

Dear fellow Court members,

We are being asked at our Court meeting on 8 Sept. 2026 to agree to a voluntary redundancy and compulsory redundancy process leading to major staff reductions without accurate reporting on the actual position of the University.

Accounting for core funded staff numbers has not been easy at the University of Dundee. A variety of inconsistent figures for staff numbers and FTEs have been provided over time. Below is evidence (provided by the University) which highlights the actual position of staffing numbers at the University of Dundee. This evidence is in the public domain and available to all university staff.

The University's use of inconsistent and contradictory data on staffing levels makes it unnecessarily difficult to determine the position of the University. Measures of headcount, roles and Full Time Equivalent (FTE) are too often interchangeably used.

Excessive staff reductions will have a detrimental impact on income generation. Indeed, staff reductions beyond the £20m target which UEG considers necessary for financial survival will threaten the very sustainability sought.

In conclusion the evidence below shows that the reduction in staff required to achieve the £20m cost savings is within reach already, and would be achieved through natural turnover in a few months, without any need for compulsory redundancies.

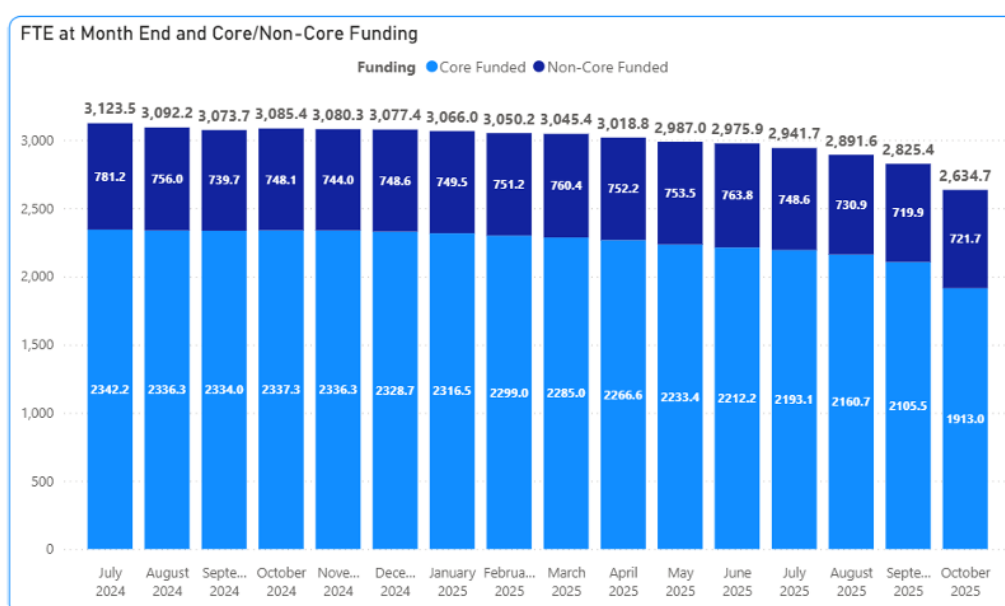
Staffing Levels: A Step-By-Step Approach

The recently released audited *UoD Financial Statement, 2023-24* state that the July 2024 staffing level was 3,259 staff (source: [Financial statements for the University of Dundee | University of Dundee, UK](#) p.55).¹

In November 2025 the Interim Principal Professor Nigel Seaton wrote to Douglas Ross, Convenor of the Scottish Parliament's Education and Young Person Committee, to supply updated staff numbers from July 2024 to October 2025, broken down in core-funded and non-core-funded staff. Prof. Seaton sought to provide a correction of a verbal reply he had given to questions raised at a meeting of the Scottish Government's

¹ A letter from interim Principal Shane O'Neil to the Convenor of the Scottish Parliament's Education & Young Person Committee, 31 March 2025 states this is Full Time Equivalent (FTE) not headcount.

Education & Young Persons Committee in October 2025. The interim Principal's letter includes the table below, which shows that staff numbers were 3,123.5 FTE in July 2024, 135.5FTE lower than reported in the 2023-24 financial statements.



Source: Interim Principal letter to the Convenor of the Scottish Government Education, Children and Young persons Committee 13th November 2025, Table 2, p.2. Submitted as a correction to the public statements made in the hearing. [Letter from the Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Dundee to the Convenor of 13 November 2025](#)

The interim Principal's letter informed the Convener of the Education, Children and Young People Committee that the reduction of staff from July 2024 to October 2025 took the total core funded staff down to 1,913.0 FTE.

"The reduction in core funded FTE is 429.2 from 2,342.2 to 1,913. The largest drops have occurred in September and October (256.9 FTE in total)."

Source available at [Letter from the Interim Principal and Vice-Chancellor, University of Dundee to the Convenor of 13 November 2025](#)

A further source of staff numbers comes from the VS schemes, VS1 run in 2025 (financial year 2024-25) and VS2 in 2026 (financial year 2025-26). The FTE reductions from these are provided in the Strategy to Recovery document. They are:

Voluntary Severance (impact of VS1 and VS2)

VS Leavers	VS Leavers Headcount	VS Leavers FTE
VS1	282	240.3
VS2	134	114.4

UoD, *Strategy to Recovery*, 2026, p.27, available at [Strategy to Recovery June 26](#)

This means that of the 429.2 FTE reduction in core funded staff between July 2024 and October 2025, 188.9 FTE left through normal processes of retirement and resignation ($429.2 - 240.3 = 188.9$). From October 2025 to May 2026, after the 114.4 FTE secondary voluntary severance leavers were removed, the number of total core funded staff FTE were at or below 1,798.6 FTE ($1,913 - 114.4 = 1,798.6$).

The University's *Strategy to Recovery* document provides the next piece of information: staff numbers on 1st May 2026, seemingly after 114.4 FTE of second VS scheme leavers had been removed from the staff numbers. Here the numbers start to get confusing and contradictory. Staff are firstly disaggregated into three categories of headcount numbers ('non-salaried staff', 'salaried core-funded staff' and 'salaried non-core-funded staff'), before being aggregated into FTE. These numbers are difficult to reconcile with the earlier audited data in either the *Financial Statements 2023-24* or the interim Principal's letter to Douglas Ross.

According to the University *Strategy to Recovery* (see table below), the headcount of the University on 1st May 2026 was 3,387 staff and 2,500.3 FTE. Removing the 528 non-salaried staff in the Strategy to Recovery table produces a more plausible headcount figure of 2,859. However, this headcount is unconvincing when we consider it is just 400 lower (after two rounds of VS) than the 3,259 FTE figure of July 2024.

Faculty/Directorate	Non-Salaried Staff Headcount	Salaried Core Funded	Salaried Non-Core Funded	Grand Total - Headcount	% of Workforce	FTE Total	% of Workforce
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences	240	335	26	601	17.7	303.3	12.1
Faculty of Health	59	420	315	794	23.4	587.2	23.5
Faculty of Life Sciences	4	200	415	619	18.3	572.6	22.9
Faculty of Science, Engineering and Business	138	255	29	422	12.5	271.8	10.9
Academic and Corporate Governance	1	43	1	45	1.3	41.7	1.7
Digital and Technology Services		92		92	2.7	90.6	3.6
Estates and Campus Services	21	194	2	217	6.4	152.3	6.1
External Relations	37	57	2	96	2.8	54.8	2.2
Finance and Procurement		64		64	1.9	59.4	2.4

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Global Engagement and Future Students	13	80	2	95	2.8	78.7	3.1
Library Academic and Cultural Services	15	195	2	212	6.3	171.0	6.8
People		61	1	62	1.8	56.8	2.3
Research and Innovation		29	5	34	1.0	32.6	1.3
Subsidiaries		15		15	0.4	9.1	0.4
University Executive and Strategy Office		19		19	0.6	18.5	0.7
Grand Total	528	2059	800	3387		2500.3	

UoD, [Strategy to Recovery June 26](#), pp.34-35. Figures are for 1st May 2026.

I also wish to alert Court members to two pieces of information released in emails to all staff on 15 May 2025, the first e-mail by the University interim Principal and immediately corrected by a second email from Chief People Officer, Dawnne Mahmoud. These emails allow us to reconcile the conflicting data.

In the first email we are informed about the reduction in staff numbers from August 2024:

“We can confirm that through the period 1 August 2024 to 1 May 2026, the University’s headcount changed from 3,432 to 2,859 people and the FTE (full-time equivalent) changed from 3,111 to 2,500 (salaried core funded and non-core funded).”

Source: <https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fuod.cm-send.dundee.ac.uk%2Ft%2Fj-e-ydhddtty-hrtiwlhn-r%2F&data=05%7C02%7Cc.j.morelli%40dundee.ac.uk%7Cb546fff6225a446ea32108deb262aeb7%7Cae323139093a4d2a81a65d334bcd9019%7C0%7C0%7C639144334078923506%7CUnknown%7CTWFPbGZsb3d8eyJFbXB0eU1hcGkiOnRydWUsIlYiOiwlLjAuMDAwMCIsIlAiOiJXaW4zMilslkFOljoitTWFPbClslldUljoyfQ%3D%3D%7C0%7C%7C%7C&sdata=h%2FqCPpfPsxmgScl1Pi%2F8fMmYl3ozMACNfzura1eZgvM%3D&reserved=0>

However, the figure of 2,859 for May 2026 is equivalent to removing all non-salaried staff from the table in the *Strategy to Recovery*. Hence the headcounts provided were actually roles, double counting those with more than one role in the University. This error was corrected the same day. The Chief People’s Officer’s correction is provided in full below:

Correction: An update from the University Executive Group

Friday 15 May 2026

Dear colleagues,

I am writing to correct a figure we shared in the update from the University Executive Group this morning.

In the message we quoted a figure that “the University’s headcount changed from 3,432 to 2,859 people”, between 1 August 2024 to 1 May 2026.

The 2,859 figure actually relates to positions, not people (some of our staff hold more than one position). The correct people figure is 2,757, as at 1 May 2026. All other figures are correct.

Please accept my apologies for this human error.

Dawnne Mahmoud

Chief People Officer

Source: <https://uod.cm-send.dundee.ac.uk/t/j-e-ydhdduit-hrtiwlhn-r/>

These two emails provide us with an opportunity to compare headcount with FTE numbers. They tell us that the headcount for August 2024 and corresponding FTE cited in the first email produces a ratio of FTE/Headcount of 0.9065 (3111/3432) while the corrected staff headcount and FTE in the second email produces a corresponding ratio of FTE to Headcount of 0.9068 for May 2026.

Rationale for Voluntary Redundancy and Compulsory Redundancy

The University proposals for reductions in core-funded staff are meant to achieve an Earnings Before Interest, Tax, Depreciating and Amortisation (EBITDA) of 8%, a surplus over and above its operating costs.

The proposals require a reduction in staff of 187 FTE against 2,500.3 FTE on 1 May 2026. These figures taken from the *Strategy to Recovery*, as shown below.

Potential impacts of the changes

University Position

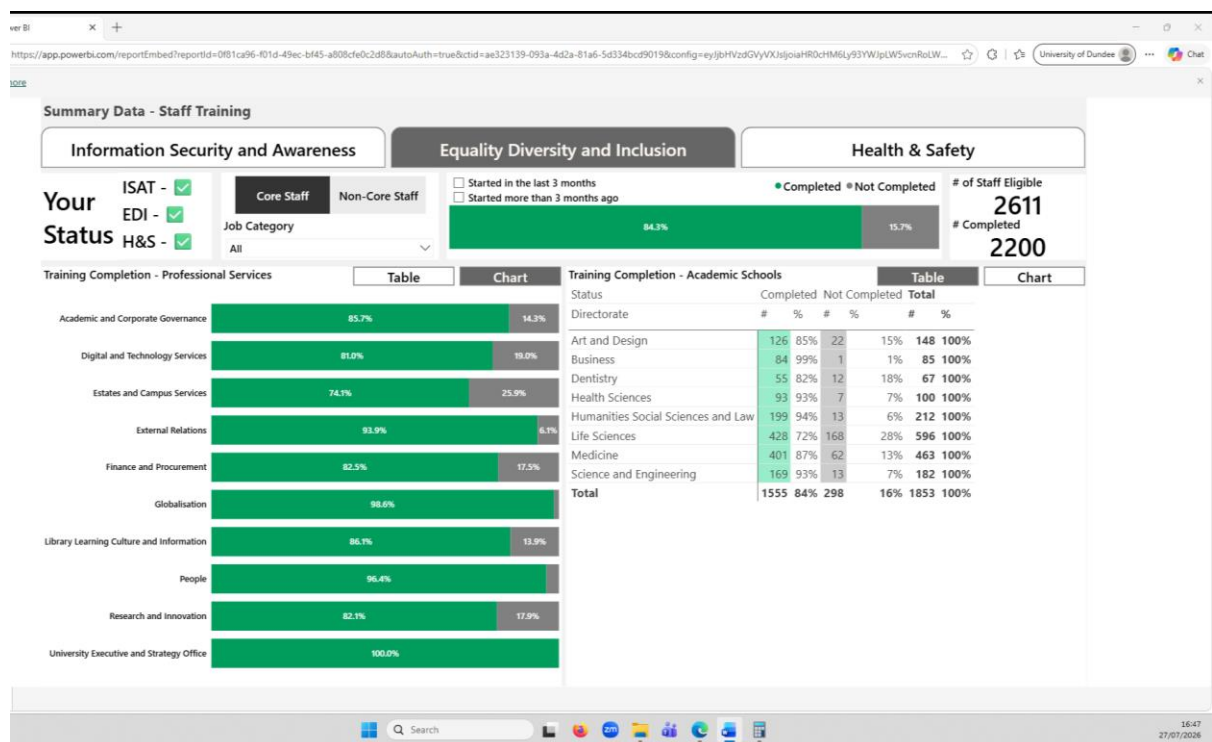
Area	Current FTE (01/05/2026)	Proposed FTE	Proposed FTE reduction
Professional Services	765.5 FTE	660.5 FTE	105 FTE
Faculties	1734.8 FTE	1652.8 FTE	82 FTE
Total			187 FTE

Source: [Organisational Case for Change](#)

The missing figures in this table are Total Current FTE (2,500.3 FTE) and Total Proposed FTE (2,313.3 FTE).

Using a final set of figures available to all staff in the University it becomes clear the University has already achieved most of the 187 FTE staff reductions UEG deems necessary.

The [Microsoft Power BI](#) provides information on staff numbers and training completions. The training figure (see screenshot below) shows that 2,611 eligible staff can take the compulsory training in July 2026. If we convert headcount to FTE on the basis identified earlier (of 0.9067), it becomes clear that the University staffing level is at 2,367.4 FTE, just 54.1 FTE from the target reduction to 2,313.3 FTE.



Source: [Microsoft Power BI](#)

Conclusion

The University's own data suggests that far from requiring a substantial reduction in Core Staff of 187 FTE the University is current around 54 FTE short of the desired staff level.

The current proposals for 187 FTE redundancies are not just unnecessary but also do a great deal of damage to the income generating base of the University.

All information above is independently verifiable and unpicks the variety of inconsistent, conflicting and at times misleading data provided by the University over the past 24 months.

Yours

Dr. Carlo Morelli Academic Staff Nominee to Court

Addendum

This document was originally drafted to aid discussion in the Faculty of Science, Engineering & Business in July 2026. In his most recent email to Court members (21 Aug. 2026), the interim Principal suggests that staff losses of 167 FTE are required instead of 187 FTE. This makes no difference to the argument above, except to say that

the number of staff reported as of 21st August is currently 2,369 FTE, just 55 FTE short of the original target identified by UEG.