# Aberdeen University announces course cuts and promotion freeze to tackle £5.5 million deficit



A recent announcement from Aberdeen University has sparked concerns among faculty regarding significant operational changes, including the freezing of promotions, the discontinuation of certain courses, and a new round of voluntary redundancies as part of efforts to mitigate a projected budget deficit of £5.5 million.

The university, which has been grappling with financial difficulties, previously experienced a wave of voluntary redundancies last year. Despite earlier assurances from Principal George Boyne that no plans for voluntary severance or early retirement would be pursued "at the current time," various teaching staff have been informed of forthcoming cutbacks aimed at addressing low demand for certain programmes.

During staff meetings held to discuss these developments, lecturers were made aware that courses within five schools—including Business, Geosciences, Language Literature Music and Visual Culture, Natural and Computing Sciences, and Social Sciences—are facing potential elimination.

One anonymous lecturer expressed deep frustration, stating that those aspiring for career advancement felt as if "the rug has been pulled out from under them." The lecturer characterised the overall atmosphere at the university as "grim," with low morale among colleagues, many of whom are early in their careers and have worked diligently towards promotions now jeopardised by the university’s current financial strategy.

"The mood from the principal tends to be consistently overly positive," the lecturer noted, implying a disconnect between administrative optimism and on-the-ground realities. They reiterated, "Our academic jobs are being turned into dead ends. This is a race to the bottom. It’s going to kill the institution."

The situation has not gone unnoticed by the University and Colleges Union (UCU), which expressed that the announcement would likely be perceived as a "slap in the face," particularly following previous cuts to modern languages that incited a significant backlash about 18 months ago. Mary Senior, the UCU's Scotland official, remarked that staff are questioning why the burden of job losses appears to be disproportionately affecting a small number of academic schools and highlighted the broader implications of the promotion freeze on morale.

In response to these concerns, a university spokesperson acknowledged the challenging climate within the higher education sector, noting that the current adjustments are aimed at closing the £5.5 million budget gap, which constitutes roughly 2% of the institution's total revenue. The spokesperson outlined plans to reshape degree offerings to ensure they better align with student demand while indicating that the anticipated job cuts would primarily occur through a "voluntary severance and enhanced retirement scheme."

The university’s statement also underlined ongoing efforts by management to generate additional revenue, asserting that the measures introduced are vital for maintaining financial sustainability moving forward.

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

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