

Summary of failure to agree

UCU hereby give notice of a 'Failure to Agree' on the following issues relating to Newcastle University's response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

- 1. A failure to agree to default online working for the remainder of the year, or until UCU's five tests are met.** This is despite the scientific advice from Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies of 21st September and earlier advice from the Independent Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies and others. We do not agree that the campus can be "COVID-secure" if it hosts Person-in-Person teaching. We also do not consider that the current position on Working from Home addresses key Health and Safety issues.
- 2. A failure to agree acceptable and detailed reporting mechanisms.** As previously communicated, Trade Unions need to be informed, with anonymised data, of all cases to enable them to fulfil their obligations. We have repeatedly asked for detailed and responsive reporting of Covid incidents among staff and students. The University is not sharing data and detail (location(s), times on site before isolation, numbers of people in shared space are not being identified as contacts, public facing role or in-person student contact) on cases of Covid-19 among staff on campus in a manner sufficient for UCU appointed health and safety representatives to carry out their statutory duties. Reporting should not be limited to cases deemed legally notifiable after days of investigation.
- 3. A failure to address inadequacies in risk assessments.** We have asked repeatedly for building specific and task specific health and safety risk assessments, including on ventilation which was said to have been considered on a building by building basis, to be shared with union appointed health and safety representatives. Generic risk assessments are neither suitable nor sufficient. UCU H&S reps have not been given the opportunity to engage in individual buildings risk assessments, nor have our very substantive concerns regarding Working from Home assessments been addressed.
- 4. A failure to agree appropriate facilities time for H&S representatives.** We have asked for a conservative and reasonable 100 hours to be allocated for H&S reps to fulfil their duties, with 200 for the two H&S leads. The University continues to procrastinate on agreeing to this and to advise the appropriate line managers to have this included in Workload Models, where necessary.