

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed AAC agreement and the recommendation that members should vote in favour of it. I believe it is important to address the key justifications being presented for this agreement.

1. “Additional funding and resources have been secured” While any additional funding is welcome in principle, the level secured is wholly disproportionate to the scale of the reform. AACs represent a structural shift in assessment, requiring significant additional time, coordination, and oversight. The funding outlined does not meaningfully offset the increased workload placed on teachers.
2. “Teachers will receive training and professional development” Training is not a substitute for time. Providing CPD does not reduce the ongoing workload associated with AACs — it simply prepares teachers to carry it out. In many cases, it adds further time demands.
3. “14 hours have been allocated for AAC-related work” The allocation of 14 hours is entirely insufficient given the scope of responsibilities involved, including planning, supervision, authentication, administration, and follow-up. These hours do not replace existing obligations and therefore do not address the real increase in workload.
4. “Croke Park hours are being reconfigured” The retention of full Croke Park hours fundamentally undermines this agreement. If AACs are to be implemented properly, existing time commitments must be reduced. Reconfiguration without reduction is not a meaningful concession.
5. “Protections are in place for teachers” There is no clear, robust indemnity framework publicly outlined for teachers making high-stakes judgments about academic integrity. In an era of AI-assisted work, this exposes teachers to significant professional risk. General assurances are not sufficient where complaints or disputes may arise.
6. “This agreement secures pay increases” Linking pay progression to cooperation with a significantly expanded workload places members in a difficult and unfair position. It creates a dynamic where acceptance may be driven by financial pressure rather than the merits of the agreement itself.
7. Prior agreements and the removal of industrial leverage I am particularly concerned about the broader context in which this agreement is being presented. Previous agreements effectively limited the union’s ability to take industrial action, including strike action, in exchange for pay-related measures.

While these provisions may have been included in documentation, I do not believe their implications were communicated with sufficient clarity or prominence at the time. Many members may not have fully appreciated the extent to which their industrial leverage would be constrained.

This is especially concerning given that Senior Cycle reform, including AACs, was already clearly on the horizon. Entering into such agreements had the effect of significantly weakening the union's negotiating position at a critical time. It is difficult to reconcile this with a strategy focused on protecting members' interests.

8. "Engagement ensures teachers have a voice in implementation" Meaningful engagement must include the ability to reject proposals that are not fit for purpose. If the fundamental structure of AAC implementation is already determined, then what is being presented as engagement risks becoming managed compliance rather than genuine negotiation.

Taken together, this agreement asks teachers to take on substantially increased workload and professional risk, without adequate time, protection, or compensation.

I do not believe this represents a fair or sustainable outcome, and I cannot support the recommendation that members vote in favour of it. I would also urge the union to reflect seriously on its recent strategic decisions and how they have impacted its ability to advocate effectively on behalf of members.

We need to reject this "agreement"