

In 2009-10 1,005 research-only academics were employed by the university, and 90.6% of these were on fixed-term contracts.

It is essential that the majority of fixed-term employees join UCU as only then can we campaign effectively to stamp out the widespread use of continuous fixed-term contracts.



If you aren't a member yet, join us today: join.ucu.org.uk

Five great reasons to join UCU

1 UCU gives you peace of mind We are officially recognised by your employer to negotiate your pay and conditions and we can represent you if you have a problem at work. Last year we won nearly £8 million compensation for over 3,000 staff who had been treated unfairly at work.

2 UCU helps you to develop your career We offer training to our members including *classroom management, voice care and help getting published*. We see it as our job to look after you in your job and help you to have a rewarding career.

3 UCU is your voice at work We are the collective voice of the profession – campaigning to defend education and lobbying government for more funding for colleges and universities. We stand up for your pension rights and work to protect your work-life balance.

4 UCU gets you a better deal Research shows that union members in the UK receive higher pay, better sickness and pension benefits and more holiday entitlement than staff who aren't union members. It makes sense to be a member of UCU.

5 As a UCU member, you are not alone At a time when life in our profession is becoming harder, joining UCU makes you a member of a special community, one that understands what it means to be an educator and stands up for your interests.

For more information about Sheffield UCU contact Jane Rodger on 0114 222 8976

Are you on a fixed-term contract



and working at the University of Sheffield?

Staff on fixed-term contracts are a priority for Sheffield UCU. We are talking to management about changes that will benefit both the university and researchers.



Researchers at Sheffield

The latest HESA figures available, 2010-2011, show that 90.7% of research-only academics are on fixed-term contracts at the University of Sheffield. This figure is the third highest among the Russell Group, only being beaten by Kings College, London (95.6%) and Queen Mary and Westfield College, London (91%). Out of 105 HE institutions, only seven employ a greater percentage of fixed-term research-only academics than Sheffield.

Contracts

One of the most difficult times can be when a fixed-term contract is coming to an end. If you are in this situation, we can make sure you know what the university's obligations are. These depend upon the nature of your particular contract, when it was signed, what clauses it contains, whether it has previously been renewed – all of which affect your legal entitlements.

The law is changing and it is very important that anyone who has had two or more fixed-term contracts over four years is converted to open-ended status without delay.

We meet monthly with the university to discuss fixed-term employees whose contracts are coming to an end. Have you worked for the university for more than four years and do you still receive fixed-term contracts? Do you know a non-member who is in this position? We have already helped over 150 individuals to gain permanent open-ended status. Encourage all those working in your department to read this leaflet and contact us for more information.

Don't be invisible!

Hourly-paid workers and fixed-term employees are often invisible. The amount of case work is rising as those who felt that they were not vulnerable suddenly find that they are. Thankfully many have union support to assist them through these difficult times.

There has never been a time when union membership was so important. Can you afford not to be a member of UCU?

Research funding is an issue

The pattern of research funding creates a serious barrier to the management of research, and funding tends to follow a model of tying researchers to projects, often meaning staff spend a year learning the job, a year being productive and then a year looking for their next job – a huge waste of potential.

As a report of the House of Commons Science and Technology Committee (2002) concludes:

'...universities have deflected the risk onto the researchers; this bad management has added to the plight of contract researchers. In this respect universities have failed their research workforce and the UK's science base.' Managing for the Ideal Research Environment, Andrew D Madden

The way forward

There are ways of employing researchers differently. Some universities have research units which attract funding from a range of sources and employ permanent researchers on a number of projects. It makes a pool of research expertise and experience available. It implicitly recognises that researchers have transferable research skills, as well as specific expertise, with more experienced researchers being able to develop and lead projects. It also provides scope for career development and it helps to ensure that, in the event of researchers leaving or falling ill, the projects with which they have been involved can continue.

We will be talking to management about changes which would benefit both the university and researchers alike, and it is essential that researchers join UCU and actively engage with us in order that their concerns can be highlighted, and suggestions implemented.

Join us

If you aren't a member, invest in your career and join your union today: join.ucu.org.uk – for information about membership benefits: www.ucu.org.uk/join

For more information

If you would like more information about Sheffield UCU please contact **Jane Rodger on 0114 222 8976**

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