



THE UNIVERSITY *of* EDINBURGH

GUIDANCE – TYPES OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

Summary

This guidance document details the most common types of contracts offered to employees or workers at the University of Edinburgh. The contract types are detailed in the table in Appendix 1, this is not an exhaustive list. The table details the type of contract, a brief description of the type of contract, key points associated to the contract type and where helpful provides examples of jobs. In principle, the type of contract offered to an individual should best reflect the regularity of the work being carried out.

If you are unsure of what type of contract you are employed on, guidance on how to find the relevant detail in the People and Money system can be found [here](#).

Conditions of Service apply to the types of contracts detailed in the table below and a full list of Conditions of Service can be found [here](#). Most Conditions of Service are linked to the Grade of your role, rather than what contract type you are employed on. There is one exception to this and the exception is if you are engaged on a casual basis. There are specific Conditions of Service for casual workers.

If you are unsure what grade you are employed on, guidance on how to find the relevant detail in the People and Money system can be found [here](#).

History & Review

This guidance was reviewed in 2025. It is subject to ongoing review and is expected to be revised or expanded in response to queries and feedback or legislative change.

Appendix 1

Type of Contract	Description	Points to Note	Examples
Open-ended Contract either full time or part time.	There is an indefinite requirement and funding for the post to be carried out as far as can be reasonably predicted.	The term 'open-ended contract' is often referred to as 'permanent contract' by other employers but the meaning is the same. Salary is paid in 12 equal monthly instalments and annual leave must be taken.	Any role where there is an indefinite requirement and funding for the post to be carried out as far as can be reasonably predicted
Open-Ended with Contract Review Date either full time or part time	This contract is underpinned by restricted funding or the work is anticipated to end by a specific date, referred to as the contract review date. The funding and requirement for employment may continue beyond the review date but this cannot be confirmed from the outset.	The University uses the reasons that can be seen at Reasons for the use of Contracts with a Fixed Term End Date or Contract Review Date and to justify the reason for the contract review date. Salary is paid in 12 equal monthly instalments and annual leave must be taken.	Any role where the funding or work and requirement for employment may continue beyond the review date but this cannot be confirmed from the outset. A relevant example would be a Research Fellow where the post is funded by a grant and further grant money needs to be secured for the post to continue. The contract review date will be tied to the grant funding dates that are known.
Fixed Term – either full time or part time	There is a finite requirement and/or funding for the post or there is another justifiable business reason for the fixed term basis.	An employee on a fixed term contract with continuous service of 4 years or more, with at least one contract extension or on transfer to a new post, will normally transfer to an open-ended contract or open-ended contract with	Relevant examples include, but are not limited to the following: • a post to support a specific conference or

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		contract review date unless a justifiable business reason for the continuation of fixed term status is provided. The University uses the reasons that can be seen at Reasons for the use of Contracts with a Fixed Term End Date or Contract Review Date to justify the reason for the fixed term contract Salary is paid in equal monthly instalments and annual leave must be taken	project e.g. Conference Assistant a post that is funded by an external organisation for a specific purpose e.g. Research Assistant
Annualised Hours	Offered where there are known fluctuations in demand for work during the calendar/academic year or other period of time. Annualised hours contracts may be offered on an open-ended, open-ended with review date or fixed term basis.	This type of contract is based on an average number of weekly hours over the calendar year of up to 35 hours per week. Typically, contracts are based on a total number of hours each year and/or a total number of weeks of work each year. There may be weeks where no work is required. Working hours / weeks are notified as far as possible in advance. Annualised hours contracts are normally calculated for a full year at a time. The annual leave entitlement will be available in People and Money and annual leave must be requested and recorded in People and Money.	A relevant example would be a Teaching Fellow who is only required to teach 10 months of the year e.g., September to June

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		Contractual benefits/ entitlements, including annual leave, are pro-rated over the full year based on hours and weeks worked. Salary is paid in 12 monthly instalments.	
Fractional Contracts	Typically, the term 'fractional' is used to denote contractual arrangements for a 'fraction' of the year, e.g. semester only working. Pay is spread evenly over a full year, or the length of the fixed term contract, and is inclusive of annual leave entitlement. Fractional contracts may be offered on an open-ended, open-ended with review date or fixed term basis	The contract will reflect the total hours to be worked per annum and the 'fraction' of the year in which they are to be worked, as well as the total hours to be paid, inclusive of annual leave entitlement. Normally the total number of hours and schedule of work required for the period of employment will be calculated in advance. Contractual benefits/ entitlements, including annual leave, are pro-rated over the full year based on hours and weeks worked. Salary is paid in 12 monthly instalments. In line with the University and UCU collective agreement dated 26 March 2019, teaching and research focussed staff on a GH contract will be offered a fractional contract if they have worked more than 0.2FTE on average, in the same role, over the preceding 2 years and it is reasonable to assume that work will continue to be available at that level in the future.	A relevant example would be a Tutor who carries out semester work only.

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Guaranteed Minimum Hours Contract (GH) (Please see Appendix 2 for more information regarding GH contracts that are student employment posts)	A specific minimum number of hours of work are guaranteed. GH contracts are typically appropriate where work demand fluctuates during the period of employment and where there are weeks or months where no work is offered. Hours can be guaranteed in the following ways. - Hours can be guaranteed over a calendar or academic year and will vary from one guaranteed period to the next. This way of offering hours should be used where the total hours to be offered cannot be reasonably predicted. The arrangement should be reviewed annually and at the end of the GH period a further amount of guaranteed minimum hours is specified for the next guaranteed hours period. - The <i>same</i> minimum number of hours of work can be guaranteed in each Guaranteed Hours Period. For example, the employee will be guaranteed to	Hours worked must be submitted via a Timecard in the Time and Absence app in People and Money. All time claimed is paid a month in arrears, for example a timecard submitted for dates worked in August will be paid in September pay" The hourly rate of pay is enhanced in respect of the contractual annual leave entitlement As above, a teaching and research focussed member of staff on a GH contract will be offered a fractional contract if they have worked more than 0.2FTE on average, in the same role, over the preceding 2 years and it is reasonable to assume that work will continue to be available at that level in the future. For fuller guidance please see Management of Guaranteed Minimum Hours Contracts.	A relevant example of a GH contract where hours are guaranteed over a calendar or academic year would be a Tutor. A relevant example of a GH contract where the same hours are guaranteed for each guaranteed hours period would be a Cleaner.

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	be offered 100 hours of work in <u>each</u> academic year. This way of offering hours should be used where the <i>total</i> minimum hours worked in each guaranteed hours period is reasonably predictable. The arrangement can be varied with reasonable notice. Guaranteed Hours contracts may be offered on an open-ended, open-ended with review date or fixed term basis.		
Casual Engagement	Where there is no obligation to offer the individual work, nor an obligation for the individual to accept the work then the individual can be engaged to carry out the work on a casual basis. Casual workers are <u>not employees</u> therefore benefits and policies applicable to employees do not apply.	Subject to certain exceptions, these parameters should be met if a manager wishes to offer engagement on a casual contract: i) the work is irregular/unpredictable; ii) the engagement of the individual is for a period of less than 8 consecutive weeks; iii) the work is subject to management direction on a day-to-day basis with the individual having little or no discretion over the work to be done/how the work is done; iv) there is no expectation that the individual will necessarily be available to work when the need arises; and	Examples of the types of activities that may constitute casual working arrangements could include: engagement for 2 to 3 days to provide assistance with an office move; assistance at Open Days, Recruitment Events, Post Application Visit Days etc.; one-off demonstrating sessions in the lab; examination scribing.

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		v) the individual can refuse work offered to them, even if they have previously agreed to do it. Payment for hours worked is usually made in the following month and a payment is made in respect of annual leave. For fuller details please refer to Use of the Casual Payroll	

At the University, “student employment posts” are available in order to provide employment linked to a specific programme of study. Typically, these contracts will be offered on a guaranteed hours basis but may also be offered on a part-time basis where the number of hours per week are specified. The contract will always be fixed term and should not extend beyond the expected date the student will no longer be a matriculated student of the University of Edinburgh.

Relevant examples of student employment posts, include, but are not limited to the following:

- Tutors and Demonstrators
- Pharmacy Counter Assistants
- Research Assistant
- Student Ambassadors
- Student Callers
- Student Helpers

Where there are no suitable UoE students to fill a post designated as a ‘student employment post’ a contract may be issued to a suitable individual who is not a UoE student. Under these circumstances, the contract of employment should be for a maximum of one year but can be renewed annually for up to one further year at a time, subject to there being no suitable University of Edinburgh student available to fill the post.

For fuller guidance please see Appendix A - *Student Experience Guidance* of the [Reasons for the use of Contracts with a Fixed Term End Date or Contract Review Date](#).