



Issue 3 - Autumn 2012

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## Working to fix Fixed Term Contracts

Fixed Term Contracts (FTC) are a priority for UCU because casualization of work leads to personal stress, inequality and inefficiency. UCU is running a national



campaign to **Stamp Out Casual Contracts** and locally your branch aims to:

- Move staff on FTC to permanent or open contracts.
- Push for fair working conditions and equal opportunities for FTC staff.
- Improve career development opportunities for FTC staff.
- Develop an effective redeployment process and to oppose selection for redundancy on the basis of being on a fixed-term and/or part-time contract.
- Increase UCU participation by FTC staff to encourage their voices to be heard.

### FTC working group

A local FTC working group has been established with the active support and participation of the branch president, Eric Silverman (who is himself on a FTC). This group aims to identify the key priorities of staff on FTCs and engage with management to develop policies that will improve the chances that early career researchers can have sustainable and productive careers. We would welcome your involvement, so please contact us at [ucu@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@soton.ac.uk)

### Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fixed Term Employees Regulations

On 1<sup>st</sup> October, we held an event at the Staff Club (with free cakes!) to raise awareness of FTC employee rights and to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Fixed-Term Employees Regulations. This legislation ensures that fixed term employees (maybe you!) are treated no less favourably than comparable permanent employees and aims to prevent any abuse arising from successive fixed-term contracts. If you would like more info, please get in touch with us.

**Curious Facts:** Your Vice Chancellor, Prof Don Nutbeam, and your UCU President, Dr Eric Silverman, are both on Fixed Term Contracts.

## UCU: the Union for Professors?

In the days of tenure, before performance measures like REF and student evaluations or external directives about the impact of research and teaching, a traditional view of Professors in the education Trade Unions might be summarised in the phrase *"I'm alright Jack, so pull the ladder up"*.

These days it's probably more accurate to say *"we're all in it together"* as the line between the professoriate and other staff has become blurred and the job of line managing staff has been distributed down the pay grades. Academics and professional service staff alike are increasingly judged against performance targets and output measures and the special freedoms and privileges once enjoyed by Profs – with the important exception of higher pay - have been eroded.

At many Universities UCU has full recognition to represent all staff at all pay levels. However since 2004 when the new pay agreement was settled here UCU has not been able to negotiate for level 7 staff. Nationally UCU has a voice on the Board of your pension (USS), negotiates on national pay scales and campaigns on a range of issues facing higher education - all of which affect all of our members. But increasingly we are finding that we are asked to represent individual level 7 UCU members in local workplace disputes, redundancy threats, and are having to fight on issues like DAP that affect level 7 staff as much as those at other levels.

As you may know, your local UCU branch has worked very hard to oppose the introduction of the replacement PPDR system called DAP and has won this battle for staff at levels 4-6. We also continue to oppose the use of performance related pay (PRP) as we believe it is damaging and divisive. The key issues for staff at Level 7 are the increased burden of performance management, threats to academic freedom, and the potential for grade drift. For example we believe that the new Associate Professor grade could be expected to deliver the same outputs as current Professors but for level 6 pay. So if you are level 7, why not join your professorial colleagues who are already in UCU and work with us on these key issues? Otherwise, you're on your own...



# A FUTURE THAT WORKS



Members of Southampton UCU will be joining the TUC march for a **future that works** ([afuturethatworks.org](http://afuturethatworks.org)) in London on Saturday 20 October 2012. Please contact [ucu@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@soton.ac.uk) if you want to book a place on one of the coaches and help send the message that AUSTERITY ISN'T WORKING!

The National Union of Students (NUS) will also be marching in London on 21 November to demonstrate against the bleak prospects facing today's students. UCU has voiced support for this protest and Sally Hunt, our general secretary said *"At a time when other countries are investing in education, our government is cutting college and university places and making it more expensive to study. Ministers need to harness further and higher education to provide young people with opportunities and a future."* You can follow the discussion about the march on Twitter #demo2012

## Early Career Researcher Development Event

On the 1st August our branch organised a career development workshop run by Stephen Tarling, which was well attended by thirty-five Early Career Researchers, as well as representatives of the University's Professional Development Unit. Topics covered at the event included: career planning, selecting appropriate training courses, time management and the REF. Participants also had the opportunity to attend individual coaching sessions. If there are any additional training courses which you would like UCU to run then please contact us at [ucu@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@soton.ac.uk)



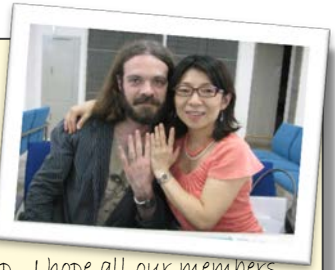
...and another saving from short contracts is that we never have to give anyone a set of engraved wine glasses for long service!

*Glittering Prizes*

## A few words from our President

Dr Eric Silverman is a researcher on a FTC

I won't be saying much this issue; I spent September travelling to Japan to marry my love Takako! As the new term starts you'll hear more from me, particularly those of you in the Fixed-Term Contract Working Group. I hope all our members had a great summer, and I'm looking forward to working with you during the coming academic year to make this University a better place to work.



## UCU Higher Education Sector Conference on the USS – 13 Sept 2012 Wasdale, Cumbria

Two members of Southampton UCU attended this conference and were able to support a successful motion that overturned resolution HE25 made at the main UCU Congress in June which reinstated the industrial action over changes to our USS pensions. Following some lively debate, a coalition of moderate UCU branches won the argument and after a vote, it was agreed overwhelmingly to suspend action and restart negotiations on USS with employers as soon as possible.

More details can be found on our blog at <http://southampton.web.ucu.org.uk/>

Southampton UCU's executive committee are pleased that negotiations can now be resumed about our pension scheme. We hope that this positive outcome might encourage you to take an active part in your local branch.

Image credit: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/pasujoba44/3222500194/>



**UCU General Meeting:** Wednesday 21 November at 1:00pm in 06/1083 (Nuffield Theatre Lecture Room C). The theme will be around the UCU campaign against workplace stress and bullying .

## Are you a member of your local UCU?

Your local UCU works hard to improve pay and conditions, and aims to make the University of Southampton a better place for all those who work and study here. However, a union is only as strong as its members, and we welcome your active involvement. Please contact Amanda Bitouche at [ucu@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ucu@soton.ac.uk) to join or find out how you can contribute.

The UCU Office is located at 47 University Road. Tel: 0238 059 2364.

Office hours: Monday to Thursday, 9:15 AM to 4:00 PM.