British Society for Phenomenology

President Dr Keith Crome
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9th July 2026

Dear Professors Roberts, Charman, Jones, Stansfield, Berry and Watt,

I am writing in my capacity as President of the British Society for Phenomenology (BSP), on behalf of the Society's Executive Committee and its international membership, which includes a number of colleagues from the University of Exeter's Philosophy Department.

The BSP has become aware of proposals currently under consideration at the University of Exeter that may result in the loss of at least five full-time equivalent academic posts within Philosophy as part of a compulsory redundancy process affecting the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences. We wish to express our serious concern about the potential consequences of these proposals and to urge the University to pursue a course of action that protects the long-term vitality, reputation and success of Philosophy at Exeter.

We are especially concerned about the implications for phenomenology, an area in which Exeter has established an outstanding national and international reputation. Exeter's strengths in phenomenological research and teaching have contributed significantly to the development of the field and have fostered important interdisciplinary collaborations. The relevance of phenomenology extends far beyond philosophy itself, informing research and innovation in areas such as healthcare, mental health, education, human-computer interaction, and artificial intelligence. Preserving this expertise is therefore important not only for the discipline, but also for a range of research areas with growing technological, social and economic significance.

It is our understanding that the University's overall financial position remains comparatively robust within the UK higher education sector. Furthermore, Philosophy at Exeter is widely recognised as both academically successful and financially sustainable, with strong student recruitment and an

impressive national profile. The department's placement of 8th in the Complete University Guide 2027 reflects this success. In these circumstances, it is difficult to see how reductions on the scale proposed could be implemented without jeopardising the quality, reputation and future development of the programme. Such cuts would have consequences extending beyond Exeter itself, diminishing a recognised centre of excellence and weakening the broader philosophical and phenomenological landscape in the United Kingdom.

The proposed reductions also risk undermining a department that has earned distinction through the quality of its research, the strength of its teaching, and its contribution to the University's academic standing. Significant losses of academic staff would inevitably place these achievements at risk.

In light of these concerns, we respectfully urge the University to be guided by the following principles:

- Any proposals affecting Philosophy should be underpinned by a clear and transparent financial rationale that fully recognises the department's teaching provision, student demand, research activity and broader contribution to the University.
- University leadership should work closely and constructively with colleagues in Philosophy to develop a sustainable and positive vision for the future of the discipline at Exeter.
- The University should continue to recognise and support the crucial contribution that phenomenology in particular, and philosophy more generally, make to the intellectual, cultural and civic life of the UK, as well as to the international reputation of British higher education.

We appreciate the considerable challenges currently facing universities across the sector and recognise the difficult responsibilities borne by institutional leaders. Nevertheless, we urge you to reflect carefully on the long-term implications of the proposed measures and to take all possible steps to protect a department that has demonstrated academic excellence, strong student demand and a sustained record of success.

Yours sincerely,



Keith Crome