

Thousands of
researchers
on fixed-term
contracts are
made redundant
every year



University
researchers:
Know your

RIGHTS!

As a researcher, your skills and commitment should be properly rewarded. However, researchers are often undervalued – employed on externally-funded short-term contracts with no structured career path. This information sheet is a basic guide to your key rights and the issues facing you.

Your university is your employer and has duties towards you

Your terms and conditions You should have a contract with a full statement of your terms and conditions when you start your job.

Your health Your employer has a legal responsibility for the health, welfare and safety of staff. This includes your workspace, workload and stress.

www.ucu.org.uk/safemembers

Your contract Fixed-term (temporary) contracts have a specified date on which they are due to end. Your employer is obliged to consult with you about the potential ending of your contract and to seek ways to avoid your dismissal – for example by extending your contract or offering you alternative work. They should also consult with UCU about any potential redundancies.

Redundancy pay If you have been working for more than two years you are entitled to redundancy pay.

The Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 state that:

- 1 Your employer cannot treat a fixed-term researcher any less favourably than a comparable permanent employee unless such treatment can be objectively justified. This relates to all terms and conditions including your pay, and benefits such as career development and training.
- 2 Once you have four years' continuous service on two or more contracts (or have had your contract renewed) the contract automatically becomes indefinite unless the continued use of a fixed-term contract is objectively justified.

The Research Excellence Framework (REF) has implications for researchers and for the environment in which your work. UCU has guidance to help you.

You can find out more and get guidance on all these issues by downloading a copy of UCU's Researcher's Survival Guide from www.ucu.org.uk/youngmembers For a free hard copy email: campaigns@ucu.org.uk

UCU is working hard to get more job security and career development for researchers



University researchers: Join your

UNION!

We're making changes

UCU is negotiating agreements to achieve greater job security for researchers.

Open-ended contracts – a first step Being transferred from a fixed-term contract to an open-ended contract does not in itself increase your job security but it is a move in the right direction. Using a pool of researchers to work on different projects, forward-planning, increased communication between principal investigators, active redeployment policies and bridging funds can help to create the stability you need to develop a career. Full economic costing of research projects means more research costs can be recovered and this is intended to make research more sustainable.

Researchers are a priority for UCU and we are:

- campaigning for improvements
- negotiating policies that move the majority of fixed-term staff onto open-ended contracts

- putting systems in place that increase job security, such as redundancy avoidance agreements and effective redeployment procedures
- winning significant legal cases that increase researchers' rights
- lobbying the government and research councils.

UCU is here to support you We support many members individually with contracts, redeployment and other issues.

You are not alone Members can join a Researchers' Network to link up with other researchers across the UK, find out what is happening elsewhere and get up-to-date information on the issues.

Events UCU also organises workshops that cover your rights, the national situation and getting a better deal. Contact campaigns@ucu.org.uk for details.

If you are not already a member join us TODAY

You can join online at www.joinonline.ucu.org.uk Our website shows a full list of benefits

Join UCU today. The more researchers who join us, the more we can achieve

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UCU**