

CARDIFF



CAERDYDD

Our Mission

Working together to foster fairness, equality and dignity in support of the advancement of knowledge and the education of students.

☎ 02920 874443

✉ e-mail: ucu@cardiff.ac.uk

✉ 49b Park Place, Cardiff, CF10 3AT

EDI

- Our analysis reveals that this restructuring is having a disproportional effect on ethnic minority colleagues. What steps are senior management going to take to reduce this impact?

CARBS

1. SSR targets

- a. The document introduces an 'Operational SSR' but does not clearly explain how it differs from the HESA-reported SSR or why it is preferred. Why were official HESA figures not used?
- b. Can staff be granted full access to the model and dataset used for CARBS SSR calculations to allow for independent review?
- c. How do SSR targets contribute to financial savings, and what specific cost reductions are anticipated?
- d. Are academic staff in managerial roles included in the SSR calculation, and if so, how are they categorised?
- e. What is the relationship between SSR targets and the potential number of redundancies?
- f. How was the RAG rating/methodology used to construct school business case? CARBS business case does not refer to RAG explicitly and SSR is one of the parameters for RAG rating.
- g. Why were 1 November 2024 and 15 January 2025 chosen as the benchmark dates for testing the operational SSR, and what factors influenced this decision?

8. “Critical Friendship Review” of CARBS

- a. We would like to know the details of membership of this Critical Friendship Review, and how the Review will inform decisions about job reductions.
- b. We request that the findings of the Critical Friendship Review are shared with CARBS staff.

3. Timescales

- a. How does a timescale for financial savings relate to job losses?
- b. The document states that the proposals are not final, but also states that a 90-day consultation will determine how they are implemented, rather than whether they should proceed at all.
- c. How is the statutory requirement for meaningful consultation on redundancy met in a consultation that doesn't specify timeframes, target savings or criteria for redundancy?

4. Teaching

- a. How does the university plan to maintain teaching quality with the proposed target SSR?
- b. How does the proposed target SSR account for the university's plan for CARBS to teach in Kazakhstan?
- c. What is the university's plan for CARBS staff teaching in Kazakhstan?

4. Research

- a. There is little to no discussion or consideration of research in the consultation document. How does the university plan to address the impact of the target SSR on workloads and the ability of staff to conduct research?
- b. Additionally, what strategy does the university have to ensure a strong REF contribution, given the potential staff reductions and increased teaching loads?

3. Compulsory redundancies

- a. The document states that compulsory redundancies will only be used "if absolutely necessary." What specific criteria will determine when compulsory redundancies are triggered?
- b. Will redundancies be distributed equally across all contract types and grades, or are some groups more at risk (e.g., Teaching & Scholarship staff vs. Teaching & Research staff)?
- c. What options will the university offer to staff at risk for redeployment?

4. Diversity and Inclusivity

- a. Given that certain disciplines (e.g., humanities) are facing larger reductions, what steps will be taken to prevent disproportionate impacts on underrepresented staff groups?
- b. Will affected staff have access to detailed financial and operational data to challenge the justification for cuts?

ENGIN

1. When exactly will we receive the University's "current ideas for how to select employees for redundancy" as required by law during the consultancy period? We will need adequate time to have a meaningful consultation on this.
2. What are the expected timescales for the redundancies themselves to take place? Will we be receiving notice in July that we will be redundant in 3 years' time?

HCARE

Questions and Challenges for UEB

- **Critical evaluation of the programme's performance ignores a significant number of significant confounding factors:**
 - It ignores that 50% of the programme is delivered outside of the university by NHS providers, but the NSS directs all feedback to the teaching faculty only, despite the clear and apparent evidence that experiences on clinical placement drive student dissatisfaction and attrition.
 - It ignores that a new curriculum – the NMC's *Future Standards*, arguably the biggest change to undergraduate education for a generation – was implemented at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.
 - It ignores that, even without the challenges of implementing an entirely new curriculum - which included new skills training, regimes of student supervision and brand new ePAD system for documenting progress - the level of disruption to nursing programmes caused by COVID was higher than others:
 - some students signed onto an emergency register to contribute to frontline NHS services
 - all students undertaking placements were, by definition, more exposed to the virus which required new and extensive risk assessment and management by faculty
 - Nursing faculty were required to provide greater levels of anxiety management, emotional and pastoral support to students during this period, in addition to designing and delivering new modules

- It ignores that USW does not publish its NSS Scores
- It ignores that nursing scores for satisfaction at CU are higher than equivalents in USW, Swansea and University of West England.
- **Specifically in relation to recruitment, judging the faculty on its inability to meet fill rates ignores:**
 - Nursing applications cratered nationally during the pandemic and the campaigns around nurse pay, both of which highlighted the difficulty of the job. This macro phenomenon cannot be compensated by corporate marketing strategies by individual HEIs.
 - CU did not compensate for this adverse environment by supporting nurse recruitment with resources for better marketing.
 - The commissioned rates set by HEIW (an external body) are not evidence-based, increased by an arbitrary percentage, and continued to increase despite the evidence of interest in nursing collapsing nationally during the pandemic.
 - According to UCAS, the fill rates for nursing in Wales are increasing! This is true only in Wales and Northern Ireland, not in England or Scotland. They have increased in Wales year on year since 2023.
- **On the question of tariffs, and the notion that nursing lowers CU's RG tariff:**
 - According to the Times University Guide, CU's nursing tariff is above that of a large number of programmes in CU, and well above the median for the sector and Russell Group. This information can be found in the Academic Future Data Pack.
 - The percentage of students coming through clearing is lower than a number of schools in CU
- **Regarding impact assessments:**
 - Was an equality impact assessment carried out on cutting a faculty staffed predominantly by women? If so this should be shared. If not, why not and when will this be completed?
 - Was an equality impact assessment carried out on terminating nursing programmes when the student population of these courses has high numbers of mature students, many with caring responsibilities? If so this should be shared. If not, why not and when will this be completed?
 - Was an equality impact assessment carried out on terminating a programme such as mental health nursing which has a student population with high levels of lived-experience of mental health difficulties? If so this should be shared. If not, why not and when will this be completed?
- **Regarding impact of cutting postgraduate taught programmes:**
 - The claim that the inability to win tendered contracts for the provision of specialist primary and community care PGT programmes is inaccurate and

misleading, and can be contradicted by the high scores (8 or 10/10) given to CU's application during the process, indicating strong credibility and quality. In 2021 only 1 contract was awarded, when previously provision was split between HEIs, and notably the programmes that were tendered are now being taught out at the other HEIs.

- Has the university considered that the design, delivery and evaluation of PGT in HCARE relies on nursing faculty, the removal of which threatens the provision of advanced clinical and healthcare practitioners from multiple professions to the NHS?
- Has the university considered that cutting PGT in healthcare, particularly around independent prescribing, is at odds with workforce planning trends and future designs for advanced clinical practice in the NHS?
- Have any impact assessments, or even conversations, been jointly undertaken with NHS Wales regarding this loss of highly skilled human resources.
- **Regarding the impact of cutting postgraduate research:**
 - Has the university taken note of the fact that, prior to COVID, HCARE grew a large PGR community, including home and international students and a combination of full-and part-time students?
 - Has it noted that HCARE PGR works successfully and necessarily across professions (is intrinsically interdisciplinary)? If so, how does it plan to continue without the presence of nursing academics?
 - Has it noted that HCARE PGR produces high numbers of completions in timely fashion, and does so without having a health services DTP
 - Has the university noted HCARE PGR success in multiple fellowship applications (RCBC, UKRI, KESS2, HCRW)?
 - PGR student numbers have retracted recently because of factors including (a) loss of main supervisors (retirements, departures for new opportunities, VSS) (b) success with completions (c) loss of funding for home students (d) decline in international numbers. None of these factors indicate an issue with high performance.
 - Lastly, the University should acknowledge that it does not make recruitment and applications easy: no system for easily searching for cross-School/College supervision; very limited marketing support.
- **Regarding any claims of quality of provision of taught programmes:**
 - Since 2020 CU nursing has successfully secured NMC approval for eight out of nine programmes
 - The only programme which was not approved, passed through three of four gateways, and was held to a higher number of conditions than usual, and was undone by a confounding factor unrelated to pedagogical quality. This course was due to be resubmitted but was not due to changes in HEIW tendering.

Programme	Date of NMC approval event	Outcomes
Bachelor of Nursing, Child	January 2020	Approved
Bachelor of Nursing, Adult	January 2020	Approved
Bachelor of Nursing, Mental health	January 2020	Approved
Return to Practice	July 2020	Approved
PgCert Independent Prescribing, V300	June 2021	Approved
PgDip Community SPQ for V100 (DN/GPN)	June 2021	Approved
PgDip SCPHN for V100	June 2021	Approved
MSc Community and Primary Care SPQ (DN/GPN)	February 2024	Not Approved
MSc Specialist Community Public Health Nursing	March 2024	Approved

In summary, the nursing faculty can present abundant evidence to challenge and contextualize any executive judgements that the nursing programme should be closed on grounds related to performance in any of the following areas:

- quality of teaching (UG and PG)
- quality of student support (UG and PG)
- quality of student experience
- quality of programme design (as determined by the NMC)
- tariffs (benchmarked against RG institutions)
- number of enrollments (in and post COVID)
- research environment
- successful research grant applications

MATHS

- “In reaching these proposals, a range of evidence including research, educational and financial performance has been collected and scrutinised, and different scenarios modelled.” Please share the sources of evidence. Please indicate any sources of evidence that were considered and excluded, explaining why. Please share the evidence itself. Please share the scenarios modelled. Please share the detail of the models.

Please share the basis on which model parameters were selected and indicate the range of uncertainty for the parameters and outputs.

- What plans are made if some of the UEB's assumptions and models prove incorrect? If CU's reputation, ranking, REF, &c fall as a result (or in spite) of these changes, what will be done?
- How much was spent on "Potential Futures" video project? How much on the new branding? On recruiting external new members of UEB?
- What is the financial cost of this restructuring, both implementing and sustaining additional levels of administration?
- Will this extra layer of administration impact the uni's ability to respond in an agile and responsive manner to changing trends in HE in the UK?
- What is the reputational cost of this restructuring, both on implementation and sustained?
- What is the anticipated reduction in student admissions as a result of these announcements?
- What scale of future cuts are being planned for PS staff and central admin? Given that the UEB states that it is aiming to reduce costs of academic staff by tens of millions of pounds, what is the total financial goal?
- How many members of the UEB will resign over the decisions and management they participated in historically that led the university to this situation? For example, the over-reliance on international students has been commented on in past maths staff meetings as a vulnerability; our lack of resilience was obvious years ago.
- How much financial data comes from SAP concur, which is known to give misleading or incorrect financial reports?
- Why does the UEB spend ~2 FTE salary on travel annually? Allemann specifically spends on average 40k£/a, which could be an early career salary, and his efforts have not prevented the vast decline of international enrolments the university is now using to justify these cuts.
- **Why do we decline to make assumptions about future additional income, but we do make assumptions about future pedagogical methods and assistance which make future SSRs sustainable?** For example comparing the conservative estimates of "3. Financial and market context" contrasted with the ones about "pedagogical and technological innovation".
- On what basis were non-impacted school given this status? What background and context do these Schools operate in? What SSRs do these Schools work to? What specific criteria were used?
- Have the UEB completed mandatory training on Research Integrity, Line Management, Welsh Language Awareness, EDI, Fire Safety, . E.g., direction from the UEB seems to suggest we should be gaming publications for the sake of QS rankings; certainly the

manner in which these cuts have been announced is not in line with line management training guidelines and may violate dignity at work policies; so on.

- Does the UEB have a target for our optimal level of long-term free cash reserves? If so, what is it?
- Why is the planned redundancy stated in terms of FTE rather than M£, if the goal is primarily financial? The potential cost of 400 FTE can change by a factor of 3 depending on how people are selected. Will salary level be used as a basis for determining redundancy?
- Does the distribution of cuts reflect our “core academic strengths”?
- The university has substantial financial reserves, but the UEB has claimed that the current situation is not a reason to dip into them. What would constitute a scenario where the UEB believes they are worth using?
- “Focused on putting our existing academic activities on a more sustainable footing.” It seems that the cuts will remove the footing of vast swaths of the university’s capacity for research.
- “Our Future, Together, but without 14% of you”. This is “exciting” in the same way that being chased by a velociraptor is, presumably, “exciting”.
- “We will create interdisciplinary, cross-School module options in areas such as ethics, sustainability and AI. We will also create more opportunities for students to undertake placements and other engagement with employers and communities. We expect these changes to support a higher quality and more consistent student experience as well as ensuring that Cardiff remains competitive in home and overseas markets. Also, in the early stages of strategy implementation, we will begin the shift towards new delivery modes, leveraging pedagogical and technological innovation, and creating the platforms for more flexible and modularised learning.” On what basis does UEB expect these to support higher quality student experience? On what basis does UEB believe that these goals necessitate cuts on this scale? Could this experiment in “interdisciplinary experience” be performed without closing the school of music?
- “To support these changes we will further develop roles such as learning designers, academic developers and instructional technologists to complement and support academics in their work.” Has there been any consultation with academics about whether these “supports” are desired or would be useful, especially weighed against the 400 FTE academic staff who are being cut? Does the university understand the challenges that academics are currently facing, and how these are exacerbated by “supports” such as SAP Clarity and Learning Central?
- How specifically will “this deliberate move towards more innovative and interdisciplinary education, in both English and Welsh medium provision” “foster new research opportunities”? How will interdisciplinary research be supported by the elimination of some disciplines and the merging of others? With fewer academic staff and a higher SSR, who will be able to act on any new opportunities which might arise?
- “It will build new relationships with partners that will enhance our commercialisation, translational research, entrepreneurship, and civic engagement”. What of pure science

and undirected research, which is usually thought of as a core mission of a university, unlike “commercialisation” or “entrepreneurship”? Which new partners, specifically, is the university aiming to attract, and what evidence does the UEB have that this approach will attract them?

- Swansea University is a signatory of Coara - the Coalition for Advancing Research Assessment (<https://coara.eu/agreement/the-commitments/>), which has as one of its commitments to avoid the use of rankings of research organisations in research assessment. Is the UEB willing to sign this initiative as well?

Math specific

- Who specifically is “at risk” in maths, what specific criteria were used to select them? (Business case states 30 people in the new math division, but we are not sure who they are or why those people are the ones in math vs DatAI; our best internal count arrives at 29 people in the at risk pool.)
- The individuals to join DatAI have been identified. Which parts of COMSC will join DatAI?
- In calculating the SSR, has care been taken to avoid “double counting”? Specifically, are members of staff temporarily not teaching as well as staff hired to replace their teaching both being counted.
- “Target SSR” for math puts us well worse than math at comparable Russell gp unis, based on vague assumptions that they will also adjust their SSRs going forward. What basis is used here? This seems like a gamble or race to the bottom given that SSR is one of the prime drivers of student recruitment.
 - Even if SSRs are likely to go up everywhere, we don't know by how much. But compared to the current data in the Guardian league table, the proposal puts MATHS near the bottom of the Russell Group while COMSC stays around the median, so we can guess that this proposal will leave MATHS relatively worse off
 - SSRs in mathematics are generally lower than in computer science. Across the Russell Group, the median is that maths is 85% of computer science. To have maths higher than computer science is not aligned with sector.
 - Mathematics has low non-salary costs, so a decent SSR is the main measurable thing we can offer to students.
 - The proposed combined School is intended to promote collaboration and reduce frictions around resources, and starting off with an imbalance in staffing works against that.
- How important is our school to higher math education in Wales? Have they assessed Welsh Language provisioning when they consider SSRs? (How does level of Welsh support/provision compare across schools, and is this reflected in target SSRs?)
- Welsh language provision in our school will be under threat
- It has been raised frequently at staff meetings that the university is under-funding mathematics, taking a higher cut of tuition than average (most?) other Russel Gp peers, and that as a result we have had challenges with teaching and research. Likewise

increasing SSRs and lower entry standards have been forced on the school against our objections. Now the entirely foreseeable outcome of these policies is being used to justify cuts.

- “Across the three components in the new School, Student:Staff Ratios will be reset over a three-year period (25/26-27/28) at levels that are commensurate with financial sustainability, in line with the likely direction of travel of our comparators and facilitate the delivery of excellent provision.” What is the target SSR ratio of DataI? It has no UG provision? Maths and Comsc have different target SSRs; why? The median RG university has a Maths SSR which is 85% of the Comsc SSR - clearly there is a sectoral acknowledgment that Maths is more staffing-intensive. How were these SSRs derived? How are the projected enrolments calculated, is there an assumption that student applications will not be affected by these cuts? Plans mention cross-disciplinary teaching; how does this interact with SSRs? Plans mention the School making a major contribution to TNE and CPD delivery. How does this interact with SSRs? Will DataI contribute meaningfully to BSc Mathematics teaching given that staff members are focused on other educational opportunities?
- Mathematics has maintained a “green” financial rating by the university but “red” on teaching and research (somewhat insultingly). How are we going to improve teaching and research with less staff, less funding, and a higher SSR? Why are our positions being cut 50% when we as a school are profitable and return significant funds to central?
- What percentage of student credit hours (i.e., weighted by number of students) are provided by at risk staff? How much by not at risk staff?
- How, precisely, were the school “teaching” ratings by the uni made? What specific criteria were used? Were these consistent across all schools?
- How, precisely, were the school “research” ratings by the uni made? What specific criteria were used? Were these consistent across schools? Were the outcomes of recent internal REF checkpoints considered? Have recent research developments been accounted for (Department has grown and recruited many strong researchers (e.g. winner of Future Leaders Fellowship, LMS Bennet Prize winner, ...) and taken in more grant money since last REF than in the entire last REF period. Was the depression of the School’s REF performance as a result of central decisions (eg, exclusion of a star researcher from last REF by granting voluntary severance shortly before the census date) accounted for?
- How, precisely, were the school “financial” ratings by the uni made? What specific criteria were used? Were these consistent across schools?
- How much of the business case was written by chatGPT or other AI tools?
- It is being proposed that instead of COMSC and Math we have COMSC, Math, and Data Science. This is a 50% increase in degree pathways; how is this in line with the claims of implementing clearer degree pathways with less unnecessary choice?
- The school of math has consistently warned over the last several years of the harms and challenges due to maximising intake. Why has the university not allowed us control over our own intake to gradually raise the intake requirements?

- A proposal for a Data Science Academy would have been timely in 2010 or perhaps 2015. The university is chasing yesterday's trends.
- How does the university plan to become the “strategic hub for AI and data innovation across... the region and globally”? Does it believe it can compete with OpenAI, Google, DeepSeek, MIT, Stanford? Oxbridge will be hard pressed to play in this space, and they are significantly better positioned than Cardiff. What model, specifically, was used to justify this plan?