

Professor Jane Norman
Vice Chancellor
University of Nottingham
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By email: kelly.allen@nottingham.ac.uk

15 June 2026

Dear Professor Norman,

Future Nottingham 2 Programme and Mathematics and Statistics

The Royal Statistical Society champions and promotes the power of statistics and data to inform understanding, shape policy, and drive decisions for the public good. A key part of the UK's strength in statistics and data is built on our world-leading universities and investment in excellent mathematics and statistics departments. We are writing in support of a letter sent to you recently by the London Mathematical Society (LMS) and following the University of Nottingham's announcement of cost-cutting measures, to express our concern about the potential impact on academic and professional services staff in the School of Mathematical Sciences.

The University of Nottingham has a strong international reputation in the mathematical sciences, spanning both teaching and research, with significant interdisciplinary impact, particularly in medicine and engineering. The Statistics and Probability section hosts world-leading research groups in shape analysis and epidemic modelling, alongside a strong tradition of pioneering advances in computational statistical methods. The LMS's analysis of current student recruitment in mathematics and related disciplines indicates that demand remains strong and that the School is well placed to sustain its intake.

In this context, we wish to raise concerns about the proposed business case for the Future Nottingham 2 (FN2) programme. The suggested reduction of approximately 15% in academic staff, together with a notable decrease in time allocated to research, represents a substantial change in capacity. Within statistics and the wider mathematical sciences, where staff-to-student ratios and research-active teaching are particularly important, such reductions risk placing significant strain on the delivery of high-quality teaching and the maintenance of a vibrant research environment. This is especially relevant at a time when demand for statistical skills – driven by data science, artificial intelligence, and quantitative applications across disciplines – continues to grow.

Statistics, in particular, plays a central role in equipping students with the analytical and data-handling skills required across a wide range of sectors. Sustaining strong undergraduate and postgraduate provision depends on maintaining sufficient academic expertise, both in teaching and in research-led curriculum development. A contraction at the scale proposed may limit the School's



ability to offer the breadth of statistical training that students increasingly expect, and that employers consistently seek.

The School's current involvement in the Maths Degrees for the Future programme, led by the Campaign for Mathematical Sciences, further highlights the importance of continued investment in this area. Nottingham's work, including its focus on mathematics and data-driven methods in the context of AI, aligns closely with the increasing prominence of statistics and data science within the mathematical sciences landscape. Ensuring that staffing and research capacity remain sufficient will be important for realising the full value of this initiative and for supporting innovation in undergraduate education.

More broadly, statistics and the mathematical sciences underpin teaching and research across the University, contributing to disciplines ranging from health and life sciences to economics and engineering. Maintaining adequate capacity in these areas is therefore important not only for the School itself but also for the wider academic community and for the development of future skills in data and quantitative analysis.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and colleagues to discuss these issues further, and to explore how the Royal Statistical Society might support a sustainable and positive future for statistics and the mathematical sciences at Nottingham.

We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Sir John Aston
President, Royal Statistical Society





19th June 2026

Prof Sir John Aston
President, Royal Statistical Society
56-64 Leonard Square
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Via email: J.Everett@rss.org.uk

Future Nottingham 2 Programme and Mathematics and Statistics

Dear Professor Sir John Aston

Thank you for your letter voicing your concerns regarding our Future Nottingham2 programme. Your message has been passed to me as Pro Vice Chancellor for the Faculty of Science, since Mathematical Sciences is one of the Schools in my Faculty.

As you are aware Mathematical Sciences at Nottingham is extremely strong, delivering world class research, with a vibrant community of students receiving excellent teaching, learning and pastoral support from highly dedicated and skilled staff. The School is delivering significant research in Mathematical teaching that will have major impacts on the discipline nationally and worldwide. As you point out, we are also delivering key activities such as mathematics in the age of AI, Maths Degrees for the Future and the Maths Observatory, which we are fully committed to deliver.

We are committed to ensure that our research and teaching excellence are maintained. However, to be able to invest in Research and Teaching at the level that is required we need to be financially sustainable, which is the reason for FN2; as I am sure you are aware the University of Nottingham is not unique at facing these challenges which are facing the whole sector. To secure the future of our research and teaching and to ensure that we can continue investing in these vital areas we must make changes across the University.

Our proposals recognise the changing choices for student regarding subjects like Maths and Physics, trends that are reflected across the sector. As you detail there is a proposed reduction of 15%, however this is proposed to happen gradually over a period of 4 year, with a proposed reduction of 7% over the next two years. This is partly due to changes associated with other programmes where Maths carries out additional teaching. I recognise that this is difficult, but the changes in staffing can hopefully be delivered through voluntary processes over the coming years. We are also committed to the pipeline of development of our Early Career Researchers across the Faculty who are currently on fellowships and will still transition onto the academic staff at the end of their fellowships.

Regarding our portfolio of courses, we absolutely intend to continue to offer our Mathematics degrees, PGR and research activities and to support our students. We are proposing changes for MSci Mathematical Physics, which has been suspended for entry in 2026, however this was planned prior to the Future Nottingham2 proposals. The Schools (Maths and Physics) are intending to combine Theoretical Physics and Mathematical Physics to develop a new exciting programme (BSc & MSci) proposed for 2028 entry. We are aware of the need to continuously revisit our portfolio recognising that student interests are changing, however realising the importance of training in critical subjects such as statistics which are key skills for many sectors.

Also to note, these are still proposals which are subject to meaningful consultation with the unions. Nothing will be finalised or implemented until a final Business Case is approved by Council in the autumn.

I hope that this helps address some of your concerns, we are committed to maintain the strengths of Mathematics and particularly Statistics within our research and teaching portfolio, but please do contact me directly by reply if you would like to meet to discuss this further.

Best wishes

Professor Zoe A Wilson
Pro-Vice-Chancellor, Faculty of Science