

Dear Professor Jackie Kelly,

We are writing to share concerns raised by a large number of staff within the Faculty of Health, Medicine and Social Care, in particular within the Nursing School. UCU members are committed to the faculty, the nursing profession and passionate about developing the next generation of nurses to work in the NHS. However, there are mounting concerns that working conditions within the faculty are intolerable.

As you will be aware, UCU concluded a collective agreement on workloads and wellbeing, signed by the Vice-Chancellor and our branch leadership, in May 2022 (see: [signed-agreement-may-2022.pdf](#))

This agreement was the result of the collective recognition that many colleagues had been suffering as a consequence of excessive workloads across many parts of the university. We are pleased to report, where the agreement has been properly implemented, significant improvements to staff wellbeing have been recorded.

However, we have received numerous concerns from members of your faculty, as outlined below:

- Staff are overworked and becoming ill.
- AWBM conversations have not taken place with some members of staff, especially new members of staff.
- We have heard claims that where workload plans are in place they are not being adhered to.
- Timetabling and student communication are not being addressed appropriately. This is leading to elevated stress for colleagues confronted with university wide actions.
- There needs to be a more coherent strategy in place to cover teaching. Covering teaching is taking a priority which is having a detrimental effect on other role commitments such as marking, content development and module planning. There is little acknowledgement of the knock-on effect of moving 'other' work around, which ends up being completed in non-working hours.
- There is a tendency for some managers to micromanage staff's time when cover is required. Additional teaching obligations are imposed without considering whether colleagues are comfortable teaching the subjects which they are being asked to cover.
- Staff development has taken a back seat with little if any time given to academic activities such as research, conference attendance, CPD or formal qualification.
- Concerns have also been expressed about an apparent lack of clarity on the criteria for promotion.

UCU demands the following:

- Faculty management commit to an action plan, demonstrating how they will comply with the AWBM agreement by December 16th.
- That the faculty leadership will commit to including UCU in discussions on how the workload agreement is implemented in the faculty.
- That the faculty leadership review allegations of poor management practice, such as micromanaging, last-minute changes to timetabling/covering classes.
- That faculty leadership acknowledges that the large-scale curriculum review currently taking place requires staff involvement.
- Recognition that the large-scale curriculum review requires staff to have time allocated to their workload to undertake such important work.

Sincerely,

ARU UCU Executive