

BAFA Open Letter on academic integrity and University of Leicester Business School (ULBS) redundancies

12 May, 2021

Dear professors Nishan Canagarajah, Henrietta O'Connor and James Devlin,

We are writing to you to express our grave concerns following reports of a proposed use of publications in particular journals and/or with reference to 'critical management' scholarship as a criterion for making redundancies in ULBS.

The British Accounting and Finance Association is the learned society for accounting and finance academics in Britain and is a member of the Academy of Social Sciences. Members of our association work in all sub-disciplines of accounting and finance from financial markets and institutions to corporate and behavioural finance; and from markets based accounting to interdisciplinary perspectives, management accounting and public services accounting.

It is a core principle of our association that we are heterodox and maintain a plurality of approaches to knowledge creation, dissemination and pedagogy in both accounting and finance disciplines.

Our main concern is the protection of the academic integrity of the accounting and finance disciplines. It is one of the great strengths of the British-based business and management academia that we have such a diverse and plural community. It is a key reason why we are able to attract top international academics and international doctoral students to work and study here.

Plurality of thought is also essential to avoid the narrowing of a discipline's research agenda and the potential for developing group-think. The particular targeting of academics who have published in journals that welcome critical thought seems incongruous to us for two reasons. First, as educationalists we are constantly and appropriately implored to develop critical thinkers through our education programmes. Second, research work should be judged on its quality, and not the publication it resides within.

We recognise that others have already (see the [open letter](#) from the editors of Critical Perspectives on Accounting (CPA) and [blog](#) on the European Accounting Association's (EAA) website) expressed similar concerns about academic freedom and natural justice. We whole-heartedly support these views.

We therefore call on you to reverse your decision to use publication in particular journals and/or reference to 'critical management' scholarship as a criterion for redundancy.

We look forward to hearing your response to this letter.

Kind Regards,

The Executive Committee and Trustees of the British Accounting and Finance Association (BAFA)