

In the interests of academic freedom I am making this YesYes flysheet available. However, I would much prefer that you signed the NoNo flysheet available at <http://tinyurl.com/ybz3lev>. For a rebuttal of this FAQ see <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~rja14/ccf/statute-u.html>.

Stephen Cowley

Statute U Ballot – Summary Flysheet 2 short

It has been sixteen years since the University revised Statutes concerning disciplinary, dismissal, and grievance procedures for University officers, this in response to the 1988 Education Reform Act. Since then much has changed not only in terms of employment law and practice, but also in the structure and operations of the University itself. The current arrangements for officers are not of best practice, nor in the best form to provide fair, respectful, or proportionate processes for those involved. In short, changes are overdue.

The proposals mark an important step towards convergence in relation to grievance, discipline and dismissal procedures for all categories of University staff. The major remaining differences in procedures for University officers engaged in research and teaching are to ensure that academic freedom can be safeguarded.

The changes to grievance procedures are intended to return the grievance process to its original purpose, namely that of providing an informal means of resolving work-related complaints. Over time, grievance hearings have tended to become increasingly formal, lengthy and adversarial. An officer currently in practice has to use grievance procedures for resolving disputes rather than using, as now proposed, early mediation for rapid resolution which can avoid much of the stress that the current system causes. The proposed policies now fairly balance the needs of the employees with those of the University, giving *greater* rights to individual staff members than allowed for in general employment law.

The proposals address weaknesses in the current redundancy procedures; for example after the University has decided that there should be a redundancy through a ballot of the Regent House, there is currently a requirement of a second ballot whereby the names of the individual officers affected are made open to public scrutiny and discussion. We believe that this focus on the individual is inappropriate for a ballot. The Regent House would not, in future, have a role in identifying which particular individuals should be made redundant. The selection process should be conducted by the University acting in consultation with the employees affected and with their representatives.

It is also proposed that a ballot of Regent House is used only in the cases of redundancies involving staff defined as being in Schedule J (i.e. staff with duties of teaching and research, and entitled to study leave). There are two reasons for this restriction: (i) the Regent House is tasked with protecting academic freedom. It is right therefore that it should primarily consider those tasked with pursuing *individual* academic enquiry, and (ii) extending Regent House scrutiny to non-Schedule J officers would be difficult to justify given the similarity of their roles with the many other non-established academic related staff currently in the University.

We therefore urge you to vote *placet* to Graces 1 and 2

Please return to the Registry, signed and with your name in BLOCK CAPITALS, either by mail to The Old Schools, Cambridge CB2 1TN, or by fax to 01223 332332

Deadline; 1pm on Friday 12 March 2010.

Signature

Name in BLOCK CAPITALS