

Fixed-term: the scandal continues

November 2007

The 'Fixed-term: the scandal continues' report analyses all new academic appointments in 2005 (the latest statistics available) and scrutinises researcher jobs recently advertised on the academic jobs website www.jobs.ac.uk

Researchers and fixed-term contracts.

UCU surveyed a current list of university research jobs on www.jobs.ac.uk on Wednesday 7 and Thursday 8 November. The survey concentrated exclusively on UK university research jobs, of which there were 254 on the website.

Just nine of the 254 positions advertised (3.5 per cent) were permanent positions. UCU broke down the fixed-term contracts into specific categories in order to give a better indication of the length of each fixed-term contract.

The majority of the jobs offered were for three years or less. The results below show the length of term advertised:

Year and under - 81 positions (31.9%)

1.1-2 years - 59 positions (23.2%)

2.1-3 years - 78 positions (30.7%)

3.1-4 years - 5 positions (2%)

4.1-5 years - 17 positions (6.7%)

Above 5 years - 1 position (0.4%)

Mixed contracts - 4 positions (1.6%)

Not stated - 1 position (0.4%)

The figures have been rounded up to the nearest decimal place.

Contracts for academic staff entering employment in 2005

Summary

More than two-thirds of academics recently starting continuous work in UK higher education were employed on a fixed-term basis.

In 2005, the most recent full year for which data are currently available, only 9,130 or 30% of all academics starting continuous employment in UK higher education were employed on open-ended or permanent contracts. 21,270 or 70% were employed on fixed-term contracts. ⁱ

In 2006, new employment regulations, designed to reduce the use of fixed-term contracts, were introduced. ⁱⁱ It is a matter of concern that the number of fixed-term contracts was so high in the year before the new regulations came into force.

In 2005, 68% (5,240) of teaching-and-research academics starting continuous employment were employed on open-ended contracts, and 32% (2,415) were employed on fixed-term contracts.

In 2005, 28% (3,315) of teaching-only academics starting continuous employment were employed on open-ended contracts, and 72% (8,690) were employed on fixed-term contracts.

In 2005, only 4% (455) of research-only academics starting continuous employment in that year were employed on open-ended contracts, and 96% (9,915) were employed on fixed-term contracts.

Although the proportion of all research-only academic staff in the UK on fixed-term contracts was 85% in 2004-5, compared with 94% in 1995-6, UCU is also concerned that such a high proportion of researchers entering employment in 2005 were on a fixed-term contract. ⁱⁱⁱ

Teaching-and-research academics

The University of Brighton came top of the table for employing teaching-and-research academics on fixed-term contracts for those entering continuous employment in 2005 (see Table 1).

Brighton had 81% of teaching-and-research academics starting in 2005 on a fixed-term contract. Nottingham Trent (80%), Southampton Solent (78%), Lancaster (63%), Cambridge (59%), Ulster (58%) and Cardiff (51%) universities all had more than 50% of teaching-and-research academics starting in 2005 on a fixed-term contract.

At the other end of the table, Brunel, Central England (now Birmingham City University) and Coventry universities all had fewer than 10% of teaching-and-research academics starting in 2005 on a fixed-term contract.

Table 1 Teaching-and-research academics entering continuous employment in 2005, by institution

	Open-ended/ permanent	Fixed-term contract	Total
The University of Brighton	19.5%	80.5%	100.0%
The Nottingham Trent University	20.3%	79.7%	100.0%
Southampton Solent University	22.0%	78.0%	100.0%
The University of Lancaster	36.7%	63.3%	100.0%
The University of Cambridge	41.3%	58.7%	100.0%
University of Ulster	41.6%	58.4%	100.0%
Cardiff University	49.4%	50.6%	100.0%
The University of Warwick	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
University College London	50.7%	49.3%	100.0%
The Manchester Metropolitan University	51.6%	48.4%	100.0%
The University of Central Lancashire	51.7%	48.3%	100.0%
Queen Mary and Westfield College	51.7%	48.3%	100.0%
The University of Dundee	53.1%	46.9%	100.0%
The University of Oxford	53.3%	46.7%	100.0%
University of Hertfordshire	55.4%	44.6%	100.0%
The University of Leeds	57.2%	42.8%	100.0%
The University of Manchester	59.1%	40.9%	100.0%
The University of Aberdeen	60.4%	39.6%	100.0%
The University of Reading	63.2%	36.8%	100.0%
Oxford Brookes University	63.7%	36.3%	100.0%
University of Durham	65.1%	34.9%	100.0%
The University of Strathclyde	65.2%	34.8%	100.0%
Staffordshire University	65.3%	34.7%	100.0%
The University of Liverpool	65.3%	34.7%	100.0%
Liverpool John Moores University	65.8%	34.2%	100.0%
Roehampton University	66.2%	33.8%	100.0%
The University of Leicester	66.7%	33.3%	100.0%

	Open-ended/ permanent	Fixed-term contract	Total
The University of Salford	69.8%	30.2%	100.0%
The University of Portsmouth	69.9%	30.1%	100.0%
Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine	69.9%	30.1%	100.0%
The University of Glasgow	71.5%	28.5%	100.0%
Anglia Ruskin University	71.9%	28.1%	100.0%
The University of Edinburgh	72.8%	27.2%	100.0%
The University of Exeter	73.6%	26.4%	100.0%
University of Gloucestershire	74.2%	25.8%	100.0%
Leeds Metropolitan University	75.6%	24.4%	100.0%
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	75.6%	24.4%	100.0%
King's College London	75.9%	24.1%	100.0%
The University of Plymouth	76.1%	23.9%	100.0%
Kingston University	76.3%	23.7%	100.0%
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	76.4%	23.6%	100.0%
The University of Birmingham	76.5%	23.5%	100.0%
The University of Nottingham	77.2%	22.8%	100.0%
The University of York	78.5%	21.5%	100.0%
The University of Southampton	79.6%	20.4%	100.0%
University of the West of England, Bristol	80.3%	19.7%	100.0%
The University of Sheffield	80.3%	19.7%	100.0%
The University of Greenwich	80.7%	19.3%	100.0%
The Open University	81.5%	18.5%	100.0%
The University of Keele	81.7%	18.3%	100.0%
The Queen's University of Belfast	81.8%	18.2%	100.0%
City University	82.4%	17.6%	100.0%
The University of East London	83.9%	16.1%	100.0%
The University of Northumbria at Newcastle	84.3%	15.7%	100.0%
The University of Bristol	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
The University of Kent	85.2%	14.8%	100.0%
The University of Huddersfield	86.0%	14.0%	100.0%
Sheffield Hallam University	88.1%	11.9%	100.0%
De Montfort University	89.2%	10.8%	100.0%
London South Bank University	89.6%	10.4%	100.0%
Brunel University	90.1%	9.9%	100.0%
University of Central England in Birmingham (now Birmingham City University)	90.3%	9.7%	100.0%
Coventry University	95.9%	4.1%	100.0%
UK Total	68.4%	31.6%	100.0%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency; % calculations by UCU. For data protection purposes, the table excludes HEIs with fewer than 52 academics in total in this category. The total is for all HEIs in the UK. The data exclude atypical academics. HESA does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties.

Teaching-only academics

There were 15 higher education institutions which only used fixed-term contracts for teaching-only academics entering continuous employment in 2005 (see Table 2).

Brunel, Kent, West of England, Salford, Lancaster, Oxford Brookes, Liverpool John Moores, Sunderland, Greenwich, Edge Hill, Brighton, Reading and Liverpool universities, plus Queen Mary and Westfield College and University of Wales Institute, Cardiff, all had 100% of teaching-only academics starting in 2005 on a fixed-term contract.

At the other end of the table, Coventry, Sussex and Hertfordshire universities, plus Birkbeck College and University of Wales, Newport, all had 100% of teaching-only academics starting on an open-ended contract in 2005.

Table 2 Teaching-only academics entering continuous employment in 2005, by institution

	Open-ended/ permanent	Fixed-term contract	Total
Brunel University	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Kent	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
University of the West of England, Bristol	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Salford	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Queen Mary and Westfield College	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Lancaster	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Oxford Brookes University	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Liverpool John Moores University	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Sunderland	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Greenwich	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Edge Hill University	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Brighton	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Reading	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Liverpool	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
University of Wales Institute, Cardiff	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Lincoln	0.2%	99.8%	100.0%
London School of Economics and Political Science	0.5%	99.5%	100.0%
Staffordshire University	0.5%	99.5%	100.0%
The University of Westminster	0.6%	99.4%	100.0%
Loughborough University	1.2%	98.8%	100.0%
The University of Essex	1.3%	98.7%	100.0%
Roehampton University	1.3%	98.7%	100.0%
The University of Stirling	1.3%	98.7%	100.0%
University of Glamorgan	1.4%	98.6%	100.0%
The University of Portsmouth	1.6%	98.4%	100.0%
The Manchester Metropolitan University	1.7%	98.3%	100.0%
University of Wales, Aberystwyth	1.8%	98.2%	100.0%
The School of Oriental and African Studies	1.8%	98.2%	100.0%
De Montfort University	1.9%	98.1%	100.0%

	Open-ended/ permanent	Fixed-term contract	Total
Royal Holloway and Bedford New College	2.1%	97.9%	100.0%
Cardiff University	2.4%	97.6%	100.0%
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
Napier University	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama	4.2%	95.8%	100.0%
The University of Exeter	5.0%	95.0%	100.0%
The University of Southampton	5.4%	94.6%	100.0%
University College London	5.7%	94.3%	100.0%
The University of Keele	7.8%	92.2%	100.0%
Swansea Institute of Higher Education	8.1%	91.9%	100.0%
The University of Bath	9.4%	90.6%	100.0%
The University of Manchester	9.6%	90.4%	100.0%
The University of East Anglia	10.0%	90.0%	100.0%
The University of Nottingham	11.9%	88.1%	100.0%
The University of Birmingham	14.8%	85.2%	100.0%
The University of Huddersfield	17.9%	82.1%	100.0%
The University of Dundee	19.1%	80.9%	100.0%
King's College London	21.3%	78.7%	100.0%
The University of Leeds	21.5%	78.5%	100.0%
University of the Arts, London	21.8%	78.2%	100.0%
Leeds Metropolitan University	22.9%	77.1%	100.0%
The Arts Institute at Bournemouth	24.9%	75.1%	100.0%
The University of Aberdeen	28.8%	71.2%	100.0%
Trinity and All Saints College	29.8%	70.2%	100.0%
Trinity Laban	32.1%	67.9%	100.0%
City University	35.4%	64.6%	100.0%
Anglia Ruskin University	35.8%	64.2%	100.0%
St Mary's College	37.5%	62.5%	100.0%
Thames Valley University	43.3%	56.7%	100.0%
The University of Wolverhampton	43.5%	56.5%	100.0%
The Open University	52.6%	47.4%	100.0%
The University of Glasgow	57.1%	42.9%	100.0%
Kingston University	75.1%	24.9%	100.0%
The University of Winchester	79.0%	21.0%	100.0%
Sheffield Hallam University	98.1%	1.9%	100.0%
University of Derby	98.8%	1.2%	100.0%
University of Gloucestershire	98.9%	1.1%	100.0%
Birkbeck College	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
Coventry University	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
The University of Sussex	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
University of Hertfordshire	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
The University of Wales, Newport	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
UK Total	27.6%	72.4%	100.0%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency; % calculations by UCU. For data protection purposes, the table excludes HEIs with fewer than 52 academics in total in this category. The total is for all HEIs in the UK. The data exclude atypical academics. HESA does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties.

Research-only academics

There were 9 higher education institutions which only used fixed-term contracts for research-only academics entering continuous employment in 2005 (see Table 3).

Cambridge, Strathclyde, Lancaster, Ulster, Sussex, Kent and Plymouth universities, plus the LSE and Birkbeck College, all had 100% of research-only academics starting in 2005 on a fixed-term contract.

At the other end of the table, Bath (89%), Surrey (89%), Stirling (87%), Bristol (82%) and Cranfield (81%) universities, plus University College London (84%) all had fewer than 90% of research-only academics starting in 2005 on a fixed-term contract.

Table 3 Research-only academics entering continuous employment in 2005, by institution

	Open-ended/ permanent	Fixed-term contract	Total
The University of Cambridge	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
London School of Economics and Political Science	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Strathclyde	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Lancaster	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
University of Ulster	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Sussex	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Kent	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Plymouth	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Birkbeck College	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
The University of Nottingham	0.3%	99.7%	100.0%
The University of Oxford	0.5%	99.5%	100.0%
The University of Liverpool	0.6%	99.4%	100.0%
University of Durham	0.9%	99.1%	100.0%
Imperial College of Science, Technology & Medicine	1.0%	99.0%	100.0%
The University of Sheffield	1.0%	99.0%	100.0%
The University of Leicester	1.1%	98.9%	100.0%
The University of East Anglia	1.1%	98.9%	100.0%
King's College London	1.2%	98.8%	100.0%
University of Wales, Bangor	1.3%	98.7%	100.0%
Cardiff University	1.3%	98.7%	100.0%
St George's Hospital Medical School	1.4%	98.6%	100.0%
Queen Mary and Westfield College	1.6%	98.4%	100.0%
The University of Manchester	1.9%	98.1%	100.0%
The University of Essex	1.9%	98.1%	100.0%
The Queen's University of Belfast	2.0%	98.0%	100.0%
The University of Aberdeen	2.2%	97.8%	100.0%
The University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne	2.2%	97.8%	100.0%
The University of Edinburgh	2.4%	97.6%	100.0%
The University of Southampton	2.8%	97.2%	100.0%
Loughborough University	2.8%	97.2%	100.0%

	Open-ended/ permanent	Fixed-term contract	Total
The University of Dundee	2.9%	97.1%	100.0%
The Institute of Cancer Research	3.1%	96.9%	100.0%
The University of Reading	3.2%	96.8%	100.0%
The University of Leeds	3.4%	96.6%	100.0%
The University of Exeter	4.1%	95.9%	100.0%
The University of York	4.4%	95.6%	100.0%
The University of St Andrews	5.5%	94.5%	100.0%
The University of Warwick	6.4%	93.6%	100.0%
The Open University	9.3%	90.7%	100.0%
The University of Glasgow	9.5%	90.5%	100.0%
The University of Birmingham	9.7%	90.3%	100.0%
The University of Bath	10.8%	89.2%	100.0%
The University of Surrey	11.2%	88.8%	100.0%
The University of Stirling	13.5%	86.5%	100.0%
University College London	16.2%	83.8%	100.0%
The University of Bristol	18.4%	81.6%	100.0%
Cranfield University	19.0%	81.0%	100.0%
UK Total	4.4%	95.6%	100.0%

Source: Higher Education Statistics Agency; % calculations by UCU. For data protection purposes, the table excludes HEIs with fewer than 52 academics in total in this category. The total is for all HEIs in the UK. The data exclude atypical academics. HESA does not accept responsibility for any inferences or conclusions derived from the data by third parties.

Appendix

- The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) records the date at which a member of staff in a higher education institution (HEI) started their current period of continuous employment. ^{iv}
- The European Fixed-Term Employees (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations, which came into effect from July 2006, aim to prevent fixed-term employees being treated less favourably than similar permanent employees, and will limit the use of successive fixed-term contracts. Once a fixed-term employee has four years' continuous service on two or more contracts, the contract automatically becomes indefinite from July 2006 unless the continued use is objectively justified. It is likely that the regulations will considerably reduce the proportion of staff working on fixed-term contracts; in preparation for the July 2006 deadline, a number of higher education employers have been working towards a reduction in the use of fixed-term contracts. See http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/b/ucu_acadftcs95-06.pdf

Endnotes

ⁱ Academics doing both teaching and research, as well as teaching-only and research-only academics, were included in this total.

ⁱⁱ See http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/b/ucu_acadftcs95-06.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ See http://www.ucu.org.uk/media/pdf/9/b/ucu_acadftcs95-06.pdf

^{iv} <http://www.hesa.ac.uk/dox/datacoll/C05025/05025.rtf>