

## **Employing Temporary Teaching Staff in History Code of Good Practice**

### **Introduction**

This short document arose from discussions between History Lab Plus, the network for Postdocs based at the Institute of Historical Research in London, and the Royal Historical Society. It is based on the results of a survey of over 200 postdocs and research students carried out by History Lab Plus in late 2012, asking about their experiences as early career historians. The results indicated that for those on short-term teaching contracts a few simple things, such as being included on email lists and invited to seminars, could make a big difference to their experience of a department. We hope that this Code of Good Practice will serve as a helpful reminder of policies that can help temporary teachers, many of whom will become permanent academics and all of whom are crucial to the vitality and high standards of the profession. It has been endorsed by the RHS, History Lab Plus and History UK. The Code will be regularly reviewed and we welcome any comments and/or suggested changes.

**Please send these to Jane Gerson, Research & Communications Officer at [j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org](mailto:j.gerson@royalhistsoc.org).**

### **1. Integration into the Department (or equivalent unit)**

To help temporary staff feel involved:

- a. Introduce them to academic and administrative colleagues, especially those in their own area of research interest, and to each other.
- b. Include them on staff email lists and invite them to staff events, both academic and social.
- c. Give them representation on teaching committees (or other appropriate body).
- d. Give them a guide to all administrative procedures, a list of key contacts and of important dates.
- e. Make sure they know who to contact about any difficulties, especially: 1) receipt of their pay; 2) the conduct of teaching; 3) rooms/equipment; 4) the content of their teaching; 5) students being difficult; 6) student problems. This last point is particularly important: ECRs are often the sympathetic recipients of student problems, but it is vital, for both their well-being and that of the students, that they do not carry the burden of student difficulties alone, but know how to get support.
- f. Allocate a mentor, ideally someone in their own research area.

## 2. Staff Development

- a. Temporary staff should be included in any peer-review or personal development processes within the department, including peer-review of teaching.
- b. Temporary teaching staff should be offered training, and paid for the time required. Ideally, they should be encouraged and supported in working towards becoming Associate Fellows of the Higher Education Academy (scheme details at: <http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/associate-fellow/applying-to-become-an-associate-fellow>).
- c. Advice should be available regarding research and career plans, probably from the people assigned the mentoring role.
- d. Institutional support, including mentoring, library access and affiliated status, should be available to recent doctoral candidates in the year following completion of their studies. The same facilities should be offered during vacations, including the summer, to people on 10-month or term-time only contracts.
- e. Wherever possible, institutional support should be available to temporary staff preparing funding applications.

## 3. Conditions of Employment

- a. Temporary staff should be offered formal contracts, with standard employment rights, including those on hourly employment.
- b. Temporary staff should be put on the payroll, so that they are paid on time, regularly, without prompting and at the level promised.
- c. Fractional teaching contracts should include preparation and marking time, especially for course convenors.
- d. Fractional teaching contracts should allow for any administrative roles allocated to the member of staff, including time spent attending any required meetings.
- e. Fractional teaching contracts should include payment for time spent attending staff development/training sessions.
- f. When hours required for preparation, marking and administrative work are taken into account, it should be ensured that temporary staff are paid at least the Living Wage.
- g. In ordinary circumstances, temporary teaching staff should be offered contracts and informed about the courses they are teaching at least a month before the teaching term begins. Wherever possible, this should be done earlier.
- h. Extremely short-term contracts, for example when REF deadlines are imminent, are not acceptable.