



# COVID-19

## Letter to ELICOS Employers - 25 March

Dear [employer],

I write on behalf of the ELICOS staff at your workplace. COVID-19 is not only a threat to the health and wellbeing of Australians, but also a threat to economic well-being. We are seeing massive job losses across many sectors, especially among those that employ casual workers.

As you are aware, a majority of ELICOS teachers are engaged on casual contracts. However, despite this, a great number of these teachers work regular hours and have done so over a lengthy period of time, demonstrating their dedication to their respective colleges, their students and their profession. In recent days, several colleges in Melbourne have decided to close their doors, with no indication that there will be attempts to move learning online. Other colleges have transitioned, or are in the process of transitioning, to online teaching in an effort to continue offering classes. That said, there have already been job losses among those schools moving to an online mode of delivery.

For these reasons, we seek a commitment that you make genuine attempts to retain staff, where possible. Where classes are not available, this can be achieved by engaging teachers to perform non-teaching duties or alternate duties or working from home arrangements.

The transition to online teaching creates a significant amount of work that could be undertaken by teaching staff in order to ensure students receive the highest quality learning possible. Such works includes, but is not limited to:

- Preparing materials and developing curriculum for online learning to take place. Specifically – Creating slides and activities for online use. This also can include digitising current paper-based resources for online use.
- Updating Education Procedures and Policies.

- Updating and creating teacher training documents.
- Review of supplementary materials for courses to ensure they meet compliance standards. For example, around copyright.

We seek an additional commitment that any teacher who loses their job or hours as a result of this pandemic will be prioritised for rehiring when work becomes available again. Teachers, either casual or ongoing, who have chosen not to teach face-to-face lessons in the current climate, due to the health risks concerned, should not be penalised in terms of access to online work or future face-to-face teaching work.

This crisis should not, and does not need to, result in the permanent loss of experienced staff, which would be permanently damaging to the reputation and integrity of the sector.

I would like to emphasise that our collective goal here should be staff retention and the maintenance of high standards regarding the quality of education delivered to students. Both are closely linked, and I believe that the measures outlined in this letter can ensure the best possible outcome for staff, students, and the industry as a whole. I look forward to discussing these issues with you at the earliest opportunity.

Your sincerely,

Debra James  
General Secretary