

Professor Nigel Thrift
Vice-Chancellor
University of Warwick
University House
Coventry
CV4 8UW

our ref: HEI/155

20 April 2015

Dear Professor Sir Nigel,

As you will be aware, the extensive use of casualised contracts in higher education is a major national priority for UCU.

We are pleased that a growing number of institutions, including universities in the Russell Group, have begun to engage with us constructively to address this issue. We are seeing some universities negotiating policies and contracts that ensure that academic staff are employed on better contracts, ensuring them greater security of employment, better pay and fairer terms and conditions. We believe that this is a positive step that ensures the quality of higher education provision.

In that context, it's disappointing to see that the University of Warwick appears to intend to engage casualised teaching staff on contracts for services through TeachHigher. This will place academic staff on contracts that guarantee them no work, give them inferior employment rights, and provide worse pay and working conditions. We view this as a regressive move that places Warwick out of step with a positive direction of travel in the sector.

I am particularly disappointed that in spite of our repeated requests, the university has failed to provide the union with clear information on its plans, to meet with UCU on this issue or to agree to negotiations on the employment of casualised academic staff.

To repeat, this is an issue of national importance for the union as a whole, as well as to the UCU branch at the University of Warwick.

I am requesting that the University of Warwick places the development of these plans on hold and arranges to meet with the union to negotiate as a matter of urgency.

I look forward to your reply,

Yours sincerely,



Michael MacNeil, National Head of Bargaining and Negotiations, UCU

cc Justine Mercer, President, University of Warwick UCU
Anne O'Sullivan, Regional Official, UCU, West Midlands