



## UNISON and UCU

October 2017

UCU and UNISON are the biggest unions representing staff in further education colleges. Between us UNISON and UCU cover the whole workforce representing both teaching and support staff. Both unions know that when we work together we are stronger at college, regional and national level. When FE staff are organised in a union more can be achieved.

UCU and UNISON are concerned that all jobs in FE receive the appropriate pay, grading and recognition. Over recent years many colleges have created posts that have sought to cut the costs of delivering the college curriculum. We believe that colleges need to invest in their staff to deliver courses of the highest quality and downgrading is no way to attract and retain the experienced and committed staff needed.

### Guiding principles for recruiting

This joint statement is issued alongside both unions' most recent publicity materials for current and potential members. In 2010 UCU and UNISON signed a spheres of influence agreement for the FE sector. This stated:

*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.***

Both unions recognise that in recent years colleges have created more posts involved in curriculum delivery but that may not actually be called 'teacher' or 'lecturer'. To address this matter the joint unions have called on the AoC to work with us on a project to address the pay, grading and health and safety issues affecting this group of staff.

As a general rule, staff whose job includes a requirement for a teaching qualification and is also subject to observations, will normally be members of UCU. UCU does not seek to recruit staff that are employed on support staff contracts in colleges unless they are involved with teaching and/or directly involved in curriculum delivery, or where their teaching post has been downgraded to a support staff contract.

Historically, assessors may have been either members of UNISON or UCU. This will vary between different colleges and depending on how posts have evolved and on the previous work undertaken by an individual. Local circumstance and pre-existing membership arrangements will need to be considered in terms of union recruitment and representation.

This statement recognises that there is considerable variation between colleges and similar jobs may have different titles in different places and conversely similarly titled jobs may also have significantly different roles and duties. The above are designed to be guiding principles to be read alongside the 2010 agreement. Neither union seeks to poach members, rather to work together to ensure a strong and unionised workforce in FE. This means that at a local level branches should work collaboratively and establish joint-working wherever possible. If you need further advice please speak to your branch and/or regional officer.



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