



## UCU Guidance for those who have received 'At Risk' letters from University of Chester.

### **Without prejudice**

If you have received one of these letters – or if you are a UCU representative who is accompanying a member to a meeting - here are a number of points to guide you in the process.

1. Although this is a horrible process for you personally it is not your redundancy selection. The process that the University has to follow is that in addition to consulting the trade unions it has to consult staff. This is the process we are now in. Ask for details of the timeline of events as they see it.
2. Many of these questions listed here have already been asked by the trade unions – but it is important that they are also raised in your individual consultations and the answers recorded
3. Some points have been answered – albeit unsatisfactorily – but it is important to get these objections 'on the record' should future proceedings be necessary
4. The meetings will commence from the 19 April but you must contact UCU Branch Officers before then to make sure a UCU Representative has been allocated to be with you.
5. At that meeting the representative will take notes and support you. They will also be able to ask questions on your behalf. It is important that you meet up with them before the meeting with management.
6. You should have questions about the justification for redundancies. It is the work or the post that is redundant and not you (this is the law) so what has led to this post being considered? Is it a reduction of demand or loss of contracts? Insist on requesting evidence and proof of such by asking for business plans or student enrolment information (including projected numbers)

7. The UCU representative can speak on your behalf on these difficult issues but remember this is your opportunity to raise counter arguments that are specific to your role or department.
8. Ask about the Redeployment Process. In particular ask about how it will operate for you. Remember that Redeployment in law is about Trial Periods and suitability for retraining – it is not the same as a simple vacancy freeze (although that should be part of it).
9. Ask if there has been any equality impact assessments carried out on the selection criteria and the redeployment agreement and ask them to provide them to you. If not why not?
10. Make it clear that the reasons for redundancy are not acceptable either to you or to your trade union. You might also want to raise the issue of the £814,000 loss on legal fees over the site at Thornton. The trade unions have asked if an internal inquiry was conducted and if anyone accountable for this loss. This has important consequences if we believe that this is the real cause of the redundancies
11. It is important that you spell out the consequences for you and possibly your family or dependents. Again this is important for possible further challenges especially if the consequences relate to an equality or selection issue
12. It is important that you understand that the people you are meeting are also employees and have been asked to perform a role. Do not make assumptions about how they feel about this process. A good relationship with them is not only good practice but it is important that they are able to feel that they can help and that their efforts on behalf of all of those on the process would be appreciated.

The above 12 points are not exhaustive and a briefing will be arranged for all UCU representatives about these meetings.

Remember that regular Branch meetings will be held to inform members and make decisions should any offers in negotiations be achieved. It is important that you make sure that you and all your colleagues attend.

If they are not members of the union then it is your role to recruit them. Unions work as a collective and can only be really effective when they represent the majority. Our efforts here to make sure you are all represented in your meetings are only a small part of the efforts that go in to the union work. There are many organisational issues that need your support and recruitment is always best and most successfully done by existing members. It's easy enough to join online.

These guidelines do not represent a legal position or claim by UCU nor are they for collective bargaining purposes.

Make sure you have contacted the Branch Officers to let them know that you have one received a letter from the University

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