

# PRECARITY IN THE ACADEMY REASONS TO RESIST

## UNFAIR FOR WORKERS

**INADEQUATE PAY:** More and more research and teaching staff are being forced to bounce between short-term contracts for meagre salaries and inadequate hourly pay often multiple times per year. These can vary drastically between colleges and even between departments in the same institution and generally don't reflect the actual work being undertaken.

**VULNERABLE TO EXPLOITATION:** Existing data neglects to consider and measure the labour carried out by graduate students and casually-contracted employees as work, rendering them invisible. As a result, precarious staff are often unrepresented within their departments, and there is a lack of effective representation for graduate teachers and casual workers as a growing class of workers in the academy.

**LIVING IN POVERTY:** Research suggests almost half of Ireland's casually-employed staff earn less than €10,000 per year, and are living below the poverty threshold despite taking on significant workloads.

**UNCERTAIN FUTURES:** The pathways to secure employment are becoming less accessible, and precarity has become a permanent condition for many.

## UNFAIR FOR STUDENTS

**DO YOU KNOW WHO'S TEACHING YOU?** Casually-employed staff now teach up to 40% of all module contact hours, including core modules. And while student numbers in Irish universities surged by 31,000 between 2008 and 2013, staff numbers declined by 4,500 over the same period.

**DIMINISHING PROSPECTS:** State funding for Irish universities has been cut by about half since the crash, and the Oireachtas Committee on Education is currently in process of determining whether to introduce a loan scheme that would leave many students with long term debts. Meanwhile students are encouraged to enrol in postgraduate programmes only to later find few opportunities for academic progression in their fields.

## BAD FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

Casualisation undermines collegiality and solidarity amongst grades of academic staff, entrenches socio-economic divides, makes academic autonomy the preserve of the few and erodes the possibilities for education to play a greater role for the betterment of society.

## OUR NEXT MEETING

Sunday 21 May, 2017  
7pm upstairs in Costigan's Pub,  
Washington Street

If you or anyone you know is a student employee or casually contracted lecturer, researcher, or administrator in third level education in Ireland, please come to **United in Precarity**'s next meeting to share your experiences, and discuss strategies for organising against the casualisation of labour across Ireland's colleges, universities, and technical institutes.

## WHY SELF-ORGANISE?

It is estimated that 80% of researchers in Ireland are on temporary contracts, and graduate students and precarious staff are now teaching a large proportion of third level modules. But existing students' and teachers' unions have not been able to keep up with the rapid casualisation of labour in our third level institutions. To ensure we are adequately represented, we need to organise ourselves. Together, we can turn the tide against insecure and exploitative work in higher education.

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