

Witness Name: Alastair Campbell-
Ritchie
Statement No: WITN0030001
Dated: 21 September 2025

THE NOTTINGHAM INQUIRY

FIRST WITNESS STATEMENT OF ALASTAIR CAMPBELL-RITCHIE

I, Alastair Campbell-Ritchie, of the University of Nottingham, University Park, Nottingham, NG7 2RD (the “**University**”) will say as follows: -

INTRODUCTION

1. This witness statement is made to assist the Nottingham Inquiry (the “**Inquiry**”) with the matters set out in the Rule 9 Request dated 26 June 2025.
2. Following the completion of my PhD at the University of Strathclyde in 1997, I moved to Singapore where I worked for 12 years at the National University of Singapore and at Nanyang Technological University. I joined the University in 2009 as an Assistant Professor. My primary responsibilities include the teaching of design and certain elements of Bioengineering.
3. For the Masters programmes, I tutor on the first and second year design modules and I was module convenor for the Design and Make module (MMME4085), undertaken by all MEng students in Year 3 of their studies, from 2018 to 2023. This is a year-long module and involves students forming groups of 4 or 5 to undertake a project supervised by one academic. The role of module convenor can vary depending on the module and the academic undertaking the role – some academics, such as myself, are more hands-on than others. My primary role as module convenor was to ensure that all

students received a consistent experience.

4. My roles as Assistant Professor and module convenor do include some pastoral responsibilities, in that I always try to provide a sympathetic and listening ear to students, but I do refer them on to other individuals or services if what they are raising is outside my area of expertise. I am also a personal tutor and have been since 2009. This role does involve some pastoral responsibilities, which include explaining extenuating circumstances to tutees, making tutees aware of the resources available to support their physical and mental health, and generally looking out for their welfare, in particular if there are major changes to their academic performance or if they appear to be struggling academically.

THE UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT WELLBEING SERVICES AND MENTAL HEALTH ADVISORY SERVICE

5. I have been asked what training I received. I have received training at staff away days at which we were given information, e.g. about mental health first aid and the Senior Tutor for the Department of Mechanical, Materials and Manufacturing gave us the heads up about new University processes and procedures. The Senior Tutor also sends out e-mails with relevant information to personal tutors on a weekly basis. I have also done the University's online compulsory training. Training that I have undertaken at the University has reinforced that there are several services to which students can be signposted. I was not trained to diagnose or to ask searching questions as it is important that students feel able to volunteer information that I can then use to signpost them to the appropriate service.
6. Policies and procedures regarding mental health and other issues relating to students were found in the Quality Manual and advice was also available on the University staff-facing webpages. I found these useful.
7. At the time (2017 – 2022), my understanding of the role of the Student

Wellbeing services was that they were the first point of contact between the student and the University regarding any physical or mental health problems. The circumstances in which I might seek the advice of, or refer a student to, Student Wellbeing services were if I believed there was something affecting the student's academic performance or them personally. They could then refer the student on to an appropriate care giver. I would be mindful of confidentiality, but I would usually check that a student I had passed on to the Student Wellbeing services had been dealt with. I interacted with the Student Wellbeing services via e-mail and found them to be helpful and prompt.

8. My understanding of the role of the Mental Health Advisory Service ("**MHAS**") was that it was similar to the Support and Wellbeing service in that it provided support to students. The circumstances in which I might seek the advice of, or refer a student to, MHAS would be if a student had a mental health issue, rather than a physical issue. However, I would generally signpost the student to the Support and Wellbeing service first, on the understanding that they would further signpost to MHAS as needed. I had no direct interaction with MHAS, but I am aware that students who were referred to them found them helpful.
9. If I had concerns about the mental health of a student, then at that time, I would or could have referred the student to the Support and Wellbeing service, MHAS or the Disability Support Service. I would also encourage them to seek help from their GP.
10. If I had concerns about the risk a student posed to the safety of others, the actions which I would or could have taken in 2017-2022 would depend on the situation. In the case of risk to physical safety, I would call the University Security team or, if the situation was urgent, I would call the police.
11. I have been asked whether it is left up to the student to decide whether or not to contact the services they have been signposted to. This would depend on the context - for instance, in the case of lower level issues, I would leave it up to the student to contact the relevant service, but would follow up with them

to check they had and were ok. In the case of a more serious concern, I would write to the service on the student's behalf and make the introduction to the service. I would also generally follow up with the service if I had a serious concern about the student. The guidance that I rely on in relation to this is the 'Identifying and Responding to Students in Difficulty' guide for staff [UNIN0001820].

CHRONOLOGY

12. I have been asked to set out a chronological account of my contact with Valdo Calocane, who I will refer to as Valdo throughout this statement as we generally refer to students by their first name and this is how I referred to Valdo when I interacted with him.
13. My interactions with Valdo were routine and I do not recall anything of note or out of the ordinary. My impression of Valdo was that as a mature student he was a bit quieter than the younger and more confident undergraduates. I did not meet any member of Valdo's family in person, but I did have limited interactions with his mother via e-mail, as detailed below.
14. I did not tutor Valdo in the first and second year of his studies (the 2017/18 and 2018/19 academic years), but I may have interacted with him in lectures, seminars or laboratory classes, although I do not recall any encounters with Valdo during this period.
15. Valdo took the Design and Make module in the 2019/20 academic year, when he would have been in the third year of his studies. The group supervisor was Dr Ben Rothwell.
16. In the 2019/20 academic year, teaching was disrupted by the Covid-19 pandemic. In normal circumstances, students would build a project prototype for display in May. This wasn't possible during the pandemic so students had to instead prepare a detailed design and submit calculations and drawings.

17. I conducted two design reviews on the group project, one preliminary and the other critical. The preliminary review took place on 27 November 2019 and a critical review on 28 February 2020. Design reviews are formative (which means that the assessment is to improve the project's chance of success, rather than earning marks), involve the group of students presenting their project, and are marked on a pass/fail basis. During and after the presentation, the group is questioned and provided with feedback and then the students have the opportunity to make changes to their designs, drawings or calculations. From what I recall, there was nothing in either the preliminary or critical review for this group project that was unusual and I do not remember any specific interactions with Valdo as part of the design review process. Similarly, Dr Rothwell, as the direct supervisor of the group, did not raise any issues with me as the module convenor about the group or any of its members - it was all fairly routine.

18. Late on 29 May 2020, I received an e-mail from Valdo's University e-mail account, but the e-mail (which was also sent to Donald Giddings) was not from Valdo, it was from his mother [UNIN0000966]. In this e-mail, Valdo's mother stated as follows:

"Dear Sir,

My name is Celeste Calocane and I am writing on behalf of my son Valdo Calocane who has given me access to his account. He has recently been admitted to the mental health ward, due to a psychotic episode and will remain there for the time being.

Per the situation, he will not be able to take his online exam on Tuesday the 02/06/2020 and will need an extension. If more information on this issue is required, please contact Rowan Ward 1, Highbury Hospital on GRO-B If there are any forms that need completing please can they be forwarded to this email?

I also attached a screenshot of an email from the social worker.

Kind Regards

Celeste Calocane"

19. This was the first time I was aware that Valdo was suffering from mental illness, but I was given no other information or details about the circumstances giving rise to the admission.
20. I responded to the e-mail from Valdo's mother very early the next day, Saturday 30 May 2020, informing her that Valdo's marks for the group project would not be affected by this situation and that I would check with Dr Giddings that other module convenors had been notified [UNIN0001758]. Donald e-mailed me on 1 June 2020 asking if I was his tutor and telling me that he would fill in an extenuating circumstances form for Valdo [UNIN0000781]. I replied to Donald immediately informing him that I was not Valdo's tutor and I did not know who was [UNIN0001351]. Donald replied to say that he would see if he could find out the identity of the tutor. I did not hear from Donald again in relation to this matter.
21. On 29 September 2021, Dr Emma Barney, the Senior Tutor, sent Valdo and me an e-mail in which she said that she was putting Valdo in touch with me as I was the best person to help Valdo understand the process of converting to the BEng after having done a group project [UNIN0001150].
22. It is perfectly possible for students to transfer from the MEng programme to the BEng one, but in order for them to graduate with an accredited Bachelor's degree after transfer, students have to do an individual project report in their final year. This individual project report is based on the group project they undertook in their third year of studies and, essentially, the individual project involves transferring students doing a writeup of their contribution to the group project to show they have met the learning outcome requirements for the BEng degree.
23. Valdo e-mailed me on 5 October 2021 to ask how long the report should be, how long he had to hand it in and whether he still needed to register for this

academic year. I replied the same day, providing Valdo with guidance notes, an assessment proforma and an example of a pass-level report to give him some idea of what was required for him to complete the BEng [UNIN0000293, UNIN0000689, UNIN0001438, UNIN0000768].

24. After some initial correspondence around the timing of the submission of his report, Valdo sent me his draft individual report for review on 12 June 2022. I provided him with feedback on his report on 14 June 2022, noting in my covering e-mail that the report was mostly there, but that Valdo had not demonstrated the necessary literature review skills [UNIN0001405].

25. On 15 June 2022, Valdo sent me a revised draft report for review. Major pieces of coursework such as this report have to be double marked as per University regulations. The obvious person to ask to act as a second marker for individual reports is the supervisor of the group project, in this case Dr Ben Rothwell and so I contacted Ben by e-mail on 29 June 2022 to ask if he would act as a second pair of eyes [UNIN0000527]. Ben e-mailed me back a short while later to confirm that he would be happy to second mark the report and provided me with his comments on it later that day [UNIN0000674, UNIN0000815, UNIN0000239, UNIN0001355, UNIN0000281, UNIN0001125, UNIN0000494, UNIN0001204, UNIN0001273].

26. I then e-mailed Valdo on 29 June 2022 to inform him that the draft report, in my judgment and that of Dr Rothwell, still did not meet the required standard when it came to the literature review element [UNIN0001750]. The same day, Valdo provided a further updated report to me and asked me to let him know if there was anything missing [UNIN0001173, UNIN0000418].

27. I reviewed this, but it still did not meet the required standard and I e-mailed Valdo on 30 June 2022 explaining what was required to move the report to the pass level, indicating that I was happy to meet him that afternoon to run through the draft report so that there was no question of a delay to his graduation [UNIN0000363, UNIN0000098]. Valdo responded quickly to my

feedback, but challenged it rather than accepting it and making the required changes [UNIN0001289]. It is not unusual for students to do this. I told Valdo arguing wasn't going to change the decision and that he needed to accept the feedback and address the issue [UNIN0000396]. Valdo responded again asking for feedback [UNIN0001015].

28. On 1 July 2022, I wrote to Valdo explaining again that the literature review element of his report was not at pass level and how to structure it so that it did reach pass level [UNIN0001234].

29. On 6 July 2022, Valdo sent me a further version of his report and this time, as I let him know the same day, he had addressed the shortcoming in his previous drafts and the report was now at the pass level [UNIN000048].

30. The email to Valdo to let him know that he had satisfied the requirements to pass the individual project was my final interaction with him. I have neither heard from Valdo nor from others about Valdo since then.

31. Aside from what I have detailed above, I was not aware Valdo had been detained at or admitted to hospital because of mental illness whilst he was a student at the University.

32. I was not aware of any interactions Valdo had with the police or University Security team whilst he was a student at the University. I was not aware of any complaints made to the University about the behaviour of Valdo. As far as I am aware, Valdo was not asked to undertake a Fitness to Study assessment at any time whilst he was a student at the University.

OBSERVATIONS

33. I have been asked to comment on whether I think I should have been told more about Valdo's behaviour while at the University, his mental illness and/or his interactions with the police, and if so what I should have been told and by

who. I think someone should have known about these and there should have been some level of information sharing, but not to the extent that the information became common knowledge. I do not think that in my role as module convenor it was appropriate for me to know about these things. I think it would have been appropriate for the Department's student welfare-focused staff, such as the Disability Liaison Officer, the Senior Tutor and Valdo's personal tutor, to have known about Valdo's behaviour.

34. I have been asked to comment on whether I consider there are additional actions that I or the University could have taken in respect of Valdo. I do not have enough detail to know what could have been done differently.

35. I have been asked to comment on whether I consider there are any structural issues (such as guidelines/policies, training, organisational structure, communication with others in or outside the University) which contributed to any issues of the issues I have identified. As I do not have the full facts, anything I would say would be pure speculation.

36. I have been asked to comment on what recommendations I think the Chair of this Inquiry should make to ensure lessons are learned and to prevent similar attacks in the future. Due to my limited involvement, I do not have sufficient information to feel comfortable making recommendations.

37. I have been asked what improvements I think could be made to the University or to the higher education sector generally in how they deal with acutely mentally ill students and / or students who pose a risk of safety to others. I would like to say that we are not experts in the area of mental illness. There is only so much that academics can do given the nature of our roles, but I think it would be good for there to be more consistent mental health awareness training across the higher education sector to increase academics' confidence in dealing with someone who is acutely mentally ill.

Statement of Truth

I believe the content of this statement to be true. I understand that proceedings may be brought against anyone who makes, or causes to be made, a false statement in a document verified by a statement of truth without an honest belief of its truth.

Signed: **GRO-B** _____

Dated: 21 September 2025 _____

Index to First Witness Statement of Alastair Campbell-Ritchie

No.	Inquiry URN	Document Description
1.	UNIN0001820	Policy guidance, re: Identifying and responding to students in difficulty – A guide for staff
2.	UNIN0000966	Email from Valdo Mendes Calocane to Alastair Campbell Ritchie and Donald Giddings, re: Regarding Valdo's illness
3.	UNIN0001758	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie to Valdo Mendes Calocane and Donald Giddings, re: Regarding Valdo's Illness
4.	UNIN0000781	Email from Donald Giddings (UON) to Alistair Campbell Ritchie (UON), re: Regarding Valdo's illness
5.	UNIN0001351	Email from Alistair Campbell Ritchie (UON) to Donald Giddings (UON), re: Regarding Valdo's Illness
6.	UNIN0001150	Email from Emma Barney to Valdo Mendes Calocane, Alastair Campbell Ritchie, re: RE: BEng Qualification
7.	UNIN0000293	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie to Valdo Mendes Calocane and Emma Barney Re: BEng qualification
8.	UNIN0000689	Report compiled re: MME3073 Individual Project Report Submission – Biomimetic Propulsion System
9.	UNIN0001438	Report dated 01/03/2012, compiled by Dr Alastair Campbell Ritchie, re: MMME3073 Individual Report
10.	UNIN0000768	Report compiled re: MMME3073 Individual project report
11.	UNIN0001405	Email from Valdo Mendes Calocane to Alistair Campbell Ritchie (UON), re: MMME3073 Individual Report

12.	UNIN0000527	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie to Benjamin Rothwell Re: Fw: MMME3073 Individual Report
13.	UNIN0000674	Email from Benjamin Rothwell [University of Nottingham] to Alastair Campbell Ritchie [University of Nottingham] Re: MMME3073 Individual Report
14.	UNIN0000815	Email from Alistair Campbell Ritchie (UON) to Benjamin Rothwell (UON), re: MMME3073 Individual Report
15.	UNIN0000239	Email from Benjamin Rothwell to Alastair Campbell Ritchie Re: MMME3073 Individual Report
16.	UNIN0001355	Email from Alistair Campbell Ritchie (UON) to Benjamin Rothwell (UON), re: Fw: MMME3073 Individual Report
17.	UNIN0000281	Email from Benjamin Rothwell (UoN) to Alastair Campbell Ritchie (UoN) Re: MMME3073 Individual Report
18.	UNIN0001125	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie to Benjamin Rothwell, re: MMME3073 Individual Report
19.	UNIN0000494	Report dated 15/06/2022 [Date from Parent Date], compiled by Valdo M. Calocane University of Nottingham, Re: "Design of a heavy lift unmanned aerial vehicle" project report
20.	UNIN0001204	Report dated 01/05/2011, compiled by UoN, Re: MMME3073/MM3IPR Individual project report
21.	UNIN0001273	Email from Benjamin Rothwell [UoN] to Alastair Campbell [UoN], re: RE: MMME3073 Individual Report
22.	UNIN0001750	Email from Alastair Campbell [UNIN] to Valdo Mendes Calocane, Benjamin Rothwell [UNIN], re: MMME3073 Individual Report

23.	UNIN0001173	Email from Valdo Mendes Calocane to Alastair Campbell Ritchie, re: Re: MMME3073 Individual Report
24.	UNIN0000418	Report dated 29/06/2022 [Date from Parent Date], compiled by Valdo M. Calocane University of Nottingham, Re: "Design of a heavy lift unmanned aerial vehicle" project report
25.	UNIN0000363	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie (UON) to Valdo Mendes Calocane (UON), Stewart McWilliam (UON) and Benjamin Rothwell (UON), re: MMME3073
26.	UNIN0000098	Report document compiled by the University of Nottingham – Department of Mechanical, Materials and Manufacturing Engineering RE: MMME3073 Individual project report dated 01/05/2021
27.	UNIN0001289	Email from Valdo Mendes Calocane to Alastair Campbell Ritchie [UoN], Stewart McWilliam [UoN] and Benjamin Rothwell [UoN], re: Re MMME3073
28.	UNIN0000396	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie (UNIN) to Valdo Mendes Calocane (UNIN) and Stewart McWilliam (UNIN) Re: MMME3073
29.	UNIN0001015	Email from Valdo Mendes Calocane to Alastair Campbell Ritchie [UoN], Stewart McWilliam [UoN] , Benjamin Rothwell [UoN], re: Re: MMME3073
30.	UNIN0001234	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie to Valdo Mendes Calocane and Stewart McWilliam, re; MMME3073
31.	UNIN0000048	Email from Alastair Campbell Ritchie to Valdo Mendes Calocane, Stewart McWilliam, Chantal Cappelletti and others, re: Re: MMME3073