

## Motion – De-Casualize Bristol: More To Be Done, May 2021

### Bristol UCU notes:

1. In October 2018 we submitted [the 20-point Bristol UCU Anti-Casualisation Claim \[link\]](#). Following submission of that claim, the University of Bristol and Bristol UCU issued a joint statement that committed the University ‘to reducing casualisation...avoiding the unnecessary employment of Academic and Professional Services staff on fixed-term contracts of employment...to providing secure terms and conditions of employment to University of Bristol staff, and to the fair and equitable treatment of part-time members of staff’.
2. Following this, a Precarious Contracts Working Group (PCWG) was instituted to advance matters raised by the Claim, with Human Resources (HR) and UCU membership. The PCWG was staffed and in operation until the autumn of 2020, and served as the main forum for negotiation, discussion and information. A Special Interest Group (SIG), consisting of UCU and University of Bristol (UoB) management representatives was also instituted to agree any points arising from the negotiations, to be scheduled on an ad hoc basis.
3. In terms of progress to the Claim, UoB undertook a review of the use and length of fixed-term contracts (FTC) in 2019, and revised the Fixed-Term Contract Policy and Manager’s Guidance shortly after.
4. The 2019 review saw a little under 150 staff move from FTC to open-ended (OE) contracts; the revised FTC Policy and Guidance now state that an FTC should be no longer than 13 months unless either a fellowship/research buy out or a specific training/apprenticeship role.
5. An FTC appointed for reason of [‘specialist expertise or to support a specific task or project role’ \[link\]](#) is now eligible for redundancy rights: access to the UoB Redundancy Pool (URP) and statutory redundancy pay after 2 years or more continuous service. Previously FTCs appointed on this ground were FTCs for some other substantive reason (SOSR) and at point of dismissal, the role holder was not eligible for access to URP or statutory redundancy pay.

6. In addition to the review and FTC Policy revision, UoB have agreed that where the teaching cover is over 3 months, the appointment should be on pathway/grade equivalent FTC role, not on an hourly-paid basis.
7. UoB did not agree to those points of the Claim that asked for SOSR FTC staff to be treated the same as non-SOSR FTC staff *with the same length of service*, and thus be eligible for the same redundancy rights mentioned above (URP and redundancy pay).
8. This failure to agree was because SOSR FTCs are deemed to be covering for a role holder and thus the role itself is not being made redundant. UoB also pointed out SOSR FTC staff with 2 or more years' continuous service are a small proportion of total FTC staff.
9. UoB has committed to investigating those 'cover' SOSR FTCs cases in which there is continuous service of over 2 years.
10. The University has offered some additional clarity to applicants for FTC SOSR job adverts and contracts as regards effectively waiving redundancy rights, and in recent history, has moved SOSR FTCs with no redundancy rights to non-SOSR FTC contracts in the case of Pathway 3 (PW3) teaching staff in Maths and University Vice-Chancellor Fellows.
11. The other notable University initiative is the fledgling proposal for a Graduate Teaching Scheme (GTS) in which new postgraduate researchers (PGRs) will be placed in a two-year progression-based scheme: Graduate Teacher – Level 1 (midpoint Grade G) and Level 2 (midpoint Grade H). The GTS would also see an institutional framework for recruitment, appointment and paid training, and GTS terms and conditions.
12. Since 2018 we have also seen:
  - the HPT campaign 'Calls for change on Casualisation' with its headline demand ['more time for teaching preparation and other teaching related activities'](#) [link].
  - the Temporary Staff Service (TSS) non-furloughing, then furloughing crisis of summer 2020 which exposed a pattern of long-term, repeated use of TSS appointments to cover non-temporary roles.
  - the Pathway 3 (PW3) and HPT crisis of last summer in which the UoB recruitment protocol 'freeze' meant a summer of dismissal and uncertainty for FTCs in which FTCs alone bore the 'risk' of no further work in the 2020/21 academic year.

- the formation of the Bristol Anti-Precarity Network (BAPN) in the wake of that COVID-19 summer.

**13.** As regards Pathway 2 (PW2) research staff, Bristol UCU is currently negotiating a change to UoB Honorary Status to make it more straightforward and easier for PW2 staff at the end of their contracts to have the ‘cushion’ of maintaining University access to their email accounts and to some University services for a period of time after the end date of their contract.

**14.** Outstanding points from our Claim which have not been resolved to our satisfaction include:

- a commitment to end the use of nine- and ten-month teaching contracts.
- payment of HPT unpaid work, improved HPT tariff, and ensure same HPT work, same HPT pay.
- a process to ensure that all HPTs contracts are received and signed before the commencement of the start of an HPT’s teaching delivery and to enforce the uniform, regular best practice payment of HPTs and part-time staff across the institution.

Points which require clarification and to check whether in operation include:

- the review of the operation of Policy for the Transfer of HPTs to Part-Time Teachers.
- Faculty bridging funds for PW2 staff between contracts.

### **Bristol UCU believes:**

- a) Progress on the 2018 Anti-Casualisation Claim has been marked but also limited. Despite some welcome institutional commitments and steps, much more can be done to make employment at UoB more secure, and to treat and reward HPT, TSS and part-time staff fairly and well.
- b) These include an institutional drive for ‘better’ open-ended contracts for current and future staff at the University, better terms and conditions for our hourly-paid and TSS staff, fair pay for the same work for hourly-paid staff, proper remuneration for work done, and parity in treatment for part-time staff.
- c) The effort to de-casualise the University is not simply a principled commitment from the top of the institution, but also a policed and applied set of policies that need to be consistently in force across the various Schools, Divisions and workplaces of UoB.

- d) The latest iteration of the GTS is not fit for purpose. It no longer contains the centralised recruitment and payment of HPT staff. This promised institutional uniformity and a means to ensure the principle that no HPT should go unpaid, or be without a contract of employment before the commencement of work. The current proposed GTS offers no concrete improvement to address HPTs being paid on inappropriate grades for their work. It does not include paid CREATE Level I training, and HPTs will still need to submit monthly fee claims.
- e) To deal with the 'hire and fire' cycle of our PW3 staff, a modest default, institution-wide open-ended (with fixed-term funding) contract for all PW3 staff would be a negligible financial risk to take by the University. It would allow staff, in the event of dismissal for reasons of a potential end of funding, to be eligible, for example, for reemployment if their role is needed and their work is continuing.
- f) For PW2 staff, a default Honorary Status Scheme is again a modest step to protect staff dependent on contingent funding in an uncertain funding landscape.
- g) TSS is currently used too frequently to employ Professional Service staff for roles requiring at the very least an FTC. We urgently need a transparent UoB review, shared with campus trade unions, of TSS, including proposals to prevent the use of TSS in ongoing roles/continuing work.

### **Bristol UCU resolves:**

- i. To insist on the reformation of the PCWG (and the SIG) as the main forum to further de-casualisation negotiations.
- ii. To insist on default open-ended contracts for PW3 teaching staff.
- iii. A systematic 'failsafe' institutional-wide uniform process to appoint, issue the contracts of and pay HPTs.
- iv. To work with the University on implementing a smoothed payment system for most HPT work which removes unnecessary monthly pay claims and avoids delays in payment.
- v. To insist on a GTS that focuses on the appropriate and uniform rate of payment for the teaching being performed, paid training, the timely issuing of contracts and terms of employment, and the proper payment for work done.
- vi. To request, as requested by original Claim, an urgent, data-led review of HPT payment, job descriptions and allocated time for preparation, assessment and related duties to

ensure that HPTs doing the same work are paid the same, have the same job description and are on the same grade.

- vii. To ensure the default PW2 Honorary Status Scheme described above, and to ask for an account of the use of bridging funds in the Faculties.
- viii. To insist on the TSS review plus proposals noted above.
- ix. To actively promote and build Bristol Anti-Precarity Network.
- x. To report back to the branch on University Senior Management's formal response to the above resolutions and discuss further action if required.

**Proposer: Jamie Melrose**

**Secunder: Kit Fotheringham/Jeff Pocock**