

UCU Academic Future Questions

1. Are you planning to make people redundant on the basis of this consultation process?

The University has stated its aim of avoiding compulsory redundancies where possible and has put in place a number of mitigating actions. Compulsory redundancies will remain an option of last resort, available to the University at the end of this collective consultation.

2. What is the purpose of consulting on the restructure of the University if compulsory redundancies are scheduled for June?

As reiterated by the Vice Chancellor, this is meaningful consultation and as such we recognise the proposals will evolve and change and we expect the proposals to be adapted as a result of feedback received. Any alternative proposals put forward will need to address the challenge we face. Once the consultation has concluded and feedback has been considered, final proposals will be developed. Council will be presented with final proposals for approval and will determine the need for any potential redundancies at that point.

3. How do you propose to staff the promised teaching out of degree programmes where staff are made redundant, and you cannot re-hire for the same jobs?

As final proposals are developed consideration is being given to how best to support discontinuation and teach out, should that become a requirement. These considerations will be based on experience gained via teach out provisions in previous cases which have been subject to consultation and aligned to the specific proposal being made.

4. How are Heads of School who are 'in scope' and/or who have received risk of redundancy notices expected to lead on consultations without a conflict of interest?

The University acknowledges that this is a difficult time for our staff. All Heads of Schools will be supported through this period by HR colleagues, external support (EAP) and the senior leadership team. Our Heads of Schools play an important leadership role and will have valuable input and experience to further inform the proposals which is essential to consider.

5. How will feedback from staff and unions be meaningfully incorporated into final decisions?

The proposals are live documents which can be amended throughout the duration of this consultation. [An online form](#) has been developed where staff can put forward their ideas, proposals and solutions. The proposals will be reviewed in light of the feedback received and we



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Gymraeg neu yn Saesneg. Ni fydd gohebu yn
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in Welsh or English. Corresponding in Welsh
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expect the proposals to change as a result of the consultation.

6. How will proposals from Schools be incorporated into decisions?

The Pro Vice Chancellors are engaging with Schools throughout the consultation period. The proposals will be reviewed by UEB in light of the feedback received and alternative plans put forward. There will also be an opportunity to engage in this process during individual consultation meetings.

7. Was the bond approved by the then-regulator HEFCW?

Yes

8. Who approved the bond financial projection decisions and on what grounds?

This is not directly relevant to the consultation and there have been specific meetings with Trade Unions about our financial position.

9. By what % and £GBP have administration costs increased since Cardiff introduced the system of colleges?

We have published Administrative FTEs since in our annual report since 2015/16. Administrative staff have increased by 5.7%. Academic Staff FTEs have increased by 26.1%

10. By what % and £GBP have senior management staffing costs increased since Cardiff introduced the system of colleges?

We have published Key Management Compensation in our annual report since 2015/16. During this time the real cost of Key Management Compensation has decreased by c.4% using CPI as the deflator and has also reduced as a proportion of our income.

11. The proposal states that each School has a percentage financial contribution target, yet these targets are not publicly available. What are the financial contribution targets for each School, and what are the justifications for those levels?

Publishing our contribution targets is not in the commercial interests of the University. College PVCs and Heads of Schools were engaged in establishing these targets. Schools were given bandings within which their contribution was expected to fall (e.g. 30-40%, 40-50%, 50-55%, etc). We considered various information including senior management knowledge of contribution levels in other organisations and sector benchmarking studies.



The targets for each School's financial contribution are based on a number of factors, including their overall scale, the levels of income they can attract (i.e. levels of international demand), the nature of teaching (e.g. large or small groups, timetabled hours, specialised equipment) which has an impact on costs, and the nature of research (funding sources, costs) which can impact both income and cost. In determining where each School sat on these factors, we reviewed data about the relevant subject areas for the whole sector.

12. What is the full breakdown of each School's current and projected financial contribution to central administration, and student demand statistics, in both % and £GBP?

School contributions are considered confidential/sensitive data.

13. In school meetings on 28 January 2025 UEB members emphasised that schools cross-subsidise. How has cross-subsidisation factored into decisions about where cuts are proposed?

We have considered a range of factors in our decision-making including research profile, student experience and civic mission. We have attempted to balance all of these factors in decision making as well as the need to overall balance financial contributions to deliver a financially sustainable whole of the University. As a cohesive proposition, the AF proposals aim to make more sustainable the cross-subsidies that are an inevitable part of our business model.

14. What market demand or financial threshold determines when a discipline is shut down versus restructured?

Neither of these things are considered as absolutes to whether a School is closed or restructured.

15. Is 400 FTE proposed academic redundancies a financial calculation or a headcount, and if the former, what is the financial calculation of £GBP cost per FTE staff?

The 400 FTE is a calculation based on SSRs and not a financial calculation.

16. What is the target saving goal from redundancies in £GBP?

This will be determined post the consultation closing. Salaries are highly variable and so the profile of any staff who leave will determine the scale of reduction.

17. Why are VSS leavers included in the metric towards 400 FTE only after 1st November? How was this date chosen?



This was the date at which the SSR calculations were compared to existing FTE. 1st November is also the traditional date on which we take a census of student numbers.

18. How is the existence of one college above two schools justified financially?

It is not clear what is being asked here so we have not addressed this question.

19. How were the models designed, and what data were used to create them, with what assumptions made in the modelling?

By modelling we mean the iterative process of forming, sense-checking and adapting initial ideas for our Schools' future size and shape based on the twin non-negotiables of academic and financial sustainability, leading to the proposals that are now the basis of our Consultation. The process was academically led. Current performance of academic units was assessed across a range of measures (education, research, markets, finance) – these were the RAG ratings shared with staff. Colleges developed initial ideas for each subject, taking account of Schools' known plans with the aim of further enhancing sustainable academic outcomes and improving subject rankings. Proposals were iterated. Assumptions underpinning the need to achieve both academic and financial sustainability included realistic student numbers for each subject and increased SSRs.

20. Which other scenarios were modelled and scrutinised, and what specific conclusions were reached based on what evidence?

In testing the financial impact of academic plans, we worked through scenarios for each School and discipline and international demand also had an important part to play.

21. How were the RAG ratings used in the proposals and what data was used to compile them?

The data underpinning the RAG ratings relate to publicly available performance indicators. The RAG ratings represented only one information set in the process of forming proposals: qualitative, strategic judgements aligned with our Strategy were also made and no single set of data yielded a result.

22. Were alternative restructuring models considered that did not involve large-scale staff reductions?

The process carefully considered a number of ways of delivering on the twin imperatives of delivering academic sustainability and financial sustainability.



23. What specific financial and operational criteria were used to decide which Schools face staff reductions?

Staffing reductions are the result of expectations on future student numbers and the setting of new SSRs.

24. What specific impact assessments provide the evidential grounds for merging some

Impact assessments have not been used to determine the shape of the proposals put forward for consultation but have been undertaken to assess any potential impact on staff in scope in each case. The initial Impact Assessments have been undertaken and published.

25. What impact assessments were conducted to ensure that merging disciplines will not negatively affect teaching and research quality?

Initial quality Impact Assessments and Integrated Impact Assessments have been undertaken at this stage. These will continue to evolve as the pool of those at risk of redundancy becomes clearer. These do not cover teaching and research quality.

26. What steps were taken to try and save disciplines before deciding to shut them down?

The University has not made any decisions to shut disciplines down. The University has put in place many mechanisms to support academic and financial sustainability including recruitment controls, Voluntary Severance Scheme and now the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme. The consultation which is currently underway may bring to light viable, alternative options for the University to consider to also achieve the required financial and academic sustainability.

27. What is the evidence of how the Big Conversation, the unions, the HoS, and students, have contributed to these proposals?

The results of the Big Conversation has formed the basis of the University strategy. Academic Futures has been an academic led programme, underpinned by the pillars within the strategy. Trade Union colleagues, Head of Schools and students will have the opportunity to contribute to the proposals in a meaningful way during the consultation period.

28. What proposals were put to Heads of Schools, and will these be disclosed?

The consultation proposals are published in full on the intranet.



29. Has an impact assessment been carried out regarding the negative impact that these proposals will have on the University's external partnerships in Cardiff, and in particular its civic mission initiatives with local communities?

The University has given considerable thought to the impact of these proposals and has acknowledged the difficult decisions represented in the proposals. Initial impact assessments have been undertaken on each proposal.

30. Has an assessment been done on how these proposals contravene the Welsh Government Well Being of Future Generations Act (2015)?

We do not believe this is the case, the University has acknowledged the difficult decisions represented in the proposals it feels are necessary.

31. How have comparative SSR figures for other Russell group universities been collated, given the ongoing sector wide issues with Student HESA data?

We reviewed the most recent sector data available (from 21/22 academic year, pre-Data Futures) as a benchmark.

32. The consolidated consultation document states that other Russell Group universities are also increasing SSRs—can the university provide sector-wide data to substantiate this?

The document states "it is likely that the rest of the sector, including the Russell Group, will inevitably be shifting".

33. Why are some Schools being forced into higher SSR increases while others remain unchanged?

Benchmark data (sector SSRs) and anticipated changes in student numbers informed the setting of operational SSRs.

34. How will the TNE initiatives affect the timeline for the consultations in implementing schools (SOCSI, EARTH etc.), especially in Schools where redundancies are proposed?

The consultation will proceed as already outlined in the published timeline. Other initiatives that are currently being developed, like proposals for Transnational Education, will not be taken in to account in this consultation.



35. Will EDI and other impact assessments be conducted before the TNE programmes are advertised in February?

Impact assessments will continue to be carried out where they are required, including as part of work to develop a business case to support TNE proposals.



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