

Removing Statute 24 constitutes a seismic shift in job security for all university employees

What is at stake?

a) *Job Security for All Employees*

Abolishing all but one paragraph of [Statute 24](#) will make it much easier and quicker to dismiss/discipline academic staff. If they are forced to leave, many of the other staff who work with them will lose their jobs. Without doubt, **the removal of Statute 24 will undermine the job security of all university employees.**

b) *Academic Freedom*

[Statute 24](#) sets out the procedures the university is legally-obliged to follow so that academic freedom is preserved, above all other considerations, not just in theory but in day-to-day practice. Changes require Privy Council approval because independent scrutiny is vital. The policies on redundancy, discipline and grievance that management are devising can be changed whenever they like, and all decisions about both the process and the outcome will be taken by university employees. **Can you imagine awarding degrees, year after year, with no external examiners or having institutional reviews, time after time, with no external panel members? This is how the new policies will work.** There is not a single mention of academic freedom but staff can be dismissed for “conduct which could damage the university’s reputation” or repeated “insubordination”. See overleaf for just how much protection those of us currently covered by Statute stand to lose.

c) *Enhanced Redundancy Payments*

The university will have no reason to offer enhanced pay-outs if departments are restructured or closed. In the past, **all** staff have been offered an Enhanced Voluntary Leavers Scheme (amounting to 30 weeks tax-free salary) to avoid compulsory redundancies. This was true of the restructure of WMS and the School of Life Sciences, and of the closure of Warwick Institute of Education and the Centre for Employment and Industry.

What’s the alternative?

Rewriting Statute 24 so that the language is clearer but the substantive safeguards regarding independent scrutiny and due process (see overleaf for examples) are preserved. Other universities including [Manchester](#) have already done this. Removing virtually the entire Statute is “aggressive and unnecessary” (as stated by UCU’s Head of HE). If the university wants to treat all staff equally, this should be achieved by “levelling up” and including all staff in Statute.

How can I help?

- Forward this email to everyone in your department who isn’t a UCU member so they know what “simplify, clarify and modernise” really means. Encourage them to join UCU at <https://join.ucu.org.uk/> so they can vote on the Warwick UCU motion being prepared to defeat this.
- Come to the Emergency General Meeting and vote on the motion – details to follow.
- Give us your feedback by emailing Claire Duffy on administrator@warwickucu.org.uk – tell us how to improve the existing Statute and how to mobilise against its complete abolition.
- Volunteer for the campaign working party by emailing Claire Duffy on administrator@warwickucu.org.uk

DETAILED CHANGES

REDUNDANCY

Management want the existing redundancy policy for staff not covered by Statute to apply, unchanged, to all staff. This will give HoDs and senior managers free rein to decide if work in a particular discipline or sub-discipline should be cut. The policy is on the HR webpage [here](#):

Statute 24	Existing HR Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has ultimate responsibility • Overseen by redundancy committee comprising three lay members of Council and two academic members of Senate • Staff member can make their case directly to the redundancy committee in writing and face to face • Appeal decided by a lawyer of 10 years standing, advised by a lay member of Council and an academic member of Senate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HoDs or members of the Senior management team decide on redundancies if financial pressures necessitate or need/desire for work of a certain kind decreases. • No involvement of Council or Senate members • Appeal decided by Registrar (or nominated representative) and a senior manager from another department

DISCIPLINARY AND DISMISSAL

The existing disciplinary policy for staff not covered by Statute will apply, with a few minor changes, to all staff. Insubordination might mean not applying for a particular grant or not submitting to a particular journal. The current policy for non-academic staff is on the HR webpage [here](#):

Statute 24	Proposed HR Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has ultimate responsibility • Three-stage process with right to appeal to a PVC against Stages 1 and 2 • Stage 3 (Hearing) involves two lay members of Council and an academic nominated by Senate • Stage 3 appeal decided by a lawyer of 10 years standing, advised by a lay member of Council and an academic member of Senate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HoD chairs Disciplinary hearing unless gross misconduct is alleged, in which case, the Chair of the Faculty chairs • Staff can be dismissed for repeated insubordination, poor time-keeping or anything that could damage the university's reputation • No involvement of Council or Senate members • Appeal decided by two senior members of staff

GRIEVANCE

The existing grievance policy for staff not covered by Statute will apply, with a few minor changes, to all staff. The current policy for non-academic staff is on the HR webpage [here](#):

HEALTH INCAPACITY

Term-time only staff will have to accept new contracts with pro rata sick pay. The sickness absence policy will apply to all staff. HoDs will trigger dismissal on the grounds of ill-health. Appeals will be decided by two senior members of staff. In contrast, Statute 24 requires a committee comprising a medically-qualified Chair, one person nominated by Council and one person nominated by the staff member.