University and College Union

SecurityMatters

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THIS ISSUE: **ON SHAKY GROUND: SECURITY IN ACADEMIA?** PUSHING BACK ON PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT: AN UPDATE ON UCU'S CAMPAIGN, **RECOGNITION VICTORY IN COVENTRY,** AUSTRALIA'S CASUAL APPROACH TO UNIVERSITY TEACHING, **BRANCH REPORTS** FROM SUSSEX, NORTHUMBRIA, AND ESSEX UNIVERSITIES, AND SOUTH DOWNS, AND KINGS COLLEGE

SecurityMatters

IN THIS ISSUE

WE BELIEVE IN SECURE WORK FOR ALL STAFF

UCU's new student-facing poster campaign highlights the effects on students' learning of their lecturers being insecurely employed

WELCOME TO THIS SECOND EDITION OF SECURITY MATTERS

There's no doubt that since our first edition, the issue of precarious work in post-secondary education has won an even higher profile

Thanks in large part to the union's work over the years, there is a growing public understanding that precarious employment is not confined to sectors like retail, social care and hospitality but reaches up into formerly 'professional' areas of the workforce. Higher education academics Carole Leathwood and Barbara Read are conducting research into how the sector's workforce practices are changing the understanding of the academic role, with staff expected to be not just flexible but now an 'agile workers'. As their article shows, this often has a devastating effect on individual lives but it also has implications for the way casualised teaching staff perceive their work. Their new research project, examining exactly this question, will be of great importance, so members who want to contribute to it are encouraged to contact the authors.

Of course, the casualisation of post-secondary education is also a process which has worked itself out across the global economy. UCU has been working with Education International to push this issue up the agenda of global education unions but for our sister unions in Australia and Canada, precariousness has been a priority for years. In this edition, we're really pleased to publish an article by Dr Robyn May from Griffith University, who reports on her research on the way in which casualisation has reshaped the Australian academic workforce. We're also pleased to publish a report from James Compton, President of the Canadian AUT, another union which has made the fight against job insecurity a priority for years. james's article explains why the CAUT has made the fight for job security central to its 'Fair Employment Week' this year.

In Britain, the continued debate about precarious employment, workers' rights and the gig economy provides a critical context for the union's campaign. My own article updates readers on UCU's strategy for creating meaningful change on the ground by combining reputation campaigning and collective bargaining, as well as reporting on recent successes. Security Matters also contains more detailed reports on some of the ways our branches are winning improvements for casualised staff and the ways in which casualised staff are organising among themselves to influence their union's work. Case studies from Sussex University, King's College London, Sussex Downs College and Essex University show that real progress is possible at this time through collective campaigning and negotiation. The longer special feature from Coventry University's UCU committee is particularly important in illustrating some critical trends at work in both further and higher education, as well as showing how the union can respond to them. Faced with an employer actively building its business through 'off balance sheet' subsidiaries, the local UCU branch, with regional and national support made a strategic intervention to win recognition for highly precarious workers in one company. The company's response in dismissing many of the staff and trying to move them onto agency contracts provoked a massive, national campaigning response and a welcome change of heart from the employer. There are many lessons for the union from this case study and it bears careful reading.

Jonathan White
Bargaining and negotiations official, UCU

SECURITY MATTERS is UCU's campaign magazine featuring discussion of issues facing precarious workers in post-secondary education and reports on the union's work to win better, more secure jobs for education professionals.

On shaky ground: security in academia?

PROFESSOR CAROLE LEATHWOOD AND DR BARBARA READ REPORT ON THEIR RESEARCH INTO ACADEMIC WORKFORCE CHANGE AND THE EXPERIENCE OF PRECARIOUSNESS

A recent article in the Guardian, *Think only low-paid workers get the Sports Direct treatment? You're wrong*, highlighted the ways in which some established academics at Coventry University are being 'turned into temporary agency workers'. And Coventry isn't alone – UCU recently concluded that at least 49% of academic staff are on some form of insecure contract.

As the Coventry case highlights, insecurity does not only affect those at the start of their career attempting to secure a permanent academic post, though as many 'early career' academics have discovered, the scarcity of such posts means that competition is intense. And it is the more junior grades that are the most casualised, with 57.7% of lecturers, research and/or teaching fellows on fixed term contracts, and 75.5% of research and/or teaching assistants on such contracts. As UCU note in their 2015 report *Precarious work in higher education*, it is only at senior lecturer/senior research fellow level and above that permanent contracts predominate, and many academics never get beyond a series of fixed term positions. As the Equality Challenge Unit have shown, white men are also more likely to be on permanent contracts than women or black and minority ethnic academics. Whilst insecure fixed-term contracts have long been the norm for those employed as researchers (indeed we both began our careers in higher education on such contracts), there is little doubt that universities are now strategically employing many staff on precarious contracts to deliver their 'core business' of teaching and research.

Women and black and minority ethnic academics are less likely to be on permanent contracts than their white male colleagues.

Risks, pressures, hopes and fears in the academy

Our interest in the increasing issues of precarity for academic staff came about from a research project we conducted in 2011-12 which explored academic staff perceptions of the impact of developments in research policy on academic work. The study, funded by the Society for Research into Higher Education, consisted of email interviews with 71 academic staff who specialised in research on higher education. A key theme that emerged was the concern of older/established academics for more junior staff and those trying to establish themselves in academia. This resulted to a large extent from the

pressures to publish and gain research funding as a prerequisite for gaining a first academic appointment or for promotion. Several participants explained that they would not want to be starting an academic career now as the bar to entry has become so high. The concerns of many of our research participants, however, were not only for 'early career' researchers, but also for research itself, with risks to both capacity building and to the potential loss of new and innovative ideas that new entrants to the academy may bring. Most of our participants were established academics, so in 2014, we revisited the study data and re-contacted our participants, both to ask them about developments since our last email interview session, and to ask new questions about the experience of precarity and casualisation in the academy. In addition, we also asked them if they would forward our email to any additional academics they knew who were on fixed term or other forms of precarious contracts. We had responses from 28 of our original participants and we recruited three additional participants through this process.

Our research has highlighted how feelings of insecurity and concerns about precarity can affect academics at any stage of their careers, although it was more likely to be reported by women than men participants. Our focus here, however, is primarily on the experiences of those trying to gain a relatively secure academic post in the first place, although we also touch on insecurities reported by those in established academic positions and some questions about casualisation in late career raised by several participants approaching or post-retirement.

We have used the terms 'early career' and 'late career' academics, though we acknowledge that both are problematic. In particular, the notion of an 'early career' academic is, in many cases, a misnomer, as it does not necessarily signify either young age or those in the most junior entry level posts. We have used the term for those participants who indicated that they were still trying to gain a (more permanent/established) foothold in academia, and their ages ranged from the 'under 30' to the '51-60' age groups, with job titles ranging from 'research assistant' to 'senior lecturer'.

Early career academics: insecurity on the margins

For the 'early career' academics, practical and material concerns about whether or not a position was permanent and how they might pay the rent tended to predominate. As Mary, a research assistant in a pre-92 university, explained:

The temporary contracts issue has been a very real problem for me. Until August 2014 I was on very short-term contracts which of course was very difficult for knowing things like whether I would be able to pay my rent the next month. I am now very lucky to have two years' security, which compared to lots of my friends/people who graduated at the same time as me working inside and outside of academia is practically permanent.

That a two-year contract is seen as 'practically permanent' shows just how precarious academic work has become. And in addition to financial worries about how to pay immediate and forthcoming bills, it is difficult to make plans when income and employment contracts are insecure. For women hoping to have children, lack of maternity leave and concerns about putting one's career at even greater risk make taking a decision to have a child particularly risky.

In order to gain a more secure academic contract, publications and often research grants are now required. But time to write articles and/or research proposals is severely limited for most academics employed on fixed-term research or hourly paid lecturing contracts, especially when lack of holiday pay means finding other employment during the Christmas, Easter end summer breaks. One established (later career) academic reported encouraging her PhD student to take a part-time post once she completed, to give her the other half of the week (unpaid of course) to write the publications she will need. Others spoke of the difficulty of establishing their own research specialism, also seen as a necessary precursor to gaining a more secure position. Faye, a research fellow, explained how as a contract researcher who had worked on several different projects, 'once one project finishes (and often before) you have moved to another project and the 'headspace' to write from the former project is less easy to find'. As a result, although she considered herself an experienced researcher, she was finding it hard to see herself as a 'specialist' in one area.

A sense of academic marginalisation was reported by most of those on hourly-paid or fixed term positions, as a result of not being included on faculty or university email lists or webpages, and/or being physically located away from the rest of the department or main centre of the university and so excluded from departmental discussions. In consequence, some reported missing out on important 'calls for papers' and research opportunities as well as finding it difficult to build networks.

Perhaps of most concern was the stress and anxiety that financial insecurity and precarious contracts brings. Pippa, a senior lecturer at a post-92 university, described part-time hourly paid work as being 'like a temp' with no

holiday pay. She explained that she had experienced insomnia and panic attacks and that the stress 'means that you cannot do your job very well'. The fear of being stuck forever on precarious contracts was of particular concern as she added: 'it seems that a new semi-permanent tier of the labour market has become almost solidified and that is the fractional, flexible worker'.

But as we indicated above, gaining a more secure academic position does not necessarily mean that one has security. When we asked our original participants about the impact that trends in research policy were having on them and their work, many reported not only overwork to meet the increasing and at times unattainable targets to produce 4* or 'internationally excellent' publications and to bring in research funding, but also fears they would be identified for redundancy or moved onto a 'teaching-only' contract if they did not meet the standards required. Continual monitoring of research outputs, and requirements to demonstrate one's progress by uploading publications on to the university intranet, added to feelings of insecurity for many and of 'public shaming' for some. A sense of precarity seems to be permeating many parts of the academy.

Late-career academics: 'taking up space'?

Nevertheless, a number of 'late-career' academics in our study discussed how they felt they were in a privileged position compared to those now trying to enter academia, with several expressing the view that they were pleased to be nearing the end of an academic career rather than at the beginning. Some were considering retirement or a voluntary move to a teaching-only contract in order to pursue their own research interests in their own time and without constraint. For example, Nigel, an academic from a post-92 university who was taking early retirement, explained '*My own research is fine. I've never had any encouragement or funding, and now, at least, I have time'*.

Some late-career academics, however, raised concerns about undertaking casualised or unpaid work, about whether they may be seen to be 'taking up space' that could be freed up to provide more jobs for younger academics, and the extent to which older staff may be pressurised to leave. For example, Gary, an emeritus professor at a pre-1992 university, explained:

I have retired and have become an emeritus member of my department. This has involved a degree of casualisation, in that I now carry out a small number of tasks but without remuneration – indeed, they cost me a few quid in travel to the university. This includes a couple of hours first year lecturing and supervising two doctorates. I love doing this, but it seems to me to have two implications. First, am I doing work for free that could otherwise help give someone a toe-hold on the career ladder? Second, how much unpaid labour are emeriti contributing, and has it risen in recent years?

Emilia, who did not give her job title but who worked in a post-1992 university, also asked:

One thought did occur to me – how precarious is it for OLD members of staff? Now the statutory retirement age has been removed, it is technically possible for us to remain in post as long as we want - so what is happening in the older age groups – is anyone being pressurised to leave?

Serious questions for future research are raised by these participants.

From flexibility to 'agility'

At the beginning of this article, we suggested that more and more universities are now deliberately relying on casualised labour to fulfil their core business of teaching and research. We appear to be moving from a focus on flexible labour to one of 'agile workers', with all the worrying connotations such terminology evokes. This all raises important questions not just for the academic staff concerned, but also for the purpose, status and international reputation of UK higher education and for the student experience. Given the emphasis being placed on 'student satisfaction' in the context of the Teaching Excellence Framework, such questions are likely to be of interest to universities. So we are now in the process of developing a piece of research to explore how casualised academic staff perceive such casualisation to affect their university teaching and pedagogical interactions with students. If you might be interested in contributing to this, or to future research on issues of precarity and late career or retired academics, please do get in touch with us.

Contact

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Publications in relation to our original (2011-12) study

Leathwood, C. and Read, B. *(2013) Research policy and academic performativity: Contestation, compliance and complicity, Studies in Higher Education: 38:8, 1162-1174.*

Leathwood, C. And Read, B. *(2012) Final Report: Assessing the impact of developments in research policy for research on higher education: An exploratory study. SRHE http://www.srhe.ac.uk/downloads/Leathwood_Read_Final_Report_16_July_2012.pdf.*

The precarious life of contract academic staff in Canada

JAMES COMPTON, PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY TEACHERS (CAUT), REPORTS ON HOW HIS UNION'S *FAIR EMPLOYMENT WEEK* IS TARGETING THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF CONTRACT STAFF

One of the biggest decisions many couples have to make is whether or not to have children. Choosing the right time to do so can also be a source of anxiety for many. For professor Rhiannon Don, the decision was even more complicated, since she was worried about losing her job if she got pregnant at the wrong time in the academic year.

'We often joke that I planned the birth of my daughter so that I could teach for a whole semester, take seven months off and come back for the following academic year, but it isn't really a joke,' says Don, who has been teaching on limited-term contracts at Nipissing University for the last nine years. *'I was worried that if I had my baby at the wrong time, they would use it as an excuse not to hire me back. And even though I was entitled to take a year off, I didn't because I felt I had to go back to work so that I wouldn't lose my spot at the university.'*

Don is working full time on a 10-month renewable contract. Every year, her contract has been renewed, but every year she lives in uncertainty. Active in her faculty association, she has taken part in three rounds of bargaining as well as spearheading campaigns to raise awareness about the working conditions of contract academics.

'Usually, I teach four courses a semester, but I have five this semester, since I got a call ten days before school started asking me to teach a brand new course. Technically I could have said no, but realistically I couldn't. I have to think about the next time down the line. I don't want to be denied a contract for lacking collegiality or not being very accommodating,' she adds.

When he left his research position in the United States to follow his wife to Halifax in 2007, Philip Bennett thought he'd soon be able to find a job teaching astronomy in a city rich with post-secondary institutions. Nearly 10 years later, he explains how that scenario never materialised, and how he is still living in uncertainty from one semester to another, often having to juggle courses at Saint Mary's, Dalhousie and Mount Saint Vincent during the same semester.

Canadian contract academics are poorly paid, have no job security and often no benefits

'Financially, I'm fortunate because this isn't a matter of survival for me, since my wife is a university professor and has tenure at Dalhousie. Currently, I have a full-time contract for ten months, but this is the first time I've had a full salary. It's frustrating, not knowing how much you're going to earn. It's hard to plan. But also, when you teach part-time, there's a huge lack of recognition and you feel like you're invisible,' Bennett says.

These examples are just the tip of the iceberg, and they reflect the often hidden but harsh reality of a growing proportion of academic staff on our campuses. Nearly one-third of those who teach in Canadian universities and

The heavy teaching load of early-careers academics in Canadian universities can make it very difficult to conduct the research needed to develop a career path

colleges are in precarious appointments. With no job security and often no benefits, many contract academic staff find themselves teaching three, four, and even five courses per semester.

In response to the rise in casual employment, CAUT has, for more than a decade, held an annual campaign focusing on the problem in an effort to improve working conditions for contract academic staff. '*Contract academic staff are poorly paid, have little or nothing in the way of benefits, have no job security, and they do not enjoy the same rights as their colleagues*, says CAUT executive director David Robinson. '*This situation is unfair for everyone.*'

This year, CAUT's Fair Employment Week campaign will focus on the importance of improving working conditions for contract employees. The campaign features a declaration of solidarity, a survey to find out more about working conditions for contract employees, and pledges of support for the nationwide Fight for $15 and Fairness campaign.

James Gerlach knows all about the life of a precarious academic after years of contract work at Wilfrid Laurier University, as well as through his role as chair of CAUT's Contract Academic Staff Committee. '*We need to educate tenured faculty, who sometimes have prejudices, we need to educate the administration, we need to educate contract staff themselves, who can be reluctant to talk about their status, and we need to educate students, who often aren't aware that we're contract staff. I feel we have a duty to tell it like it is to students and explain, for instance, that we can't meet with them in our office because we don't have an office, and that we don't know which courses we're going to be teaching next semester.*'

At Wilfrid Laurier, contract academic staff teach an average of four courses per semester and earn a salary of $29,000 per year with very limited benefits. Half of the contract staff have been teaching for more than five years and account for nearly 40% of the institution's academic staff.

'It's frustrating for young teachers who have done a doctorate or a post-doctorate to be taking on teaching' Gerlach adds. '*They are looking to achieve tenure and using opportunities like these as a springboard. But for contracts like these to really be a springboard for teachers, they need to be able to do research and have an active profile – and that's an extremely hard thing to do when you have to teach eight or nine courses a year.*'

Rhiannon Don also believes raising awareness in the broader university community is the key to gaining leverage when it comes to negotiating better working conditions. She and her team are currently working on a campaign that will feature a museum-like exhibition where displays will dramatise the day-to-day impacts of the casualisation of the academic profession. For example, they asked one colleague who works part-time at both Nipissing and Trent universities to save all the cardboard coffee cups he drinks on the long drive between campuses over the space of a few days. *'We also drew up a map of Ontario with a star marking North Bay, and we drew lines between there and the places contract staff travel from to teach at Nipissing. We also collected prescription bottles from our members to highlight the fact we don't have drug insurance,'* Don says.

According to David Robinson, one of the key problems is that many contract staff find themselves overlooked when permanent positions open.'*Despite being fully qualified to conduct research in their field of expertise, they often aren't compensated for or able to undertake research because of their contracts and heavy teaching load.*'

Philip Bennett agrees that the lack of resources to conduct research work is frustrating. He explains how at Saint Mary's, for instance, the administration earmarks $4,000 for contract staff to attend conferences, but caps the funding at $500 per event, which often doesn't even cover the airfare. '*We're useful enough to teach, but we're not really part of the system. We don't have the right or the opportunity to do research work, and that's unfair.*'

James Gerlach would tend to agree. '*They tell us we weren't hired to do research or to do service to the community. Meanwhile, we're seeing the sheer number and percentage of contract staff growing from one year to the next, and we're seeing more and more students in our classes. Whereas we might have been teaching 50 students not so long ago, now we often have 200. It's a tall order.*'

Australia's casual approach to university teaching

ROBYN MAY AT GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY REPORTS ON HER RESEARCH INTO HOW CASUALISATION SHAPES THE EXPERIENCE OF AUSTRALIAN ACADEMICS

In a recent article in a Sydney newspaper Wester n Sydney University Academic, Dr George Morgan wrote about the 'unknown scholar', the tragic case of a casual academic, a tutor in Philosophy, who had taken his own life in the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney.[1] Of course it is not possible to know all the circumstances that may have coincided to lead to such a devastatingly sad event, but the article goes onto describe the precarious situation many casual teaching staff in Australia find themselves in bearing much of the risks of employment, and being effectively a buffer for volatility in student demand.

The reality in Australian universities today is that a large proportion of undergraduate teaching is undertaken by hourly-paid staff. This is at the same time as students themselves amass greater levels of debt than ever before during their studies, and in turn labour in casual work to pay for these studies.

My PhD research, which was part of a wider research project examining gender equity in Australian universities,[2] investigates the casualisation of the academic teaching workforce in Australia's universities. The research has contributed to an understanding of the size and scale of this workforce, the implications of this and some of its more troubling aspects. Through a large scale survey of casual academic teaching staff at 19 Australian universities, analysis of the university staff superannuation (pension) fund, and interviews with 22 casual academic staff I have established that these staff are more likely to be female and younger than their permanently employed academic counterparts. The majority either hold or are studying for their PhD and just over half aspire to a career in the academy, although many are worried about the reality of this ever eventuating. One in five work in multiple universities in order to make a living.

The experiences of these staff are aptly described by the quote below from a casual teaching academic in a letter to a national newspaper. She details the frustrations of working as a casual academic teacher after spending years to achieve her doctoral qualification.

Since completing my doctorate five years ago I have worked as a casual teaching academic in NSW [New South Wales] and Victoria, combining casual contracts from several institutions as I have been unable to find a fixed-term or permanent position anywhere. In that time I have received a maximum of two hours of pedagogical 'training'. Most university teaching skills are learnt on the job or through fleeting incidental conversations with colleagues. Although doing the frontline work of the university, we [casual academics] move around campuses almost invisibly without offices or invitations to collegial meetings. (Dr Bonny Cassidy, Letter to the editor, The Age, 29 July 2013, p. 20).

My research confirms her concerns. Casual academic staff are largely invisible in the universities which hire them, despite their 'frontline' work. Provision of basic facilities such as office space, induction and professional development, is patchy and access to career development supports such as research grants is highly dependent on whether they also have student status. Casuals are often recruited to teach at the last minute and report 'winging it' with new material, and in subjects not always aligned to their areas of research.

Australia has 37 public universities and they service a broad population, which is urban and regional, as well as international. Education as an 'industry' assumes an important place in Australia's economy, both as revenue earner and educator for the 'knowledge economy'. Education is one of Australia's largest export earners, and Australia is third only to the US and UK in the world market in foreign

students. Australia's universities underwent major reform in the late 1980s, moving from elite to mass and now universal provision, and at the same time government moving from being the majority funder to providing less than half of all university revenue.

These rapid changes in the university sector occurred alongside significant change in the Australian economy and labour force. Insecure employment in the Australian labour market takes a particularly harsh form as it is hourly paid and hourly engaged, typically with a minimum engagement period of three or four hours, together with a loading, typically around 25%, which is to compensate for the lack of benefits such as sick leave and annual leave. This form of work, known as casual employment, accounts for approximately one quarter of all employees in the Australian labour force, having risen from around 10% in the 1970s. It allows employer 'flexibility' to alter the hours of their workforce, with employees left to wear the risks of downturns in the business or wider economy. Much of the part-time work available in Australia is casual, and this has a gender dimension where notions of 'choice' and 'flexibility' are often conflated with making the best of what is available.

In the past the image of casual work was associated with younger workers, the less skilled, and those working in the service sector. This contrasts sharply with the nature and form of insecure work in the university sector and the high qualification levels of those who perform teaching work. In a report of the Inquiry into Insecure Work in

Australia, commissioned by the Australian Council of Trade Unions in 2012,[3] the chair of the inquiry observed that the divide between workers in Australia was no longer between blue collar and white collar, it was between those in secure jobs, and those at the periphery in insecure employment. Nowhere does this observation hold more truth than in Australia's universities.

The casual academic teacher

There are a number of designations for academic staff who teach and are employed on an hourly rate (casual) basis: for example, they are often referred to as sessional staff as they are typically hired for a semester teaching period. I have always preferred the term casual as it highlights the true nature of the employment arrangement. Casual academic staff have no employment security beyond the semester teaching period and are often engaged at very short notice at the start of each teaching period. Their employment takes a particularly harsh form: it is hourly paid piece-work that is both temporary and, paradoxically, sometimes long term. The survey I conducted as part of my research revealed that over half of the sample had been employed for 3 or more years at their current university. The hourly rate payment for casual academic work is derived from the lower levels of the academic pay scales, and includes compensation for set additional hours associated with preparation and administration, with a loading of 25% to make up for the absence of the standard employment benefits of annual leave (typically four weeks in Australia) and sick leave.

The rate of payment is constructed slightly differently for different types of academic work, whether it be lecturing, tutoring or demonstrating. The rate of payment for a tutorial, for example, includes an additional two hours payment for preparation, student consultation and administration. Marking work is generally paid for separately at a lower set hourly rate. The preparation, student consultation (often via email), and administration that takes place outside of the tutorial or lecture is however, largely beyond the control of the casual academic. This work has grown and expanded with the changing demands of the university sector, a rapidly advancing technological environment, and an increasingly diverse student population. The other factor beyond the control of the casual academic is the number of students in each tutorial, the number of which has doubled over the past three decades, from an average of 15 students, to an average of 30.

As the numbers of casual academic staff have grown the link between casual academic employment and a more secure academic position, has become rapidly decoupled. It is now common for many aspiring academics to spend years working on a casual basis before securing a fixed-term or continuing position and many exit academia altogether before ever making such a transition.

One young academic who I interviewed described how working as a casual academic made her feel:

I don't call myself an academic, this increased casualisation encourages us to not think of ourselves as academics, yet I have been working full time as an academic since I submitted my PhD so I am an academic but I think that casual work makes people feel bad about themselves (Jane, Research Intensive University, November 2011).

Yet the reality of her working life was that the component parts were those of a teaching and research academic. She worked in a concurrent series of casual three to four different contracts from different workplaces at the same time, all to make a living, and never being able to say no to work in case it was not offered again.

Australia's casual academic workforce has a gendered and a youthful face, and whilst comprising a diverse group, a common theme is the desire for transition. That is, most casual academics see their casual employment as a temporary stage from which they will (hopefully) transition to a continuing academic position, and they hope that their casual academic employment will assist that transition. Only a small minority actively choose casual academic employment. This presents a particular set of challenges for the University staff union, the NTEU, who despite placing casuals concerns on bargaining agendas, find it difficult to mobilise this large and diverse staff cohort.

The key themes of institutional invisibility, career void and gendered precariousness elaborate the increasingly marginalised experience of this core university workforce, a workforce without which the Australian university system simply would not function. Working as a casual academic, whilst necessary for survival for those whom I interviewed, also meant less time for research, and required more time to be spent in the constant search for work, the cultivating of networks, managing student expectations, worrying about finances, and not being able to plan ahead. The inherently insecure semester by semester mode of employment does not assist casual academic staff to make the transition to more secure employment. Casual employment status instead reduces them to that of 'marginal, temporary employees with no past and no future beyond the immediate term',[4] a status they share with their insecurely employed academic colleagues in other Anglo-American universities.

[1] *http://www.smh.com.au/comment/dangers-lurk-in-the-post-modern-career-that-is-missing-job-security-20161017-gs3u5o.html*

[2] *https://www.griffith.edu.au/business-government/centre-work-organisation-wellbeing/research/work-institutions/projects/gender-equity-in-australian-universities*

[3] ACTU (2012). Lives on hold: Unlocking the potential of Australia's workforce. Report of the Independent Inquiry into Insecure Work in Australia', Australian Council of Trade Unions, Melbourne.

[4] Gappa, J & Leslie, D (1993). The invisible faculty: Improving the status of part-timers in higher education, Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, p63

The announcement by Sports Direct that it is to abandon the use of zero-hours contracts shows what strategic attacks on the public reputation of organisations can achieve. Negative media reports were also instrumental in UCU's successful campaign against the use of subsidiary companies to employ staff at Coventry University (page 14)

Pushing back on precarious employment in further and higher education

JONATHAN WHITE REPORTS ON PROGRESS IN UCU'S NATIONAL CAMPAIGN TO STAMP OUT CASUAL CONTRACTS ACROSS TERTIARY EDUCATION

In September this year, the Office for National Statistics announced that the number of reported zero-hours contracts had hit 1 million. At the same time, a shareholder revolt, orchestrated by Unite and the TUC at Sports Direct led to the company making a public announcement that it was abandoning zero hours contracts and would be beginning to bring agency workers into direct employment. Pub chain JD Wetherspoons announced that they also would be offering staff guaranteed hours contracts. In spite of the political indifference of the Tory government and the economic uncertainty that has followed the EU referendum, the general political and public environment within which UCU campaigns for precariously employed staff contains significant opportunities. Recognisable brands are feeling pressure to be seen to act and this illustrates what can be won by smart, strategic attacks on the public reputation of organisations using precarious contracts.

In our own sectors of further and higher education, the long waves of neoliberal reform that have swept over us have profoundly reshaped our workforces. According to UCU's analysis, more than a third of teaching staff in our colleges are employed on precarious contracts, most commonly paid by the hour. In higher education, data collated by the Higher Education Statistics Agency show that 54% of academic staff are employed on either fixed-term of atypical worker contracts, a figure that significantly understates the amount of precarious work in universities. The higher education career path has become fractured, with fixed-term contracts now the normal form of employment for staff below the level of senior lecturer. In addition, there is a growing population of 'off-balance sheet' casualised workers, delivering teaching in wholly owned subsidiary companies. According to UCU research conducted in 2014, 61 FE colleges and 64 universities had teaching subsidiary companies, usually wholly owned. Within these companies, a new workforce is growing – more precarious, lower paid and locked out of access to the sector's pension schemes. It's also practically invisible as colleges and universities are not obliged to include them in data returns to statistics agencies.

But just as marketisation poses a threat by recomposing the workforce around us, so it also presents opportunities by creating new vulnerabilities for our employers. As they strive to compete in the new marketplace, so these institutions come under the scrutiny of regulators, as well as from students and learners keen to be reassured of the quality of the product. Our colleges and universities have been hiding a dirty secret – that for years they have actively fostered a workforce employed on shamefully insecure contracts that make it almost impossible for them to do their jobs. Now that these institutions are aggressively marketing themselves as quality brands, there is a new audience out there for those who are able to reveal what's really happening in our education institutions.

UCU's campaign is premised on using this opportunity to the full, driving home the message that there will be no hiding place for employers who refuse to engage with us in tackling precarious employment.

Early this year, UCU wrote to 246 colleges and 140

universities asking them to commit to a review of their use of casual and insecure contracts, warning that their response would be included in a new report on casualisation to be published in the Spring. 36 colleges and 32 universities indicated that they would be prepared to talk to UCU and these are now being followed up by our branches and regional officials. The full results of the exercise and the institutions' responses were included in the publication of two new reports and web resources that showed both the national aggregate overview of precarious work in our sectors and the situation in each institution. The reports were published on 13 and 14 April and covered in the press. The full reports, data, institutional results and rankings are now available on the UCU website and we intend to repeat the exercise late in 2016.

Over the summer, the union launched a hugely successful student-facing version of this resource, promoted through social media, which profiled students' chosen universities and asked them to contact university managements encouraging them to engage with UCU. Thousands of students have already accessed the data for their institutions.

The main objective of this series of national initiatives is to persuade more employers to negotiate with us and there has clearly been progress here. In dozens of colleges and universities, casualisation is now on the agenda in a way that just wasn't true a few years ago. Turning these into negotiated agreements can be slow and arduous work but we've seen impressive successes this year alone. The University of the Arts has agreed a new policy that creates greater security of employment for hourly-paid staff. Improved policies to move more hourly paid lecturers onto proper part-time contracts were negotiated at Southampton Solent and Winchester Universities. The University of Bristol agreed to move to using open-ended contracts for research staff as well as acting to transfer more hourly paid teaching staff to fractional part-time contracts. In September this year, the University of Sussex agreed to abandon zero-hours contracts and the branch won significant improvements for hourly-paid graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) employed at the university. Similarly, GTAs have won improved pay and conditions at King's College London and the University of Essex. UCU is organising and building new campaigns in Northern Ireland. National coordination and campaign support are working to enable and reinforce vibrant local organising and negotiation efforts. Both are working together and there is real momentum in the higher education sector.

The going has inevitably been harder in further education, with colleges managing funding cuts and an ongoing process of restructure and merger. Yet there are still opportunities to make progress, not least as the concern to demonstrate consistent and high teaching quality to Ofsted offers the union a degree of leverage. At South Downs College, UCU was able to negotiate the transfer of the vast majority of hourly-paid staff onto fractional part-time contracts. Discussions have also begun at both Leeds City College and Sheffield College in negotiating improvements to 'self-employed' workers and 'bank workers' used by these employers. London Region UCU has developed a London colleges claim which includes the call for permanent pro-rata contracts for all hourly paid, temporary, fixed-term or casual staff who have worked for their colleges to two years. The national claim in FE this year, included a call for 'Hourly paid, temporary, fixed-term or casual staff working in a college for more than two years to be offered a permanent post on a pro-rata basis that is commensurate with the hours they actually work', reflecting the profile that this issue has won within the union and several FE branches pursuing local additional agreements under the 'national plus' strategy have tabled claims aimed at addressing the grievances of the casualised workforce.

UCU is also making inroads into the growing 'shadow' sector employed through subsidiary companies. Most spectacular here was the victory at Coventry University, covered in detail in this magazine. The national revulsion caused by the actions of Coventry's subsidiary company has helpfully shone a light on the connected issues of the use of 'off-balance sheet' companies and agency worker contracts. Universities who get compared to SportsDirect in the Guardian need to start to reassess their strategic approach to unions. Our sincere hope is that Coventry is entering a new, more constructive relationship with UCU. But the wider issues remain. UCU will be targeting more of these subsidiary companies, together with any institution that thinks that it's acceptable to employ front line teachers on bank worker or agency worker contracts. Frances O'Grady's words at the TUC were aimed at the likes of Sports Direct and ASOS. But they apply just as well to our own employers:

'Run a big brand with a dirty little secret? A warehouse of people paid less than the minimum wage? A fleet of couriers who are slaves to an app? Let me put you on notice. There will be no hiding place. We will organise and we will win. Britain's unions will not rest until every worker gets the fair treatment they deserve.'

Our employers should consider themselves on notice.

Recognition victory in Coventry

COVENTRY UNIVERSITY UCU'S COMMITTEE REPORT ON THEIR HIGH PROFILE STRUGGLE TO WIN RECOGNITION FOR PRECARIOUS WORKERS EMPLOYED IN SUBSIDIARY COMPANIES

Coventry University is attempting to restructure itself into a multi-national corporation with a highly 'flexible' workforce. To do this it has created a group structure with the charitable umbrella body in the centre and an ever-growing periphery of 'wholly owned' for-profit subsidiaries. The most well known of these is the Coventry University College, one of the first experiments in budget higher education within a for-profit subsidiary company. Coventry University has many of these 'wholly owned' for-profit education subsidiaries and is looking to expand them into other cities across the UK, opening campuses in Scarborough and London. For the employer, the advantage of this arrangement is that the labour costs of highly qualified teachers can be slashed by taking them out of the hard won *framework agreement*, thus allowing for new non-academic contracts to be invented. 'Benefits' such as holiday, sickness, maternity/paternity allowances and pensions contributions can be reduced to the statutory minimum. Most significantly for UCU, teachers in these subsidiaries are not covered by the existing collective bargaining agreements between the trade unions and the main university. We can see why the use of subsidiaries and group structures are appealing to universities, who are now under pressure from government to respond to an artificially created and politically imposed market in higher education.

At Coventry, pre-sessional English (PSE) lecturers, who help international students who didn't achieve English language entrance requirements get on to their undergraduate or postgraduate courses, used to be academics on Grade 7 contracts with collective bargaining rights. Two years ago they were moved to one of these subsidiaries, CU Services Ltd, ostensibly a professional training subsidiary, on new contracts that were a whole scale lower (if compared against the framework agreement), with benefits reduced to the statutory minimum and access to the Teacher's Pension Scheme replaced with an inferior private Aviva option. Due to the extreme casualisation of PSE teachers, with contracts lasting for only the exact duration of the course they teach (for example five, 10 or 15 weeks), with arbitrary breaks in contract between courses, these teachers did not qualify for a TUPE transfer and most of the time do not accrue the continuity of services necessary to actually receive their new statutory benefits. In response to being transferred out of the university, these colleagues got in touch with the local UCU branch and asked if we could help. However, before we could do anything we needed to win collective bargaining rights for these teachers.

The first step was to gauge support for a recognition campaign. Last summer (2015) we began collecting signatures for a petition, and managed to get over 80% support at the busiest time of the PSE teaching year. At this point there were tutors on five/10/15-week contracts, who despite the extremely temporary nature of their roles at CU Services were mostly in favour of recognition. We also conducted a survey on some of the problems staff were facing, which would inform our bargaining with the employer. We then presented the fact of very high support

UCU WINNING IN THE WORKPLACE

for recognition to the employer, and offered to work with them to deal with issues if they were to voluntarily recognise UCU, but the board of governors (each subsidiary has its own board, the members of which are mostly made up of the executive at the main university) decided to turn down our request. Due to the winter break, we decided to begin the recognition campaign again in 2016, beginning in Spring with a renewed, this time formal, request to CU Services for voluntary recognition. Once again the board refused (we also went to the board of governors for the university as parent organisation, who also refused), so we began the statutory recognition process. This process requires a minimum of 10% UCU membership and 50% support for recognition in the form of petitions, both of which we once again gathered (with support once again well above the minimum). CU Services were determined to refuse recognition right until the bitter end, so this process resulted in an independent ballot (organised by the Electoral Reform Services), the results of which we received on the 2nd of September. UCU achieved a staggering result, with 73% turnout and 100% support for recognition of those who returned the ballot.

This was a phenomenal result and we were feeling proud of our achievement and looking forward to constructive negotiations. The response from CU Services however was to attempt to move our colleagues into another subsidiary. Not only was this a clear example of union busting, but this subsidiary was a wholly owned temping agency. People who had once been on full academic contracts were now equivalent to agency workers with inferior sick pay, no pension, no maternity or paternity scheme and could be let go at a week's notice. After a damning article in The Guardian by Aditya Chakrabortty, comparing Coventry University to Sports Direct, UCU immediately began a national campaign to get the university to reverse this decision. Within a week we had over 3000 signatures on the UCU petition and two more articles appeared in the local press, along with coverage also on local radio. People were rightly and unanimously appalled at CU Services' actions, with many people in the comments using adjectives like 'shameful'. As a consequence of this action the university had overnight inflicted serious reputational damage on its name as both a charity and a leading higher education institution. Finally two actions at branch level seemed to shatter the overwhelming tension that had been building: firstly, after refusing to put the CU Services issue on to the agenda at JNC, all three unions walked out of negotiations, and secondly a huge public protest was

announced for the November open day. The very next day the head of human resources emailed Stephen Cowden, our branch chair, and said they were willing to reverse their decision entirely.

For all intents and purposes this is a massive victory for not only the branch, which for a long time had not enough members for a committee, but for UCU as a trade union. It shows that when local and regional branches work together with regional and national officials, we can create an unstoppable force that can reverse major decisions. The bravery of these most vulnerable workers shows that not only can casualised employees stand up for themselves, but that in solidarity as a union we can successfully defend our casualised colleagues. But perhaps most importantly we as a union drew a line in the sand and defended this line, we said that if this kind of behaviour is not acceptable in the private sector, it is certainly not acceptable in higher education. The overwhelming support we received from other branches all across the country in UCU, from other trade unions, the Trade Unions Council in Coventry, and from the public all support this conclusion. All eyes are on Coventry, and this success shows that the fight against marketisation can be fought at a local level and that the implications of these battles spread to the sector as a whole. But the battle is not over, and the aim is to get recognition for the whole CU group, and we are now moving on to CU College. We would like to thank everyone who supported us and we welcome any support as the campaign carries on.

GTAs at King's College London win 20% pay rise

Following an 18-month long campaign at King's College London, graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) at the university have won a 20% pay increase for marking, among other concessions.

Like many universities, King's College London is heavily reliant on GTAs, a manifestation of the general level of casualisation in the HE sector, in which over 60% of workers are 'partially' employed. Inspired by the Fractionals for Fair Pay group at SOAS, student teachers at King's College London launched a campaign of their own in 2015, beginning with a survey of over 400 GTAs, which found that 96% of King's GTAs regularly work overtime for nothing.

This survey (which was covered in the Times Higher Education supplement) was followed by threats of marking boycott in 2016, with GTAs refusing to mark coursework and summer exams until they were paid fairly.

Under pressure from the campaign, which received joint support from the local UCU branch and student union (with a further motion of solidarity from Unison), King's management acquiesced to the following concessions:

- 20% increase in pay for essay marking (from 5000 words per hour to 4000).
- Double pay for preparation time (from a 1:1 ratio with teaching hours to 2:1).
- The establishment of an elected representational body for GTAs, with the right to send representatives to senior staff and management meetings to discuss issues relating to casual staff.
- Improvements to GTAs' training, with a greater emphasis on best practice for marking and teaching.

Despite falling short of the campaign's original demands, this offer is still a significant victory. Joe Attard, Film Studies GTA and member of the UCU local executive at King's College London argued that the campaign's success demonstrates the value of direct action and cross-union support in pay disputes.

'We weren't taken seriously until we combined the reputational damage from the survey with the threat of a marking boycott,' he said. *'It was only then, and with the urging of three separate unions, that we were invited to the negotiation table.*

'I'm very clear on College's dismissive attitude of casuals. At one stage, they were trying to rebrand us as 'apprentices' – despite the fact we receive very minimal training (none of it paid). However, the fact is that the rampant casualisation they've invited is their undoing: they can't do without us, which is what made the assertive approach so effective.'

Campaigners pledge that these gains will be built upon in coming months, involving other casual staff (such as teaching fellows and hourly-paid lecturers) as well as extending support to exploited casuals at other universities.

Graduate teaching assistants at Kings College London who regularly work overtime without pay refused to make coursework or summer exams until they were paid fairly

University of Sussex agreement ends zero-hours contracts

UCU has welcomed a new agreement at the University of Sussex that will end the use of zero-hours contracts and mean that the hundreds of PhD students who deliver frontline teaching there will be employed on proper contracts with enhanced pay, benefits and set hours. The agreement follows negotiations that began in February 2014 at the time when the public toxicity of zero-hours contracts was growing.

The employment of postgraduate students as associate tutors has been an issue at the University for years and both the UCU branch and the Sussex Students Union have campaigned for a long time for improvements.

The agreement between UCU and the university should mean that PhD students teaching at the University will have established set hours, improved multipliers for their teaching pay rates, incremental pay progression and new access to occupational sick pay. In addition, departments will be allowed to create fixed-term or permanent teaching positions for people completing their positions where their budgets allow.

The Sussex agreement represents more evidence that it is quite possible to operate teaching in a university without using zero-hours contracts, 'bank workers' contracts or any of the other forms of bogus self-employment and precarious contract that blight the higher education sector. Other universities should take note that UCU will not stop campaigning on this issue.

The public profile of zero-hours contracts, agency working, self-employment and the 'gig economy' provide a valuable context in which to highlight the fact that supposedly enlightened employers have operated for years now by exploiting teaching staff who frequently exist in a state of precariousness and perpetual anxiety, unable to establish viable academic careers and unable to plan their lives.

Until universities start to engage seriously on this issue in greater numbers, their employment practices will continue to see them bracketed them with Sports Direct and other high profile offenders.

A better deal for graduate teaching assistants at Essex

Back in summer 2015 Essex University set up a working group to look at the pay and other terms and conditions of graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) at the university. This was driven by concern regarding a number of employment and equity issues including the lack of consistency in how GTA were recruited and paid, the use of multipliers that poorly reflected the full hours worked, a lack of transparency in employment and a lack of payment for training. The working group also looked at a number of educational impacts of the employment of GTAs, including the lack of involvement of module lecturers in feeding back on teaching and the problems caused by the non-involvement of GTAs in module design.

Unhappy at their treatment and unsatisfied with the way the process of reform was going, a number of GTAs approached UCU, who had already raised many of these issues with management separately. The union then raised this with management and as a result UCU were invited to input directly into the working group.

As a result of that work and the UCU input into it, GTA jobs have been properly evaluated and graded, their hourly rates rising as a consequence. Agreement was reached that GTAs would be paid for all hours worked rather than using a multiplier and recruitment was brought into line with normal university practices. There will be clear information about the activities to be undertaken and the time they will take to be available when posts are advertised and the management and supervision of GTAs will be improved. A new GTA contract has been agreed that provides greater clarity on pay and hours of work, provides access to the USS pension scheme and clarifies sick leave and annual leave provision.

In general Essex UCU is happy with the university's response but there are still outstanding issues relating to academic freedom for students who teach. Moreover, although the status of GLAs (lab assistants) and GDs (demonstrators) in the sciences was also reformed, this was not done in consultation with UCU and the branch have ongoing concerns about their situation. Essex University UCU will continue to work with its GTA members to ensure fairness for all.

Swift action from UCU prompts rethink of 'regressive' PhD teaching proposals from the University of Northumbria

PhD students are a large and distinctive part of the modern higher education teaching workforce. Universities have historically had a pretty good deal from their PhD students, seeing them as a useful pool of cheap labour. Teaching and demonstration are portrayed as part of an 'apprenticeship', a career-building step which students should gratefully accept without too many questions.

This helps to explain why for years, some universities have got away with low pay rates, zero-hours contracts and most scandalously, schemes that made unpaid teaching work a condition of research studentships. UCU and the NUS have been campaigning for years now to win improvements to the postgraduates' pay and conditions, agreeing a joint campaigning charter.

And we're beginning to see progress. Leading universities are beginning to take action, most productively through negotiations with the UCU, to improve the way they employ students. We've been assisted in this by the Research Councils taking a more enlightened view and establishing clearer guidelines for the employment of postgraduate students that reflect many of UCU and NUS's concerns.

This gradual shift in policy is of course uneven, but it is there nonetheless. All of which makes it more shocking that the University of Northumbria recently attempted to introduce a scheme to make unpaid teaching a condition of a studentship to study at the university. Justifying this move, the university resorted to an old argument that the students were being paid but through the bursary they would receive. But this flies in the face of advice from HMRC that makes it clear that bursaries are non-taxable training grants, not to be confused with taxable employment. This position now underpins Research Councils UK guidance which states that teaching and demonstrating must be paid through contracted employment.

The potential benefits of ignoring this advice for Northumbria are fairly obvious. Concealing 'pay' for teaching within the value of the studentship means that it's impossible to see what the rate is, there is no need to pay National Insurance contributions and there is no need to discuss enrolling PhD students in the TPS pension scheme. Given that the value of Northumbria's studentship was set at the recommended Research Councils minimum (£14,269), which is intended to be exclusive of any pay for teaching, then the amount that Northumbria envisaged paying its students must surely have been precisely zero.

UCU's reaction to this locally and nationally was swift and decisive. Both the local students' union and the UCU branch raised the issue with management only to be told that it was being introduced without consultation. The branch then contacted the chair of the Anti-Casualisation Committee Vicky Blake and the national union issued a press release slamming the university for its regressive proposal. As the threat of increasing press attention and reputation damage grew, the university announced that it was suspending its proposals and would discuss them further with students and the union. UCU naturally welcomed this move.

Hopefully, Northumbria will not repeat this error and will negotiate constructively with UCU and the NUS. But this episode has thrown up other examples of universities continuing to use unpaid PhD students to deliver their teaching and within our anti-casualisation campaigning, UCU will be looking to end this practice once and for all.

This episode also reinforces the enhanced importance for campaigning around university reputations. Universities desperate to trade on a brand for high quality to justify their fees are vulnerable to action that publicly exposes their workforce practices. We need to be prepared to use this to support our collective campaigning and bargaining for precarious workers in our universities and colleges.

South Downs College UCU – proud of their progress on permanent contracts

As part of their participation in UCU's Stamp out casual contracts campaign, branch officers at South Downs College in Hampshire have been campaigning hard to persuade managers to move hourly-paid staff onto permanent fractional or full-time contracts.

Branch secretary Vicky Doxat sent us the update below, reporting on the excellent progress they've made, exploiting the opportunity presented by a sympathetic and constructive principal to drive home the case against casualisation:

'Our previous principal, Lyn Surgeon, who retired in 2015, was keen to formally recognise UCU as the trade union which represented staff and after requests from UCU branch officers, she implemented a recognition and facilities Agreement which previously we had not had. Lyn also established an HR department which again had not existed previously.

As a result of the agreement a termly joint consultation and negotiating committee (JCNC) was established with senior managers, HR and UCU representation. Faced with discussions about a restructure, we took the opportunity to raise the issue of contracts of employment. When UCU officers made Lyn aware of UCU's national campaign against casualisation, the principal indicated that she was supportive of our suggestion of moving staff from temporary hourly-paid contracts to permanent fractional contracts. Obviously, we welcomed this move and as a result, we now have 95% of staff on permanent contracts and only 5% of staff on temporary hourly paid contracts.

It was agreed at a subsequent JCNC that all members of staff who had been employed by the college for four years or more on a C contract would be automatically moved to a fractional permanent contract. Although this only affected a small number of lecturers at the time it has set an important precedent for the future.

The drive to reduce casualisation at South Downs College was spearheaded by our membership secretary, Scott Alexander, who successfully used the Fixed-Term Workers Regulations to make a case for moving members onto permanent contracts. We were fortunate in that the Principal at the time was also convinced of the case against casualisation. Our new principal has already stated that he intends to move towards 80% of staff being on permanent contracts and 20% on hourly-paid contracts so UCU officers at South Downs College are gearing up to defend the progress we've made.'

Opposition to casualisation was one of the key issues raised during nationwide strike action in higher education this summer

Why you should join your union today

University and College Union

1. With almost 110,000 members, UCU is the largest trade union in post-school education. If you are an academic, lecturer, trainer, instructor, researcher, manager, administrator, computer staff, librarian or postgraduate from a university, college, prison, or training organisation, UCU is the union for you.

2. We know that making working life more secure is a priority issue for our members. We are working hard – and successfully – to raise the profile of precarious employment with the Government, MPs and the press, making sure that our employers are under public scrutiny.

3. Because we are a trade union, we have the unique ability to negotiate collective agreements that benefit all our members. That's why UCU negotiates for staff to be transferred from precarious hourly-paid and fixed-term contracts to open-ended, fractional or full-time contracts.

4. Because of our collective and individual work, many thousands of staff have been moved to more secure employment. Find out more about our successes at our campaign website: www.ucu.org.uk/stampout

5. When you join the union, you will enhance our power to speak as the collective voice of casualised staff in education. Your local branch will be stronger and so will the national union. The more you get involved, the stronger we will all be.

6. As an individual member you can get advice and representation from experienced UCU reps, supported by full-time UCU officials and employment law specialists where necessary. But don't leave it till you have a problem at work to join.

7. UCU members also get access to 24/7 counselling, financial assistance and advice through our partnership with Recourse. Find out more here: http://www.ucu.org.uk/recourse

8. We know that precarious work is often low paid, so our subscription rates are adjusted to reflect your earnings, starting as low as 99p per month. You can also can claim tax relief from a proportion of your subs.

9. Student membership is free and open to those training to teach in post-school education, including PGCE students and postgraduates (not employed) planning a career in higher education.

10. **Don't wait any longer. Join your union today: join.ucu.org.uk or call 0333 207 0719**

JOIN AT: join.ucu.org.uk

OR CALL: 0333 207 0719*

*Calls are charged at standard rates; if you have inclusive call minutes or an allowance calls to this number are usually included (please check with your provider).