



September 8th, 2020

NOTICE OF OFFICIAL DISPUTE

The University and College Union hereby gives notice to Anglia Ruskin University that under the terms of our Recognition Agreement, an official dispute is declared with immediate effect.

Following the cessation of on-campus activities further to the Covid-19 pandemic, we note the University's decision to resume on-site activities, with campus-based teaching to begin in the week starting September 21st.

UCU is unconvinced by claims made by the University that it is safe, responsible or necessary to resume on-site activity. For further details, please see the attached letter to the Chief Operating Officer, James Rolfe, from the Branch Executive of ARU UCU, dated September 8th, 2020 (Attached). We would urge the University to consult the authoritative and scientific sources referenced in that document. In addition, we would urge the University to adopt the position as set out by national UCU and endorsed by the ARU Branch Executive, namely:

- full consultation with UCU
- no default face-to-face teaching
- facemasks to be worn in indoor spaces
- widely available sanitising stations and facility cleaning regimes
- members who are required to work on campus and want to do so must have suitable and sufficient risk assessments
- testing, tracing, and quarantine measures
- social distancing of two metres, unless otherwise specified and sufficiently risk assessed
- infection levels must be stable and not increasing

Our decision to declare a dispute has not been made lightly, but there is far too much at stake. It is a matter of life and death.

UCU reminds the University that it is under a duty to consult with Unions (more specifically the Unions' H&S reps) in good time when introducing measures which have an impact on the health and safety at work of employees. The only consultation that has taken place has been in relation to the Institutional Risk Assessment, which deals with measures to mitigate the decision to return to face to face teaching. The hierarchy of controls means that the University should eliminate the risk in the first

instance, rather than mitigate. No such discussion on the principle of face to face teaching has taken place, either in relation to health and safety responsibilities or professional and industrial considerations and repercussions.

With this declaration of a dispute, the University is called upon to enter into negotiations to find a way forward and is reminded that under the terms of dispute resolution, to which the University is committed as part of our recognition agreement, the status quo prevails. In this case, online delivery is the pre-established mode of work and will remain so until we have reached a negotiated agreed settlement.

It is a source of regret that we have reached this situation. We need to act quickly to resolve matters. There is room for compromise. The University could announce a delay in the start of face to face teaching, as has been announced at St Andrews University. It might also be possible we could reach agreement with regard to subject areas with specialized teaching, in particular health and elements of art. But the situation is urgent and the University must act quickly.

We look forward to working with the University to find a resolution.

Dr John Hogan

Chair of Anglia Ruskin University and Vice Chair of Eastern and Home Counties
Region, University and College Union