

As you will be aware, UCU is calling all its members to strike on Thursday 31st October to stop the fourth year of real terms pay cuts. Importantly though the claim rejected by the employers this year was not just about pay but about ten general working conditions, including job security for researchers, and a victory on pay will strengthen our hand on these other vital issues.

Researchers do the vast bulk of the work which gives Bath its high REF scores and ultimately attracts students and their fees, but we are still treated like disposable tools to be thrown away at the end of every project, while management reaps the benefits of our publications. Not only does Bath routinely get rid of research staff at the end of their 'fixed term', but Bath also employs more research and teaching staff on zero hours contracts than any other university.

Many other organisations derive their income from projects but no-one apart from some universities routinely makes all their project staff redundant at the end of each project. Rather, companies like Goldman Sachs, McKinsey and QinetiQ use skilled financial management to balance their income streams from multiple projects with salary costs and use their "on the bench" staff to propose new projects and generate income.

The Ball vs Aberdeen 2008 tribunal held that the cost of employing researchers on a permanent basis, and the wish to avoid having to make them redundant because funding might run out, could not possibly be objective justifications for fixed term working. It found that the university is in no different a position to many other employers in this respect. Following this, some UCU researchers have recently managed to use EU law to convert their contracts to the same open-ended status as teaching and management staff. However the university has been slow to adjust to these changes and in some cases is still not taking permanent researchers seriously until threatened by tribunal.

UCU will be demonstrating with "Stop casualising researchers" placards next Thursday as well as having placards on pay. Most researchers are not going to become lecturers – they are going to be professional researchers for ever. So if you care about job security then please join us on Thursday. Being seen and winning concessions now will strengthen our position next time too -- maybe when one of our personal caseworkers is defending YOUR job.

Join us on Thursday fmorning at any of the main entrances to the University. Help us to make research at Bath into the professional career that it should be.

Please forward this message to your non-UCU colleagues, groups and PIs to explain why we are striking and why you will be away from work. We want every researcher and every manager here to understand this.