

1. What measures are currently being implemented to address issues of bullying and nepotism within AHES?
2. Following the announcement of the new ARU academic franchise in Cairo, in the light of the notorious abduction and brutal torture to the point of death in 2016 of Giulio Regeni, a young University of Cambridge doctoral student who was researching the Egyptian independent trade union movement, at the hands of agents of the Egyptian ministries of interior and defence, and in light of the fact that, according to Amnesty International, bodies reporting to the Egyptian interior and defence ministries routinely practise the same kinds of torture that Giulio suffered against hundreds of Egyptian citizens each year; in the light of the fact that, according to the Association for Freedom of Thought and Expression (AFTE) of Egypt, Giulio is only one of many scholars who have been arbitrarily detained, and often abused, in Egypt, and university independence is limited by the intervention of the security sector in teaching and research and its targeting of professors who speak in public about public affairs and state policies; and in light of the fact that, according to the International Trade Union Confederation, “Workers in Egypt are deprived of many of their basic rights due to the hardline repression of the independent union movement [since 2018]. The right to strike and freedoms of expression and assembly are severely restricted”; thus, in the light of the fact that academic freedom does not exist in Egypt, and that universities are in practice obliged to co-operate with the state in muzzling academic freedom and staff, what practical steps and planning has ARU taken to ensure that 1) its franchise operation in Cairo meets international standards in academic freedom, teaching and research, 2) it meets its duty of care to its students and academic staff in Egypt such that they may study, teach and research without the fear of being abducted, detained and tortured; and 3) it abides by international human and labour rights conventions, not least in the area of independent trade unions representing both academic and non-academic staff on the Cairo campus?
3. PSR methodology and consistency  
PSR guidance states that where roles have split purposes, alignment should follow the *largest proportion of the role’s function*. Can you clarify how this methodology was applied to faculty-based roles, and what assessment was used beyond job descriptions?
4. Exclusion from RISM review despite majority function  
Some faculty-based roles with a clear majority function within RISM have been excluded from that review. On what basis were these decisions made, and will they be reconsidered?
5. Risk, disadvantage, and fairness  
Excluding post-holders from the RISM review while aligning their primary function to

RISM creates a clear disadvantage and directly contradicts assurances that their roles are not at risk. How does senior management justify this inconsistency, and how is the resulting risk being actively mitigated? This raises serious concerns about unfair or procedurally unsound treatment.

6. What guidance has been given to HoS to manage the introduction of teaching over the summer to ensure staff are not being required to teach all through the year (with implications for ability to take leave and WBM)?
7. What are the projected student numbers for the Cairo campus over the next five years?
8. What is the projected surplus (profit) for this new activity and how will it improve ARU's financial position (over the next 5 years)?
9. Does Writtle currently return a surplus to ARU? If not, when is it expected to return a surplus and how will this be achieved?
10. How it can be the case that more than one member of the RISM Working Group which supposedly supported the development of the RISM proposal can claim to have little or no knowledge of the proposal; and how the majority of the members are remotely qualified to lead a meaningful consideration of research & innovation support & management given the absence of research & innovation experience and expertise?

How the proposals around staff mapping and resource requirements can be seen as safe, given it now known they rest on job descriptions which were not up to date at the beginning of the process

How the demand for growth, including in terms of research and innovation activities and the proposed future university strategy, can be reconciled with the swingeing reduction in resource being proposed under RISM.

How the university plans to build bridges with, address the low morale among and restore trust with the staff affected by RISM, as part of ensuring that R&I support is effectively delivered in the future.

11. We are conscious that we have members around the university who are being bullied by their colleagues, some on a long term basis over years. Senior management are aware of some of the issues that have arisen and these sometimes come from areas

of the uni where you would least expect it.

We obviously have a new policy and R+S platform, as well as training on the subject, but these do not appear to be making any tangible difference to the issue.

12. Given your previous experience on such matters, how can we make a difference for our colleagues, and really tackle bullying and harassment and unacceptable behaviours so that our members do not continue to suffer in silence?
13. There is a growing level of anxiety and frustration among staff regarding the Estates and Facilities efficiency review. The Director recently shared an update on Phases 1 and 2 of the consultation period. The update provided was vague, with key dates described as being “sometime towards the end of May and June,” and an acknowledgement that the Director could not recall the exact dates. Given that staff are awaiting information that may significantly affect their roles and job security, this lack of clarity is unsettling and adds to existing anxiety. Would the VC and COO be able to ask their direct reports to provide more timely, accurate, and detailed information to their teams, particularly around key dates and expectations, in order to help alleviate staff concerns?
14. Would it be possible to revisit the language used when discussing role changes within the efficiency reviews. The term ‘deleted’ when a role is changing or being removed does not consider the human impact. Could we adopt language that feels more respectful and people focused?
15. What is the strategy behind opening ARU Cairo? Why is there minimal transparency around the building of a new campus abroad and setup of ‘British experiences’ when courses are set to start in September 2026? How does the founding of this campus impact ARU’s funds, particularly in light of the £11million deficit announced recently?
16. Teacher Pension (in regard to the inaccurate 'break in service') be raised. This was a result of the merge with Writtle University College and ARU. This is an historic issue but is yet to be resolved.
17. How will all PSS be formally represented in shaping the review, and what assurance can be given that the review will be based on the work staff actually do, rather than outdated job descriptions or incorrect information provided by Faculty leadership who often are not aware of our actual contributions?

How will existing inconsistencies in PSS grading be identified and addressed through the review, and on what evidence base?

With regrading currently frozen, what mechanism will exist during the review for PSS to have additional or above-grade work formally recognised?

PSS have no equivalent to academic workload allocation models or promotion routes. What recognition mechanisms will the review introduce to address this asymmetry?

18. Many PSS staff remain uncertain whether they fall within scope of the restructure, and on what basis those decisions are being made. Role titles and job descriptions across teams are demonstrably out of date, many have long been operating above their substantive grades and now with unfulfilled vacancies, staff are routinely absorbing additional work. At the same time, the PSS regrading process has been frozen, leaving staff with no formal route to have their actual workload and the additional contribution recognised. This particularly disadvantages those returning from long-term leave, who find themselves unable even to submit a regrading case.

In light of this:

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19. Why and how big increase in the projected income-to-expenditure gap is currently £11.4m (compared with a previous estimate of £4m). How did we miss this difference?

The financial reporting - is it really accurate?

Are we keeping a close eye on income being coded correctly?

Are we invoicing too much, or in error?

Are we keeping an eye on the debt all around the University?

What are the "Non-pay efficiencies of £1.2m ". Can these be explained, and why are they not detailed on the Heron? They also were not listed in the VC meeting.

Bursaries and scholarships - if we hope to save £2.0m, why are we offering £10,000 towards tuition fees for one-year Master's programmes to students from Indonesia, India and Ghana?

20.0 We are being asked to improve the student experience. Since VSS our team of Study Coaches was reduced from 7 to 3. There are now no coaches at the two largest campuses. This means students at these campuses do not get 1:1 in person support or have coaches able to deliver valuable in class writing support. In addition we the remaining coaches are not able to offer an acceptable level of service, with not enough availability for online appointments or being able to offer the previous range of workshops to students on the two largest campuses due to our limited number. It seems unfair the students at our main campuses do not have their own coaches. How does this improve student experience and what will be done to provide equity of provision to students at Cambridge and Chelmsford?

21.0 Unfortunately, the bullying culture that previously existed at ARU has returned. This is often in relation to student experience and the NSS, where academics are blamed for disappointing NSS results. This behaviour is clearly against ARU's stated visions and values as an institution.

The reality is that we admit almost every BA student that applies. With the mental health crisis facing the UK, courses in universities like ARU are covering much of the support to young people, who are in some cases are very unwell individuals. This can significantly affect survey responses in areas such as the NSS. However there has been a failure by ARU management to acknowledge this wider context.

22.0 I am a member of the newly merged School of Art and I was contacted today by the new HoS to inform me that HR has made changes to the Associate Professor contract to include line management duties. This seems like a significant change to the profile and I'm wondering if the union has been consulted. I also want to ask if this change is being implemented across the university, or if the measure has been brought in as a consequence of the merger.

I also have questions about how the process and methodology for making the projected savings that the VC announced at the last town hall. I'm sure others have similar questions. What will the metrics be for deciding whose courses and roles are targeted?

23.0 Are there going to be staff redundancies within the next the 12 - 24 months?

Did we receive our second 1.5% pay rise in February 2026 as promised in 2025? And if not, why not when Roderick clearly stated in the last Town meeting that ARU has a surplus of money.

Will there be a clear career progression path for the technical team and when we be informed about it

Why was the AHES technical teams remaining budget suddenly removed in April 2026 when there is 3 - 4 months of the financial year left?

24.0 Why are roles that are fairly generic administrative roles being advertised externally when an existing member of staff may need a vacancy like this if their own job becomes at risk.

Considering reviews are not all underway (including the Financial Management review), how can roles such as the newly advertised Income Team Finance Assistant permanent Grade 3 role be advertised at present when no one yet knows how this functional review will play out. It seems hopeful to me that 'they' are not considering cuts in that area in that case, if they are able to appoint a new member of staff permanently (not even advertised as a fixed role). However, it doesn't seem wise to appoint anyone to a permanent role all things considered and would not be fair to any new person taking on that role if they might then find themselves out of work relatively soon. The recent vacancy for the Initial Teacher Training Course Administrator was advertised externally. Was it fair to advertise the role externally?

25.0 Why were some staff refused VSS recently. Clearly that would have helped us now. I also don't understand why they haven't re-considered this route rather than compulsory redundancy for some, which will be inevitable.

26.0 Consultation - Why haven't they consulted anyone below a Grade 7 role about what they do and how the roles work/team culture is etc. There seems to have been no research undertaken at all!

27.0 Comms – could comms on the website be far more explicit (perhaps they're intentionally vague and unclear what's been updated). As someone anticipating news in April regarding the scope of the Business Administration review – I have been on edge waiting for an update that never came. When considering the wording, they mention the scope will be implemented in April but not that it'd be communicated with the likes of us in the same month. I think better comms around timeline is required, because we're all on edge and worried sick. It is also very clear from recent town halls and the like that Exec staff are frustrated with the number of queries they are being challenged on. The empathy is

visibly non-existent in some cases and signposting people to wellbeing services etc is just a throwaway sentence and we're past that stage now.

28.0 Questionable Functional Reviews – It's clearly not going well so far ('RISM' – need I say more). The Administrative Review has become a 'miscellaneous' review for all the stragglers left at the end. People from previous reviews have argued that they need their staff, so they were taken out of one review and put in the next. How is this logical? How does that achieve the desired aim? What happens when everyone's put to the last review and then there are no jobs left to redeploy people to. Have they considered the fairness that those in earlier reviews will have more opportunities for redeployment than those put in the last group to be looked at? It pushes any savings needed into another area.

Progress so far – Are they on track with their financial projections? How many staff are they prepared to lose and have they genuinely considered how it will impact the student experience when they are directed to a 'bot' rather than a human on any of their queries.

Redeployments and Redundancies – how many have been made redundant or successfully redeployed in the finished reviews so far? Keen to see the percentages of these.

Reputational fallout – has this been considered at all?

Staff Survey – Why is time and money being invested in the annual survey when clearly they should know responses already due to this poorly implemented project

29.0 The Skills and Development for Staff and Students functional review has seen its timeline change several times, yet these changes are not communicated directly to staff. Instead, people become aware only when dates on the website change, with no explanation for why. When staff have raised concerns about the repeated movement of dates, we are often told not to worry because it is a "light-touch" process. For many colleagues, however, the uncertainty and lack of information is itself a significant source of anxiety.

How will senior leadership improve transparency around changes, communicate respectfully and proactively with staff, and ensure that the people doing the work are at the centre of this process rather than treated as an afterthought of a functional review?

30.0 'Multi-functional' staff spent weeks preparing for RISM based on incorrect scoping and have now been placed into further undefined reviews. Does senior leadership recognise this as a failure of process, and what mitigation or acknowledgement, including an apology, will be offered for the wellbeing impact?

Leadership has said it wants to "quicken the timescales". Can you explain what this means in practice for staff who are now waiting until probably after summer, and how uncertainty will be actively reduced during that period?

31.0 A full directorate meeting was held relating to the Future Student Professional Services review to set out the proposed TOM. At this meeting it was made clear some roles would be put at risk. Those in roles that are now at risk were not told until after their follow up department consultation meeting had taken place. At the department level meeting they were advised to 'check their emails' for a meeting invite to find out if their role was at risk.

Do you consider this appropriate practice within a consultation to inform staff that roles are at risk? Should employees be identifying their own status by checking emails for a meeting invite? Should those in roles at risk not have been made a priority for further communications straight after the directorate level meeting?

This approach is insensitive, lacked timely and direct communication with those most impacted and created unnecessary anxiety at an already difficult time.

32.0 As part of the current redesign, some functional reviews have already been completed and staff in those areas have been informed and are able to apply for redeployment roles. However, staff whose functions are still under review will not receive outcomes for some time. This means they are currently unable to apply for vacancies and may be disadvantaged compared to colleagues whose reviews have already concluded. How will this imbalance be addressed to ensure a fair and equitable process for all affected staff?

33.0 On the PID it states there is to be a working group including course admin, are there any dates for this at all as the working group doesn't appear to have been formed as yet and as such we are unsure how you can have the TOM without this?

34.0 Where functional reviews have been completed (e.g. I-Centre), staff from areas still under review are being asked to provide operational support. How does this affect those staff members' roles while they remain in scope of a functional review?

35.0 As the functional review involving faculty staff appears to be no longer on track, and the promised updated timeline has not yet been provided, what assurances can be given that this will be addressed promptly? Staff morale is being adversely affected by the ongoing uncertainty

36. Given the financial context in which we are currently operating, it's understandable that a voluntary severance programme was implemented as part of the Efficiencies Programme.

Following the loss of 1.6 FTE Study Coach roles at Cambridge and 1.6 FTE at Chelmsford through voluntary severance, how can ARU meet the Access and Participation Plan targets to improve Black/Asian/mature student and lower socio-economic background awarding and continuation gaps by 2027?

The APP identifies curriculum-embedded and co-curricular support for library and study skills as one part of the solution (e.g. Study Skills Plus). Given the removal of 100% of Study Coach roles at our Cambridge and Chelmsford campuses, leaving 1.6 FTE at Writtle and 1 FTE at Peterborough and 0.6 FTE Maths/Statistics coach across all campuses, how can ARU meet its APP targets and deliver equity of experience across our campuses?

Study Coaches co-design academic skills teaching with academic staff and support students at all levels of study in co-curricular workshops and 1:1s. They contribute towards retention, continuation and success targets and support the strategic priority around improving the on-campus student experience.

The estimated potential financial costs to ARU resulting from lower retention, continuation and awarding gaps, as outlined in the APP, considerably outweigh the on-costs for a Grade 5 Study Coach. This situation impacts academic learning and teaching across all Faculties.

37.0 Given that the University has clear, agreed-upon workload models, why are colleagues at the Writtle campus consistently required to work hours far in excess of these annual limits, and what immediate steps will the Executive take to bring these workloads back into compliance with our collective agreements?

This is impacting on wellbeing.

38.0

PSR methodology and consistency

PSR guidance states that where roles have split purposes, alignment should follow the *largest proportion of the role's function*. Can you clarify how this methodology was applied to faculty-based roles, and what assessment was used beyond job descriptions?

Exclusion from RISM review despite majority function

Some faculty-based roles with a clear majority function within RISM have been excluded from that review. On what basis were these decisions made, and will they be reconsidered?

Risk, disadvantage, and fairness

Excluding post-holders from the RISM review while aligning their primary function to RISM creates a clear disadvantage and directly contradicts assurances that their roles are not at risk. How does senior management justify this inconsistency, and how is the resulting risk being actively mitigated? This raises serious concerns about unfair or procedurally unsound treatment.

39.0 Why are the Professional Services functional reviews being staggered - is it to avoid triggering the statutory requirement to report where 20 or more staff are at risk of redundancy?

Do you feel it is good practice for outdated JDPSs to be used to inform decision-making in terms of redundancies?

Further to this, the functional lead is unilaterally making decisions about staff jobs/redundancies without any rigor or independent, impartial review? (We have been told by the CPO that she doesn't believe there currently isn't a process and that's ok)

Scoping of roles within the reviews has changed, alarming during the consultation. Some staff do not feel this change correctly reflects their roles.

There have been serious issues with the RISM functional review - what lessons have been learnt and what process changes will be implemented to ensure the same mistakes aren't made for ongoing/upcoming reviews?

How will the RISM savings shortfall be made up? Will this be passed onto other reviews, to find additional savings?

Staff are still unclear which review they fall under. Can you provide a list of roles by review?

Line Managers are not being kept informed on key information pertaining to the scoping and review outcomes, making it extremely difficult to support their staff. How do you aim to improve on communication?

Will ARU Management or Senior Management roles also be reviewed as part of the functional reviews?

Will voluntary severance or voluntary redundancy be opened out to all staff again?

When will the Professional Services Regrading process re-open? It has been suggested by the CPO recently that it may not return at all...?

40.0 We currently have a vacancy within my team for which recruitment was initiated (up to shortlisting) but paused following guidance that the role would instead be used for staff redeployment.

As I understand it, the Professional Staff redesign is being undertaken sequentially across Services and support teams. Staff deemed at risk within each completed phase are then able to apply for redeployment opportunities across the University, including roles designated for redeployment.

However, my understanding is that my team is scheduled to be reviewed towards the final stages of this process. This raises a significant concern: by the time our review takes place, it is highly likely that most, if not all, redeployment opportunities across ARU will already have been filled by staff from earlier phases.

This creates a potential inequity, placing my team—and any service reviewed in the later stages—at a distinct disadvantage compared to those reviewed earlier in the process.

In light of this, I would like to propose the following for consideration:

- That our current vacancy be held open until our team's review is completed, ensuring a fair redeployment opportunity for any staff who may be placed at risk.

- That the final two Services—particularly where there is overlap in activity—be reviewed concurrently, allowing affected staff to apply across both areas and access a broader pool of redeployment opportunities.

In addition, I would ask that it be noted that the work undertaken so far in relation to the Professional Services Function Review appears to reflect a lack of full understanding of the nature of professional staff roles within the organisation, especially within Faculties. The absence of meaningful involvement from middle and operational management risks depriving leadership of critical insight needed for the review to be effective.

There is a concern that a top-down approach may lead to changes being imposed without sufficient research or a comprehensive understanding of the breadth and extent of services, operations, and activities currently delivered and required.

Without addressing these issues, there is a risk that outcomes of the review may not be equitable or operationally sustainable.

41.0 Unfortunately, the bullying culture that previously existed at ARU has returned. This is often in relation to student experience and the NSS, where academics are blamed for disappointing NSS results. This behaviour is clearly against ARU's stated visions and values as an institution.

The reality is that we admit almost every BA student that applies. With the mental health crisis facing the UK, and nationwide care in the community since the 1980s, courses in universities like ARU are covering much of the support to young people, who are in some cases are very unwell individuals. However there has been a failure by ARU management to acknowledge this wider context.

Alongside, within ARU there are multiple areas where decisions are made or actions taken which can be seriously detrimental to student experience, but there remain almost no checks and balances to ensure these on-going areas of concern are addressed. Management at ARU has also failed in this respect.

This creates an impossible working environment for academic staff and has to stop.