

Your Union Executive Officers recently met with members of the University Executive Team, Keith McLay (Deputy Vice Chancellor), Sarah Setchell (Chief People Officer and University Secretary), and Susan Ambler (Chief Finance Officer) to raise questions submitted by students regarding the University's current redundancy review.

Using the feedback gathered, we have themed the responses and captured the key highlights below:

Course Closures

You asked about potential course closures.

- The University conducts an annual review of all programmes to ensure they remain high quality, current, and attractive to future students.
 - If a course is proposed for closure, the Student Protection Plan guarantees that current students can complete their studies and graduate as planned.
[https://www.derby.ac.uk/media/derbyacuk/assets/departments/the-registry/governance/documents/Appendix-1---Condition-C3----Student-Protection-Plan---FINAL---202324-OFS-\(1\).pdf](https://www.derby.ac.uk/media/derbyacuk/assets/departments/the-registry/governance/documents/Appendix-1---Condition-C3----Student-Protection-Plan---FINAL---202324-OFS-(1).pdf)
 - There are no plans for large-scale course closures. Changes to staffing are being made only where courses are currently over-resourced based on student numbers.
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Redundancy and Voluntary Severance

You wanted to better understand the redundancy process and voluntary severance.

- No decisions have yet been made – consultation with staff begins tomorrow (29 Oct).
- The University is offering Voluntary Severance (VS) and Voluntary Redundancy (VR) with enhanced financial terms, aiming to achieve savings through this route. Compulsory redundancy remains a last resort.
- The University is committed to minimising disruption and maintaining teaching quality and student support throughout the process.
- Executive members acknowledged the difficulty of this period for staff but expect continued delivery of teaching and support.
- While the scale of change is wider, it will be managed similarly to any staff departure, with provisions in place to ensure continuity in teaching.

- There is no direct link between changes to administrative staff and academic roles. The review of student-facing administrative functions is focused on aligning teams with the new college structure and responding to reduced student numbers.
 - The University recognises concerns from academic staff about administrative workload. The transformation project aims to improve support and reduce this burden through digitalisation and process improvements.
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Impact on Students and Support Services

You asked how these changes might affect students and the support available.

- The University confirmed that students should not experience any negative impact on their studies or results.
 - If students do encounter issues, feedback can be shared through:
 - Module evaluations
 - Programme Reps or College Quality Committees (CQEC)
 - The formal complaints process (if needed)
 - Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) will continue to be available.
 - Student wellbeing services, including counselling and mental health support, remain in place.
 - The Student Hub will continue to operate post-redundancies, with ongoing work to explore shared services with other universities to enhance resources, knowledge, and accessibility.
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Communication of Redundancies

You raised concerns about how the University communicated the redundancy process.

- The University acknowledged issues with student communications landing in junk inboxes and delays to online student inboxes. This is being investigated.
- Leadership stated that the communication approach followed standard procedures and was timed to ensure affected staff were notified first.
- The press release preceded planned student communications due to a leak to the media, which contained inaccuracies. The University felt obliged to respond

to ensure accurate information was shared and avoid further confusion or distress for staff.

- Concerns were raised about students receiving template campaign letters with inaccurate information. The University is working to address misinformation directly.
 - The University are committed to an open dialogue with Union representatives. And plan to join a meeting with student representatives next month.
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Financial Management

You asked whether financial mismanagement led to the redundancies.

- The University undergoes regular internal and external audits, all of which have returned clean reports with no red flags.
 - It reports to both the Office for Students (OfS) and lenders, confirming financial sustainability.
 - The development of the Cavendish Building aligns with long-term strategic goals which have been in development for six years.
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Next Steps

- The Union meet with **UCU** in the afternoon of the 28th October and minutes will be released shortly.
- The formal consultation process begins tomorrow. Although some staff have already reached out and informal check-ins have taken place, the official process cannot begin until the scheduled start date to allow leadership staff to appoint staff representatives, as they are not collectively represented by the trade unions.

Once underway, UCU will gain further insight into the proposals and implications. It will take time before any decisions are made about which roles may be affected.

This process is expected to take time, and that's intentional, to ensure decisions are made carefully, fairly, and with full consideration of the impact on staff and students.

- Communication between the University and the Union will continue to ensure students are kept informed.

- The University is investigating email delivery issues that may have affected some students.
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7. In Summary

- The University will not close courses that are in progress.
- Student experience and teaching quality will remain a priority.
- Support services will continue and may be enhanced through digital access.
- The Cavendish Building is not the cause of these proposals.
- The University's financial position is stable and independently verified.

We will continue to engage with the University to ensure students are heard, informed, and supported throughout this process.