

CARDIFF



CAERDYDD

Our Mission

Working together to foster fairness, equality and dignity in support of the advancement of knowledge and the education of students.

Use of Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) motion passed at Cardiff UCU General Meeting on 16th September 2020

Cardiff University UCU notes that:

- Postgraduate students are being called upon to deliver face-to-face teaching and demonstrations for the autumn semester across a range of schools and colleges.
- We are yet to receive adequate assurances from Cardiff University that the campus is safe for ANY staff to return to deliver face-to-face teaching.
- At a national level UCU has called for all teaching to be delivered online as default, in recognition of the risks to students, staff and wider publics in university towns and cities.
- Cardiff University continues to ignore our calls for graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) to be recognised as employees of the university. This means that GTAs are not entitled to sick leave or compassionate leave. Nor do they have access to the staff intranet and so are cut off from some important forms of university communication, impeding their ability to work.
- We find it wholly unacceptable that the lowest paid and most precarious members of staff are being called upon to conduct face to face teaching at a time when risks to health and safety are higher than ever before. If postgraduate students fall ill as a result of returning to campus to fulfil their teaching commitments they will not only lose income but will also lose valuable study time, potentially delaying the completion of their doctoral theses.
- The university's reliance on GTAs to deliver face to face teaching also excludes those with underlying health conditions from being able to develop their teaching experience – which is an equality and diversity issue. This impacts not only those with health conditions, but students from BAME backgrounds who are disproportionately affected by COVID, and women, who are less likely to receive full sick pay than men across workplaces.
- We call on Cardiff University to reconsider its position and urgently grant employment status of GTAs so that they can receive the proper protections associated with their roles.