

Professor Eunice Simmons,
Vice-Chancellor,
University of Chester

Delivered by email.

24 May 2021

Re: Proposed cuts to Department of Archaeology

Dear Professor Simmons,

The Chartered Institute for Archaeologists (CIfA) has recently learned that the University of Chester has sent 'at risk' notifications to academic staff in the department of History and Archaeology. As a department with a clear focus on vocational training for students wishing to enter the archaeological profession, we have a strong interest in the future of the Department. The Department performs strongly in the student satisfaction survey and is highly regarded for its contributions to the investigation of the internationally important historic city of Chester and its engagement with the local community, as well as local archaeology societies and employers. Because of this, we urge you to consider finding alternative solutions to the proposed cuts to the Department.

CIfA is the leading professional body representing archaeologists working in the UK and overseas. We promote high professional standards and strong ethics in archaeological practice, to maximise the benefits that archaeologists bring to society, and provide a self-regulatory quality assurance framework for the sector and those it serves. We have close links with the academic archaeology sector, through University Archaeology UK (UAUK), and with the Archaeology Department at Chester where recently we have worked with Professor Caroline Pudney and Professor Meggen Gondek during the department's application for degree programme accreditation (outcome currently pending). The accreditation scheme was developed by CIfA and UAUK to ensure that Archaeology degree programmes offer students a sound foundation in archaeological practice, preparing them for a career in archaeology as well as equipping them with a broad range of transferable skills. It is likely that departments offering accredited

programmes would have a competitive edge, especially for recruiting students seeking a career in archaeology.

We are only too aware of the challenges currently facing higher education institutions, and we recognise that the University must consider options to help it meet its financial responsibilities. As History and Archaeology is a small department, we appreciate its vulnerability. However, given its vocational training focus, we suggest that it remains a strong candidate for future sustainable growth.

This confidence is based on the fact that the UK is currently facing high demand for skilled professional archaeologists, who help to deliver sustainable development through the planning system. 97% of UK professionals will enter the workforce with a degree, and recent changes to the immigration system will mean an even greater reliance on UK-trained graduates to meet this demand.

In addition, the Department has a strong reputation for engaging local communities and schoolchildren, providing a clear route for achieving impact in the local area. The Department is also well positioned to capitalise on the huge public interest in the renowned archaeology of the city of Chester, especially given its strong links to local community heritage groups and archaeological employers.

If we can be of any assistance in considering further the landscape for investment in archaeology teaching and research, or exploring options other than reducing staff numbers, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Peter Hinton
BA MCIfA FRSA FSA FIAM FSA Scot
Chief Executive, Chartered Institute for Archaeologists