

Summary of feedback – Consultation exercise – 5 April 2026 to 10 July 2026

Policy: Decision to propose 450 FTE redundancies and as a consequence submit a HR1 notification and commence a 90-day consultation period.

Consultee	Summary of Feedback	University response	Action required
Equality Commission Northern Ireland (ECNI)	The following recommendations were made: Highlight that the screening will be revisited when more information and data has been collated. It might be helpful to explain more fully the reasons for this decision; could the University provide detailed figures on the gap between cost and income. The University could also highlight more of the reasons for this decision. It would be helpful to add in information on what may happen if the University does not receive the numbers it requires for voluntary redundancy. Highlight what support will be made available to staff wishing to consider taking voluntary redundancy and possibly highlight what wrap-around support will be made for all staff going forward. The screening mentions the LRA's redundancy calculator, and it would be useful to provide a	At present, we are not in a position to predict the outcome of the 90-day consultation process, which will allow us to consider ways to avoid, reduce and mitigate the need for any redundancies. It also provides us with the opportunity to complete a further equality screening pro-forma, if a voluntary severance scheme is brought forward, to assess and mitigate any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations. The University has remained committed to keeping staff informed and their wellbeing supported through the statutory 90-day consultation process, which ran concurrently with the public policy screening consultation exercise. For example, it implemented: • A series of face-to face townhall events hosted by the Vice-Chancellor and members of the senior leadership team, on each campus, to encourage two-way communication and enable staff to ask	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.

	link to this so staff can quickly see their potential entitlements. There may be other potential impacts, such as that younger staff may find it difficult to find other suitable employment given the current labour market. State that impacts are difficult to define at this stage of the process as this is a voluntary process and overall numbers, including within equality categories, are unknown. Need to add information on how the process is to be monitored going forward. The proforma states that the decision was to 'Screen out the policy and mitigate the impacts on equality by amending or changing the policy, or by developing an alternative policy or action'. There is no mention of how the policy is to be mitigated or how alternative policies will be considered. The policy owner could include such things as support mechanisms to be put in place, information sessions and regular communication plans.	questions directly and offer ideas for further cost-saving measure; • A 'consultation hub', providing a go-to resource for further information about the process and answers to submitted questions - acting as a single hub for updates, key information, events, contacts, and support; • Weekly email updates to staff on progress of consultation with the Trade Unions, indicative timeframes should a decision be made to proceed with a voluntary severance scheme, a cost-saving interim recruitment approach and portfolio support; • Integrated support measures for staff wellbeing and for how we experience change; • Additional support for managers and leaders; to help them lead with clarity, compassion, and confidence, supporting both their team and their own wellbeing Whilst these mitigating initiatives are not referenced explicitly within our current screening pro-forma, the insights provided have been taken into consideration and will inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.	
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University Staff	The consultee welcomed the decision to distribute this equality screening, but expressed concern that insufficient attention to equality considerations could expose the University to reputational and further financial risks. They noted that whilst no evidence or data is provided within the proforma to explore the potential for voluntary redundancy schemes to impact disproportionately upon protected and under-represented groups, substantial evidence is available, particularly for older workers, women and ethnically diverse staff. They also noted that there is insufficient engagement with existing research and sector guidance, including work by organisations such as Advance HE, which highlights the need for robust equality assessments of redundancy schemes. They requested that the policy owner provide details of the underpinning analysis of the data provided, and how this led to, and supported, the contention that voluntary redundancies will, for the most part, have ‘no negative impact’ on the various protected groups listed. The consultee raised concerns regarding references to benefits for long-serving	At present, we are not in a position to predict the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process, which will allow us to consider ways to avoid, reduce and mitigate the need for any redundancies. It also provides us with the opportunity to complete further equality screening pro-forma, to inform any subsequent voluntary severance scheme.	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.
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	employees and how this may amount to age-related assumptions that could disadvantage both younger and older workers. They requested that the policy owner be more specific on which age groups are being discussed in this section and sought clarification on why the impact on age was assessed as “minor+”, when the screening suggests older workers may be significantly impacted. The consultee requested a fuller description of why this policy was screened out, and for the screening pro-forma to be updated to adequately reflect lived realities before the redundancy scheme proceeds any further.		
University Staff	The consultee proposed that this decision should have been screened in for a full EQIA due to its significance and potential to have a negative impact on all staff and students. They suggested that without matching equality data and grade, mapping the job families to the equality data noted in the proforma under each of the section 75 categories, the University is unable to identify and mitigate how particular group(s) are at risk of negative impacts. The consultee proposed examples of potential negative impacts of redundancies across the	At this stage, the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process is unknown. The screening proforma therefore relates only to the decision to propose 450 FTE redundancies, submit an HR1 notification and commence the statutory consultation process. The assessment of impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations reflects this specific stage of the process only. Completing screening in stages allows the University to assess and mitigate potential impacts as further proposals are developed.	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.

	Section 75 groups that must be considered, and emphasised that there has been no consideration of intersectionality, and the impact multiple, intersecting protected characteristics will have on staff.	Should a voluntary severance scheme be brought forward following consultation, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups. We note your comments regarding potential differential impacts and the scope of the data used. Future screening will provide an opportunity to consider additional aggregated and disaggregated data, where appropriate and available, once further details of any subsequent proposals are known. As considerations of impact and mitigation will continue through any future equality screening, in line with the University's Equality Scheme and statutory obligations, no changes will be made to the current screening decision. This decision relates solely to the proposal to make 450 staff redundant and commence consultation; it does not assess the impacts of any future voluntary severance scheme.	
University Staff	The consultee provided feedback regarding the needs, experiences and priorities of different	At this stage, the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process is unknown.	Insights provided to

	Section 75 categories, and the impact of the policy upon these groups. They noted that women are disproportionately affected by inequality in the workplace, as the work of Athena Swan has highlighted, specifically in the Higher Education (HE) sector. They also noted that whilst the screening proforma indicates that older people will welcome the scheme, staff aged 45-54 are not old enough to claim their pension might find it challenging to secure a new career because of their age and bespoke skill set, having dedicated most of their working lives to Ulster University. They requested acknowledgement of potential equality impacts on gender, race, marital status, dependents, sexual orientation, disability, including intersectional impacts, and proposed that mitigation or a full EQIA is required.	The screening proforma therefore relates only to the decision to propose 450 FTE redundancies, submit an HR1 notification and commence the statutory consultation process. The assessment of impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations therefore reflects this specific stage of the process only. Completing screening in stages allows the University to assess and mitigate potential impacts as further proposals are developed. Should a voluntary severance scheme be brought forward following consultation, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups.	inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.
Anonymous	The consultee queried why the screening proforma states that this policy will have a positive impact only in relation to age and will not affect equality of opportunity for any other group. They queried how a redundancy package based on age and length of service at the University might affect carers and individuals with disabilities, and staff who have worked full-	The screening proforma relates only to the decision to propose 450 FTE redundancies, submit an HR1 notification and commence the statutory consultation process. At present, we are not in a position to predict the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process, which will allow us to	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance

	time for many years but later moved to part-time hours due to personal circumstances. They offered practical examples of how to mitigate any disadvantages to disabled staff, including using full-time equivalent salary, averaging pay over-time, adjusting for disability-related reduced hours, or introducing case-by-case adjustments to ensure equality of opportunity.	consider ways to avoid, reduce and mitigate the need for any redundancies. If a voluntary severance scheme is brought forward, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups.	scheme, as appropriate.
University Staff	The consultee suggested that given the nature of the announcement and the information provided on the HR1 Redundancy Notice form, it is impossible at this stage to see how a meaningful EQIA can be implemented or a comprehensive equality screening can have taken place given. They proposed that additional information and evidence should be provided to demonstrate that equality was considered prior to the announcement, is being considered during the entire process, and that a full EQIA must be carried out at every stage of the process.	The statutory 90-day consultation process allows us to consider ways to avoid, reduce and mitigate the need for any redundancies. It also provides us with the opportunity to complete a further equality screening pro-forma, if a voluntary severance scheme is brought forward, to assess and mitigate any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations. The assessment of impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations within this proforma therefore reflects this specific stage of the process only. Completing screening in stages allows the University to assess and mitigate potential	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.

		impacts as further proposals are developed. Should a voluntary severance scheme be brought forward following consultation, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups.	
University Staff	The consultee proposed that none of the Section 75 categories have been fully considered for equality impacts other than Age. They raised concerns regarding the anecdotal nature of the evidence provided for Age, especially the assumption that redundancies will have a positive impact on this category. They proposed that other circumstantial and compounding factors should be considered, such as gender, health, disability, dependents, pension implications, state pension age (67), opportunity to find alternative employment. They proposed that an EQIA should be carried out to assess fully the equality issues faced by each group, both individually and across intersectional identities.	At this stage, the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process is unknown. The screening proforma therefore relates only to the decision to propose 450 FTE redundancies, submit an HR1 notification and commence the statutory consultation process. The assessment of impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including the perceived potential impact for Age, therefore reflects this specific stage of the process only. Completing screening in stages allows the University to assess and mitigate potential impacts as further proposals are developed. Should a voluntary severance scheme be	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.

		brought forward following consultation, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups.	
University staff	The consultee expressed concerns regarding the direct and detrimental impact any large scale reduction in staff is likely to have on workload (increased pressures on retained staff), staffing sustainability, overall student educational experience (student provision, teaching quality curriculum and student support), and the multi-campus model. The consultee proposed that given that the process will likely move to compulsory redundancies, a full EQIA should be carried out to assess impact on young and early career staff with mortgages and existing heavy workloads, in addition to single parents, single people carrying a mortgage alone, and those with caring responsibilities.	At present, we are not in a position to predict the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process, which will allow us to consider ways to avoid, reduce and mitigate the need for any redundancies. It also provides us with the opportunity to complete further equality screening pro-forma and will inform any subsequent voluntary severance scheme. Should a voluntary severance scheme be brought forward following consultation, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups. Further information about workload pressures is available in the 'Workload implications' section of our 'consultation hub'.	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.

Joint Trade Union (TU) response: UCU, UNITE and UNISON	The trade unions strongly challenged both the process and conclusions of the University's equality screening of this decision. Their overall position is that the screening is inadequate, fails to meet the University's equality obligations, and that a full EQIA should be carried out. Key concerns raised included: 1. A lack of meaningful prior consultation prior to equality screening 2. Insufficient data and evidence provided to justify the screening decision 3. The unions do not accept the screening's identification of a positive impact upon older staff who may wish to avail of the scheme 4. The impact on students across all 75 categories, particularly vulnerable students, those with dependents, LGBTQIA+ and disabled students, due to reduced staff capacity to support them. 5. The screening gives insufficient consideration to good relations impacts for each campus. Uncertainty about where redundancies will ultimately fall could disproportionately affect different community backgrounds and may have wider social, political and economic consequences, particularly in Magee and Coleraine.	At this stage, the outcome of the statutory 90-day consultation process is unknown. The screening proforma therefore relates only to the decision to propose 450 FTE redundancies, submit an HR1 notification and commence the statutory consultation process. The assessment of impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations reflects this specific stage of the process only. Completing screening in stages allows the University to assess and mitigate potential impacts as further proposals are developed. Should a voluntary severance scheme be brought forward following consultation, a separate equality screening will be undertaken to consider any perceived impacts on equality of opportunity and good relations, including impacts across and within the Section 75 equality groups. Regarding the timing and nature of the consultation, the HR1 submission triggered a statutory consultation process (minimum of 90 days). During this time, and in keeping with University commitments under Chapter 3 of the Equality Scheme, the University Senior Leadership has been committed to formally consulting	Insights provided to inform our approach to equality screening a voluntary severance scheme, as appropriate.
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	6. Concerns raised publicly by political representatives regarding the future sustainability and growth of individual campuses.	with our University Trade Unions on the need for redundancy, measures which may help avoid or limit redundancies and any proposals around the resultant redundancy scheme. These discussions remain important foundations for what needs to be considered. We note your comments regarding potential differential impacts on the Section 75 equality categories and the scope of the data used. Future screening will provide an opportunity to consider additional aggregated and disaggregated data, where appropriate and available, once further details of any subsequent proposals are known. As considerations of impact and mitigation will continue through any future equality screening, in line with the University's Equality Scheme and statutory obligations, no changes will be made to the current screening decision. This decision relates solely to the proposal to make 450 staff redundant and commence consultation; it does not assess the impacts of any future voluntary severance scheme.	
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