# Cardiff University faces £31 million deficit amid budget cuts and job losses



Cardiff University is navigating a challenging financial landscape as it grapples with a projected deficit exceeding £31 million. In light of ongoing consultations regarding proposed budget cuts and potential job losses, Vice Chancellor Wendy Larner has provided a significant update on the situation, marking a shift in the university's strategy following months of opposition and protests from staff and unions.

Initially, the university announced plans to eliminate 400 academic positions, but this figure has since been revised down to 286. Larner confirmed that all staff within the schools of mathematics and chemistry have been removed from the redundancy list, alleviating immediate concerns for those departments. Despite this adjustment, with a total of 1,307 full-time academic positions still classified as at risk, uncertainty remains prevalent among faculty members.

Three notable developments emerged from the university's recent announcements:

**Nursing School Update**: The widely respected School of Nursing will remain operational, although it will be scaled down and accept a reduced number of students. A proposed plan, which is pending approval from the Welsh Government and related entities, aims to maintain adult, child, and mental health nursing programmes by potentially introducing a foundation year to encourage wider participation. This proposal requires collaboration with Health Education and Improvement Wales (HEIW), which is tasked with developing a strategy to ensure consistent nursing provision meets the needs of the healthcare workforce in Wales.

**Response from Welsh Government**: The Welsh Government has maintained a degree of distance regarding the university’s financial situation but affirmed the importance of developing a viable plan for nursing education. In a statement, the Welsh Government expressed its commitment to engaging with Cardiff University and HEIW throughout this planning phase to ensure that the nursing sector is effectively addressed.

**Alternatives from Mathematics and Chemistry**: The mathematics and chemistry departments have successfully presented alternative strategies that led to their exemption from proposed cuts. The chemistry school will retain its medicinal chemistry programme, while the mathematics department has proposed measures to increase student participation. The Vice Chancellor noted that the university's plans to establish a campus in Kazakhstan will also necessitate input from mathematics faculty, contributing to the reduction in potential job cuts.

The University and College Union (UCU), representing academic staff, has warned of possible strike action and a marking boycott should any compulsory redundancies be enforced. Following the latest announcements, a union spokesperson commented, “We are relieved for the very small number of staff that have been taken out of scope for redundancy... But today’s news is not good enough. It is unforgivable that so many of our members remain in fear for their livelihoods.” The union has highlighted its belief that compulsory redundancies can be avoided through better financial management and scrutiny of the university's ambitious revenue goals.

The financial troubles faced by Cardiff University resonate with broader pressures affecting higher education institutions across Wales and the UK. Rising operational costs, static home tuition fees, and dwindling numbers of international students have contributed to an estimated combined deficit of £70 million among Welsh universities. Several institutions, including Bangor University and Cardiff Metropolitan University, have announced job cuts in response to similar financial constraints.

As Cardiff University continues to navigate this tumultuous period, the outcome of ongoing consultations and agreements with various stakeholders will play a critical role in shaping its future and the employment landscape for its academic staff.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://nation.cymru/news/university-imposing-massive-job-cuts-and-school-closures-has-0-5bn-in-unrestricted-reserves/> - This article supports the claim that Cardiff University faces financial challenges despite having significant unrestricted reserves, and it discusses the controversial nature of the proposed job cuts.
* <https://voice.cymru/under-a-mantra-of-austerity-and-marketisation-welsh-universities-are-in-peril/> - This piece highlights the broader financial struggles of Welsh universities, including Cardiff University, and the protests against proposed cuts.
* <https://www.cardiff.ac.uk/public-information/corporate-information/financial-information> - This page provides detailed financial information about Cardiff University, including its income, expenditure, and financial challenges, which supports the claim of an underlying deficit.
* <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-62801407> - This article outlines the financial situation and proposed cuts in Welsh universities, reflecting the broader context Cardiff University operates within.
* <https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/education/cardiff-university-cuts-nursing-jobs-26336601> - This news article discusses the specific impacts on departments like nursing and the reactions from staff and students, aligning with the updates on the School of Nursing's status.