

**PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL**  
**INVESTIGATORY REPORT BY [REDACTED]**  
**INTO COMMUNICATION OF ASSESSMENTS AT GOLDSMITHS**  
**OCTOBER 2022**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

4. From November 2021 a number of academics at Goldsmiths were involved in industrial action including an academic boycott triggered in April 2022. A key impact of this upon student assessment, despite the initiation of 'Exceptional Academic Regulations' (EAR) in May 2022, was that many final year undergraduate students were unable to graduate when they had expected to in late July 2022, because an insufficient amount of their work had been marked. The boycott had a marked effect on students in the Department of MCCS at Goldsmiths owing to the number of academics there taking part in this industrial action.
  
5. DF [*Professor Des Freedman*] and GK [*Dr Gholam Khiabany*], the Head and Deputy Head of MCCS (the HoDs) were well aware of this and raised their concerns about how to manage communications (with the particular cohort of students with insufficient marks to graduate) with the Senior Management Team (SMT) at Goldsmiths on several occasions. By late June 2022 final year students were raising frequent concerns seeking clarification about marks and Graduation in the absence of guidance from the College. Such concerns reached the HoDs who were anxious about providing clarification as the date for the Graduation of 27 July 2022 (and the Graduation bookings cancellation deadline of 13 July 2022) grew ever closer.

6. After a departmental meeting on 1 July 2022 where the marks for students were confirmed including those who would not be able to graduate for want of marks, the HoDs sent a message to this cohort on 4 July 2022 letting them know that many of them would be unable to graduate for want of marks and providing guidance of next steps including contacting the Graduation team ('the email'). An identical email was sent the following morning to further students who should have been included in the day before. [REDACTED]

7. Students reacted to the email by sending many enquiries to the Graduations team and the SMT thereafter met and discussed the email. The SMT were concerned the email contained incorrect information and had been sent contrary to College guidance and before the School (within which MCCS sat) had met on 5 July 2022 to ratify departmental marks. Moreover, SMT believed the email had been sent to some students who would actually be able to graduate with a 'provisional award', meaning that 50% of their marks had been gathered (sufficient to pass under the Emergency Academic Regulations (EARs)).

8. Consequently, the College laid allegations of misconduct against the HoDs [REDACTED] (together referred to here as 'the respondents'), commenced an investigation under College procedures Statute 16 and suspended the HoDs.

9. The allegations against the HoDs related to the sending of the email itself. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

10. Having interviewed all the relevant people who had information about these issues and examined the pertinent documents, I reached findings on the facts and allegations before me.

11. I found the email went to the correct cohort of students, those who were not able to graduate that summer owing to lack of marks. The email did not communicate 'marks' to the students (which only the College centrally was permitted to do) as this cohort had no results to communicate. I found that waiting until after the School Board meeting on 5 July 2022 would have made no difference since this cohort had no marks to ratify and were not discussed at either the Departmental meeting (known as the Programme Board) on 1 July 2022 nor the School Board on 5 July 2022.

12. I found there was no guidance on how or when to communicate with this cohort prior to the Graduation cancellation deadline date and that the HoDs, having communicated their concerns about the impact of the boycott upon assessment, were not responsible for devising a plan for such communication. In fact, the Goldsmiths' [REDACTED] had said on 10 June 2022 that the College would provide guidance on this issue, but none had materialised by the time of the email on 4 July 2022.

13. I found the HoDs had a genuine concern that they needed to act

urgently to communicate with the affected cohort, particularly in light of the large number of international students whose families were booking plane tickets to attend the London Graduation, perhaps unnecessarily.

14.

[REDACTED]

15. Given these findings, I find that the respondents did not act in breach of College regulations or policies. Neither did they breach any duty of care owed or act in breach of any term of implied trust and confidence in taking the alleged actions. For these reasons my recommendation is that there is no case to answer in respect of a disciplinary case against the respondents and that these allegations proceed no further.