

Frequently Asked Questions for Fórsa members of the **NETB branch**

What should I do during the industrial action?

A union instruction has been issued to members working in Education and Training Boards. It outlines the work to rule and non-cooperation actions you should follow as part of this industrial action. It is very important that you are familiar with the instruction and understand it.

This FAQ is a guide to help with general queries and will be updated as a live document over the coming weeks.

If a manager asks you to carry out any task or action covered by the withdrawal instruction, explain that you are following the union instruction and that the matter should be raised at national level.

What does this FAQ document cover?

This document covers questions asked to date about the work to rule industrial action that starts on Wednesday 30th September 2026. A separate strike FAQ document will be issued in early October before the national strike day on Wednesday 14th October 2026.

In relation to non-critical reports, are there any exemptions?

The only reports that have been given exemption are those specifically linked to payroll and the paying of salaries/payments to staff/learners/apprenticeships.

What does outsourced consultants include?

This relates specifically to external consultants which have been engaged by ETBs to carry out work. One such example is Project Managers. These are roles the NETB branch believes should and could be carried out by an administrative staff member of the equivalent grade after receiving sufficient training. ETBs have elected to outsource this role without collaboration with Fórsa and members have voiced their frustration on this matter. Therefore, members are not to engage with any new consultants including the project managers on projects that have not commenced by the Wednesday 30th of September.

What work in relation to the transfer of the school completion programme to ETBs is covered by the work to rule instruction - training of transferring staff etc?

Any ETBs which have commenced the preparation work for the transfer of SCP and are included in Wave 1, may continue. Any work on any other Wave is not allowed.

We have an open evening coming up that takes place from 5pm - 7pm. This would be within core hours so technically it would not be classed as overtime, should I attend?

If it is within your core and contracted hours then you can attend.

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For a number of years I have worked one evening per week covering the office during night classes. I start at 12.30pm and finish at 8pm. It is not overtime. Should I continue?

If this is part of your normal and regular duties then you can continue.

Can you accrue flexi time and use it during this time?

You may only carry out the hours you are contracted for. Flexible working arrangements may be utilised, but you should not be accruing flexi leave hours.

Can you work with Agency staff?

Yes.

How does prior booked annual leave affect strike days and related pay?

Managements should honour these leave requests if booked prior to Wednesday 30th September. You will need to ensure management have you marked off on leave for the strike days to not have pay deducted.

I am the only Fórsa member at my location. How do I participate in industrial action? I don't want to strike on my own!

The industrial action is being taken by not only Fórsa but by the other unions, including SIPTU, and teaching unions. You would therefore not be alone outside your workplace.

We currently have agency staff working in a clerical capacity - where do they stand with regards to work to rule and strike day?

If they are not union members then they can be asked to cover any duty by management.

Can you expand more on not engaging with the College of the Future please?

This relates to any work from the Wednesday 30th September which directly relates to the setting up, or organising for College of the Future.

Is there any Fórsa approved Out of Office message that should be used from 30th September and/or on any Strike days?

The branch will be issuing such a message, but it will be up to members whether they use it.

Should staff cover the work of a higher grade if they are on sick leave or on annual leave during work to rule?

Members should not be carrying out any role of a higher grade in normal circumstances or during the work to rule.

Our contracts around duties are a bit vague, has the union considered a one day phone ban?

This is not included in the current list of instructions but is being considered for future escalation.

We have the College of the Future in place by a different name - we are engaging with issues on our central application system, should that stop?

Any work already commenced prior to Wednesday 30th September can continue. Any new items pertaining to college of the future after Wednesday 30th September should not be carried out.

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I help cover reception for the admin staff to take breaks and let students into classes during this period. Do I refuse to do this?

If it is within your normal duties you may continue. If you are only doing this due to a vacant position, then you should cease.

Should I do October returns with deputy principal?

The only reports that have been given exemption are those specifically linked to payroll and the paying of salaries/payments to staff/learners/apprenticeships. So this should continue.

If we progress to next stage /phase who organises the 'picket lines' roster for each centre?

The branch and the disputes committee will be in communication with local reps within each ETB to discuss the logistics for pickets on strike days.

I was recently awarded a temp G6 for Mat Leave, but I am still covering my G4 as no backfill was sanctioned. Which role should I do?

You should only be covering the acting role. Your Grade 4 role should have been filled and is therefore a vacant post.

In relation to October returns - we help students fill out the form, should we refuse to help the student?

You can still assist students in this manner.

How does the work to rule instruction align with the point in contracts that say 'and any duties assigned by your line manager'?

Any request to carry out 'other duties that may be assigned' are covered on the instruction: do not to take on any new work streams or processes.

Will all unions be striking on same dates?

Yes, the Public Services Committee of ICTU has agreed that all public sector unions participating in the dispute will strike on the same day for maximum impact.

Have ETBs been informed of the actions members will be asked to take?

Yes, official notice of industrial cation was served by the union to ETB Chief Executives.

Are people who join before Wednesday 30th September covered by the union for the industrial action?

Yes, any person who has submitted their application form is covered.

