



**Toolkit for
Vital Visibility**



Being a worker in a university without a permanent contract is very common: 46% of teaching-only staff are employed on fixed-term contracts and 40% on hourly paid contracts*.

Over a prolonged period, precarious employment can take its toll on finances, confidence, ability to plan for the future and in turn, mental health.

The Toolkit for Vital Visibility has been made with the hope that precarious staff members of the university can come together to:

1. Form community, providing one another with practical, emotional and moral support.
2. Create energy for themselves and as a group both in and out of work. This energy may be needed to fight for fairer working conditions or to leave this job and find alternative employment.
3. Create visibility of the huge issue of precarity in higher education. Let management see you come together and raise the issue daily. Let students see that your job does not come with the security that they likely expect it does.

The toolkit suggests a series of daily 10-minute group exercises intended to take place during lunch breaks.

This has been devised by an hourly-paid lecturer, recognising the need for change and therefore proposing this on-the-ground intervention. It is hoped it will be a support in individual and communal struggles.

* Stand Together and Oppose Cuts. UCU, 2020.

To begin

Get the word out

There needs to be a quick, fuss-free way to promote the gatherings. There is a poster/flyer that you can rip out or photocopy on the following page (p.6 - 7) to promote the activity. If you are reading this from the pdf, the poster/flyer can be printed A4. There is space to promote the location and time of the meetings - using a sharpie to fill this out by hand is perfect.

Choose a time

Planning the timing of the sessions to be in a lunch break is important so as to make them as accessible as possible to all staff. Find the most common lunch time and go with that. Give people 10 minutes to get from their classes/desks to the meet-point.

Choose a meet point

This meet-point is where all in-person activities will be or start. It is important to keep it consistent so participants always know where to go and so your presence will be visible.

The most important thing is that a meet-point be convenient to you and your colleagues. Depending on how geographically large your university is, consider department or school-specific meet-points to make it more possible for staff to join, rather than be restricted by their location.

Locate the offices of the Vice Chancellor

This will be important to be able to make yourselves visible. The meet-point location may be chosen to be nearby, though this might not be possible depending on where you are situated on campus. It is more important that the meet-point be easily accessible to participants.

Toolkit available
to download here:



Exercises for the
vital visibility of
non-permanent
members of staff

Day/s: _____

Time: _____

Meet-point: _____

Everyone welcome
(including students and
permanent staff)

Pull out to use as a poster!

Exercises

Duration

The exercises are designed to last approximately 10 minutes. This is an important factor in making the activities short enough to be a regular part of the day, whilst not encroaching on time before or after work, and still giving enough time to eat lunch and have a break.

Frequency

It is recommended that the meets/exercises be daily. The majority of non-permanent teaching staff work part-time so this firstly gives the opportunity for all to be involved. It also builds momentum and reassurance that the activity is constant.

Leadership

Aside from an initial instigator or a group of instigators, there is no need for one person to take the lead. There are audio recordings introducing all of the exercises available on the next page. These can be played on a phone at the beginning of each session to guide the group and alleviate pressure from one person taking the lead.

Participation

1. Though the activities are designed to build energy and support within the precarious HE teaching community, other staff members and students are welcome to join in solidarity.
2. Participants can join whenever they want or can. There is no obligation to go every day or every week if it is not possible or desirable to the individual. When a new or returning participant joins, welcome them warmly.
3. It is important to recognise that the ability to participate is different for everyone due to their circumstances. For some, participation will pose more of a risk than for others, fearing judgement or repercussions from management, for example.

Invite everyone but pass no judgement if an individual does not want or feel able to join. The more people involved will allow those with concerns to either be supported from afar or become part of a larger group if they so wish in future.

Suggested weekly timetable*

All available as audio [here](#) or scan >



MONDAY

Group run (you don't actually have to run)

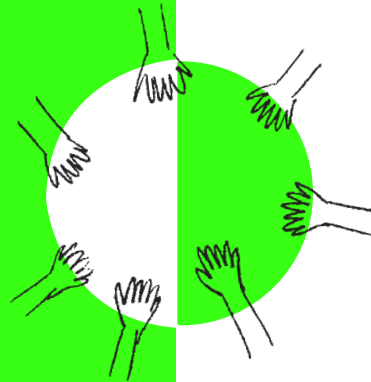
Run a short route (10 minutes). Consider being visible, particularly to senior management - can the route go by their office doors/windows?

The aim is not the running - it is just about moving faster than you normally would and in a group. It is advised that you go at the pace of the slowest person. You need to be a group at all times, both for general morale and for visibility.

TUESDAY

Emotional letter writing

Spend 10 minutes writing your emotions down. They can be related to work, or not. Your wider life is also welcome. You can choose to sign the letter or keep it anonymous. Should you wish, you can post the letters under the door of the Vice Chancellor or take a photo and email it them.



*mix it up as per the group/s wishes

WEDNESDAY

Shaking the Bones

Stand with legs hip width apart, start bouncing on the feet/bending the knees. Keep going until the movement becomes more vigorous. Let it move into your arms and head.

Start with 5 minutes and build up to 10 minutes over a few weeks.

Set a timer to know when to stop and stand very still for a minute when the timer goes off.

THURSDAY

What are your questions?

What do you need to ask someone? If what your supervisor is asking of you is appropriate? What to make for dinner?

Get into groups of 2 or 3 to ask and answer (or discuss if there isn't a clear answer). Set a timer so everyone gets a chance to ask their question.

FRIDAY

Friday check-in

In pairs, check in with each other about your week. It can be work-related or not. Set a 5-minute timer so you have equal time to share.

The future

Though there does not have to be an end-point, it is recommended to continue the exercises for an academic year to build connections and have repetition build energy.

After each term, have a check-in with attendees. This can be an opportunity for any exercises deemed to not be working or enjoyable can be switched out for others. Make this a democratic process where the group come up with alternative ideas in line with the aim of creating energy and visibility, and vote.

Additionally, this can be a time to consider whether further measures are necessary, such as a meeting with the Vice Chancellor or your Dean to discuss the reasons for the activity they will hopefully have seen occurring around the university.