

Reducing Reliance on External Consultancies at Cardiff University

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Cardiff UCU notes:

1. Cardiff University has spent in excess of £4 million on external consultancy services during 2025/26 and over £4.5 million during 2024/25, at a time when the University is making reductions to staffing and increasing workloads for remaining employees.
2. Over the last two academic years, Cardiff University has spent more than £1 million with Nous Group as part of this consultancy expenditure. <https://nation.cymru/news/cardiff-university-spent-more-than-1m-on-controversial-cuts-consultants/>
3. Staff across the University have repeatedly demonstrated the expertise, institutional knowledge and commitment needed to develop and improve services, yet their views have too often been overlooked in favour of external advice.
4. The use of external consultancies has generated concern within the global higher education sector, including questions around value for money, transparency, accountability and the influence of private consultants on public universities.
5. Staff responsible for delivering services continue to absorb increasing workloads without corresponding resource.

Cardiff UCU believes:

1. At a time of financial constraint, expenditure on external consultants should be subject to rigorous scrutiny and should only be used where genuinely specialist expertise cannot reasonably be provided internally.
2. Cardiff University's staff possess extensive professional, academic and operational expertise and should be the primary source of advice on institutional change.
3. Resources should be directed towards sustaining frontline teaching, research and professional services, rather than repeated expenditure on external consultancy and programme management.
4. Greater transparency is required regarding consultancy procurement, commissioning, outputs and evaluation of value for money.
5. *Before external consultants are commissioned, the University should be required to demonstrate that equivalent expertise is not available internally, or that internal capacity has been appropriately considered and cannot reasonably meet the identified need, and that this justification must be made available to staff on the intranet*
6. Consultants and project managers can recommend change, but they cannot undertake the day-to-day work required to deliver it. Sustainable improvement comes from investing in the staff who deliver the University's teaching, research and professional services.

Cardiff UCU resolves to:

1. Call upon Cardiff University to significantly reduce its reliance on external consultancies and prioritise investment in its own staff and internal expertise
2. Seek publication of an internal annual report detailing:
 - a. consultancy expenditure;
 - b. the purpose of each contract;

- c. the procurement process used;
 - d. expected and realised benefits;
- 3. Campaign for resources currently spent on consultancy to be redirected towards staffing, workload reduction, staff development and student-facing services wherever practicable.
- 4. Raise these concerns formally with University Council.