

*Professor Michael Young  
Professor John Murray  
Elizabeth Green  
Alison Stephenson  
Sunderland University*

Copy to UCU Reps: *Steve Cannon, Susan Hunt, Diane Stevens*

via email only

Wednesday 11 May 2022

Dear all

## **The Restructure and Redundancies in the Faculty of Technology - School of Computer Science**

I write to you all as the four names that I have seen associated with the communication and detail about the above restructure.

Our local representatives at Sunderland University have been in touch with me about the proposals. I have been sent some of the documentation. We have a number of questions and concerns.

In short, it would appear that the University has not complied with the relevant legislation on consultation about redundancies.

Section 188 of the Trade Union & Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 provides that you write to the relevant recognized trade union/s and provide them with full details of the proposals. While it might be the case that you have informed the local representatives with some of the detail, we would expect such communication to be provided in writing to the office of the relevant trade union. This could be to our Head Office, the Regional Official (Iain Owens), or to me. Such communication should make clear that this is a formal notification under the terms of the Act. For the avoidance of doubt, we do not believe that the letter that has been received from Alison Stephenson dated 9 May 2022 complies with the Act in full.

In addition, you will be cognizant of the need for the government to be aware of possible redundancies. With this in mind, has the University completed a HR1 notification? If so, can we please have a copy? If not, when is this going to happen? You will be aware that a "*failure to comply with the statutory notification requirements without good cause may result*

*in prosecution and a fine, on summary conviction, for the company and/or officers of the company."* ([Ref](#))

It is of serious concern to us that the University has indicated in the documents that *"All staff aligned to Computer Science are potentially impacted"*, and that the total number of affected employees at risk is 35. Our union Branch Committee representatives were briefed yesterday. Suffice to say that they expressed some outrage at the proposals, including the manner in which they were being implemented, as well as the timing.

One example of this is the email that was sent to affected staff (09 May 2022 16:27) which states *"Please do not share this presentation outside of the school other than with your UCU representative"*. This is concerning on a number of levels. Staff who have been sent correspondence that could potentially end their career at Sunderland University have every right to speak to those that they deem necessary in order to get through this. This includes friends and colleagues throughout the institution, as well as those close to them outside of work. Such a request to effectively keep quiet about some aspects of the proposals is unreasonable in the circumstances.

I understand that Role Profiles, Selection Criteria, and perhaps other information have yet to be provided to us. I further understand that an Equality Impact Assessment on the proposals also needs to be provided. If this has not been formally asked for, please accept this as a request for such an assessment to be conducted and provided to us.

To be clear, our position is that formal notification of redundancies, and the collective consultation that is necessary which follows from that, has yet to begin. The Branch have asked me to be at that first meeting and I have agreed. I will make time to ensure that I am available for such a meeting. Please contact me as soon as possible to arrange this meeting.

In the meantime, I would suggest that the University ceases all formal individual consultation with staff that is planned - with the exception of queries relating to DVR and questions of clarity about the proposals - until we have been able to set up the collective consultation meeting that I have mentioned above.

Yours sincerely,

*Jon Bryan*

**Jon Bryan**  
**Regional Support Official**