



**Making the University of Nottingham a fair and socially
sustainable employer**

Proposals by the *Nottingham University Living Wage / Anti-casualisation campaign.*





The quality of education is closely linked to fair working conditions of members of staff. All University employees should enjoy stability and continuity of employment. ‘Casualisation is bad for staff and bad for education, yet it's endemic in our colleges and universities’ (UCU, <http://www.ucu.org.uk/stampout>, accessed 12/01/2016). As the testimonials in the Appendix indicate, the University of Nottingham is no exception in this respect.

In this document, the *Living Wage / Anti-casualisation campaign group* at Nottingham University outlines its specific proposals. The campaign group consists of the three trade unions on campus, Unison, Unite and UCU, together with Nottingham Citizens as well as the Labour Students society, Feminist Students, Socialist Students, the Young Greens and the Left Society.

Our most important, overall demand is that the University opens formal negotiations with the campaign group to discuss the various specific proposals outlined in this document.

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I. The Living Wage:

The Living Wage is an hourly rate set independently and updated annually in November by the Living Wage Foundation (<http://www.livingwage.org.uk/>; accessed 12/01/2016). It is calculated according to the basic cost of living in the UK, ensuring that employees enjoy a 'minimum income standard'. The Living Wage is currently £8.25 an hour outside London.

There are now more than 2,000 accredited Living Wage employers across the UK. This includes a wide range of different companies and institutions such as IKEA, LIDL, Lloyds Banking Group, HSBC, the Bank of England, Goldman Sachs, PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) and Unilever.

17 universities are already accredited Living Wage employers, several of which the University of Nottingham would identify as its direct 'competitors' (in bold): Birkbeck College, Goldsmiths College, Huddersfield University, Institute of Education, **Kings College London**, Leeds Trinity University, London Business School, London Metropolitan University, **London School of Economics**, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Queen Mary University, SOAS, St Mary University, **University College London**, University of East London, University of Salford, and Wolverhampton University (Unison, 2013, <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2013/11/Briefings-and-CircularsLiving-wage-research-Exec-summary3.pdf>; accessed 13/01/2016). The University of Manchester has just recently announced that it will pay the living wage for its catering staff (see <http://www.staffnet.manchester.ac.uk/news/display/?id=15797>; accessed 23/01/2016).

For the 2014/2015 pay year (Aug/July), using figures provided by Human Resources, all Nottingham University employees on pay points 2 and 3 were paid below the Living wage rate of £7.85 ph (set in November, 2014). The number of people totalled 711. This was made up of 633 from the O&F family, 45 APM, and 33 from TS family.

Following the Living wage increasing to £8.25 in November 2015, and after allowing for the 2015 cost of living pay rise to be applied from 01/08/2015, the number of staff now paid less than the Living Wage has increased to 745. All staff in pay points 2, 3 and 4 are now paid below the LW. This adds a further 21 O&F staff, 9 APM and 4 TS to the above family figures.

Using the headcount of staff on each pay point, we estimate that the maximum cost to the University in 2015-16 of raising the pay of all staff to the current level of the Living Wage

(£8.25 ph) would be approximately £650,000. This represents only 2.6% of the University's surplus in 2014/15 and only 0.21% of finance spent on staffing. It is important to note that these figures are based on headcount, not on FTEs and, therefore, do not take into account the fact that approximately 60% of staff on these grades work part-time. As a result, this is the absolute maximum cost assuming that all staff worked full time, while the real cost for the University, to be based on FTEs, is even less than the already comparatively low figure.

These figures also need to be evaluated against the background of Nottingham University's surplus of £25m in the year ending 31st July 2014 and another £25m in the year ending 31 July 2015 (see <http://www.nottingham.ac.uk/fabs/finance/documents/financialstatements/fin-stats-2015.pdf>, p.5; accessed 12/01/2016).

The campaign group commends recent actions by the university to raise the pay rates at the bottom of their pay scales. We note that the university's policy of not using the lowest pay rate in the national bargaining structure meant that in August 2014, the lowest paid staff at the university were paid £7.65, which was the Living Wage rate at the time. The Living Wage rate is adjusted in November of each year, and in November 2014 it was raised to £7.85. In August 2015, the continued readjustment of the university pay for the lowest paid staff meant that the lowest rate for directly paid staff was £7.93. In November 2015, the Living Wage rate was raised to £8.25.

Clearly, the university has made some steps in recent years to de facto acknowledge the importance of the Living Wage rate for its lowest paid staff. The campaign believes that these steps have not gone far enough, however. Therefore, we propose:

That the University becomes an accredited Living Wage employer. This is an appropriate statement of the University's long term commitment to being a responsible employer.

That the University also pays not just its directly employed staff a rate at or above the Living Wage rate, but also the staff who are indirectly employed at the University through the use of sub-contracted employers. Thus, in its procurement relationships the University should, we suggest, insist that contractors pay at least the Living Wage to all employees in line with Living Wage accreditation.

II. Casually assigned and fixed-term employed research staff at Nottingham University:¹

‘Although I was conducting post-doctoral research for the University, one of the administrators of the scheme confided that the recipients of the prize would not be employees as this would cost too much in benefits and pension contributions; the prize was tax free, but this also meant no national insurance contributions were paid either’ (Personal Testimony No.1, see Appendix).

‘68% of research staff in higher education are on fixed-term contracts, with many more dependent on short-term funding for continued employment’ (UCU, <http://www.ucu.org.uk/stampout>, accessed 12/01/2016). The use of fixed-term contracts has ensured that UK higher education has remained the highest user of such contracts after the hotel and catering industry. Researchers at the University of Nottingham too suffer from extremely poor contractual conditions.

‘The thought of being seriously sick, without anything other than a subsistence income was terrifying’ (Personal Testimony No.1, see Appendix).

In December 2015, the local UCU association carried out a survey of researchers at Nottingham University:

- a. 93% of survey respondents answered ‘yes’ to the question ‘Would you prefer a permanent contract?’
- b. Comment from survey respondent to ‘If you had the power to change ONE thing to improve the terms and conditions of research staff at the University of Nottingham, what would it be?’: *‘Equivalency in permanent contracts - Academics, Administrators and Technicians are not funded on a project specific basis. Why is it only Researchers are treated this way?’*
- c. Of 89 respondents to open text question ‘If you had the power to change ONE thing to improve the terms and conditions of research staff at the University of Nottingham,

¹ We consider both fixed-term contracts and casual assignments to be versions of casualised labour. Hence, we will use the term casual to mean both, but distinguish casual assignments from fixed-term contracts where necessary in this section II as well as the next section III.

what would it be?' 64 (72%) identified permanent contracts, an increase in contract length or a clear career path as the improvement they would make.

- d. For 86% of respondents, lack of job security was a reason they had considered leaving HE.

We propose that if more researchers were on open-ended, permanent contracts the University of Nottingham would see an improvement in research outputs due to knowledge retention and increased number of PI's available to submit grant proposals. Hence, the University of Nottingham would benefit from more researchers on permanent contracts. The usual maximum length of an externally funded research position is 36 months, yet 37% of staff who responded to our survey were in at least the fourth year of continuous employment at UoN, illustrating that they have already been identified as skilled, knowledgeable and valuable staff that the university would like to retain.

The Fixed-term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002, state that: *Where you are employed on a succession of fixed-term contracts and your contract is renewed after 4 years in employment you will become a permanent employee, unless your employer can objectively justify not making you permanent. Employers will, however, need a very good reason for not to making you permanent after 4 successive years. The fact that your employment is externally funded will not be a sufficient reason.*

Hence, our first proposal for research staff is: All researchers who have completed four years continuous service on more than one contract should be placed on permanent contracts, irrespective of funding source, and that objective justifications based on end of funding should not be used to prevent this. Furthermore, the university should move to create permanent contracts for research staff from the start of their employment.

Research staff on repeated fixed-term contracts often experience high stress levels due to the precarity of their employment.

'I have children and a mortgage and a contract ending after Christmas, but who cares?' (Personal Testimony No.5, see Appendix).

Hence, our second request re research staff is: After two years of continuous employment, all fixed-term researchers are guaranteed a six-month paid period beyond their notice period. The University of Manchester has already adopted a policy along this line.

We recognise and commend the work that the University has been doing in the area of gender equality with schemes such as WinSET, APPLE and working toward Athena SWAN accreditation, but there are still many problems in this area. Point 6 of the Athena SWAN principles states: 'We commit to addressing the negative consequences of using short-term contracts for the retention and progression of staff in academia, particularly women' (<http://www.ecu.ac.uk/equality-charters/athena-swan/about-athena-swan/>; accessed 22/01/2016).

As the UCU survey revealed: 45% of female survey respondents stated that their shortest contract had been less than 1 year in contrast to 27% of male respondents. There is evidence that the current system is less fair to women.

Hence, our third proposal re research staff is: According to the Fixed Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 legislation, jobs are to be kept open whilst an employee is on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, disability leave or sick leave and this must be followed for all staff.

For casual assignments this should be a rare exception and prospective casual workers should be made fully aware of the reason for their not being made a full employee.

Obviously, there must be no discrimination based on gender, sexuality, ethnicity or disability and illness, including mental health and long-term physical health conditions, and this should apply to performance assessment, promotion and career development opportunities.

'Senior Research Fellows are too expensive compared to the cost-effectiveness of PhD students and Research Assistants. We are not wanted, we are too old, and we are a waste. We cannot be PIs but we are expected to lead grant applications that may (or may not) be successful only after the end of our fixed-term contract' (Personal Testimony No.5, see Appendix).

An open UCU meeting for casually employed research staff at Nottingham University in December 2015 revealed that (1) Ph.D. students are increasingly used as cheap labour

replacing researchers; (2) research staff feel treated as second class citizens without access to staff development and promotion; and (3) research staff are not recognised as co-supervisors of Ph.D. students and cannot be the PI on research grant applications.

Hence, our fourth proposal re research staff is: all researchers must be offered a clear promotion path, career development opportunities and access to training within the research job family.

Research at Nottingham University is characterised by large amounts of overtime unevenly spread across Schools.

Hence our fifth proposal re research staff is: implementation of a new monitoring scheme of researchers' hours to prevent individuals regularly working over contracted number of hours per week. Additionally, rules must be applied consistently across all departments with moving towards better conditions as best practice.

In **summary**, the following is proposed to improve the precarious working conditions of research staff on fixed-term contracts:

1. After four years of continuous service on more than one contract researchers should be placed on permanent contracts, irrespective of funding source.
2. After two years of continuous employment, fixed-term researchers should be offered a six-month paid period at the end of their contract.
3. Jobs are to be kept open whilst an employee is on maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, disability leave or sick leave.
4. Clear promotion path, career development opportunities and access to training.
5. New workload monitoring scheme for researchers.

III. Casually employed teaching staff at Nottingham University:

'Working as a Teaching Associate is not easy. It means constant worry about paying rent, bills and living expenses. It involves endless stress about where the next short-term contract will come from' (Personal Testimony No.2, see Appendix).

Large parts of teaching at Nottingham University are carried out by casually employed teachers including postgraduate students as well as fully qualified academics who are employed for part of the academic year (fixed-term contracts) or for teaching particular modules.

'To give your students the best possible learning experience you tend to spend more time preparing than you are paid for. You spend valuable time responding to emails and sorting out administrative questions, again unpaid' (Personal Testimony No.2, see Appendix).

Teachers on casual contracts carry out a considerable amount of unpaid work and experience large levels of precariousness. They have no guarantee of employment, and no annual salary increments. Many teaching staff paid on an hourly basis do not even have contracts of employment setting out normal employment rights. They receive holiday pay, but no sick pay or redundancy entitlements.

'For all those years without a permanent job, I kept my head down. I was too pre-occupied with paying my bills to think about anything else. Sadly, my first marriage failed. Money problems played a part, but mostly the sheer stress involved in working my fingers to the bone' (Personal Testimony No.6, see Appendix).

Not every School has a clear and transparent procedure of how teaching staff are recruited, nor are there general guidelines individual Schools have to follow. In some instances, promised teaching was withdrawn at short notice. This situation results in bad feelings between postgraduate students, who are put in competition with each other over access to teaching hours.

'Sometimes, I would do my cleaning job in the middle of the night, take a quick sleep in the bath, then drive to do a full day's teaching at Nottingham' (Personal Testimony No.6, see Appendix.)

Unsurprisingly, there is a likelihood that the quality of teaching will suffer in the end. Eventually, despite their commitment to the students, the motivation, willingness and approachability of casually employed teaching staff, often without access to an office to meet their students, is likely to be affected negatively. This is not a situation in which students paying high fees at Nottingham University would expect their teachers to be.

'Hourly paid teaching is uncertain – hours can be offered, then decreased or removed relatively last minute. Pay is only effective during teaching weeks, and so I have also had to retain an evening and weekend job to support the income from teaching, meaning family life has suffered. There is very little job security in this role due to semester-long contracts, which puts a major financial strain on young families – the circumstances for many coming out of a PhD. This situation had a detrimental effect on my health, resulting in my being referred by my GP for anxiety due to being overworked, and being put on medication for this' (Personal Testimony No.8, see Appendix).

In order to tackle this deplorable situation, **our main proposal re casual teaching staff is that all hourly paid teaching staff at Nottingham University are being put on harmonised employee contracts, collectively negotiated with UCU and that the University conduct a joint review of all hourly paid contracts with a view to transferring them onto established part-time contracts that create greater security, continuity of employment and enable higher quality provision.**

'It is demoralising to see a role, which requires the level of qualifications as well as the commitment and dedication this job does, being offered at these sorts of rates, where an individual with a PhD, and four years' teaching experience, can be effectively paid at less than minimum wage' (Personal Testimony No.8, see Appendix).

Although the use of Unitemps to employ casual teaching staff has declined, this practice is still happening in some Schools. Hence, **our second proposal is that no teaching staff will be employed through Unitemps or any other non-University company.**

'The biggest problem of casualisation is that it gives you the nagging feeling of not being appreciated as a professional, despite working as hard as colleagues who are employed full-time' (Personal Testimony No.3, see Appendix).

Terms and conditions of teaching of hourly paid staff differ drastically from School to School. In some Schools, preparation time is paid, in others not but the hourly rate may be higher. Some teachers are paid to attend the lectures of the module, on which they teach, others are not.

Hence, **our third proposal is that the guidelines for the employment of remaining hourly paid staff and the related role descriptions are determined in collective negotiations between management and UCU.**

'I have been advised by some academics to just do the minimum that I am paid for, turn up for the session and wait for the students to talk. But I cannot do that, it's not fair on the students and it's not why I want to or why I enjoy teaching. I therefore spend a lot of my own time preparing for sessions but do not feel I have any other choice as to provide a much lower standard of teaching is not something I would feel comfortable doing and I know many other teachers feel the same way' (Personal Testimony No.7, see Appendix).

Hourly paid staff should also be given access to office space, where they can meet their students, and be invited to teaching related departmental meetings.

'I work as many hours as the rest of my colleagues, I spend most of the time at the university, delivering or preparing lessons, I attend every meeting and I participate in every event or session where people are needed. However when summer arrives, while all my colleagues are planning their holidays and can relax, I have to do my maths to see whether I will be able to pay or not for my bills during the following months' (Personal Testimony No.4, see Appendix).

There are casually employed teachers at the University, who are shifted from one ten-month contract, followed by a two-month period of unemployment, only to be re-employed at the beginning of the new academic year on another fixed-term, ten-month contract.

Our fourth proposal is that staff on regular fixed-term contracts are transferred onto permanent contracts to avoid the problem of poverty during summer months.

'I am sure that students paying fees of 9 grand upwards would be shocked if they knew how much (or rather, how little) we were paid to teach them! I know from experience that students are often very surprised to discover that casual teachers have multiple other part time jobs in order to earn a living' (Personal Testimony No.7, see Appendix).

In **summary**, the following is proposed to improve the precarious working conditions of teachers on casual contracts:

1. All hourly paid teaching staff at Nottingham University should be put on harmonised employee contracts, collectively negotiated with UCU.
2. No teaching staff will be employed through Unitemps or any other non-University company.
3. The guidelines for the employment of remaining hourly paid staff and the related role descriptions are determined in collective negotiations between management and UCU.
4. Staff on regular, fixed-term contracts are transferred onto permanent contracts.

IV. Co-operation with private providers in delivering teaching:

The University of Nottingham currently proposes the franchising of Foundation Programmes to a private provider. UCU is opposed to any partnership that transfers teaching responsibility to a private provider. In our view, any proposal to franchise teaching is problematic for the following reasons:

- There is evidence that suggests that there are problems with the quality of teachers and teaching within private provision, and some evidence that suggests problems over the qualifications of students brought in by private providers;
- Staff members of the private provider will, in all probability, be on inferior contracts, lowering the working conditions within the University as a whole and putting subsequent downward pressure on current University contracts.

The obvious way to make profit in instances of privatising public services is through employing staff on lower pay and poorer working conditions. If the Foundation programmes are franchised to a private provider, the terms and conditions of employment of staff members will be the responsibility of the private provider. Especially in relation to pensions, employees of private providers will be on significantly inferior contracts. Clearly, co-operation with private providers is a direct route towards further casual employment at Nottingham University.

Hence, our proposal is that the University withdraws from any attempt at co-operation with private providers.

Appendix - Living Wage/Anti-Casualisation campaign - Personal Testimonies

Personal Testimony No.1: My casual contract cancer scare.

I received one of the post-doctoral awards that are still offered in Science and Engineering faculties. At the time I was very proud to receive such a prestigious award – the application process was rigorous and the technical bar was high. However, right from the start I was concerned about the terms of my 'contract'. **Although I was conducting post-doctoral research for the University, one of the administrators of the scheme confided that the recipients of the prize would not be employees as this would cost too much in benefits and pension contributions; the prize was tax free, but this also meant no national insurance contributions were paid either.** I was provided with a signed document that set out the terms of the award, but this document did not include any information about holidays, parental leave or sickness procedures.

A year into this 'role' I noticed a large mole on my thigh had changed shape and colour. I discussed it with my GP who made an urgent referral to the dermatology clinic, where the specialist agreed straight away that there was a likelihood that the mole was a melanoma. He arranged for it to be removed and biopsied. Despite the fact that there was a very likely chance that I had skin cancer, the treatment of which would have included an invasive surgical procedure that would have removed both a large area of skin and, given the location, the lymph nodes in my right leg, being both painful and scarring, the biggest fear I was experienced at this time was that I would be financially destitute. I had no idea (and still don't) what would happen to my stipend payments if I needed to take several weeks or months off, and, given that neither I nor the University hadn't been paying my NI contributions, I would not have been eligible for statutory sick pay. **The thought of being seriously sick, without anything other than a subsistence income was terrifying.**

Fortunately, I did not have cancer, but this was pure luck, and a colleague at a different time might not have had this outcome. I left the award scheme early, with 6 months left of funding, as soon as I was able to find a new role where I would be under a regular contract.

Casual researcher

Personal Testimony No.2: Working as a Teaching Associate is not easy.

On the one hand you get to know a group of students, help them to learn, and gain some teaching experience in the process. On the other hand you get paid a relatively low wage, work only a small number of hours – except for marking coursework, when everything seems to be on your plate at once – and have no idea whether you will get enough work to live, year to year or even semester to semester. **To give your students the best possible learning experience you tend to spend more time preparing than you are paid for. You spend valuable time responding to emails and sorting out administrative questions, again unpaid.** For all of this time you have to keep producing books and articles in the hope of one day gaining a permanent, academic job. **Working as a Teaching Associate is not easy. It means constant worry about paying rent, bills and living expenses. It involves endless stress about where the next short-term contract will come from.** And you are left knowing that in the current academic job market your work might ultimately be for nothing, and the prospect of a permanent position will remain forever out of your grasp.

Casual teacher

Personal Testimony No.3: Working as hourly paid teaching staff

As an hourly paid teaching staff, I have been very fortunate since my teaching hours have gradually increased to almost full time hours. However, with the increasing teaching hours, my responsibilities have also increased. I love my work and my students. I devoted a lot of time and energy to teach well. Being hourly paid does not reflect the actual effort I have put in my work. **The biggest problem of casualisation is that it gives you the nagging feeling of not being appreciated as a professional, despite working as hard as colleagues who are employed full-time.**

Casual teacher

Personal Testimony No.4: How to survive summer without income?

Casualisation is understandable to me in situations in which someone is really needed for a short period of time due to maternity leaves, diseases and similar issues. However I have been working now as a casual staff for some years, doing a full-time job in the same position, which means that it is not a “casual” one.

I do not have any permanent contract, full-time or part-time. The only document that links me to the university is what they call “Letters of Engagement” that I receive at the beginning of each academic year through e-mail. As a casual staff member I only get paid for the lessons I deliver, plus some extra money for preparation and office hours. I receive also some money for marking exams and for attending some events such as information or registration sessions, but this is only because the director of my department helps and makes it possible.

Since I only get paid for my lessons, I do not have any income during vacation periods. This fact is creating constant economic problems for me, as I need to live the whole year with the income from just a few months. These problems increase during the summer, as my last payment is normally in June and I do not have any other income from the University until the end of October (despite my work starting already in September). **I work as many hours as the rest of my colleagues, I spend most of the time at the university, delivering or preparing lessons, I attend every meeting and I participate in every event or session where people are needed. However when summer arrives, while all my colleagues are planning their holidays and can relax, I have to do my maths to see whether I will be able to pay or not for my bills during the following months.** In fact I have already had to ask for money on some occasions, because I was not able to pay for my house. This is very frustrating and discouraging after having been working hard the whole year.

This situation occurs when the university is run as a business and not as an education place. Modern labs, libraries, shops and cafés on campus, new accommodation for students, etc., they make the university go up in the rankings, which is the only important thing for them. But they should realise that the most important thing in this “business” are the teachers, and it does not matter how many libraries you have or how modern your labs are, if your teachers are not happy. At the end of the day we are the ones taking care of the students.

Casual teacher

Personal Testimony No.5: I am a research waste, but who cares.

After nine years working as a researcher, my earlier career opportunities are gone. Not enough 4* publications for tenure positions and contract restrictions for grant applications. **Senior Research Fellows are too expensive compared to the cost-effectiveness of PhD students and Research Assistants. We are not wanted, we are too old, and we are a waste. We cannot be PIs but we are expected to lead grant applications that may (or may not) be successful only after the end of our fixed-term contract. I am stuck, I am waste.**

The uncertainty of 'permanent' contracts that -in reality- are fixed-term contracts linked to end-of-funding is devastating. The lack of personal control is asphyxiating, it is unbearable. It is affecting my personal stability, my confidence, my perception of reality, definitely my perception of academia.

But where did I go wrong? Why did I trust my line managers when they promised me a contract extension? Why did I believe them when they said I would co-author so many 4* publications? Why was I loyal to all the research projects I have been involved with? Why was I so committed? Why did I care so much? How could I be so naïve, so stupid?

Academia is ruthless and competition is fierce.

And now, what am I expected to do? Shall I make my research track record even more inconsistent? Shall I desperately jump to another 'permanent' contract and just wait for a better opportunity? Like a rat deserting a sinking ship? Like a rat.

I have children and a mortgage and a contract ending after Christmas, but who cares?

Casual researcher

Personal Testimony No.6: Handling five jobs at the same time to make ends meet.

I have worked at the University of Nottingham on and off since 2003. However, it was only in 2015 – twelve years later - that I was offered a permanent job. I began as a researcher, working on two or three year contracts. Luckily, the first contract was renewed. Unluckily, the second time around, in 2006, the grant funding ended, so I found myself out of a job. Worse still, my first wife fell ill and eventually had to leave her employment. **We struggled to pay the mortgage. I got a job as an outdoor cleaning operative for sixteen hours a week. That proved insufficient to meet the bills, so I took on some gardening work and wrote for a newspaper. Eventually, another institution offered me some teaching work on a casual basis. In February 2007, I was offered more casual teaching work at the University of Nottingham, covering for a colleague who was on study leave. That meant that by the middle of 2007, I was juggling five different jobs.** I applied for a permanent post at Nottingham in the spring of 2007, but was unsuccessful. From 2007 to 2009, I worked on a casual basis at Nottingham, keeping my other jobs. **Sometimes, I would do my cleaning job in the middle of the night, take a quick sleep in the bath, then drive to do a full day's teaching at Nottingham.**

Eventually, in 2009, I was offered a part-time teaching and research job, a three-year post covering for a colleague on buy-out. Again, in 2011, I applied for a permanent post, but was unsuccessful. It wasn't as if my teaching was substandard. I won a Lord Dearing Award for my teaching in July 2011. In May 2012, I was successful in gaining a three-year teaching only contract, again covering for a colleague on buyout. During that time (in 2013), I won a

PSA Award for Innovation in Teaching. But it was only in May 2015 that I was finally successful in achieving a full-time permanent position.

I would describe myself as very conscientious and hardworking. I am a good teacher and a good researcher. **For all those years without a permanent job, I kept my head down. I was too pre-occupied with paying my bills to think about anything else. Sadly, my first marriage failed. Money problems played a part, but mostly the sheer stress involved in working my fingers to the bone.**

I'm now happily remarried and have the security of a permanent job. But, looking back I am left to reflect: did it really need to take twelve years? And what about all the other people who are forced to live hand-to-mouth on a casual basis or on short-term contracts? For their sake, it's time to speak out.

Casual researcher and teacher

Personal Testimony No.7: Caring for students while being on low pay.

During my three years as a casual, hourly paid teacher I have effectively had a pay cut. When I first taught I was on 10 pounds an hour and got holiday pay on top of that. In the past year that has been changed to 8.92 an hour so that with holiday it takes it up to ten pounds an hour. When this was questioned with the department we were told that our pay claims had always been altered by the admin staff so that it worked out as 10 with holiday and this was just removing that step. So pay had not changed. Firstly, this was obviously misleading as we were never told that this altering occurred after sending the pay claim off. Secondly, there are doubts among people as to whether it actually did happen as some at the time were sure we had received the extra holiday pay on top of the ten pounds.

I understand that the cuts mean cuts in teaching however the way these have been handed out among us casual teachers makes little sense to me. I was told that the school's priority was to give some teaching experience to those who have not taught before and who were current students in the department. Yet there seems to be a few teachers who have received a lot of hours compared to the rest of the teachers and who are no longer students in the department, which contradicts the reasons many of us were given for our reduction in hours. Plus (without wishing to sound arrogant) as a teacher with a fair amount of experience and consistent high feedback from the students, I would expect to receive more than inexperienced or badly marked teachers if the 'priority of giving current inexperienced students teaching' line is untrue. The allocation therefore seems arbitrary and it is upsetting to have your hours cut without good reason when you have previously put a lot into the role. I know a couple of people have left because of this lack of recognition and I seriously considered not taking any teaching this year as the benefits of doing so are vastly reduced. **I love teaching but the amount of work I now have for less money and the fact that I do not feel appreciated at all is a major off putting factor.**

As a result of this treatment, **I have been advised by some academics to just do the minimum that I am paid for, turn up for the session and wait for the students to talk. But I cannot do that, it's not fair on the students and it's not why I want to or why I enjoy teaching. I therefore spend a lot of my own time preparing for sessions but do not feel I have any other choice as to provide a much lower standard of teaching is not something I would feel comfortable doing and I know many other teachers feel the same way.**

I understand that the nature of timetables makes it difficult to allocate teaching hours but the nature of the casualness of the work means I often do not know how many/ if I will receive

any hours until a week or so before teaching begins, which just reinforces the precariousness of the situation.

I am sure that students paying fees of 9 grand upwards would be shocked if they knew how much (or rather, how little) we were paid to teach them! I know from experience that students are often very surprised to discover that casual teachers have multiple other part time jobs in order to earn a living. Unfortunately there is little we can do as when issues are raised within the department we are met with the same line of 'there's no money, there's nothing we can do' and essentially the attitude and knowledge that if we don't like it then we can easily be replaced by someone else. That fear of losing your teaching hours is always at the back of your mind and even writing this statement makes me feel very nervous (though it is anonymised). I love teaching but overall it can be quite demoralising and I worry that if we continue to go in this direction the best teachers will have no other choice but to leave.

Casual teacher

Personal Testimony No.8: The detrimental impact on health and career prospects.

The opportunity to gain teaching experience is, I believe, essential to PhD students and particularly early career researchers, enabling them to be a part of an academic community and to add to their CV. As a keen researcher who hoped to work within Higher Education following my PhD, I was keen to gain teaching experience along with this and worked hard to gain positions at Nottingham, Leicester, Lincoln and Derby to this purpose. The teaching, however, has proved completely unsustainable following my PhD, and I have now had to move outside of the academic field instead, due to financial circumstances. For hourly paid lecturers and Teaching Affiliates, the pay is given for teaching hours, and for each course taught, an extra hour is given for prep. Taking into account the preparation of the text, updating of research material, class planning as well as time spent on email contact with students, this comes nowhere close to covering working hours. During last semester I taught 6 hours of classes at Leicester, 2 at Lincoln and covered Distance Learning at Nottingham. Realistically, between this and my evening job, my working hours were between 45-50 hours per week. On a good week with full classes, I could earn up to £350, however this only accounted for around 9 weeks in total, allowing for holidays and reading weeks. Some weeks there was no income whatsoever, during holidays etc., as the work is paid through weekly timesheets. **Hourly paid teaching is uncertain – hours can be offered, then decreased or removed relatively last minute. Pay is only effective during teaching weeks, and so I have also had to retain an evening and weekend job to support the income from teaching, meaning family life has suffered. There is very little job security in this role due to semester-long contracts, which puts a major financial strain on young families – the circumstances for many coming out of a PhD. This situation had a detrimental effect on my health, resulting in my being referred by my GP for anxiety due to being overworked, and being put on medication for this.** The time situation as well as my resultant health issues have affected my ability to engage in productive research, causing material damage to my future job prospects within academia. I have been unable to attend many conferences at which I could have publicised my research, to purchase research materials or attend relevant events and courses. **Overall, the past three years have taken a great toll on both my career prospects and health.**

This year I have had to take a full time job in another field, whilst pursuing my research around this, and hoping that this does not further damage my chances for an academic career. I am still hoping to pursue a career in Academia, but am unable to gain further experience in teaching due to the format of the contracts and the rates of pay for this work. **It is demoralising to see a role, which requires the level of qualifications as well as the**

commitment and dedication this job does, being offered at these sorts of rates, where an individual with a PhD, and four years' teaching experience, can be effectively paid at less than minimum wage. I am now working in an administrative role which is in theory two pay grades below lecturing, yet effectively pays me around triple what I could expect as a Teaching Affiliate. The skills and expertise of hourly paid teachers are being deeply undervalued and are not reflected in their treatment as casual workers.

January – June 2015: Average monthly income £621.56, weekly £143.44. For 40 hrs/week this comes to £3.59/hr.

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