Professor Sasha Roseneil
Vice-Chancellor and President
University of Sussex
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By email: vco@sussex.ac.uk

9 July 2026

Dear Professor Roseneil,

Re: The Future of Mathematics at the University of Sussex

We are writing on behalf of the professional and learned societies representing the mathematical sciences community in the United Kingdom, and in collaboration through the Campaign for Mathematical Sciences, to express our collective concern about the proposed compulsory redundancies in the Department of Mathematics at the University of Sussex. We understand that the consultation places at risk a substantial proportion of academic staff in the Department.

We recognise the financial pressures facing higher education institutions and the need for universities to respond responsibly to changing circumstances. However, the proposed reduction in mathematics raises significant strategic concerns, particularly given the Department's strength in teaching, research and student demand, and the central role of mathematical sciences in supporting the University's wider academic portfolio.

Mathematics at Sussex is a department of genuine strength and growing momentum. Recent National Student Survey results place it consistently in the top quarter of UK mathematics departments, and its Guardian league table position has risen from 49th to 21st. Its Research Excellence Framework performance is also among the strongest at Sussex, generating QR income per FTE well above the University average. In REF 2021, the Department ranked 18th out of 54 for research outputs; with a single exception, every mathematics department ranked above Sussex submitted more than twice the staff FTE. These are not the hallmarks of a department in need of contraction.

The proposed cuts are particularly difficult to understand. Undergraduate applications are rising alongside new undergraduate and master's programmes in Data Science that align directly with student demand and the national need for quantitative skills. We understand that the projected income growth from new programmes, as well as through new international partnerships, exceeds the savings that the proposed redundancies are intended to deliver.

Experience elsewhere in the sector suggests that proposed redundancies in mathematics departments can cause long-lasting reputational damage. Staff retention and recruitment

become more difficult, student confidence may be affected, and the remaining department can struggle to sustain the breadth and quality of its programmes. Once lost, mathematical capacity can be difficult to rebuild.

More broadly, mathematics is a foundational discipline that underpins innovation across science, engineering, medicine, business, AI and emerging technologies. It is also a cost-effective subject to teach and a critical contributor to the UK's research base, skills pipeline and future economic resilience. Any reduction in core mathematical sciences capacity at a university with Sussex's strengths would have consequences beyond the Department itself.

As professional and learned societies, we believe that the proposed redundancies in the Department of Mathematics represent a serious strategic misjudgement. We therefore urge the University's senior leadership to reconsider the proposals affecting mathematics and to work openly with staff and the wider mathematical sciences community on sustainable alternatives.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues further and to explore how our organisations, through the Campaign for Mathematical Sciences and our wider networks, might support a sustainable and positive future for mathematics at Sussex

Yours sincerely,

Professor Mark Chaplain, FRS FRSE
President, London Mathematical Society

Professor Sir John Aston FRS
President, Royal Statistical Society

Professor Beatrice Pelloni, FRSE
President, Edinburgh Mathematical Society

Dr Heather Tewkesbury
President, Institute of Mathematics and its Applications