

To all signatories of the collective letter

Follow-up to the collective letter of concern

Thank you for your collective letter of concern responding to issues raised by the [Reindorf Report](#) , I am responding to the points that you raise on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. As a University our responsibilities include upholding academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law, legal duties in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion, and a commitment to our University values. The relationship between these responsibilities comes to the fore in moments of contestation. Universities have a vital role to play in convening difficult and sometimes uncomfortable conversations, and in curating the spaces in which ideas that some may find challenging or unpopular can be expressed and debated. The Vice-Chancellor has written a [blog](#) about the review.

I will now take the opportunity to respond to the wider issues you raise, including: the process for the review; the report redactions; and providing further detail relating to our approach to implementing our action plan.

Process for the review

The remit of the Review was endorsed by University Senate and approved by University Council, to ensure the purpose was clear and appropriate and that a fair process was followed in gathering facts. We took considerable care in appointing a person independent from the University to impartially review the two issues. Their credentials and their appointment were approved by a selection panel. All internal interviewees had an opportunity to see those parts of the Report that relate to them and had an opportunity to draw to the reviewer's attention any errors of fact, any points of clarification or any issues of interpretation that they wished to raise. It was for the sole discretion of the reviewer to determine whether or not these comments should result in any amendments to the Report. Submissions were made directly to the reviewer without any involvement of the University. Staff and students were also able to make anonymous submissions. We also added an extra layer of assurance through the expert external reference group, which reviewed and provided further independent comment for the reviewer to consider before finalising the Report.

These steps were taken to ensure the Review was both fair and independent. Details of the context of the review and the remit, including the governance arrangements and sign off processes for all elements of the review, as well as the process for selecting the reviewer are at: [Terms of reference](#). The University's Senate and our governing body, our Council, have considered the Report and agreed to take a series of [actions](#) in response to the recommendations.

Redactions

The purpose of the independent review, with a remit approved by Senate and Council, was to establish what happened, why, and to make recommendations to prevent this happening again. The published Report provides an open analysis of what happened, the independent reviewer's assessment of the outcomes and all the recommendations made. Redacting the Report has

allowed us to publish the findings of the Report, ensuring maximum transparency. However, we also have a legal duty to protect the privacy of the individuals mentioned and a duty of care to those who are named in the Report.

The Report has been redacted by specialist legal experts and not by the author of the Report, or by the University. The redactions are intended to protect the personal data of individuals who contributed to the Review, and have been made in line with the University's legal obligations. As the 'Facts and Evidence' section covers detailed contributions made by named or otherwise identifiable witnesses, this part of the Report has been redacted in full. The remaining sections' content has been redacted where appropriate. Personal data appearing in these sections that is already in the public domain was not redacted as it is deemed disclosed to the world at large. The specialist legal advisors have not altered the structure or content of the Report, and the recommendations and our response to them, covers the detail of the Review.

Our approach

As the Vice-Chancellor has commented in his blog, some of our community may agree with the current legal framework in which universities operate, whilst others may disagree profoundly and want to campaign to change it. Academic freedom and freedom of speech within the law protect their right to do this. At the same time, the University carries obligations to act lawfully, to allow our staff the freedom to express challenging views within the law, and to ensure that staff and students who express lawful views that are controversial or unpopular are not disadvantaged for doing so. The University will want to go beyond the minimum standards the law requires of us in relation to equality, diversity and inclusion and promoting our University values where this is possible, but we cannot do so in a way that means we act unlawfully.

This Review is not an end point and the areas it covers are and will remain both highly sensitive and contested areas of the law. However, where we have made mistakes, we must and will address these issues. The Report raises issues that may be difficult and upsetting, particularly for staff who have been personally affected by the issues raised by the Review, our trans and non-binary community and their allies. The Vice-Chancellor has apologised to staff, on behalf of the University, for the procedural and other failings that occurred in relation to the two events covered in the Review, and for the distress that this has caused. I want to reassure you that we are committed to being a supportive and inclusive community for all our members.

We will be taking a range of actions, working with you, to address the impact of these events on our whole community. I fully understand and respect that some members of our community might chose not to engage with this process, but we will take all the steps we can to ensure a wide diversity and breadth of ideas are included.

Sara Limerick

Acting Director of People and Culture