

The consultation

1. Can UEB be challenged on why they have not provided the information that would enable the unions and schools to offer evidenced counterproposals?

Yes. On 5 February UCU Cardiff sent a list of university-wide questions and requests for evidence to UEB. You can read the questions [here](#). We will also challenge UEB to provide this evidence in our formal consultation meetings. Our branch is also submitting further questions to UEB, provided by branch reps in schools – we encourage members to work with [your department reps](#) to do this.

2. How is Cardiff UCU collectively scrutinising the ‘data’ that UEB has provided?

Members have been working together on our Teams channel to analyse the EDI data and the ‘data pack’ provided by UEB. We have also asked for proper evidence for their decision-making and the financial bases for the ‘business cases.’ If you would like to join the Teams channel to help, please email ucu@cardiff.ac.uk.

3. Could UCU try to pressure CU into independent assessment of the deficit and the job cut plans, like with the USS scheme?

Cardiff UCU already commissioned an independent university financial expert to review the finances of CU. You can read the summary of their review on our website front page [here](#). But the USS scheme review was only agreed after we took significant strike action – we need to use pressure to make CU reconsider.

4. Is there any information on how UEB will respond to counterproposals?

CU has provided a Microsoft Forms [page](#) for alternative proposals, which states that the Academic Futures Task Group (comprising DVC and Provost, College PVCs, Thematic PVCs, Chief Transformation Officer, CFO, College Registrars, Dir. Of Communications, Marketing and Recruitment, Dir. of People and Culture, Dir. of Strategic Planning) will consider all proposals carefully. The Group will make recommendations to University Executive Board ahead of consideration of any revised proposals by Council in June.

5. Do we know whether and to what extent Senate have been involved in the UEB proposal?

The Senate has not been consulted on any of the proposals, neither before their release nor since. UCU believe that keeping Senate in the dark about UEB’s proposals is a profound undermining of Senate’s essential role in scrutinising and challenging university governance practices. A petition of 19 Senate members has forced the university to agree to an emergency meeting of Senate. This will be held on 5th March 2025, 4 weeks after the petition was submitted, which is the maximum possible period for delaying an emergency Senate meeting that university rules allow. This meeting will

be 1 hour and online, unlike all other Senate meetings which are a full afternoon and in-person.

6. What channels are there for discussing matters with members of Council rather than only with the UEB?

There are no formal channels, but UCU is in contact with Council members who are also members of UCU. We have also discussed matters with the Chair of Council and other Council members through the dispute resolution process. These discussions have not so far been productive. The key issue remains the need or not for compulsory redundancies and the failure of UEB to rule them out.

7. Is the VC (and the UEB) as officer and organ of CU acting in line with the mission and charitable status of CU?

We would argue that seeking a cash surplus of 12% EBITDA within one academic year is not in the charitable objectives of the institution.

8. Do we know which consultants were used and how much they were paid?

The consultants used by university management are called [SUMS](#). They have acted as consultants for many other universities undergoing restructuring and cuts and their annual revenue has increased by approximately £1m in the financial year 2023-24. We do not currently know the details of their contract with the university, nor how much they were paid.

9. What might be the impact of the Welsh Government's announcement of an emergency £19 million for HE in Wales?

We do not know yet, but it is clear that the Welsh Government is appalled by the scale of the proposed course closures and redundancies, and intends the cash to be used to prevent them. It places pressure on UEB – but whether they will change course remains to be seen.

Equality data

1. The overview of the current statistical analysis of EDI data provided by HR shows that BAME members of staff were significantly more likely to be put at risk of redundancy, compared to white members of staff. Is it true that colleagues with protected characteristics could be singled out for redundancy?

We are concerned about the lack of consideration for equalities in the redundancy process, and have challenged university management on their poor EDI reporting

around the consultation. Legally, the university cannot single out those with protected characteristics for redundancy, since this would constitute unfair dismissal if protected characteristics were used as criteria for redundancy. Therefore, it is unlikely that this will happen, but there should also be a clear attention paid to equalities when the redundancy pool is identified. UCU will continue to monitor this closely and challenge management on these issues.

Redundancy process

1. It's my understanding of section 188 that from day 45 of the consultation, the University can start making us redundant. Is my understanding correct?

Yes. You can read ACAS advice on the legal process [here](#).

2. Has anyone been able to clarify the relationship between the 90-day 'consultation' we've been told by the university is happening and the documentation we've been sent which lays out a 45-day consultation on feedback on the proposals followed by a 45-day consultation on how to implement proposals?

The 90-day consultation is a statutory requirement – there is more information from ACAS [here](#).

3. If staff are thinking about taking Voluntary Redundancy (VR) because they are worried about their job, are they better off waiting or will the deal they get for compulsory redundancy be worse? how much worse?

You can calculate your statutory redundancy payment [here](#). The university administration has issued risk of redundancy notices to around 1800 academic staff and is putting pressure on us to take VR. We would encourage all members to make decisions based on what's best for you.

Campaign strategy

1. Why are we balloting for strike action?

Having a mandate for strike action is one of the most powerful tools available to trade unions when fighting compulsory redundancies. The threat of industrial action gives your branch negotiators leverage in negotiations with management, and shows the power of the membership. Experiences from other institutions like Goldsmiths and University of Kent have shown that having a mandate is important for getting management to the negotiating table, and thus being able to negotiate better terms and proposals. Furthermore, Cardiff UCU has been explicitly clear with university senior management for almost a year that our red line is compulsory redundancies. They have crossed this line in full knowledge of the consequences; that we will ballot for industrial action. As a trade union, our priority is always the livelihoods of our members.

2. How did students at Goldsmiths respond to the Marking and Assessment Boycott (MAB)? There is a risk with MABs of losing public and student support.

UCU members from Goldsmiths who joined us at our 19 February open meeting emphasised that industrial action is the most crucial element of putting pressure on management. For industrial action to be effective, it must be disruptive to the operations of the employer. Our Goldsmiths colleagues emphasised that they threw everything at their two disputes, and that indefinite strike action is the most effective. They undertook a MAB at the end of both their disputes over redundancies, targeting final assessment marking and exam boards. They noted this is hard for members, hard for students, but also hits the administrative procedures most effectively. Unfortunately effective industrial action will be painful. Our hope is that we will not get to that point but we cannot rule it out. It is an important part of our possible strategy, and UEB has admitted that the 2023 MAB impacts were 'worse than COVID' on the university.

3. One of the main controversies with a marking and assessment boycott is that it unevenly affects colleagues who have more assessment and marking duties (as pay will be deducted from them specifically, and they can be targeted by management). What can we do better this time around to ensure that the boycott is effective?

There are a number of important points here that warrant addressing separately.

- Cardiff UCU is balloting for industrial action including strike action and action short of a strike, on the mandate of stopping all compulsory redundancies. Within this broad heading, the precise action we take has not been predetermined. We have the advantage with this dispute of being able to decide on the best course of industrial action as a branch, since it is a 'local' dispute.
- A strength of a marking and assessment boycott (MAB) is that each participating member creates a high level of disruption to university processes. In this sense a MAB does not rely on every member taking part.
- At the same time, the concern that a MAB unevenly affects colleagues is well-founded: not all UCU members have marking and assessment duties to boycott. There is a number of steps we can take as a branch to manage this (see below), and we can and should discuss what else we could do too.
- The question also asks how a MAB can be effective. The national MAB in 2023 achieved some but not all of its goals. Many activists believe that this was not due to a lack of disruptive impact by the action, nor the uneven cost of taking part, but instead due to a disconnect between branch-level disruption and national-level negotiation, along with employers being unwilling to negotiate fairly.
- There are several possible ways to run a MAB or similar action in an equitable way, including raising funds to support participating members whose pay is deducted, to distribute the financial cost of a MAB more evenly. In 2023 many

members involved in the MAB recouped a substantial amount of their pay deductions this way.

- Alternatively we could take strike action during the examination period instead of a MAB, so that all members contribute to industrial action. With this approach, disruption to marking and assessment sits alongside other useful forms of disruptive action.
4. What would the short and long term impact of a vote of no confidence be? How many 'votes' are required for this to be impactful? How does it work? Did Goldsmiths have a vote of no confidence in their UEB and if so what was the effect?

The primary goal of a vote of no confidence is to show management that their staff do not believe they are able to effectively lead the institution. It is both an 'internal' and 'external' tool that can be used for exerting pressure on UEB and Council to change their plans, and for informing the outside world (e.g. media, politicians, partner organisations) of our concern about how the university is run. The current vote has no specific end date and there is no specific target for votes, but we are hoping for as many as possible, as quickly as possible, so it can be part of our strategy to exert pressure on management to change their approach.

5. Is there any news on a student vote of no confidence? There are lots of students keen to vote in it!

This is being discussed within the Students Union, and students should contact the SU to help organise!

6. What can members safely do in public engagement / outreach events, and on the radio, social media etc. if we are in scope for redundancy?

It's likely a lot of us feel scared to speak out when we normally would. This is a chilling effect of their strategy. As a union, we will robustly criticise the University on behalf of our members, and if you have a specific argument or point you want putting out, we can pass on anonymised member statements on our social media platforms.

7. How can we support in terms of being case officers for other colleagues in consultations? Will there be recruitment advertised through the branch? Will volunteers receive training since most of us probably don't have the expertise for that?

Yes, we are currently working on training for members to support other members through this process and will email when this is set up.