

## Risking jobs, competitiveness and skills

Faculty members, postdoctoral researchers and PhD students at UK universities are enraged by moves to cut jobs, and are accusing institutions of adopting 'autocratic' decision-making practices under cover of the COVID-19 pandemic, finds [a survey of academics](#) around the nation.

In open-ended responses to the survey, one PhD student wrote, "money will be prioritised before people be they staff or students", adding that universities "will work the academics who survive the jobs cuts into the ground to achieve financial gain".

Seventy per cent of respondents say that pandemic-related cuts have created job insecurity and a culture of fear among staff, with university leaders becoming more autocratic as a result. Some respondents say that they fear shifts towards "undemocratic governance" will undermine academic independence.

The developments at UK universities are not unique. Governments around the world will need to invest more in universities if the situation caused by the pandemic is not to worsen.