



September 19th, 2025

Crisis in Criminology: Declaration of Dispute

Open Letter to Professor Roderick Watkins, Vice Chancellor of Anglia Ruskin University

Dear Vice Chancellor,

Academics in Criminology have repeatedly raised concerns, for over twelve months, about unsustainable and excessive workloads. Faculty and School management have failed to respond adequately and thus breached the [workload agreement which you signed with UCU](#).

Colleagues are yet to see their workloads specified and agreed for this year, despite repeated assurances from management that this failure would not happen again. This demonstrates a clear disregard for agreed processes and prevents staff from planning workloads in a fair and sustainable way. With the workload agreement breached, staff well-being is being undermined and the quality of education provided to students diminished.

In order to resolve this dispute, UCU members in Criminology have set out the following key demands:

1. The existing workload agreement between the university and UCU must be implemented in full, without reductions imposed by management to make workloads appear artificially lower.
2. The AWBM must be completed and agreed jointly by staff and line managers no later than early July each year. This year, as it is already far too late, the AWBM must be completed and agreed no later than September 26th 2025.
3. Staff should not be allocated over 100% workload. There should be a plan to ensure workloads are reduced further next year to allow for some headroom to cover emergency work, in accordance with the AWBM agreement.
4. Staff seeking development roles such as Course Director, undertaking training, or requiring a sabbatical to conduct research should not be refused on the grounds that there are no

resources to cover their existing workloads. There must be a fair and transparent process to ensure that such opportunities are available, supported, and not blocked simply because workloads are being mismanaged.

5. Criminology courses must be resourced appropriately with the number of staff to reflect student numbers. Current staffing is insufficient and results in excessive workloads, in breach of both the workload agreement and the Working Time Regulations 1998.
6. Modules must be delivered as set out in their Module Definition Forms (MDFs). Reducing seminar lengths or otherwise cutting delivery standards undermines both staff welfare and student experience.
7. All staff must have sufficient time allocated for marking, in line with the workload agreement: 1 hour per student for 15-credit modules, and 2 hours per student for 30-credit modules. These allocations must be realistic within the 20-working-day marking turnaround and must take into account the full range of other duties, including teaching preparation, administration, and research. Unrealistic or overloaded marking allocations risk breaching both the agreement and student assessment standards.
8. Criminology staff must be meaningfully consulted on departmental matters affecting workloads, teaching delivery, and resourcing. Consultation must take place before decisions are made, not after. This includes changes to module delivery, recruitment decisions, course resourcing, and workload allocation. The current practice of informing staff post-decision, without genuine dialogue, undermines trust, breaches the spirit of the workload agreement, and treats staff as passive recipients rather than professionals. As the academic's front facing the students, we should be properly resourced and supported to provide them with the highest quality teaching. We should not be treated as disposable or disregarded in decisions that directly affect our work and our students' education.

The university leadership has made improving the student experience its top priority, as stated in the recent Town Halls. Yet at the same time it has been decided Criminology can manage courses with staffing reductions!

The time for delay has passed, workloads must be corrected, students must receive the quality of provision they are entitled to, and staff must be treated fairly under the terms of the workload agreement.

We very much hope that we can find a rapid resolution to this dispute. However, if we are faced with a failure to agree, then our members in Criminology will be balloted for strike action.

We look forward to hearing from you and working together to resolve this ongoing dispute.

ARU UCU Branch Executive