

Dear Paul Thompson,

This letter is written by a group of Jewish RCAUCU members and supported by our colleagues, all the undersigned below. We strongly oppose the implementation of the IHRA definition and the way this was brought to the Senate for voting. Only on 26 May 2021, the day that Senate was due to vote on the implementation of this definition, was RCAUCU informed that the College was considering the IHRA definition of antisemitism. This is in no way meaningful consultation and as such is a serious breach of the recognition agreement that the College has with the UCU. Other institutions have tried to meaningfully consult with all staff on the implementation of the IHRA. For example Kent held a consultative survey to gain feedback from staff and students **before** the issue was taken back to Council. The way this matter has been handled by the RCA shows the absolute disregard the College shows for the views of staff and students. Not only that but it has caused huge hurt to many Jewish members.

We find all forms of antisemitism abhorrent. That is why we take its definition seriously. We believe the IHRA is not fit for purpose, even with the caveats from the Home Office Select Committee¹, and will still stifle legitimate criticism of the Israeli government. There are many definitions of antisemitism, a large number of which do not try to create parallels between antisemitism and opposition to the Israeli state, including the Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism. We find the idea that all Jewish people should be seen as supporting the actions of the Israeli state not just factually inaccurate, but antisemitic in and of itself. The problem with the IHRA is that due to its imprecise definition of antisemitism it does little to tackle antisemitic behaviour and actions. However this definition could have a major impact on academic freedoms. This is not acceptable to us and extremely unhelpful in fighting antisemitism. At worst this means that the fight against antisemitism can be hijacked to censor political debate around Israeli/Palestine and further institutional racism against Palestinian and Arab staff and students. We need to build bridges between communities. This definition does little to help us do that.

Signed, (Add your name to the letter by clicking [here](#) to fill in a form. Names will be transferred manually and may take a few hours)

Tai Shani, RCA
Aura Satz, RCA
Pil Kollektiv RCA
Kevin Biderman, RCA
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Richard Bevan, RCA
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Martin McGrath, RCA
Alex Fletcher, RCA
Matt Lewis, RCA

¹ Both additions rely on the notion of *antisemitic intent* which lacks any independent criteria or clarity. Along with the way antisemitism is defined in the main body of the definition it relies on perceptions, as the text states 'a certain perception of Jews'. This can be taken out of context and used in a way that is unhelpful to the fight against antisemitism and disallows legitimate criticism of the Israeli state.

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