

Scotland's colleges 2024: Written submission from UNITE Scotland, 12 November 2024



Unite the Union Scotland represents around 150,000 working people and their families throughout Scotland. Unite is the UK's leading trade union with 1.4 million members in a range of industries including transport, education, construction, financial services, aerospace and shipbuilding, manufacturing, automotive industries, energy, print and media, the voluntary and non-profit sectors, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, local government and health the NHS.

1. In your view, why has there been such slow progress of the job evaluation process?

At the outset, it was agreed that it should be a joint project with a project manager from both the trade union and management side. Joint terms of reference for the project were agreed however it was severely underestimated the length of time and resource required to conclude the project, including resource to score a large number of roles. In the interim period many roles in the sector have changed and evolved and new roles have also been created. None of these new or changed roles have been scored to date and there are now also concerns from CES about the outcomes of some of the roles that have been scored based on role questionnaires that were completed at the beginning of the project, in most cases 2019. This has resulted in further delays with the latest proposal to work on a revised project plan and timeline to conclude the project. Unite's view is that the project needs to conclude urgently. Unison have led on this project throughout and from the time of the pay dispute in the sector, i.e. 2022 onwards, Unite have had limited involvement and influence on the job evaluation project. That said, until recently any progress on the job evaluation project had effectively stalled due to the pay dispute and poor industrial relations in the sector. The pay dispute ended in July 2024.

2. Has a timeline for the resolution of the job evaluation process been agreed, if so, is Unite content with it?

No, or at least not that Unite are aware of. Unite would stress that the emphasis needs to be on concluding the project urgently.

3. Has agreement been reached on the inclusion of back pay for staff whose roles are undergoing evaluation, and if so, are you able to share your views on this?

It was originally agreed that the outcomes would be backdated to 2018, including impacts on pay. CES have stated that they can no longer commit to this given the length of time the project has been going on, without being concluded. There was some exploratory discussion about options to make one off payments to all staff in the sector to offset any back pay due, but Unite were opposed to this and these proposals did not progress further. Unite's position is that there should be no detriment in pay for any member of staff and we are keen that members who are due an uplift in pay, including back pay, receive this as soon as possible.

4. What impact has the slow progress of the job evaluation process had on support staff?

Unite and our members have lost faith in the project, some members have also lost interest, but other members are frustrated as they are confident that job evaluation would have delivered an increase in pay which they have been waiting for this last 5 years or so.