**BACLS Guidance Sheet**

**Anti-casualisation: how tenured/senior staff can help combat casualisation**

*The following advice is not exhaustive and the Exec welcome any comments or suggestions on how to expand these ideas as productively as possible.*

**Role replacement:** If your institution is going to advertise for a replacement because you are on maternity leave or a grant, check that they are offering a full year rather than 9 months or less. Any person taking up the role needs the summer for research and also might have to relocate and rental contracts are typically at least 6 months (and no one should be forced to relocate for less than a year).

**Grant writing or reviewing:** Many grant bids include a role for a postdoc or research assistant (RA), typically someone with a PhD who has recently finished. Often these are fractional posts, e.g. 0.5 or 0.6, which are hard to live on and require the person to find additional work. They also perforce exclude international applicants. If you are writing a bid, involved in writing a team bid, or you review for the AHRC Peer Review College, the Leverhulme Trust, the Wellcome, or any other large grant body, scrutinise carefully the contract and plans for any planned RA(s). Is there a rationale from *the point of view of the RA* as to why a bid lists them as on a fractional contract? Does this support their career? Is it a liveable sum? Why not a full-time post for the RA? Is there full thought given to the research trajectory and career plans of the RA on the bid? Is time allowed for writing up within the span of the project for the RA and are there plans for their transition out of the project? Do the plans for the RA fall into the traps outlined by [‘The Precarious Postdoc’](http://www.workingknowledgeps.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/WKPS_PrecariousPostdoc_PDF_Interactive.pdf) by Sophie Collins and Catherine Oakley? When writing bids, try to avoid fractional contracts for postdocs and RAs unless you are certain that is what they want and they have other income streams. If reviewing, point out the problems with fractional posts and link to ‘The Precarious Postdoc’. When writing a bid which will result in role replacement (see above) make sure that advertising for the role and interviewing is factored into the costings so that this isn’t taken out of how long the contract is for.

**Hourly-paid lecturers (HPLs)/PhD students:**

* Be aware of what is happening in your department and the terms and conditions under which Hourly-paid Lecturers are working. Raise awareness among senior management of the University English [‘Good Practice’](http://www.universityenglish.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Good-Practice-Guide-Employing-Temporary-Staff-in-English.pdf) document and advocate for this to be adopted.
* Support HPLs as much as possible (share teaching notes, tips, books, etc).
* Make sure you know what they are paid and what they are paid for so that you are not asking them to work beyond what they should be doing (e.g. asking them to take on marking that comes in late even when their contract is over). Do not ever ask them to do unpaid work, such as a lecture which ‘would be good for their CV’ or extra unpaid marking. Challenge any staff who make such suggestions.
* Advise them to join UCU, which is prioritising anti-casualisation and may help them build solidarity with HPLs in the sector.
* Raise any problems on behalf of HPLs in Departmental Meetings and in more senior meetings and university committees, with Deans and Associate Deans, especially if they cannot attend (but also because you have more power than them to question the structures in place). Work proactively with HPLs to ensure they are not exploited by senior management.
* If you are an HoD or module convenor on a course with HPLs, ask them how best you can support them and facilitate them fulfilling their role. Many HPLs work at more than one institution so try to facilitate this through time-tabling that is sensitive to their needs (e.g. all on one day). Sometimes help can be in the ‘small’ things, such as lending your office when you are not in or sharing books (so they don’t have to purchase them), teaching notes, and other resources. Offer these and other kinds of support where you can. Offer to sit in on their teaching so that you could write a teaching reference for them. Argue for them to be paid properly for seminars, marking, lecture attendance, and providing office hours. Check that they are paid on time and if they are not then advocate on their behalf. Problems with payment can cause significant financial difficulties for HPLs.
* Be aware that HPLs who have completed their PhDs are most likely applying for academic jobs. Offer help and support where you can, which can sometimes just be a coffee and to listen.

**Postdoctoral researchers:** Be aware of the postdocs in your department and find out what the terms of their contract are in terms of teaching and responsibilities so that you do not ask them to undertake tasks outside of their remit. Most postdocs will be actively applying for jobs or soon to do so. Offer help, where you can, in reading a CV or covering letter or informal mentorship on where to publish and how to position oneself, especially if they are in your field. Involve them in research activities (but don’t burden them with extra tasks!) and invite them to events. Often postdocs have moved somewhere new and do not know many people, often they are not included on departmental email lists either, so try to include them in social occasions, giving them a chance to meet people. Help them secure permanent desk space in the department, if possible.

**Supporting discipline engagement:** Spread the good word about BACLS and other subject associations as a good way for ECRs and those applying for jobs to network. Advocate for your department to offer non-tenured and ECR staff the opportunity to attend ‘discipline-wide’ events such as Shared Futures and the University English OGM and AGM on a fully subsidised basis, both of which can help with networking across the sector and will allow their views to be represented. Include HLPs and ECRs in plans for panels etc at such events.

**Library Access:** does your university offer library access to PhD students after they have finished? Some do through alumni arrangements. If yours does not, try to advocate for this. Be aware that HPLs and PhD students can suddenly be cut off from research resources at the end of their contract/registration and try to support them as much as you can.

**Compiled by Jennifer Cooke, June 2019, in conjunction with members of the BACLS Exec and with feedback from Loughborough University PGRs.**