

INFORMATION FOR MEMBERS

Supporting research staff

Advice to UCU members who manage research staff

The leaflet: 'Research managers – employing fixed-term staff' is aimed at all HEI staff who manage research staff. UCU members who manage have a pivotal role in helping to challenge the excessive use of fixed-term contracts and the culture of short-termism that is prevalent in research in UK HEIs. You can download a copy from: www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=3571

We know that insecurity of employment and lack of career development opportunities are major issues of our research members. UCU has a firm policy of seeking a move away from the use of fixed-term contracts to the use of more secure contracts of employment for research staff. We believe it is possible to move away from the insecure nature of employment for research staff despite the current funding models of research in the UK.

As a UCU member we are calling on you to uphold UCU policy and to do everything that you can in helping us to achieve secure employment for our research members.

Practical things that you can do

- Distribute our leaflet 'Research managers – employing fixed-term staff' to your colleagues and encourage them to talk about the issues raised.
- Order and distribute copies of the

'Researchers' Survival Guide' from UCU and distribute to research members in your department (or ask your branch to order and distribute copies).

- Encourage your research staff to join UCU.
- Be pro-active in challenging the use of fixed-term contracts – ensure that staff are moved to permanent contracts wherever possible.
- Raise the use of fixed-term contracts in staff meetings etc and suggest that your department think about alternative ways to employ research staff.
- Ask other departments for examples of good practice or ask your branch what is happening elsewhere.
- Fully support staff if project funding comes to an end to maximise the opportunities they have for moving to another project/redeployment and encourage your colleagues to do the same.
- Be willing to accept redeployees onto new projects and encourage your colleagues to do so.

Remember – you have a vital role in helping to improve the security of employment of research staff and supporting UCU policy on anti-casualisation – please help your union to achieve this.