

UNIVERSITY OF BATH SHOULD BE PROVIDING MORE FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING NOT LESS

What is the University planning to do ?

The University of Bath has announced plans to cut up to 20% of its Foreign Languages Centre (FLC) teaching. 3 of the 11 languages presently would be lost (Russian, Polish and Greek) and the top two levels (Stages 5-6) of all languages would go. Some languages would be cut even further. Mandarin Chinese, Italian, Japanese which are all currently taught to Level 4 would be cut back to Level 2 or 3. Up to 18 people who work in the FLC would be made redundant. All evening classes that start at 6.15 would be moved to 7.15.

Why do they want to do it ?

The University say there is not enough room for FLC classes. They also say that the changes are in line with the University's new International Strategy.

Why are we opposing the changes ?

When the University created the FLC it was done to meet the needs of staff, students and the local community. Thousands of people have attended the Centre's courses, and over the years the Centre has built a reputation for high quality teaching and committed staff, many of whom are employed on zero hours contracts. We believe the FLC is needed now more than ever for three reasons:

- if the University is serious about becoming more internationally engaged, its more of its staff and students will need to understand more languages
- the FLC is one of the few things the University gives back to the city of Bath in return for its rent-free use of land at Claverton Down. To cut it back would be a slap in the face of local people who welcomed the University to the City 50 years ago.
- following the EU referendum we have seen an increase in racist attacks. There is an opportunity for the university to publicly oppose the narratives that are feeding a rise in xenophobia and racism, by cancelling the cuts and announcing expanded language provision.

What can we do to prevent the cuts ?

The University is consulting the University and College Union (UCU), who represent the FLC staff, about the proposed redundancies. At the request of FLC staff and students we set up a petition which has attracted over 2500 signatures, and which calls on the University's governing body to put the changes on hold for 12 months.

Local engagement AND international engagement

UCU believes that we are not the only ones who should be consulted about these proposals. We want the University to engage in consultation with all students, staff and members of the local community about how the Foreign Languages Centre that can meet the needs of all the students and staff who use it and continue to be a valuable asset for the local community.