

6 March 2019

Uber Tutes – coming to a university near you

Australian education company Studiosity’s plan to introduce an Uber-style peer-to-peer tutoring service for university students is another step in the ongoing casualisation and outsourcing of teaching at Australia’s universities, the National Tertiary Education Union (NTEU) said today.

Unfortunately over half of the teaching done at our universities is currently done by casual academic staff, who are already coping with insecure employment and not being properly paid for the work they do,” NTEU National President Dr Alison Barnes said today. “This plan will just make this worse.”

Dr Barnes also said that it was unclear on what basis the tutors would be employed, but it was likely to be as individual ‘contractors’ paid piecemeal rates, like the rest of the gig economy.

“These arrangements raise a number of serious questions, including:

“Who will be expected to vet and approve suitable students to qualify as per-to-peer tutors?

“Who will provide the training and induction alluded to?

“Will these students meet the standards laid down by the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA) for teaching at a university?”

“What happens if a student gets incorrect advice?”

“Our members will need to seriously consider whether to participate in this proposal, which in our view is clearly not in either existing staff’s or students’ best interests,” Dr Barnes said.

“We are also concerned that the proposal amounts to further corporatisation of what we consider to be core academic and support services. It will inevitably put downward pressure on salaries and employment conditions for university staff.”

“Teaching and tutoring should be done by properly qualified university staff.”

ENDS

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Uber-style service to offer peer-to-peer learning app

THE AUSTRALIAN

Uber-style service to offer peer-to-peer learning app

EXCLUSIVE

By **TIM DODD**, HIGHER EDUCATION EDITOR

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