## UCU Paper: Changes affecting PGR Tutors

Both UCU and Cardiff University Student's Union are concerned regarding the recent decision to reduce/remove paid undergraduate teaching time for Postgraduate Researchers undertaking tutoring (PGR tutors) in SOCSI. Furthermore, the unions are concerned that SOCSI proposes to fill the teaching hours formally held by PGRs with Postdoctoral Teaching Associates (PDTAs), employed on variable-hours, fixed-term contracts. This role is remunerated at the same level as a  PGR tutor position (Grade 5), despite requiring a PhD to apply.

The union is primarily concerned that:

1. The decision was made without consultation with the unions.
2. Removal of a vital source of income will push many PGRs into a financially precarity.
3. Removing opportunities for delivering taught material will harm the future employment prospects of current PGRs - as evidenced by the advertisement for the new SOCSI teaching role preferring teaching experience for applicants.
4. The advertised role is part of a growing trend towards precarious, fixed-term contracts that are inadequately remunerated for a given level of qualification.

The union also notes that the university recently adopted policy of providing formal contracts for PGR tutors, which was mutually agreed and welcomed by the university and the union; reducing PGR teaching opportunities in less than a year since the adoption of this policy clearly shows the unwillingness of certain schools to engage with this policy in good faith. Furthermore, there are further departments allegedly planning to move PGR teaching hours to PDTAs on variable hours contracts, signalling that this practice is not isolated within SOCSI.

The Union requests:

1. Engagement with the unions in formal discussions on the removal of PGR teaching hours on the school level.
2. An outline of the decision-making of such a policy, including the financial modelling and the on-costs and any administrative costs associated with employing PGRs compared with PDTAs, the benefits for undergraduates, and how the widespread adoption of this policy impacts on the sustainability of the sector.
3. Confirmation of whether the stated move from PGR teaching hours to precariously employed PDTAs is a decision condoned by senior university management.
4. Ceasing the removal of further PGR teaching hours in favour of PDTAs, and reinstating teaching time to currently affected PGRs.