

FAQ

This was done by the Dean and Deputy Dean alone. They have little expertise in the research of the at-risk group. The School's research director was not involved and was sacked from her role as AD when she objected to the process.

We have written to all members of the University Council seeking clarification on their involvement.

One major issue remains - why wasn't Senate consulted?

Senate is the 'custodian of the institution's academic integrity'.

How was the Case for Change put together?

The Case for Change was approved by the University Executive Board and ratified by University Council as part of the University strategy after taking into consideration the feedback from the pre-change engagement process. It was developed by senior leadership in the School in consultation with the College and other senior leaders in the organisation.

Are future changes planned?

We have no other plans to make any further redundancies in the School of this nature. We view this as very much a one-off exercise.

The Dean was explicit that perhaps things will need to be re-visited in the future. Questions should be asked about 'redundancies of this nature' - what other kinds of redundancies are planned? This also does not square with the University's finances.

What is the timeline of the Case for Change?

The current timeline, as of 8th of March, is below (note this is subject to change).

Activity	Timescale
First collective consultation meeting with unions	26 th January 2021
First collective consultation meeting with staff	26 th January 2021
First individual consultation meetings with affected staff/staff at risk of redundancy	w/c 8 th , 15 th and 22 nd of February 2021
Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee Meeting (JNCC)	16 th February 2021
Collective consultation meeting with union	25 th February 2021
Deadline for formal expressions of interest in VSS	26 th February 2021
Deadline for feedback and comments on the proposal	3rd March 2021
Review Group meet and write to all at risk staff with proposal	by 12th March 2021
Second collective consultation meetings with staff and trade unions	17 th March 2021
Deadline for expression of interest forms in vacant posts and/or signed VSS agreements	25 th March 2021
Selection processes to new roles	Over w/c 5 th and w/c 12 th April 2021
Outcome of selection process communicated to staff	w/c 12 th April 2021

Activity	Timescale
Second individual consultation meetings with affected staff (notice of redundancy to be given shortly after this meeting where required).	w/c 19 th April 2021
JNCC Meeting	13 th April 2021
Consultation process ends.	w/c 26 th April 2021
Finalised plan confirmed and distributed to affected staff	w/c 3 rd May 2021
Provisional final implementation date	1 st August 2021

This is not true. 4 externals have now resigned. The statement and comments made by the School's Research Committee have been ignored completely. The WEMO L&T Committee has put a lot of time to produce a detailed document with questions, again to be ignored. There is global outcry in the academic community with more than 2400 signatures against these plans. No one is listening. Instead, they monitor staff on Twitter.

How does the process work?

The University is currently engaged in a period of consultation under the University's redundancy ordinance with those affected by the possible changes. This has involved collective and individual meetings and other methods of providing feedback. We are working in accordance **with the Ordinance** and the need to respect confidentiality. We need to ensure that any changes and amendments to the case are shared firstly with those directly affected at the second collective consultation meeting and then with the whole School. **We are listening to feedback** and is considering what amendments to the case may be necessary. It is important that the University follows due process. We will share information as quickly and as widely as we are permitted.

We invite any reasonable person to read the Ordinance and decide.

How were individuals identified in the pre-screening?

A pre-screening exercise was conducted of all teaching and research staff across MISO, M&O and W&E to establish whether individuals are conducting research primarily in areas that are not aligned with the School's future direction (as proposed in the Case for Change), namely in the areas of Critical Management Studies and/or Political Economy (using the definitions supplied). **The process itself was agreed between the School and College with input and advice from HR.**

There is no record of this 'pre-screening'. The Dean and Deputy Dean claim to have read papers thoroughly but there are no notes and they did not minute their subsequent discussions. Is this 'due process'?

For all members of staff in these Divisions and Department the same information was collected and recorded. **This included, amongst other information, papers and grant applications.** Details of the indicators considered were provided to those staff directly affected on the 1st of February.

Where are the records? 16 people might lose their jobs and no records are made or kept.

A qualitative assessment of this basket of indicators was conducted to determine if the primary research focus of an individual may be Critical Management Studies and/or Political Economy. In **this context 'primarily' was not used as a quantifiable measure based on a specific proportion of outputs and/or grants but as a descriptor** to determine the more significant or principal focus of research activity in an individual's overall research profile. Each individual's research profile was assessed according to the basket of indicators in

What is a descriptor? Several colleagues are told that 50% of their research is CMS/PE while the rest isn't, but that's enough to be deemed 'primarily'. When even this fails, senior management now flags up publications as 'whilst not overtly critical per se it is a research output which is not aligned with future strategic direction of research in the School' or elsewhere 'does little to contribute to School's strategic priorities for research'.

We were never told the reasons why our work fell under CMS or PE, only that the Dean or Deputy Dean felt that our work fitted their definition.

making this assessment. **At the individual consultation meetings effected staff were given information about this assessment**, including the data considered and those parts viewed to be in line with the definition **and why**.

This is not true. Individuals at risk have repeatedly asked for this information and have still to have gotten a clear, objective answer.

What happens next?

A review group has been established to facilitate the next part of the process. The review group will be responsible for considering, reviewing and recommending outcomes for further consultation in the individual cases for all staff at risk of redundancy in the case for change in ULSB. The group will be chaired by the Head of College and include senior leadership from the school and senior research leaders in the institution. The group will be supported by HR colleagues to ensure the process undertaken is fair and objective and to record the outcome of the discussions in each case. Individual staff at risk will receive the outcome from this review group by 12th March 2021 at the latest, which will determine if they are to remain in the pool for redundancy ahead of the 2nd Collective Consultation meeting.

The group will use all the information initially considered plus additional information, including on outputs and grants, from the individual consultation process. **Translation has been arranged for all outputs not written in English.**

Work was not translated for the 'screening exercise'. It was only after highlighting in the individual consultations that work not written in English was excluded from the assessment due to a lack of language competence by the Dean and Deputy Dean that this line was needed now. There is no evidence as to what was translated, for which member of staff, and by whom.

Will more staff become at risk?

In drafting the case for change all staff on Research and Teaching contracts in MISO, M&O and W&E were considered in line with process described above. For the meeting of the review group assessments were re-checked. **The University is confident that no other staff meet the definitions across the basket of indicators used in this process.**

Regardless of confidence, this is simply not true.

Does this proposal breach academic freedom?

The University has an Academic Freedom Ordinance (available here: <https://le.ac.uk/about/governance/documents/ordinances> - number 25). The possibility of a conflict with academic freedom has been considered, however, in our judgement and that of HR we do not believe there is a conflict. As part of the process, however, individuals directly affected **can highlight if they believe academic freedom is an issue and this will be considered in line with University policy.**

The academic freedom committee is chaired by the Execs who approved this process. There is no appeal once they decide this is not an academic freedom issue.

Do I have to evaluate what I teach in light of disinvestment?

No. The current round of curriculum planning is complete, and the School and Institution are satisfied that the School is teaching as required by current programme specifications and related module specifications. You should continue to plan for your teaching as before. We hope in the future to add additional opportunities for students in areas such as data analytics as a result of the case for change. Any future changes to programmes or modules will be supported through the curriculum planning process.

Do I need to change the focus of my research in the light of the case for change or are there certain journals that I should not target?

If after the initial screening you have not been identified as potentially at risk of redundancy, then it has been established that the research you carry out and the publications that result are not primarily focussed on aspects of CMS/PE as defined for the purposes of the case and that they contribute to School strategic priorities sufficiently. As a result, you should not feel the need to change your research focus as a result of the Case for Change. **As would always be the case, over time it is hoped that all staff will reflect on their personal research agenda and how they might best contribute to the strategic priorities of the School through discussions with mentors, cluster leads and Department Heads.**

The name of Journals, specifically, is used as a reason for keeping individuals in the at-risk group. A colleague was notified that publishing in Critical Perspectives on Accounting is a reason for remaining in the pool. Other reasons to be included in the at-risk pool are publishing in Ephemera, Organization or Culture and Organization which are deemed problematic because Swann and Storobod (2014) identify these journals as 'hospitable to those writing in the name of CMS'. When all of this failed, the reason given for inclusion in the pool was that 'a sociological perspective... does little to contribute to debates connected to mainstream business and management understanding'. This is now what senior management says in relation to strategic priorities and problematic research.

Considering all the above-mentioned obfuscation and straightforward lies, we ask you to reflect critically on the message and the subtle threat of this sentence. At its core, it states the subordination of research to any strategy that senior leadership wants to announce and that research not aligned to it is a reason to make you redundant. No, this is not 'always be the case', this is a precedent.

Questions that are asked frequently, deserve to be answered. The people working in the School deserve answers.

1. Why was the AD sacked from her role? No answer.
2. Why wasn't research leads and the research director involved in making the new strategy? No answer.
3. Why isn't there a Strategy Document to underpin the cases for change? No answer.
4. Why is the process rushed if this is not motivated by financial reasons? No answer.

Is this an accepted FAQ addressing the largest, quickest, change of direction for the School of Business? Is this how to treat 16 colleagues?

Please ask yourself if this is the work of people you can trust going forward. Ask yourself if this is the level of care you want for your colleagues and your students. Ask yourself if this is leadership that inspires confidence.