

## Part-time troubles

September 29, 2016



By [Contributor \(/content/contributor\)](/content/contributor)

I wonder if any other part-time lecturers have had my recent experience. Last May, I was delighted when a college of the University of London accepted my proposal to teach a third-year undergraduate module, and the first lecture was timetabled for 26 September. But I was never offered a contract or told what the pay would be, and eventually I had no option but to withdraw.

I expected to spend much of the summer preparing and was surprised that the college did not send me a contract immediately, as any other employer would have done. In June, one was promised for “later in the summer” – probably July, I thought. Then it was to be early September; by 8 September it was “next week”, and on the 16th that turned into “within the next couple of weeks”.

I replied that that was too late, and four days later I formally withdrew. If I had been offered a contract that afternoon, it would already have been far, far too late.

I worked as an emergency lecturer in the department last year and was much appreciated all round. “The students love you,” several people told me. However, I was disappointed with the pay, and this time I needed to know how much it would be before committing myself.

In the commercial world, working without paid holidays or a pension or the security of knowing that in three months’ time you will have an income translates into more pay pro rata. At universities, it seems to be the opposite.

I have informed some of the students why the module is not running, since I can be sure the department will not tell them the real reason. I sincerely hope they will make a formal

complaint.

**Tom Lines**

**Brighton**

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