

In the interests of academic freedom I am making the YesYes flysheet available. However, I would much prefer that you signed the NoNo flysheet available at <http://tinyurl.com/ybz3lev>. For a rebuttal of this FAQ see <http://www.cl.cam.ac.uk/~rja14/ccf/statute-u.html>.

Stephen Cowley

Flysheet

Statute U, while it has some virtues, is a product of its time, a period in the early 1990s when academic tenure was being cut back and employment law was only just beginning to grapple with difficult issues involving disciplinary and grievance procedures. We need a new employment statute which will reaffirm academic freedom and ensure clarity and consistency in the operation of our procedures. The proposed changes will remove opportunities for misuse of the grievance procedures which have caused widespread concern. On redundancy, no School, Faculty or Department will be able to implement a redundancy process affecting academic officers without the consent of the Regent House, as at present. Nor can a School, Faculty or Department be suppressed without such consent. The Regent House will no longer vote on the selection of particular individuals for redundancy, a change which will align our practice with the requirements of employment law and has been generally welcomed. In other cases of dismissal, the proposed text makes clear what is currently less than completely clear under Statute U, namely that dismissal may only be for good cause, objectively assessed by reference to one of a number of grounds for disciplinary action. This is a stronger standard than that provided both by general employment law and by the Zellick amendments to the 'model statute' which many other universities have adopted. From a legal point of view, the effect of the reforms will be to strengthen, not weaken, job protection for academic officers. They will thereby confirm the University's commitment to freedom of inquiry, and to its tradition of democratic governance based, among other things, on freedom to speak out on matters of general concern.

We therefore urge you to vote 'placet' to Graces 1 and 2 or, alternatively, 'placet' to Grace 2.