1st of August 2005 Colleges would place support staff working as IDs on the pay scales for this role, the same pay scales as the unqualified lecturers. At that time we negotiated and agreed a form of words to try and differentiate the role from that of a lecturer.

The agreement recognises the need for individual institutions to operate within a flexible framework and that it is not possible to precisely define that role for the FE sector.

The agreement reached in 2005 was based on the following three key principles:

1. the work of instructors/demonstrators complements the work of lecturers by taking responsibility for overseeing agreed learning and/or training activities.
2. those colleges in Wales which chose to use instructors/demonstrators to support the delivery of learning will reach agreement with local trade union representatives on distinguishing between the role and responsibilities of the instructor/demonstrator on the one hand and the lecturer on the other.
3. the roles of instructors/demonstrators and lecturers are not interchangeable and it is not the intention of this agreement to allow the use of instructors/demonstrators to undermine the role of lecturers. It is agreed that instructors/demonstrators will not carry out formal scheduled teaching or course development work other than under the general direction of a lecturer. (*See Agreement at appendix 1*)

Action points branch committees

1. Branches are asked to establish whether their institution uses this role and how many staff are employed on this type of contract and confirm whether there is a local agreement in place. If so provide a copy to the office. We will be chasing you in the new academic year for this information.
2. Branch officers are advised to write to their principals and chief executives (*using the letter at appendix 2 of these guidance notes*) to seek assurances that instructor demonstrators will not be used to deliver teaching, defined by ucu as; 'any new knowledge contained in a syllabus'. Please cc Phil into the letter and provide copies of any response to Phil.
3. Branches are also asked to inform the UCU Cymru office about any college who refuses to give a commitment not to use Instructor Demonstrators to deliver teaching as defined by UCU Cymru.
4. If your college is one that has chosen to use instructor demonstrators and if you have not yet negotiated an agreement with your college, you are advised as a branch to put this item on the agenda to be discussed (JCC, JNCC etc) with a view to reaching agreement with your college to differentiate between the role and responsibilities of the instructor/demonstrator on the one hand and the lecturer on the other. Please keep Phil appraised of progress on this matter.

Appendix One

Agreement on the employment of instructor/demonstrator staff in FE colleges and institutions in Wales

1. Objectives

- 1.1. Phase two of the Pay Wales Agreement agreed two job roles; lecturer and instructor /demonstrator. This agreement provides the framework within which those two roles can coexist within FE in Wales.
- 1.2. It is recognised that the role of instructor/demonstrator within FE colleges in Wales is required by some institutions to support the delivery of learning and/or training, although some institutions may chose not to use this role.
- 1.3. This agreement recognises the need for individual institutions to operate within a flexible framework and that it is not possible to precisely define that role for the FE sector.
- 1.4. This agreement covers the staff in the 23 FE colleges and 2 FE institutions in Wales. However it is subject to approval by college employers collectively represented by fforwm and by trades unions of staff employed by colleges. The legal position is that each corporation/governing body has the responsibility to set the framework for the pay and conditions of staff in their own college or institution.

2. Principles

- 2.1. The work of instructor/demonstrator complements the work of lecturers by taking responsibility for overseeing agreed learning and/or training activities.
- 2.2. Those colleges in Wales which chose to use instructor/demonstrators to support the delivery of learning will reach agreement with local trade union representatives on distinguishing between the role and responsibilities of the Instructor/Demonstrator on the one hand and the lecturer on the other.
- 2.3. The roles of instructor/demonstrators and lecturers are not interchangeable and it is not the intention of this agreement to allow the use of instructor/demonstrators to undermine the role of lecturers. It is agreed that instructor/demonstrators will not carry out formal scheduled teaching or course development work other than under the general direction of a lecturer.

3. Implementation

- 3.1. It is agreed that from the 1st August 2005 colleges will place support staff working as instructor/demonstrators on the pay scales for this role, as agreed in the main agreement for Phase two.
- 3.2. No member of staff should suffer a reduction in salary as a result of this agreement.
- 3.3. Implementation of this framework agreement will involve all parties to this agreement (Unison, NATFHE and where appropriate ATL,UCAC)
- 3.4. It is agreed that NFENCW will review this agreement during the academic year 2006/7.

Appendix 2

Name
Title
Address

Date

Dear Principal or Chief Executive (Delete one as appropriate)

There is growing concern amongst branch officers at UCU Cymru Further Education Sector Committee (FESC) about the misuse of instructor demonstrators within some FE colleges in Wales. The main concern being that instructor demonstrators are being used to deliver teaching, defined by UCU Cymru as: 'The delivery of any new knowledge contained in a syllabus'.

Section 3.1 of the National Agreement on the Employment of Instructor/Demonstrator Staff in FE Colleges and Institutions in Wales states:

'The roles of instructor/demonstrators and lecturers are not interchangeable and it is not the intention of this agreement to allow the use of instructor/demonstrators to undermine the role of lecturers. It is agreed that instructor/demonstrators will not carry out formal scheduled teaching or course development work other than under the general direction of a lecturer.'

Please provide us with an assurance that (insert College name here) are not and have no intention of using instructor demonstrators to deliver formal scheduled teaching as defined by the UCU Cymru as: 'The delivery of any new knowledge contained in a syllabus'.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely

UCU Branch Secretary