

September 2019

UCEA Briefing notes on ‘Employment contracts in HE’ infographics

This is the third year of UCEA producing infographics examining ‘Employment contracts in HE’. This issue includes some new individual infographics and all use information from the latest available HESA data (2017-18). They aim to present accessible information at sector level from these data in relation to the use of different contractual forms for both academic and professional services employees. In total there are seven individual infographics over two pages, each responding to key a question.

We provide here some explanatory information notes to limit text-heavy explanations within the infographics themselves. We first include a short summary of some other resources relating to HE employment contracts.

Other resources

With the support of its member HE institutions (HEIs) UCEA has for some years worked with the sector trade unions to develop a better understanding of the data and of the practices and arrangements within HEIs to support those in hourly-paid and variable employment. It was successful joint work by UCEA and the HE trade unions in 2016 that led to the addition of new fields in the HESA Staff Collection that record ‘zero hours’ and ‘hourly-paid’ employees for the first time, as well as identifying those employees who are apprentices. In the 2019-20 final offer in the [JNCHES pay negotiations](#) UCEA has proposed further work with the HE trade unions to consider what can be learned from the examination of these data.

As part of UCEA’s continued efforts to engage with the trade unions at sector level on this topic, a joint working group was formed in 2017 to look at the use of variable hour contracts and the ways that managers might best support colleagues engaged to teach on fixed term contracts. Although trade unions withdrew support from this, UCEA concluded the work and published the report, [‘Flexible and Fair’](#).

Notes on the ‘Employment contracts in HE’ infographics

Page 1

The first page of infographics on Employment contracts in HE focuses on proportions of different HE contracts and how the balance has been changing.

The first, **‘In what proportion are different contracts used in HE?’**, shows how open-ended contracts account for more than three-quarters of the employment contracts in HE – using full time equivalents (FTEs) to enable a meaningful apportionment. Using the newly available HESA data it also shows the very small proportion of FTE that is attributable to individuals on ‘atypical’¹ contracts. The HESA data for atypical engagements cover academic roles only.

The second infographic, **‘Is the balance between fixed and open-ended academic contracts changing?’** examines the trends in open-ended vs fixed-term academic contracts. The updated data are examined over five years, showing that the sector is reducing rather than increasing its

¹ www.hesa.ac.uk/collection/c18025/a/terms

reliance on fixed-term contracts for academic staff. This infographic examines the entire academic population, including those engaged exclusively in research.

In the third infographic we have refreshed details in the key question, '**How do the contracts in HE teaching differ between subjects?**' This infographic examines just those academic roles engaged in the delivery of teaching and shows that the majority (73.7%) of teaching delivery is done by staff with open-ended contracts, before looking at the figures for contracts in teaching delivery across three main subject groupings.

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The second page of infographics provides new information through key questions relating to open-ended and fixed-term employment contracts, examining different staff categories and funding sources.

The fourth infographic '**Why are fixed-term contracts used for teaching?**' illustrates the wide range of reasons that may determine an HEI's decision to offer a member of teaching staff a fixed-term contract.

The fifth infographic, '**How do contracts vary for different types of lecturers?**' provides a new insight into how the prevalence of part-time and full-time working and the use of hourly-paid and salaried staff between the largest group of academics – lecturers and professors – and the smaller group engaged to support teaching delivery we call 'associate lecturers'. The factors behind these figures will include that 'associate lecturers' are most likely to be industry professionals, postgraduate students or postdocs, often providing specialised teaching and/or help to cover temporary absences of substantive academic colleagues. Some of these individuals will have other careers or be directly engaged in research activities, limiting the time they can be engaged in delivering teaching activities.

The sixth infographic '**Which academic disciplines used zero hours contracts most?**' is new and shows the limited extent of 'zero hours contracts' in use in 2017-18, with continuing education (those delivering short courses and evening classes) being the area of delivery where their use was most common.

The seventh and final infographic is also new, responding to '**Does the source of funding influence the prevalence of fixed-term or open-ended contracts?**' This demonstrates that research posts and fellowships are the area where we see by far the higher percentages of fixed term contracts in use and that this broadly mirrors the extent of funding from external sources, which are in general limited term research grants. In the main academic population, we see just 8% of professors and lecturers on fixed-term contracts, again mirroring the extent of external funding sources.

Each of these infographics are available as individual jpeg attachments on the UCEA website and we encourage their use.

UCEA contracts contacts

If you have any questions or queries regarding this Briefing or the infographics please contact UCEA through enquiries@ucea.ac.uk