

## **Motion to support graduate students in their role as workers in collaboration with Cambridge UCU**

### **This council believes:**

1. Graduate students regularly occupy a dual role in the collegiate University, acting both as **students** who are undergoing training and mentoring in their education, and also as **workers** employed as: teachers, teaching assistants, administrative and technical assistants and researchers.
2. This dual role has meant that graduate student workers have been subject to exploitative and bad employment practises such as low hourly pay or unpaid work, lack of appraisal and professional development, formal contracts and unequal access to work through networks of patronage, raising serious issues of systemic inequality.
3. Due to the large number of graduate students, the competitive atmosphere, and the high turnover of employed students, this problem is largely unacknowledged and unchallenged.
4. This has allowed low-quality employment for teaching and research work to be embedded throughout the university, which is detrimental to the graduate students employed, but also to other staff and students.
5. The University should not rely on exploitative or unpaid work to maintain its teaching and research.
6. Graduate work is important for graduates to begin their careers, to gain experience and to earn money to support themselves. In their role as workers, they should have the right to a recognised trade union, the Cambridge UCU, which works to protect their rights, alongside the GU which supports graduate students more generally.

### **This council condemns:**

- Unequal access to work for graduate students based on informal social networks
- Uncontracted work
- Unpaid work
- Low-paid work
- Work without appropriate professional development and appraisal
- Treatment of graduate work as training, and graduate pay as irrelevant

### **This council resolves to:**

1. Work with the Cambridge UCU to uncover exploitative employment of graduate students and challenge the university to end bad practices where they exist.
2. Promote the representation of Cambridge UCU as a voice for students as workers and work with them to highlight these concerns at University committees (University Council or any syndicates) and college committees at which the GU is present.
3. Work with the Cambridge UCU to improve graduate employment through promoting the representation of UCU unionisation in departments and colleges, for example by promoting the creation of a UCU representative on each MCR committee to help grads negotiate their role as workers during their studies.

Motion Submitted by: Rox Middleton, Cambridge UCU graduate representative, on behalf of UCU graduate members