

Mr Chris Skidmore MP
Minister of State for Universities,
Science, Research and Innovation
Department for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
Great Smith Street
London, SW1P 3BT

Dear Mr Skidmore,

On behalf of the University and College Union (UCU), I am writing to raise significant concerns about the decision by the UK funding bodies to permit the submission of outputs of former staff made redundant in the 2021 Research Excellence Framework (REF).

This decision sends a deeply damaging message about the way in which academic staff are valued by universities and funders.

In a sector where insecure employment is already endemic, this move will also act as a major disincentive for institutions to retain and invest in their academic staff.

Moreover, it risks causing real reputational damage to institutions and individual Units of Assessment that choose to go down this particular route.

I would therefore ask you to do two things:

- 1) Urge the funding bodies to reverse their decision and ensure that the work of staff who have been made redundant will not be submissible.
- 2) Urge universities to make a clear commitment not to use the work of redundant staff in their REF 2021 submissions and update their 2021 REF Code of Practice (CoP) accordingly.

I would also appreciate a meeting with you at your earliest convenience to discuss this and other issues of concern to higher education staff.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully,

Matt Waddup
Head of Policy and Campaigns