Education Services Counterproposal

Leicester Learning Institute team

# Proposed Business Case does not “Shape for Excellence”

The following counterproposal, co-authored by staff in the Leicester Learning Institute (LLI), sets out the serious flaws, omissions and inconsistencies in the Business Case as it applies to the work undertaken by the LLI. In particular, it calls attention to the ongoing importance and relevance of the LLI’s work both to the University of Leicester’s educational mission in general, and the stated educational objectives the Business Case itself prioritises.

Throughout, the counterproposal emphasises the essential role played by the practical advice, guidance, resources, advocacy and leadership the LLI provides in developing educational practice. The Business Case fails both to acknowledge this and to make clear how the support the LLI currently provides would be otherwise resourced in future. Indeed, whilst the Business Case deals extensively with the important areas of policy, compliance, and quality assurance, it makes very little provision indeed for the practical support clearly required to implement educational policies and strategies. In doing so, the Business Case departs radically and unaccountably from sector norms and as such places at severe risk the University's capacity to meet its stated strategic objectives. In order to counter this risk, we strongly propose no loss of current posts. Indeed, if effective support in all the areas detailed in this counterproposal is to be delivered, then it is essential that current staffing resources are at the very least maintained. Further, although this counterproposal necessarily applies to work undertaken by the LLI, the specific proposal of no loss of posts extends to all identified as being at risk in the Business Case.

The activities of the LLI are common in most other HEI’s, although how they are organised varies, as has been evident in any of the studies into the field over the past 20 years or so (see Appendix for more detail of provision from our direct competitors). The areas concerned cover:

* professional development in teaching, including accredited teaching qualifications
* educational development and innovation funding
* educational research and enquiry into teaching practices
* programme and module design
* learning technologies and learning media production
* transitions and student learning development

Social mobility and Access and Participation Plan (APP) actions are increasingly central to the aims of educational development work. Institutions typically employ between 15 to 32 staff in these roles, with between 3-5 individuals in each section. Where there is substantial distance learning and investment in digital education, the learning technology teams are larger and include media and content production. This Business Case proposes to reduce the resource that supports these functions at the University of Leicester from 13 to 6 people and remove key areas of activity from educational enhancement.



Figure 1: Staff employed under similar provision to LLI at different HEIs (2018).

# The actions of the proposed Business Case do not meet its stated aims

The stated aims of the change are **‘to support the diversification and continuous enhancement of our curriculum, which enables an exceptional and inclusive student educational experience**.**’** The details of the case presented instead removes much of the forward-thinking, agile and responsive expertise necessary for successful transformation of the educational experience through close liaison with academic staff and educational leadership. The Business Case is fundamentally flawed in this regard.

The following sections make a case for retaining teams in the following areas to fulfil essential functions towards this aim, namely:

* Student learning development
* Curriculum design
* Academic professional development
* Digital education

The counterproposal furthermore sets out the important work that is underway and being planned in order to support the new Education Strategy. By removing the Leicester Learning Institute and the associated staffing expertise, this much needed and well-regarded activity is placed significantly at risk.

A selection of indicative statements from Education Services – a Case for Change have been selected to frame the counterproposal. This in no way endorses the rest of the case.

The counterproposal concludes with a set of recommendations to ensure that the University is able to deliver an excellent student learning experience under the new research-inspired Education Strategy.

## Student learning development

### “Our student body is growing, increasingly diverse and we need to be able to offer an education service that enables all our students to succeed, whatever their background, and put in place appropriate services to support our educational provision, which itself is increasingly diverse.” (1.3)

**“Putting equality, diversity and inclusion at the heart of our approach, building on work already underway to improve outcomes for under-represented groups.” (Business Case, 1.4)**

The Business Case points quite rightly to the importance of supporting an increasingly diverse student body. It then proposes, however, to remove much of the existing support provided by the LLI, whilst making no alternative provision for this support, or indicating how future support will be resourced and provided. The proposals will, therefore, severely inhibit the Education Service in its aim of ensuring **‘all our students succeed, whatever their background.’**

A conspicuous omission within the Business Case and current proposals is any explicit recognition of the support the LLI provides for student academic transition and progression. This constitutes a major focus for current LLI activity with Schools and programmes, and forms a significant area of demand for the LLI’s support. This area of activity is led by the Student Learning Development Team and Educational Developers (in the form of advice, guidance, training and resources), but draws extensively also on the expertise and practical resources provided by all areas of the LLI. The provision of high-quality, curriculum-embedded support for academic transition and progression is widely recognised across the sector, and across a substantial body of relevant research literature, as being essential to enabling **‘students to succeed, whatever their background.’** In particular, it has for some time been recognised as a necessary and indispensable component in addressing the objectives as set out in the University of Leicester’s Access and Participation Plan 2020-21:

### “The University has invested substantially in pre-arrival and early induction provision to engage students from underrepresented groups in a more co-ordinated way, including: new online ‘Prepare to Study’ [LLI-led resource] resources to support the transition new students make into University learning; embedded learning activities to support skills development... The ‘Transitions Toolkit’ delivered by the Leicester Learning Institute is supported by workshops and training which are embedded in the curriculum of many courses.” (Access and Participation Plan 2020-21, 4.8)

The current Business Case proposals make no acknowledgement of the importance of this area of activity, or that it is part of the Action and Participation Plan submitted to the Office for Students. It also fails to identify how it would be supported in future.

Related to this focus on supporting academic transition and progression is that of supporting academic and assessment literacies. Once again, the overwhelming weight of relevant research, coupled with the prevailing direction of pedagogical practice across the sector, is towards providing curriculum- embedded support for the development of academic and assessment literacies. A substantial current focus of the Student Learning Development Team in particular, and the LLI more broadly, is on providing advice, guidance, training and resources to enable Schools, programmes, module conveners and personal tutors to effectively embed support for academic and assessment literacies into their teaching,

assessment and feedback practice. Good progress has been made in this, as evidenced by the explicit references in the latest NSS Action Plans in many Schools, for instance Psychology, Biological Sciences, HyPIR and MCS, and implicit expectations of LLI support in others. Once again, the current proposals fail to either acknowledge this crucial area of work or to indicate how or by whom it would be undertaken in future.

With the advent of *Ignite*, the Student Learning Development Team, in close collaboration with LLI and academic colleagues, transformed the resources provided to support academic and assessment literacies, providing practical guidance and materials to ensure this support could be provided in the context of a cross-institutional move towards a blend of online as well as face-to-face teaching, and asynchronous as well as synchronous learning. Members of the SLD team are currently working with LLI learning technologist colleagues to ensure academic programmes can enable their future student cohorts to experience effective transitions to *Ignite* learning. This ability to integrate support for academic and digital literacies is only made possible thanks to the LLI’s current resource and expertise base, and would be radically compromised were the current proposals to proceed.

Taken alongside apparent plans for the Academic Skills Centre (ASC), the Business Case proposes to revert to an *exclusively* central student-service model for academic and assessment literacies support – a model which has long been recognised across the sector to be ill-conceived, radically inadequate and unable to meet the needs of students. The prevailing sector norm for learning development support, not least currently within the University of Leicester, is to combine embedded curriculum-level staff-facing support (such as that now provided by the LLI) with the provision of high-quality central, student-facing services (such as now provided by the ASC in partnership with LLI colleagues who, in addition to contributing to the ASC’s valuable work, were also responsible for creating many of the ASC’s resources). In addition, the current proposals will leave the ASC itself with a much-diminished capacity to provide academic support, as those LLI roles which currently contribute to its resources and services - who were responsible, indeed, for creating many of those resources and services in the first place – will no longer exist.

If the University of Leicester is sincere in its commitment to **‘put in place appropriate services to support our educational provision’**, then far from dismantling the provision for supporting academic and assessment literacies currently in place, it would be sustaining and strengthening this support as is the case in other institutions.

Principal responsibilities currently reside with: Head of Learning Development, 1 FTE Learning Development Advisors, Educational Developer with relevant cross-service support.

## Curriculum design

### “We want to support a cutting-edge, high-quality curriculum, designed and developed in partnership with our academic schools and students, which is responsive to their needs, and flexible in delivery.” (1.5)

**“Provide joined-up frameworks, guidance and advice to enable programmes to adapt to student expectations, enabling them to study more flexibly with structures that go beyond the traditional undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision, and encapsulate**

### apprenticeships, professional learning and CPD, in which students and employers are co- designers.” (Business Case, 1.7)

The case refers to a current ‘fragmented approach’ in respect of curriculum design, which is attempted to be resolved by bringing together the four units of Quality Office, Business Change, Leicester Learning Institute and Education Strategy Unit. The educational designers in the LLI already work in partnership with the quality officers on Programme Development Groups, each bringing their own distinct expertise to bear. They also collaborate on process improvement initiatives (moderation, stepped marking) and on incorporating new strategic imperatives into UoL course design guidance and advice (sustainability, accessibility). Institution-wide communication under Ignite has been channelled through the ESU; School-based communication has been through the regular committee structures. In this, it is difficult to see what ‘fragmentation’ refers to in this area, and it is not being addressed by removing the designer roles.

Fragmentation occurs elsewhere in the curriculum design cycle, namely between the ambitions of Schools to diversify and improve their offer, and top-level decisions about investment into measures to increase the student population in potentially lucrative markets. This fragmentation is not addressed with the proposed restructuring, and would be far less in evidence if there were a coherent and explicit institutional business development strategy.

Educational designers and the Director of the LLI have long advocated administrative and systems changes to facilitate flexible delivery patterns, professional learning and CPD, apprenticeships and blended approaches to curriculum design, and have modelled this in our MOOC activities with Schools, our future plans and design of a course in line with the Academic Professional Apprenticeship standard, as well as in our support for innovative course designs that are being looked to as exemplars for the future of flexible learning at UoL, such as the Socially Engaged Practice course in Museum Studies.

These significant educational design roles are absent from the proposal. The proposed Educational Developer and Quality and Enhancement Adviser job roles may support Schools in meeting the approval requirements and panel approvals, but there are no job roles which cover the design of new models of curriculum, mindful of student learning outcomes, appropriate assessment and progression, at a time when the institution is diversifying and has urgent need of such expertise to ensure high-quality student experience. The educational designers have significant influence in course design and in providing practical assistance to academic staff in adapting their programmes in order to meet professional body accreditation while defining educational learning outcomes to provide rigour and stretch appropriate to the academic level. Additionally, the educational designers prepare staff in adapting patterns of delivery and learner interactions; such guidance and advice has come to the fore in the past 12 months with the rapid shift to online delivery and assessment and the work will continue, not diminish, in supporting agile adaptation to meet the expectations of flexible, research-inspired education. In the College of Life Sciences alone, there are over 30 new programmes being developed in the next six months which require substantial expertise of this nature.

Implementation of the peer enhancement scheme designed by the LLI Director with support from the Education Committee, is currently being led by one of the educational designers. This scheme replaces annual teaching observation as a powerful new approach to teaching enhancement and serves as a quality indicator with respect of teaching quality assurance. The initiative dovetails with the plans for

module and programme review, so will require creative attention and motivational activities, as well as a breadth of teaching expertise to enact and co-ordinate.

The proposal places two educational developer posts from current staffing in the LLI into the Academic Quality and Development team. The role of educational developers will play a useful role in developing connections across academic interest areas, raising awareness of, and sharing inclusive teaching practices, developing digital literacy and academic learning communities, promoting case studies, workshops and conferences, and bringing students into teaching enhancement activities. The two posts will be able to continue the School liaison work that was intensified during the summer of 2020 but will have lost the support of four other colleagues making up the team which has been able to work collaboratively and support School-based interventions very successfully, often in partnership with the learning technologists.

The educational developer job descriptions have not been aligned with the current post-holder skill sets and aptitudes, and may be better placed within a different functional team in order to emphasise inclusive practices.

Current provision to be removed despite the stated aim of building education design into the service environment:

* 3 educational design roles (since early in the pandemic 1 educational designer has been working solely on digital education, and has been matched to that new dedicated role in the proposal)
* Peer enhancement implementation, supporting the Associate Deans of Education in localising with Schools, motivating engagement and developing a community of co-ordinators able to bridge connections between module review and Annual Development Review to bring sustained enhancement to the student learning experience
* College Programme Design and Development Group educational design interventions
* Programme-level review and design, e.g. for PSRB requirements, multi-modal, employer- engaged
* Alternative assessment models, e.g. flexible, inclusive, community partnership
* Distance learning design and community

## Academic professional development

In order to respond to the stated driver to strengthen the alignment of programmes to the research- inspired Education Strategy (Business Case, 1.7), it is necessary not only to review and refresh what is taught and how it is structured into a programme, but also to bring about cultural change in how it is delivered and experienced by students and staff. This is where academic professional development of teaching, both initial and ongoing CPD, plays a significant role.

At a time when teaching itself is becoming more complex, digitally-enabled, personalised and inclusive, the proposal is remiss in making no mention of academic professional development nor of continuing with Advance HE accredited provision, which provides essential foundational grounding in educational principles, and benchmark recognition of adherence to basic quality markers in teaching practice through HEA Fellowships.

This is entirely absent from the proposed Education Services and there is no indication of how this will be facilitated, suggesting it is premature to issue redundancies. Feedback at the pre-change stage noted this, and in addition the response from Deans and the PVC Education who stressed the importance of **‘more focus on the highly valued teaching support’ (Business Case, 1.13)**. It is not evident that this feedback has been acted upon.

This omission was pointed out during the pre-change engagement, but only as a result of persistent questioning during the individual consultations was the Director of the LLI informed that there will be a ‘strategic review of academic professional development that will report before the end of the calendar year’, which will mean that the University will be in breach of its own probationary ordinance if current staff expertise is lost through this premature business change process.

The Director of the LLI is well-placed to lead this review, with excellent credentials and connections across the sector but has not been invited to do so as an active collaborator. A strategic review of initial professional development in 2018 was prompted by the possibility of recouping funds from the apprenticeship levy. This led to the redesign of a taught programmes in teaching for academic staff to replace the PGCAPP. The resulting programme was accredited by Advance HE, and internal programme approval granted in 2019, in accordance with a clear steer from Executive Board. The LLI thereby obtained senior buy-in to a work-based approach to initial CPD across the institution but was denied the resource required to initiate the programme in February 2020. Strategic direction in this regard is lacking, despite colleagues currently at risk are offering to take a lead.

Teaching support is currently provided by members of the LLI in other ways as set out in the bullet points below to meet the aims of academic quality and development in the proposal.

### “All programmes must meet the academic requirements of the Framework for Higher Education Qualifications and the expectations articulated in the UK Quality Code for Higher Education published by the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA).”(2.21)

The UK Quality Code outlines the following requirement around expectations for quality: **‘The provider has sufficient appropriately qualified and skilled staff to deliver a high-quality academic experience’**. Over the past five years, colleagues in the Leicester Learning Institute have achieved a sector-leading uplift in the percentage of teaching staff with an accredited teaching qualification, moving from 44% to 80% at the University. There is no provision in the plan to continue to improve on, or even to maintain this national quality benchmark.

### ‘Proposed function the team [Academic quality and development] would be:

* + **Advice and guidance on educational programme design and curriculum structure and content approaches.**

### Supporting and driving the continuous improvement of pedagogic practice by disseminating good practice across the academic community.

* + **Coordinating academic practice CPD initiatives, liaising closely with the Organisational Development team in HR.’ (Business Case, 2.23)**

There are no proposed job roles which deliver academic practice CPD, or in fact, have the recognised teaching qualifications (PGCE, PGCERT, PGCAPP) required for them to do so. Organisational Development do not have the expertise or capacity to support this.

Current provision, which would be lost, includes:

* Initial Professional Development support, encompassing Preparing to Teach for Graduate Teaching Assistants and Postgraduate Researchers (required by University policy and Unitemps contracts), and the Postgraduate Certificate for Academic Professional Practice (PGCAPP) course for new lecturers. Note: this was to be replaced with an apprenticeship programme of study from Jan 2020, but resource was not allocated. The last PGCAPP cohort finished in June 2020. As well as obtaining a teaching qualification through these taught programmes, staff develop lasting networks with other teaching staff; alumni of this programme make up a substantial proportion of current educational leadership at UoL;
* Continuing Professional Development (CPD) including PEERS – a route to Fellowship of the Higher Education Academy (a recognised ATQ). In order for the University to confer Fellowship of the HEA, scheme leaders are required to hold appropriate teaching qualifications/ recognition and retain their own CPD vis a vis the UK PSF. As an institution we are committed to providing opportunities for Fellowship holders to remain in good standing; the assessor community for PEERS is supporting peer-mentoring in teaching, under LLI guidance;
* Engaging staff in CPD activities for education, such as the Discovering Teaching Excellence at Leicester Conference, which enable sharing of good practice, developing a community of practice and seeding inspiration. The last conference has over 150 attendees, including students. Other CPD activities include Focus on sessions and targeted workshops on educational topics for schools;
* Supporting innovation in teaching through administering and supporting the Teaching Enhancement Project Fund. This includes both encouragement to apply, support for applications, and designing meaningful evaluations of interventions. Investment in this area has declined due to financial cuts in the past three years, and reduction of staff in the academic professional development team;
* Supporting recognition of excellence, by helping teaching staff to apply for University Distinguished Teaching Fellowships, Senior Fellowship of HEA, National Teaching Fellowships, Collaborative Award for Teaching Excellence run by Advance HE. Not only are these important for our institutional reputation for teaching, but successful fellowship awards (our numbers of staff with Accredited Teaching Qualification) are required for Higher Education Statistics Agency returns;
* An increasingly important aspect of academic professional development is educational leadership. For this in the recent past, the Director established a successful model of project- based leadership development as a complementary element of the Organisational Development programme with the external company Nous. Members of the LLI have a contribution to make to the work of Organisational Development in this area.

Current contributors to academic professional development to be removed includes 1 vacant Grade 8 post whose job was being held in order to make vacancy savings as a short-term measure, and the work is being picked up on a temporary basis by LLI Director and Education Designer; 1 Grade 7 Professional Development Adviser; 0.2 from a Learning Technologist. A Grade 8 post needs to be reinstated.

There is confusion in the Business Case which states in 2.4 that the role of Professional Development Adviser will not be placed at risk of redundancy, but the role is not included in the plan, and the role

holder has been placed at risk of redundancy, which suggests this role was initially considered to be needed to deliver the Business Case:

**“It is proposed that staff in the roles of Head of Digital Education and Education/*Professional Development Advisers*, Learning Technologists and Learning Technology Assistant would be matched to roles in the new structure without being placed at risk of redundancy.” (Business Case, 2.4)**

## Digital education

### “The rationale for [not focusing on research and scholarship in the new teams] is that the proposed service will focus on supporting Schools to design and deliver high quality programmes and this will include horizon-scanning and promoting educational innovation.” (Business Case, 2.4)

The proposed Digital Learning and Innovation team job roles include digital innovation and horizon- scanning, however wider education innovation beyond the digital does not appear to be present in other proposed job roles. A digital learning and innovation support service requires a combination of the activities outlined in the proposed Business Case and interdisciplinary working between colleagues with experience in curriculum, learning and academic practice development.

## Impact of cessation of the Leicester Learning Institute on the implementation of the Education Strategy

### ‘Key drivers

**At Leicester, we have a diverse student community, and this requires a more nuanced approach to curriculum design, delivery and review in order to remove potential barriers to access. For example, recent efforts to decolonise the curriculum need to be fully integrated with our academic mission.**

### Enable students to study more flexibly with structures that go beyond the traditional undergraduate and postgraduate taught provision.

* + **Provide well-signposted expertise to assist the development of high quality, accessible and inclusive programmes as Leicester has one of the most diverse student populations in the country and our students need curricula that are delivered and assessed in a way that are relevant to them, in which they can recognise themselves.’ (Business Case, 1.7)**

### “[Benefits to the student experience include] a more flexible, well-structured, and inclusive approach to curriculum and assessment design, delivery and review, in which students have a real voice.” (Business Case, 1.9)

With the above comments, the Business Case once again makes references to laudable educational objectives, but neglects to mention that much of the LLI’s current work is in providing direct practical and pedagogical support in achieving these objectives, and advocating for process and infrastructural improvements for the benefit of the student experience. Nor does the Business Case explain how, or by whom, this support will be provided in future. Although it is envisaged that much strategic direction will come from the yet-to-be established LIIHE, which is intended to be a sector-leading research

institute, it has also been confirmed during conversations with those affected by the current proposals, that the LIIHE will not replace, either in purpose or practical mission, the work currently undertaken by the LLI. The pedagogical direction requires substantial infrastructural adjustments, which is in the remit of the LLI as business owner of the DLE and Learning Spaces Strategy.

The current proposals make significant provision for the development of relevant policies, together with the monitoring of compliance and progress towards implementing policies. However, important and valuable though such activities clearly are, it is widely acknowledged across the sector that support for changes and developments in practice are equally necessary if policies are to become a reality. Robust policy and quality assurance processes need to be complemented by practical advice, advocacy and resources to enable institutional policies to be effectively translated and implemented within diverse disciplinary and pedagogical contexts. It is this essential process of translation and implementation which the LLI (in common with other such services and units across UK HE) is instrumental in enabling through its close work and strong relationships with academic Schools and professional services areas outside of Student and Academic Services.

Below are some examples of the kinds of support the LLI offers, and which will cease and/or be severely diminished should the current proposals be implemented.

* The recommendations in Campbell *et. al’*s, *Decolonising Assessment: A Multi-Disciplinary Case Study* (2021: University of Leicester), concerning BAME students’ experiences of assessment make clear the need for lecturers to understand and apply a learning development perspective, characterised by dialogical feedback, and diverse representation within disciplines and assignments. This support is already underway and would be jeopardised, or at the least severely diminished, under the current proposals.
* Working with Schools to apply the *Decolonising the Curriculum Toolkit* (Campbell: University of Leicester) and extend the resources to support various phases of academic literacies development that is essential for successful transition and progression, including dissertations and final year projects. Once again, this is already underway and is placed in danger by the current proposals which offer no recognition of this work and therefore no indication as to how it would be otherwise undertaken in future.
* Partnering with the Students’ Union - bringing together the #LeicsDecolonise campaign, with the University’s commitments to ensuring maximal curriculum inclusivity and addressing BAME student awarding gaps - by establishing a network of student Curriculum Consultants, to activate inclusive approaches in teaching and assessment. The first stage of this project has been successfully completed, with Consultants now selected, and negotiations underway with academic Schools to ensure the next stage enables progress with School and programme-level objectives. This project would be placed at severe risk, and would certainly be unable to proceed into future iterations, should the current proposals stand.
* The LLI is in the process of creating a practical EDI-in-the-curriculum forum to share, disseminate and promote good practice in teaching and assessment.
* At present, the LLI is collaborating with the SU to achieve their manifesto pledge on Accessibility. It has emerged in discussions of this pledge that many of the barriers to participation students currently face are the result of poor academic practices. These are areas the LLI has already been actively engaging in improving (with evidence suggesting LLI initiatives within the PGCAPP and support for educational development more broadly are having a positive impact on practice) and plans to extend further ensure an inclusive educational experience for all students.
* Continuing to support the University Careers Service with successfully embedding the Leicester Award and Leicester Award Gold, and (once approved) the development of significant experience in the curriculum for all students.
* Driving digital and physical infrastructure enhancements for students’ sense of belonging and inclusivity is substantially compromised in the proposal; the Learning Spaces Strategy work enabled academic and professional services stakeholders to collaborate to create new open spaces for students to learn and collaborate, which will once again be in high demand going forward as we reimagine our campus usage.
* Enabling students as partners in driving up the quality of digital education with the Digital Innovation Partnership initiative, about to launch in its fourth year, with cohort-wide impact from 38 staff:student collaborative projects so far.
* Consultations, resources and workshops to assist Schools in delivering their stated NSS action plans (16/20 Schools explicitly or implicitly rely on the support from the LLI).
* Maintenance and further development of relevant and timely guides to new methods of teaching, learning and assessment and student partnership working, informed by latest scholarship and sector or subject-specific knowledge.

All of the above are in progress thanks to the work currently undertaken by LLI staff, many of whom, under the current proposals, are set to have their posts made redundant. As noted throughout this counterproposal, the Business Case makes no acknowledgement of this substantial work already underway and offers no alternative means by which it would otherwise be continued in the absence of redundant posts.

In order to continue this work, and to ensure the practical realisation of the strategic educational objectives the Business Case quite rightly prioritises, the posts currently threatened must be retained and their work strengthened and championed.

As a unit, the Leicester Learning Institute was able to move exceedingly swiftly and responsively in the past 12 months to meet the challenges of the switch to remote teaching, remote assessment and then the emergence of Ignite and planning for next year. The team produced exceptionally high-quality active guidance, resources, training and teaching support for academic staff, contributed substantially to the working groups of SSTB and assisted with sense-making and action planning of most Directors of Learning and Teaching, not only with respect to digital quality, but also inclusivity and flexibility, brokering knowledge across Schools.

This has been possible because of how the LLI operates internally, embedding continuous improvement and good cross-team communication. The matrix working between members from different teams, active encouragement for personal development through study and assigning of project leadership, engagement with scholarship and collaborative enquiry into practice have actively fostered an agile and learning mindset. Inclusivity, student and staff partnership, digital practices, accessibility have become embedded in our practices in enhancing assessment, teaching and learning, and course design. The range of educational expertise and collaborative working across specialisms means that the School liaison role was able to be incorporated as an additional responsibility by six members of the LLI.

# Proposal going forward

In light of the arguments and problems, identified here, with the Education Services counterproposal, and as part of a ‘meaningful consultation’ process, we request the following:

1. A meeting at the earliest opportunity between the Leicester Learning Institute team and stakeholders within the Executive Board (to include, Geoff Green, Louise Masterman, Neil Donohue, Graham Wynn, Emma Stevens, Michael Flanagan and other key stakeholders).
2. An immediate halt to the redundancy process.
3. An immediate initiation of a strategic review of academic professional development, learning development and curriculum design.
4. To immediately instate one or more people with a strong Educational Development background and appropriate qualifications, to have oversight in any restructuring of Education Services. This could be internal (LLI Director and LLI Heads) or external (such as a consultant from Advance HE or another appropriate body that supports learning and teaching development).

# Appendix: HE Sector norms for Academic Practice and Educational Support

**Nottingham Trent University** (TEF Gold)

[Centre for Academic Development and Quality (CADQ)](https://www.ntu.ac.uk/about-us/academic-development-and-quality) employs 63 staff to cover educational development, enhancement-led quality management, design for online learning, academic practice development, and research and evaluation. The Trent Institute for Learning and Teaching (TILT) Initiative supports excellence in learning and teaching, and celebrates, recognises and shares innovative learning and teaching practice.

**DMU** (TEF Gold)

[Centre for Academic Innovation (CAI)](https://www.dmu.ac.uk/academic/centre-academic-innovation/index.aspx) is an essential part of DMU’s teaching excellence environment. It supports and disseminates teaching and learning good practice, such as blended teaching, Universal Design for Learning, remote teaching through the Virtual Teaching Toolkit, and events such as seminars, masterclasses, Learning and Teaching Conference, Festival of Teaching, The Writing Circle. CAI runs its own Sabbatical Fellowships for educational development and supports staff to gain recognition through National Teaching Fellowships, Teacher Fellowships, and the CATE committee.

**Nottingham** (TEF Gold)

[Teaching and Learning Observation College (TLOC)](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/professionaldevelopment/learningandteaching/tloc/index.aspx) develops excellence in teaching practice and ongoing professional development through dialogue, support, enhancement and dissemination, with an emphasis on peer-led observation. It assists schools and individuals in providing high-quality teaching and learning experience, through reflection and development.

[Educational Excellence Team](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/educational-excellence/) develops student-staff partnerships, offers new approaches to assessment design, shares good practice though the Teaching and Learning Conference and Inclusive Learning Conference. It supports teaching projects through the Educational Excellence Fund, and maintains quality and compliance through Quality Assurance and Frameworks

[Student Academic Skills Team](https://www.nottingham.ac.uk/library/studying/student-academic-skills/student-academic-skills-team.aspx) works with a range of Schools and Faculties on programmes to help students develop their skills in a range of areas.

**Loughborough** (TEF Gold)

[Centre for Academic Practice](https://www.lboro.ac.uk/services/cap/) has 17 staff that deliver nationally accredited programmes of professional development for staff new to teaching and oversee an accredited Continuing Professional Development (CPD) framework with HEA recognition. They support staff with digital learning, and with curriculum design, evaluation of teaching, and share good practice. Additionally, they manage the University’s Teaching Innovation and Research-informed Teaching Awards.

**Derby** (TEF Gold)

[Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching](https://www.derby.ac.uk/services/centre-for-excellence-learning-teaching/) is made up of the Learning and Teaching team and Technology Enhanced Learning team. They provide professional academic support across the University, focused on teaching excellence, educational innovation, student experience and transition. They have developed the **DELTA** approach to staff development offering bespoke College sessions, to supporting staff as they develop their professional method and practice, and are aligned to the [UK Professional](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/ukpsf) [Standards Framework (UKPSF).](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/guidance/teaching-and-learning/ukpsf) This includes showcasing good practice, design of learning, teaching and assessment, and pedagogic research. They also support colleagues to gain professional recognition for their skills in teaching and supporting learning by gaining Associate Fellowship, Fellowship or Senior Fellowship of [Advance HE.](https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/)