

CALLING FOR THE RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS OF THE UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE BOARD (UEB)

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis the University of Sheffield Executive Board (UEB) has acted in utter disregard for the physical and mental health of staff and students, as well the long-term future of the very institution that is supposed to lead. Consequently, we do not have confidence that it is fit to lead the University of Sheffield. We ask for the resignation of the Vice-Chancellor, the deputy Vice-Chancellor, the Head of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and all other members of the UEB involved with the restructure of the School of Languages and Cultures and the closure of the Department of Archaeology (see below).

Significant examples of unsavoury initiatives by the UEB include:

- The decision to subject staff to the ill-conceived and entirely financially unnecessary Section 188 “fire and rehire” process, which triggered a vote of no-confidence approved by the UCU Sheffield branch.
- The obsession with reviews and restructures across the University at a critical time during a pandemic, when staff and student should rather be allowed to focus on how best to continue their work in exceptionally difficult circumstances.
- The extremely ill-conceived proposed restructure of the School of Languages and Cultures, implemented in complete disregard of the staff and students’ opinions. The proposed separation of the teaching of Cultures on the one hand and Languages on the other risks jeopardising the value of the offered degrees and the future of the discipline in Sheffield.
- The proposed closure of the world-renowned Department of Archaeology, ignoring the outrage expressed by local, national and international communities and expressed in more than 2,300 letters of protest and almost 47,000 petition signatures. This initiative has brought shame and ridicule to the University and enormous mental health strain to current and past students and staff of the Department, as well as the many who were planning to begin or continue their archaeology studies in Sheffield.
- The manipulative and non-transparent conduct of all these review processes, as well as the treatment of students as merchandise and staff as disposable commodities.
- The behaviour of the Vice Chancellor who chose to inform staff of the closure of Department of Archaeology in a 13-minute meeting, which did not allow any questions or discussion. The Vice Chancellor did not even have the decency to look at his colleagues in the face, as their cameras were turned off.
- The focus on destruction rather than planning, bringing misery to students and staff alike.
- The overall inability to interact with staff and students in a constructive way and the complete disregard for their physical and mental health.

The resignation of key members of the current UEB will open up the opportunity for a more sympathetic, informed and forward-looking team to take over and re-establish the University of Sheffield as a genuine place of learning, working in tune with its staff and students as well as the wider community.