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We are most grateful to all those staff of the University of Nottingham who shared their experiences and stories with us. We are aware we have merely touched the surface.



Struggling to Make a Living at the University

For many people getting a job at a University is a dream; for others it's a part of a career progression; for others it is little more than a necessity. The University of Nottingham is a World Class University, a member of the "elite" research intensive Russell Group, and one of the most popular universities in the country for student admissions. But, there is a darker side. It is also a "business", concerned about its "image" and reputation. In early 2017 in its *Global Strategy 2020*, it set off on a path of ambitious restructuring in order to meet the challenges of our times: 'almost 90 years of globalisation and technological developments make the world a very different place and our vision for 2020 needs to reflect these changes.'

How does a university act when occupying such an elevated position? One way is through emphasising the excellence of its students and the quality of its staff. But the stories of how members of staff experience this situation reveal a rather different, darker picture. We have spent time talking to and interviewing staff in many different Schools and Faculties and in many different job families. Here we present some of the stories of contract researchers, casual teaches and cleaners. One political dictum from Tony Benn is that you should look at how a company treats its lowest paid staff – because that is how it would treat us all if it could.

First we have accounts from five contract researchers, followed by nine casually employed teachers, then four cleaners – 18 colleagues in all. We have altered their names for purposes of anonymity.

Fixed-term Contract Researchers

We start with Tom, who was awarded a Post-doctoral award in Science and Engineering. Tom's initial excitement turned to distress when he discovered a potential serious health scare. Tom's case illustrates the way in which the University's interests take priority over the rights of individuals often leaving an individual in a highly vulnerable position.

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.

Our second case is Julie, a long-standing Senior Research Fellow, who in spite of her commitment and extensive experience feels she is little more than "waste" to be sacrificed for cheaper staff. What does this tell us about how the University fulfills its "duty of care" toward its staff? In what way does the University reward its employees' dedication to the institution? Julie's story shows a lack of concern for career planning and progression – sacrificed on the altar of expediency. These colleagues have – as Julie reminds us – mortgages and children.

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?

The reality of a short, fixed-term contract is pointed out by Sanjay, who like most in his situation has to consider his position some 6 months before the end of a contract. This cannot be in anyone's best interest. Other members of staff suffer stress because of the precariousness of employment due to the University's practice of fragmenting contracts in order to avoid having to provide employment security for its staff. As a result, colleagues are often unable to get a mortgage, which means that they have no opportunity of moving out of rented accommodation. Medium- to long-term family plans are also made impossible. While the University remains flexible, staff members experience high levels of insecurity in their daily lives. Risks are pushed onto the individual.

Redeployment doesn't work

I was fortunate to be on a two year fixed-term contract. This allowed me to focus on research and get published during the first 18 months of the contract. The main caveat of fixed term contracts is that you feel like you are disposable to the university. There is a redeployment list you can sign up for towards the end of the contract. I know quite a few people who have signed up for the redeployment list without being contacted about any suitable posts (myself included). Additionally, you spend most of your time during the final six months of your contract applying for jobs rather than doing research.

The university loses good, productive employees by not doing more to retain fixed-term researchers.

The university is supposed to offer permanent posts to those who have been on fixed term contracts for four years or more. The problem is that the university considers two consecutive two year fixed term contracts as two years at the university rather than four years despite being employed by the university for four or more years. The time as an employee 'resets' with each new fixed term contract...

Steve is another contract researcher who talks of "waste" but raises the point that the treatment of contract researchers also harms the University. Indeed, Steve goes further and suggests the lack of a long-term vision also damages the funders, and potentially the academy.

No time to publish

'As a researcher on fixed term contracts, I feel there's a great deal of waste and unnecessary stress associated with them, and it's ultimately detrimental to our employers and to wider academia. Towards the end of any contract, we have to start finding the next post, which reduces the energy we can bring to our current role, and may even require leaving a job early for a new post. Moving from one short term project to another, it's hard to find time to publish,

because invariably the previous post didn't allow sufficient time for publications, and this has to come from our own time. That's difficult when you're starting a new job and entering a steep learning curve – perhaps in a new department or university. As a result, I've worked on projects that haven't been adequately disseminated – not to the extent that they deserve. This harms my career, and it also does a disservice to the funders and to the research participants. But if it means working past breaking point to publish, then something has to give; my health is more important than my publication

Yu-Sing offers us a very poignant picture of his experience of 12 years of short term contracts. One wonders how many people impressed with the World Class research reputation of Nottingham University appreciate that research staff might well be working as cleaners overnight. Indeed, in some cases “*juggling five jobs*” in order to survive financially.

Juggling five jobs 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, 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.

Casually Employed Teachers

We now present the stories of eight casually employed teachers. Some of these cases are quite long but illustrate the instability associated with casual employment. Given the Universities' commitment to its reputation and image, and the importance placed upon the National Student Survey, one would think providing the best conditions of service to teaching staff was essential in order to ensure the high quality teaching that students reasonably expect. However, these colleagues paint a very different picture.

Casually employed staff face three issues: (a) the precarious nature of their work; (b) preparation and marking time not adequately factored in and, (c) the effectively low pay this means for the long(er) hours worked.

It is no surprise that the University manages to employ very committed and dedicated staff. First, Ben highlights the way staff go over and above their contracted hours because – it's what you do. However, Ben identified a very common concern for staff. The problem isn't with the students, or the teaching, but with the interminable administration, all unpaid. The good will of those who are committed to learning is exploited. It is all very well being committed, but commitment does not pay the rent.

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 have

to 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

If hourly paid teaching staff were not essential to the operation of the University, we would not be employing them, yet however many hours one teaches there is a deep sense of being treated as second class – as Charlotte tells us next. This account of working at the university brings with it a subtle feeling that you are not as valued as full-time permanent staff.

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 to 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.

It is not unreasonable that PhD students might be looking to establish a career in higher education. Consequently, many PhD students want to gain experience in teaching – they do after all have considerable knowledge in their field, but can also contribute positively to the diversity of the University community. Here Holly raises the problem of low pay and the unrealistic nature of planning and preparation time. In addition to this the work is insecure – placing such colleagues in a similar situation to those on zero hours contracts. Of course management may have good reasons for such flexibility, but this brings with it the detrimental effects on family life and health, as Holly describes here.

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.

In any complex large organization such as our University, there will always be a need to have some flexibility, and this might be something that some people prefer. However, as Miguel says, this isn't always the preferred option – especially when these “flexible” arrangements go on for years, as in his case. The “routine” renewal (by email), he experienced at the start of each year, questions whether a case can be made that this is a reasonable adjustment to immediate needs. The importance of teachers in the success of the University in one of its main activities – is undermined by these employment practices.

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 leave, illness and similar issues. However I have been working now as a casual member of 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 also receive 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 a place of education. Modern labs, libraries, shops and cafés on campus, new accommodation for students, etc., may 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.

Further evidence from Toni, of unease over so called “casual” contracts and the associated high workload that goes unrewarded. How long can the University rely on the goodwill of its casually employed members of staff, before the quality of teaching suffers and the student experience deteriorates?

We are not casuals!

We, part-time tutors, comprise a rather varied bunch, from post-graduate students acquiring some teaching practice to very experienced teachers who provide yearlong support to the courses we teach and co-ordinate (without it being recognised in our contracts).

What we share, though, is the progressive deterioration of work and pay conditions which is something I certainly have witnessed and experienced over the years

But, most definitely, what we are not is “casuals”: our predictable workload (and the training, planning and preparation required by this job) is at odds with the current “zero hours” style contracts that have been imposed on us.

The allocation of teaching comes under scrutiny by Kulbir, who raises the problem of how teaching is allocated, and whether decisions might be influenced by cost saving. The resulting precarious nature of the work leaves Kulbir with a decision to make. Although she loves teaching, can she afford to stay? She ponders on whether our students, paying £9000 tuition fees per year, are aware of the financial difficulties some of their teachers are facing.

Caring for students while 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 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 about these changes 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 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 consistently good feedback from the students, I would expect to receive more than inexperienced 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 hours I will be allocated, if any, until a week or so before teaching begins, which just reinforces the precariousness of the situation.

I am sure that students paying fees of £9.000 and 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.

Time and time again colleagues spoke of the insecurity of the job which causes most frustration and workplace stress and which Alan raises here. The public image of a World Class institution, our University presents to the world, is clearly contradicted by the way it treats its most vulnerable members of staff.

Saving pennies on casually employed teaching staff

My casual employment with the university started during my PhD, when it provided valuable teaching experience. However, I initially taught one hour per week and was paid for one hour plus one hour office hour each week. It took me around six hours to prepare for the one hour teaching resulting in the effective rate of pay being lower than the minimum wage at the time.

My teaching load increased in subsequent years but the insecurity of not knowing how many, if any, hours you would get each semester was stressful as an unfunded PhD student.

I appreciate that it may be challenging to predict teaching loads far in advance but the insecurity of not knowing whether there would be any teaching was stressful.

The university started to pay holiday pay and pay for exam marking (which had previously been unpaid) in autumn 2013. That was greatly appreciated until the base salary was subsequently lowered resulting in a lower rate of pay in autumn 2014 than in 2013. That made me feel like the university was attempting to save pennies on us casual employees rather than make us feel appreciated for the work we do.

Next, Wendy talks next of the need to reconsider the time allocation for marking. As we have previously said, being paid for time allocated to marking is an issue, which forces staff into an unwelcome compromise; quality marking and feedback, or working to contract. Not paying your staff properly will ultimately result in a deteriorating student experience.

Marking needs to be paid properly

One problem I have with the way that casual teaching staff members are paid relates to the payment for marking. Marking is currently pro rata at £13.62 per hour + holiday pay, based on 20 minutes per 1000 word student submission or 25 minutes per 1500 word student submission.

My experience of marking literature essays is that it is very difficult to mark an essay within the time specified, except possibly for a top tier essay, and most essays do not fall into this category. The students only do a few marked assignments per module and rely on detailed feedback in order to learn and improve. I got excellent feedback from my convenor for the first round of essays I marked, for which I spent more time than I was paid for. For the second round, I was told by the convenor that my marking was good but slightly less focused. Ever since then I have felt pressure in two senses: to give the students what they need and also to please the convenor, and therefore I feel obliged to work more hours than I am being paid for, which is especially frustrating given that the basic rate of pay is so low already for what is highly skilled work.

Another module I have worked on involves marking individual translation projects, and here the problem was exacerbated because these projects take much longer to mark than a literature essay, since such close attention to detail is required, plus extensive research on terminology. A student submission of 1500 words which is supposed to take me 25 minutes to mark actually takes 2 hours or more. Even having put in more than double the amount paid time in unpaid overtime, I still had one student challenging my marking of specific terms, which I think proves that it would have been impossible to do a decent job with the time that I was actually paid for. For marking 8 student submissions I was paid £50 for over 16 hours of work. This felt particularly exploitative, given that I could have earned £50 elsewhere doing less than a day's worth of low skilled work.

I really think that the time allowances for marking should be increased, and should also vary according to the type of assignment. This is the only way we can ensure that students receive the quality of feedback they deserve and expect, and also ensure that casual staff are not unfairly exploited.

Sophia raises here what has to be an astonishing revelation. That casual administration staff receive better treatment than casual teaching staff. This has to be an astonishing situation especially when parents and students are paying fees of £9000 per year. Every member of staff deserves proper treatment allowing them to make a decent living.

Differences between casual contracts in Administration and Teaching

I have had the opportunity to hold two positions at The University of Nottingham: a casual (ongoing) engagement as a Teaching Affiliate, and another casual (temporary) engagement as a member of the University's administrative staff in an events-related role. Both roles effectively involved planning, preparing and delivering presentations and workshops, and completing the necessary administrative tasks which accompany these.

I have observed some significant differences in how administrative and teaching staff are recompensed for their time by the University.

As a casual worker in an administrative role, I was paid for an agreed number of weekly hours. I was instructed to claim payment for any additional hours that I worked above and beyond my agreed schedule.

My agreed weekly paid hours amply covered all necessary time for training, planning, preparation, event delivery, collecting and collating feedback, meeting with colleagues, and also for completing any paperwork relating to pay claims.

In the occasional event that I found myself completing my allocated tasks more quickly than expected, and therefore found myself without any tasks to do during my paid work hours, I was trusted to find myself something appropriate to do with this time – for example offer my time to colleagues to help them with their own workloads.

All the duties I performed for the University in this role were paid. In my role as casual Teaching Affiliate, this is not the case.

As a casual worker in a teaching role, I am paid for an agreed number of weekly teaching hours, and for one hour's preparation per week per module. I am also paid to hold one office hour per week to meet with students. As a Workshop Convenor for one of the modules I teach, I am paid an additional 10 hours' admin time.

There is no opportunity to claim payment for any additional hours worked in this role, outside of any teaching hours agreed with the Module Convenors, and the allocated preparation hour which some of these incur.

Any students to whom I wish to offer the opportunity to come and speak to me about their course, but who are unable to attend my allocated office hour, can only come and see me during my own free time. Time spent meeting with course convenors to discuss course content is also unpaid.

My workload increased significantly in the Autumn semester of 2016 due to serious problems with the new Timetabling system, which led to a large number of our students being unable to access their timetabling information, and therefore requiring additional help and catch-up sessions for classes they missed as a result. Any unexpected problems such as these need to be dealt with unpaid.

Time spent filling in marking claims forms and recording weekly hours worked is obligatory but unpaid. Time spent on marking is remunerated at a flat fee, and does not account for moderation, checking for suspected plagiarism, writing detailed feedback as required by coursework cover sheets, or meeting with colleagues to agree on marking boundaries.

As a result, I frequently find myself working over and above my paid hours in order to complete all required tasks.

Having worked for The University of Nottingham in an administrative capacity, I can see that the University already has procedures in place which allow many of its staff to claim payment for all the hours during which they work in the service of the University.

I would be delighted to see the same opportunity being offered to its casually employed teaching staff.

Cleaners

Last but by no means least – we present cases of four cleaners. Of course – where would we be without these colleagues who keep our offices and classrooms clean and ready for us the next day? They might be the hidden side of the University, coming in at night and leaving before most of us arrive, but they too have a commitment to the University.

Corinne tells us how she struggles financially on a wage that means she cannot look for the security of a pension which most academics take for granted.

No money to go out

My wages here just cover my Council Tax and rent. I'm paid on Thursdays at the end of the month, by Saturday I am already overdrawn again. While my daughter was still living with me, I had access to benefits. Now it is much more difficult to survive. I need to look for a second job to make ends meet. Here at Nottingham, I have a contract of 16 hours. I try to get overtime as much as possible, but we depend very much on our supervisor in this respect, on whether our face fits. My wages are so low that I am not

part of the University of Nottingham pension scheme, nor do I earn enough to pay into a private pension. Apart from low pay, as a black woman I also suffer from racist abuse at work.

I cut down on all bills as much as possible, I use the car only to go to work, all my expenses have to be tightly calculated. I depend on bargains when shopping for clothes and food, things on half-price, the sales. I don't go out, I simply can't afford to go out.

The loss of staff makes Jean's life – and that of her colleagues – much more difficult when they are not replaced and workloads are shared out. Yet most worryingly is Jean's claim that they are subjected to an authoritarian regime where they are not allowed to talk. Nobody working in our University should be left feeling "we are nobodies".

We are nobodies

Cleaners who are leaving are not being replaced. We constantly have to work more without extra pay. It is getting harder and harder with this regular increase in pressure at work. They won't pay an extra hour to make up for people who have left. Management is never satisfied. We are not allowed any breaks or take drinks, not even

water. We are even banned from talking to each other during work. Once a month, a manager comes round with a tick list. If we don't hit 94 per cent we are being marked down. Management has unrealistic expectations, but we are fighting a losing battle. We are nobodies. They don't regard us. Staff morale is very low.

Yet again Stan raises the reality of increase in workloads with no increase in pay, making the job more stressful but more impossible to complete. Like many, Stan is "*struggling to pay my bills*".

More work without extra pay.

I am on a 16 hours contract. I now have extra nine rooms to clean plus staircases without extra time and pay. We even have to share keys and are constantly searching for them, which adds extra time pressure.

We are not supposed to talk to each other, but how can we work as a team without communication? I am struggling to pay my

bills and cannot get a second job because of ill health. I have been off sick due to stress and anxiety because of work and the stress of having to look after my elderly parents.

We have been on a course on equality for all, but they still don't treat us from Operations and Facilities as equals. We are front line, but this is not acknowledged.

Finally, a stark description of the working life of our cleaning staff from Maeve; no words are needed to stress how unsatisfactory this situation is.

No time for breaks.

With staff not being replaced, we are being put under ever more pressure. Within one hour, I have to clean five toilets, nine offices, a large conference room, a corridor, a changing room and more.

We are not supposed to have a drink, I don't have time for breaks due to the workload and there is no extra money. We are constantly racing around ...

As a conclusion, we ask, is *that* World Class treatment?

Is There a Way Forward?

What each of these testimonies make clear is that there is low morale across the different areas of fixed-term contract researchers, casually employed teaching staff and cleaners. They reveal the human condition hidden by data on salary costs and the overall University budget. They paint a darker picture of the glossy image of the World Class Institution that our University claims to be.

The Living Wage/Anti-casualization campaign alliance of campus trade unions (UCU, Unite and Unison, Nottingham Citizens and a whole range of student societies are clear that the University has to act and take responsibility for its most vulnerable staff members and we recommend the following steps:

- In order to address the concerns of cleaners, we demand that the University reviews its management practices and signs up to the Living Wage Foundation, as many other universities have already done. Nothing else will ensure decent living standards for these colleagues.
- Fixed-term contract researchers need to receive at least an additional six-month employment guarantee beyond their term to ensure they have the opportunity to complete their projects and start looking for a new project and follow-up employment.
- Casually employed teaching staff must receive contracts, which ensures payment for all of the work they carry out. Wherever possible they should be put on permanent fractional contracts. The continuing employment on casual contracts for the same work is not acceptable.

In sum, cleaners, fixed-term contract researchers and casually employed teaching staff are important staff members at Nottingham University, who deserve better. They are human beings, who must be provided with employment security. If the University genuinely wants to be a world class institution, this must be reflected in world-class employment conditions for all its employees.



