

IDENTITY AND DIFFERENCE: FIXED-TERM CONTRACTS

The challenges of fixed-term contracts are not experienced equally or evenly. They vary depending on identity factors including race, gender, sexuality, disability status, and more - intersections of identity may mean experiences are compounded.

RESIDENCY AND VISA STATUS

For colleagues working on a visa, the stresses of a fixed-term contract may be felt more acutely. This might include increased anxiety about probation and career planning, concerns about travel, social isolation, and costly visa processes.

"For years I have been doing everything I can to build my CV to get a job as an immigrant. It is exhausting... I know that as an immigrant I have to go above and beyond... I'm overwhelmed and I still don't think it will be enough."

Participant

PARENTS AND CARERS

Factors including financial insecurity and high workloads make juggling fixed-term positions and caring responsibilities extremely difficult. Moving away from social support systems adds additional complexity.



FINANCIAL BACKGROUND

Many institutions do not provide relocation costs for short term contracts. Moreover, there can be a need to cover gaps in employment between contracts. This disproportionately impacts those from low income backgrounds.



RACE

Colleagues from Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic backgrounds must navigate an overtly white discipline. This includes the effects of institutional racism, a lack of appropriate mentorship, and feeling isolated.

"Race is a big issue in geography... Many Black Geographers are on fixed contracts as it is a very white discipline and they are gatekeepers to this field who have permanent contracts."

Participant

GENDER

Gender may affect how roles get allocated (women, for example, often bear more pastoral responsibilities), and fixed-term contracts can have a negative impact upon experiences of fertility and family planning.



LGBTQI+

Relocating for a new job can have specific impacts on LGBTQI+ people. This may include concerns about coming out to new colleagues, and the loss of community and support with each move.



DISABILITIES & HEALTH CONDITIONS

The pressures of a fixed-term contract are exacerbated by health conditions and disabilities. Colleagues may fear disclosing a condition, and moving healthcare providers can be challenging. Ableist norms may also hinder career opportunities.

"Being neurodivergent, I always worry that I am just not capable of producing work at a rate, and to a standard that will allow me to secure a permanent position."

Participant



States of Precarity

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