

How students' unions can use the charter

- Contact your local UCU branch to see if you can work together to lobby your institution to implement the Postgraduate Employment Charter
- Approach postgraduates on what kinds of support and representation they are lacking and how they would like the principles of the Charter to be put into practice.
- Together with your institution, UCU, and postgraduate students, explore whether there are effective and appropriate policies on support for postgraduates who are employed by the institution and for postgraduates that teach, and suggest improvements.
- Students' unions should encourage postgraduates employed by their institution to join UCU so that they can be represented in employment issues that a students' union has less authority or expertise on.

Why postgraduates should join UCU

- Postgraduates in employment have the right to join a trade union and UCU has the capacity to represent employed postgraduates if they have grievances and issues related to their employment.
- Postgraduates who aren't employed by their institution can join UCU as student members for FREE.
- Joining UCU gives you collective strength: UCU exerts an important influence on institutional and national higher education policy and conditions of employment
- UCU fights for greater job security for staff on fixed-term and hourly-paid contracts.
- UCU offer professional development courses and downloadable resources covering a range of topics for postgraduates and early career researchers.
- Many postgraduates are actively involved in their local UCU branches. Many branches have a specific officer to represent postgraduate students.

You can join UCU by visiting www.ucu.org.uk/join or by picking up an application form from your local UCU branch

For more information on postgraduate employment, visit our website: www.nusconnect.org.uk/campaigns/postgrad

Postgraduate employment charter



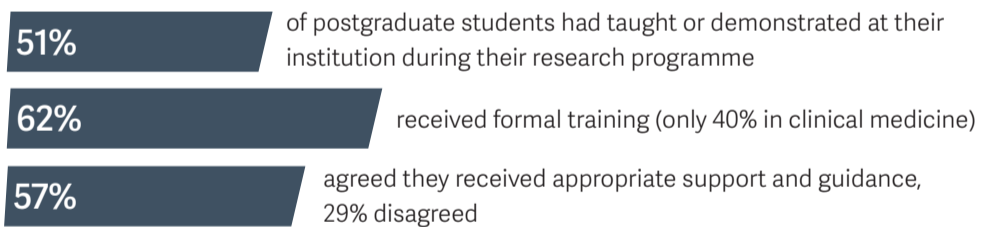
Postgraduate students: know your employment rights!

While the Postgraduate Employment Charter outlines good practice, being an employee means you have certain specific rights in law:

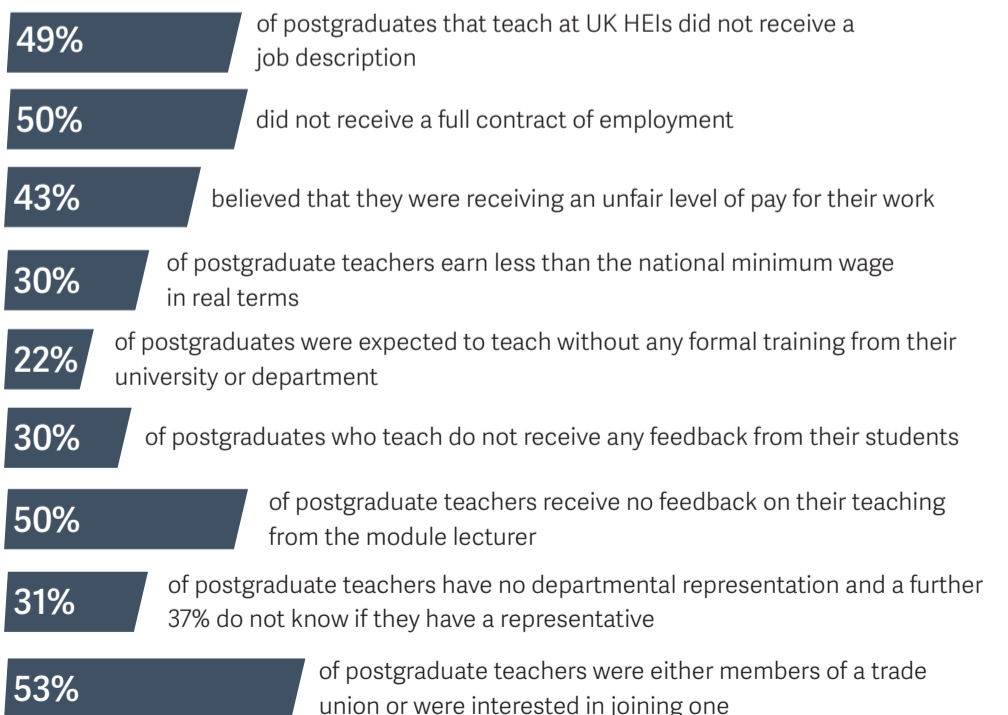
- The Employment Rights Act 1996 states that you should have a contract with a full statement of your terms and conditions when you start your job.
- Part-time workers have the right to be treated no less favourably than comparable workers on full-time contracts. Similarly, fixed-term employees have the right to be treated no less favourably than comparable permanent employees. This means that you should be paid equal pay to other members of staff doing work of equal value.
- You should also have the same access to work facilities as other members of staff including computing facilities, photocopying and secretarial support. If you don't and the reason is because you are part-time or fixed-term (or hourly paid) then you may be able to challenge your employer.
- You should be paid for all hours worked and you should be provided with holiday pay.
- You should have access to a grievance procedure if you need to make a formal complaint.
- Any complaints about you or your work should be handled in accordance with an agreed disciplinary, capability or probation policy.
- You have the legal right to join a union.
- Your employer has a legal responsibility for the health, welfare and safety of staff and you should have a safe and healthy work space.
- You should not be discriminated against on the grounds of your sex, sexual orientation, race, disability, age, religion or belief or your membership of or non-membership of a trade union.
- As an employee you have the right not to be unfairly dismissed after two years. If you are made redundant and have worked for at least two years you are entitled to redundancy pay.

Key stats

Postgraduate Research Experience Survey 2013



2012 Postgraduates who teach survey



- Many postgraduates are "forced" to teach, regardless of their interest or ability, as part of their course, or as a prerequisite for a scholarship or bursary.
- Postgraduates teaching in arts and humanities subjects are the least happy with their pay: on average, they are only paid for one in every three hours worked.

Postgraduate employment charter

1 Fair, transparent and equitable appointment procedures

Postgraduates should be offered employment opportunities at their institution through a formal and transparent process. Positions should be advertised with a job description such that qualified students are equally able to apply for the role and understand the work that is expected of them. Successful applicants should receive a contract stating working hours, amount and regularity of pay, provision for sickness and holiday leave and the recognised trade union.

2 A fair rate of pay for all hours worked

All postgraduates who teach should be paid, and this should include recognition of time spent on preparation, marking, administration, attending lectures and supporting students. UCU recommends 2.5 times the hourly rate for every teaching hour, based on a salary spine point in the university pay scale. It should be clear how payment and taxation processes are managed and, for international students, how National Insurance numbers are obtained.

3 Compulsory teaching and teaching bursaries

A postgraduate student should never be forced to teach without pay as part of their doctoral programme, or as a criteria for receiving a fee waiver or other non-cash bursary. Bursaries or scholarships which require a student to teach should provide at least the cash equivalent a student would receive if they were regularly employed to teach, as well as the same employment rights and support as those on regular employment contracts.

4 Supervision or mentoring, line management, and review of progress provided by a suitably qualified staff member who is not the research supervisor

Postgraduates who teach should be able to raise issues, and seek advice from, a single academic point of contact who is qualified to supervise postgraduate teaching and who is in a position potentially to provide an academic reference in the future.

5 Formal and informal feedback on performance and support for improvement

In the case of postgraduates that teach this should include the feedback of students and that of a more senior academic manager or mentor who has had the opportunity to observe the postgraduate teaching.

6 Induction and initial training, and support for continuing professional development

In addition to standard training provided by their institution, postgraduate teachers should have an induction into discipline-specific teaching practice and an introduction to course materials, teaching methods, modes of assessment and feedback and student complaint procedures. There should be opportunities to develop specific teaching skills such as teaching students with specific support needs, introduction to pedagogic theories and additional language support for international students. All teaching staff should be able to undertake a nationally accredited course in higher education teaching.

7 Representation within the institution and by a trade union

Postgraduates that teach should have representation on teaching and learning committees and/or student-staff liaison groups at department and faculty or school level. Postgraduates have the right to be an active member of a recognised trade union and to be represented by that union to their institution.

8 Integration into the professional academic culture

Postgraduates in employment should be treated on an equal basis with academic colleagues and given opportunities to engage as professionals with the teaching culture in their subject. For example, postgraduates who teach should be eligible for teaching awards.

9 Access to the necessary facilities and resources required to undertake the role

These could include printing and photocopying, use of teaching rooms, stationery and equipment, office space, a storage facility and access to online learning environments.

10 A reasonable balance between employment and research

Postgraduates benefit from professional development opportunities offered by working for their institution, but care should be taken to ensure that employment does not take precedence over research and successful completion of the doctoral thesis.