

Discussions and events at recent HOTCUS conferences have highlighted the profound issue of casualisation and precarious work in British academia. This is an industry-wide problem, but the popularity of American history in our universities may render those who research and teach the subject particularly vulnerable to potentially exploitative contractual terms and working conditions. American history modules are often extremely popular, in high-demand amongst students. They can therefore offer considerable opportunities for those at the beginning of their career to gain valuable teaching experience. However, the recent [American History in the UK survey](#) – conducted by HOTCUS in conjunction with British American Nineteenth Century Historians (BrANCH) and the British Group of Early American Historians (BGEAH) – suggested that very few of these appointments are converted into permanent posts, with some HOTCUS members left in precarious positions for a number of years, often across multiple institutions and with no opportunities to develop the research and publication outputs that remain crucial to their career and personal development. More generally, the findings of the Royal Historical Society's *Race, Ethnicity & Equality in UK History: A Report and Resource for Change* have indicated that poorly paid, precarious work only entrenches existing problems of race, gender, and class-based inequalities in British education. Such inequalities are also discernible in our own field, according to the American History in the UK survey.

While major, sector-wide industrial action over pensions in 2018 highlighted the visibility of those on short-term contracts, subsequent ballots issued by the University and College Union (UCU) on casualisation and the gender pay gap have proven less successful in mobilizing union members. Therefore, postgraduates and early career researchers (ECRs) continue to bear a double burden: they are the primary advocates of change within an exploitative system, whilst also often being exploited themselves.

With the majority of our membership either postgraduate or early career, we elected our first ECR secretary in 2018 to better represent these members. Since then, we have been working with members to develop an official HOTCUS stance on casualisation, as well as practical efforts to tackle inequality and highlight best practice. As part of these efforts, we have developed a Jobs Excellence Framework (JEF) that is designed to assess whether

advertised roles in twentieth-century American history meet the standards that we believe encourage positive and equal participation in this important field. All jobs advertised through HOTCUS channels will now include a link to the following key, encouraging members to consider, for example, whether the job is temporary or permanent, full or part time, and involves administrative roles. We have indicated what sort of conditions might constitute a 'Gold' standard employment opportunity, then a 'Silver,' then a 'Bronze'. The key also provides guidance on questions that candidates might wish to ask of potential employers to clarify terms and conditions and improve contracts where possible. We will offer greater visibility to job postings that include pensions and benefits, access to a mentor, and funding for research activities.

We acknowledge that fixed-term and part-time contracts are a necessary part of the university sector, but believe that too often they are implemented in a way that is detrimental to both the employee and the students they are teaching. This key, therefore, is intended to clarify issues such as pay visibility and job expectations for those seeking work in the sector, and to provide a benchmark of best practice to senior colleagues in the field with influence over recruitment, pay and conditions.

Jobs Excellence Framework

<u>Element of Job Role</u>	<u>Designation key</u>	<u>Meaning/Definition</u>	<u>Classification categories</u> <u>(Key - Required for (R)/maximum achievable (M))</u>			
			<u>Unclassifiable</u>	<u>Bronze</u>	<u>Silver</u>	<u>Gold</u>
Hours	FT	Full time hours, salaried		R	R	R
	PT	Part time hours, salaried (30hrs per week or less)		R	R	R
	GH	Guaranteed hours: set hourly rate for a specified number of hours across the semester/year		M		
	Z	Zero hours: hourly paid work with no guaranteed weekly/annual amount	M			
	PW	Piecework: No hourly designation, pay based on delivery of defined/discrete piece of work (such as single module/research project).	M			
Length of Contract	O	Open ended/permanent contract				R
	T+	Temporary/fixed term contract for more than 24 months				R
	T	Temporary/fixed term contract of 12-24 months			R	R
	T-	Temporary/fixed term contract of less than 12 months		M		
Employee Benefits	A	Agency work. Job contract will not be with the university, but an outside agency. Candidate will not be entitled to benefits given to university employees	M			

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		and may be exempt from participating in industrial action.				
	TS	Some contribution will be made towards travel and subsistence for candidates not currently resident in the relevant location(s) and subject to a short-term or non-permanent position.		R		
	R	Money to aid candidates with permanent relocation is available				R
	Off	Designated office space provided		R	R	R
	CC	Childcare provisions available				R
	M/P	Eligible for maternity/paternity leave		R	R	R
	Pen	Enrolled in local pension scheme		R	R	R
Administrative Roles	Ad+	Administrative roles clearly highlighted and appropriate for the academic position advertised.				R
	Pas+	Pastoral care role specified – personal tutoring, academic advisor, etc. Number of students specified.				R
	Pas-	Pastoral care role unspecified. Seek clarification regarding responsibilities and student numbers.		M		
	Ad?	Administrative role unclear/vague – seek clarification.			M	
	Ad-	Administrative roles inappropriate/significant considering nature of post		M		
Workload	W+	Workload clearly defined and appropriate – including research.			R	R

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	W?	Workload unclear. Seek clarification of actual tasks/classes expected to teach etc.			M	
	W-	Workload inappropriate given nature of post/remuneration		M		
Career Development	REF	Research funding/support provided				R
	HEA	Support, including work-load buy out, to gain teaching qualification provided			R	R
	&	Mentoring available		R	R	R
Salary	£	Full salary disclosed			R	R
	£?	Salary unclear or undisclosed. We would advise candidates to seek further clarity regarding their take-home pay.		M		

Gold: To achieve gold standard, the job opportunity must meet all the required criteria within employee benefits, career development, administrative roles, workload, and salary as well as one of the required criteria within hours and length of contract.

Silver: This will be awarded to any otherwise **Gold** opportunity that fails to meet one or more of the criteria outlined above. It will also be awarded to any opportunity that meets all the required criteria within employee benefits, career development, administrative roles, workload, and salary as well as one of the required criteria within hours and length of contract.

Bronze: This will be awarded to any otherwise **Silver** opportunity that fails to meet one or more of the criteria outlined above. It will also be awarded to any opportunity that meets all the required criteria within employee benefits, career development, administrative roles, workload, and salary as well as one of the required criteria within hours and length of contract.

Unclassifiable: This job does not meet minimum standards that HOTCUS believe should be offered to all colleagues. They are circulated for information only.