Joint statement on Research Excellence (2011)

Following discussions, the University and BUCU have agreed the following, which we hope will clarify the University's intentions and reassure University staff:

1 It is through the efforts of University staff that the University's success and reputation is achieved, fostered by encouragement and development.

2 It is in the interests of the University as a whole and its staff individually that it should maximize its success in the forthcoming REF, and more broadly that it create a more effective research culture. As part of its strategy to enhance quality, the University monitors and manages research performance.

3 As HEFCE is no longer funding research which is rated below 3*, the University's REF return must highlight its research at 3* and 4* and we believe that maximizing the University's average research score will be of sustained benefit. The threshold of 11* (ie a minimum of 3 x 3* plus 1 x 2* for the four REFable publications of those included in the REF return) reflects this ambition.

4 The University's activities around the primary objectives of teaching and research are many and varied. The University will not take action against staff solely on the basis of their not being submitted in the REF return.

5 Teaching-focused contracts may be an option for excellent teachers; where such contracts are offered, they may, or may not, be accepted by those to whom they are offered. The University will not forcibly move staff who are excluded from the REF return to teaching-focused contracts.

6 The University and UCU both support the rules-based approach to the equality commitment in the REF. The University will press for panels to adopt strong policies that fully recognize the effects that periods of parental leave and other caring responsibilities may have on research productivity.

7 Paragraph 7.4 of the Harassment and Bullying Policy (http://www.equality.bham.ac.uk/policy/Policies/Harassment__Bullying_Policy.pdf) sets out the distinction between bullying and reasonable activity to manage and improve performance. The University does not tolerate bullying and harassment of or by its staff.

We hope that this statement provides clarification and reassurance to those members of academic teaching staff who have raised concerns regarding the University's proposals over the recent months.

Yours faithfully

PVC (Research and Knowledge Transfer) Prof. Adam Tickell

Stephen Issitt, President BUCU, on behalf of BUCU committee