



Notice of Official Dispute

Dear Vice Chancellor,

Thank you for your letter of the [29th June 2021](#), written in response to [our latest and last attempt to resolve matters before declaring a dispute](#), although we must admit to being extremely disappointed by its contents.

We must take issue with your suggestions, and in some places explicit statements, that UCU has rejected advances made by university officers to meet with them and to take opportunities to try to find workable and practical solutions to the challenges facing our members at ARU. You will appreciate that this whole sorry recent exchange of correspondence was triggered by James Rolfe's email sent to UCU negotiators at [09:20 on 22nd June 2021](#) and statements at the extraordinary JCNG meeting that took place less than four hours later that same day, which made it perfectly clear that the University was not prepared to enter into any form of collective agreement with UCU and was not prepared to negotiate further on any of the points previously discussed. As we indicated in our [letter to you of 25th June](#), all the solutions put forward in all good faith by UCU with a view to an agreed settlement were thrown back in our faces at this meeting. We presume that James was speaking on behalf of the university management and his management and HR colleagues on the JCNG when he confirmed this as the University's position.

We can only conclude from this that the University is no longer willing to work with UCU to try to reach an amicable solution. All UCU's efforts since 22nd June in attempting to arrange meetings with you have been with the sole aim of trying to reach such a solution. Your apparent reluctance to meet with us in order to achieve this outcome can lead us to only one conclusion. We note, again with grave disappointment, that your letter of 29th June does not propose an alternative time or date for a meeting when you and your colleagues would be available.

Whilst we agree that JCNG negotiations have been productive, and some common ground has been reached, we are concerned that your letter of 29th June trivialises some of the areas upon which it has not been possible to reach agreement. Many of these areas are fundamental to the terms and conditions of our members' employment, including working time and the University's duty to provide a safe and healthy place of work, the contractual requirement to undertake research, and legal entitlements to annual leave. These are not areas upon which the University has the

luxury of the ability to be 'flexible'. It has to meet its legal and moral obligations to its staff. The University's continued failure even to acknowledge its obligations is an on-going barrier to productive industrial relations.

We acknowledge that the University has on many occasions stated its commitment to doing all it can to address the concerns raised by staff. However, the University's actions (or rather lack of action) have spoken much louder than its words on this subject. This is a real opportunity for the University to do something positive and to make a tangible commitment to improving working conditions. This opportunity has so far been spurned by the University in preference for more delay and 'tinkering around the edges' of the issues. Being unwilling even to discuss [UCU's proposals for workable solutions](#) was the most recent event in a litany of lost opportunities.

UCU have been at the forefront in trying to get the University to put in place measures designed to go beyond rhetoric and the palliative, to provide material improvements in the wellbeing of our members. UCU will continue to exercise the duty to represent the interests of its members in whatever way it sees fit.

Despite our numerous attempts to reach an amicable settlement, the position adopted by the University leaves us with no choice but to hereby give notice to Anglia Ruskin University that under the terms of our Recognition Agreement, an official dispute is declared with immediate effect. Under the terms of Dispute Resolution in our Recognition Agreement with the University, we demand that we move straight to Stage II and thereby convene the Joint Consultative and Negotiating Panel.

ARU UCU Branch Executive

June 29th, 2021