Stand up for postgrad tutors and demonstrators!

# The branch notes:

* In March 2024, The School of Social Sciences (SOCSI) wrote to its postgraduate research (PGR) and Professional Doctorate (PD) students to announce the removal of tutoring opportunities for these students from the 2024/25 academic year onward. Postgraduate tutors in SOCSI are to be replaced by Postdoctoral Teaching Associates who will be employed on variable-hour, fixed-term contracts (see Appendix 1).
* The newly created role of Postdoctoral Teaching Associate in SOCSI requires the candidate to have teaching experiences on top of their doctoral studies. This means that future PGRs and PDs from SOCSI will be ineligible for this role, unless they have gained substantial teaching experience elsewhere.
* Coincidentally or not, this slashing of teaching positions for postgraduate tutors came less than a year after employment contracts were implemented for all postgraduate tutors and demonstrators across Cardiff University, which was only achieved after years of campaigning from Cardiff UCU and Cardiff University Students’ Union (CUSU).

# The branch believes:

* Tutoring and demonstration opportunities are a vital lifeline for many PGRs and PDs, especially when stipends are incomparable to rising living costs.
* By losing the opportunity to gain teaching experiences, PGRs and PDs in SOCSI will also lose out on future employment opportunities, ineligible to apply for teaching roles at their own alma mater.
* The Postdoctoral Teaching Associate roles created to make up for the removal of Postgraduate tutors further promote academic precarity. Variable hour contracts create untenable uncertainty as there is no guaranteed income, nor certainty about availability or workload, preventing the post holders from taking on other employment.
* Without intervention, SOCSI getting away with this employment practice may inspire other schools within Cardiff University to follow suit, affecting PGRs and PDs across the institution.
* The reduction of casualised positions has been a precursor to wider redundancies in some other branches and our branch must prepare itself to fight redundancies of all kinds.

# The branch resolves:

* To work closely with CUSU and potentially other trade unions on campus to reverse SOCSI’s decision to remove teaching opportunities for PGRs and PDs. This may include (but is not limited to):
  + Writing formally to SOCSI’s senior leadership;
  + Organising negotiation meetings with SOCSI’s senior leadership;
  + Influencing and lobbying other stakeholders within the university, such as the Vice-chancellor;
  + Organising and mobilising PGRs and PDs across SOCSI, the College of Arts, Humanities, Social Sciences (AHSS), and more widely across Cardiff University to take actions against the announced job cuts,
  + Escalating the campaign with disruptive actions (with adequate support to those getting involved).
* To investigate and set up mechanisms for signposting PGRs and PDs in SOCSI who are affected by the job cuts to other employment opportunities, especially those with teaching responsibilities.
* To formally write to the leaderships of all schools across Cardiff University, asking for their commitment to protect teaching and demonstration opportunities available to postgraduates.
* To campaign against the creation of precarious postdoctoral teaching roles as part of the wider anti-precarity work done at the School of Social Sciences and Cardiff University.
* To ramp up outreach efforts to unionise PGRs and PDs across Cardiff University and build power.

**Proposer: Penny Dinh**

**Seconder: Rachael Walker**

# Appendix 1 - SOCSI Teaching Associate job description.

*This screenshot was taken from the job description’s page on 29th March 2024.*

A close-up of a text

Description automatically generated