

EIS membership for Early Years Practitioners
with BA Childhood Practice

1. At its meeting of January 10th 2020, Executive, and subsequently Council, approved in principle a decision to open membership to graduate Early Years Practitioners qualified with BA Childhood Practice degrees as Associated Professionals but sought confirmation of the envisaged mechanics of how that would operate.
2. In doing so Executive recognised that the EIS has a long-established practice of recruiting graduate education professionals (known as Associated Professionals) who are not teachers, to EIS membership. The positive experience of FELA in relation to "Instructors" was cited in discussion.
3. Whilst agreeing that there was merit in considering future proofing the interests of the Institute, Executive also confirmed that the primary EIS policy was that pre-school 3-5 year olds should have statutorily guaranteed minimum access to GTCs registered Nursery Teachers, working as part of teams within publicly funded nurseries, alongside other professionals and practitioners to plan and deliver education to that cohort of early learners.
4. It also re-affirmed EIS policy that no Nursery Teacher should be re-deployed against their will.
5. In recognising the eligibility of graduate Early Years Practitioners for membership, Executive was clear that the primary focus of such an offer was around the professional learning agenda which the Institute could offer to key practitioners, in an attempt to optimise collaboration with Teachers in pre-school settings.
6. It recognised that in opening membership to Graduate Early Years Practitioners allowing representation by an education union, the norm among many Education International (EI) affiliates, including our sister union the NEU, the EIS would strengthen its profile as the biggest education union in Scotland, representing teachers and allied professionals in all sectors and at all career levels.
7. Executive also recognised the potential offered to the EIS by opening membership to this cohort to influence national ELC policy in an holistic manner – aligning the interests of Graduate Early Years Practitioners and Nursery Teachers and further galvanising the influence of the EIS on all aspects of education policy which impact on the 3-18 learner cohort.
8. It was made clear in discussion, however, that the Institute was not seeking to aggressively recruit graduate Early Years Practitioners and would always be mindful of TUC/STUC protocols on inter-union relationship. It was also made clear in discussion that whilst EYPs (like teachers) are employed by Local Government, the Institute would not be

seeking to represent them in negotiating fora such as the Local Government bargaining group. Individual Graduate Early Years Practitioners members would receive, however, full personal representation and support in areas such as disciplinary, capability, grievance, redundancy, discrimination and other statutory claims. The EIS currently has some ULA members in a similar position. This distinction, however, would be made clear to any EYP membership applicants.

9. It was envisaged that opening EIS membership to Graduate Early Years Practitioners who sought same, would promote a less "hostile" environment than is currently the case, potentially strengthening the campaign to increase the number of GTCS registered qualified Teachers in Early Years.
10. In confirming the "in principle" decision, therefore, Executive is asked to note:
 - That the Institute is not seeking representation in bargaining arrangements outwith the SNCT and LNCTS
 - That it is not planned to aggressively recruit graduate Early Years Practitioners, but rather simply allow applications to be accepted where they are currently being turned down
 - That the primary focus of any membership "offer" would be around professional learning
 - That representation would be limited to individual professional employment issues
 - That EIS policy in relation to the critical role of teachers in pre-5 remains unaltered.
11. Whilst a particular interpretation of 'Associated Professional' within the current membership criteria could be applied to EYPs, whose graduate status didn't exist until recently, it would be cleaner to instruct a specific amendment to the criteria be brought forward to this year's AGM:

*Add a new point to **II Membership; 1 Ordinary**:*

(n) Persons employed as graduate Early Years Practitioners

Recommendation

Executive is invited to note this further report and to move forward on its previous decision in principle by adopting the proposed amendment above for submission to AGM.