

#CoronaContract Motion for EGM

We, the members of Bristol UCU branch, pledge our solidarity with and practical support for casualised colleagues at risk of losing their jobs and incomes in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

Bristol UCU notes:

- Casualisation in UK universities is a long-standing scandal, but the present crisis has turned it into an emergency. Facing a projected loss of income in the marketised higher education system, and with a government bailout still nowhere in sight, universities are preparing to solve their short-term budget crises by laying off thousands of casualised workers and passing on their work to already overburdened permanent staff. These mass layoffs are not a hypothetical possibility: they are happening now, and soon it may be too late to stop them.
- These layoffs would have devastating effects on the livelihoods and career prospects of casualised staff, and major negative consequences for the future of teaching and research in UK universities. This prospect is all the more alarming given that women and people of colour are significantly over-represented among casualised workers compared with the workforce as a whole, which means that job losses would make our already unequal universities even more unequal and even less diverse places to work and study. The consequences would also be severe for our students, who would not only lose contact with valued teachers who have taught them in previous years, but see a decline in teaching quality as already overstretched teaching staff are expected to take on greater workloads.
- We refuse to stand idly by and watch this happen. While we want our employers to see this injustice and to act to avoid it, we are not holding our breath. While we call on the government to offer a bailout of UK universities, we will not hide behind this demand. We will not wait before taking practical action now to help our colleagues.

Bristol UCU requests all members pledge:

1. To resist by whatever practical means the reallocation of work away from casualised colleagues to permanent staff. We will do this on grounds of health and safety, equality impact, breach of collective bargaining/organisational change procedures, contractual terms and conditions, teaching quality and student complaints, following guidance laid out by activists in local UCU branches: <https://qmucu.org/four-questions-to-ask-your-line-manager/>
2. To lodge, if and where necessary, collective and/or individual grievances if we are asked to take on the work of casualised colleagues who are being laid off.
3. To insist that any budget cuts start from the top of the salary scale, so that reductions in senior management and professorial salaries above the threshold for UCU collective bargaining come before job losses.
4. To listen to the experiences and demands of our casualised colleagues, amplifying their voices and speaking up for them wherever possible, and to express solidarity with any local action taken by casualised workers in our workplace.
5. To vote to reject the current, unacceptable offer on casualisation arising from the ongoing Four Fights dispute in any member consultation.
6. To campaign for and vote for any industrial action proposed in a ballot by UCU nationally or locally to defend casualised workers and resist further casualisation.

7. To publicly support the demands of the Corona Contract campaign at all opportunities, including on social media, in email signatures, and in departmental and administrative forums, in professional associations, academic governing bodies and union branches.

Proposer: Kit Fotheringham

Secunder: Megan Johnson; Christopher Gray; Beke Zwingmann