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# Scientist quits after settling uni score

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REBEL scientist Ted Steele will soon leave Wollongong University for a second time, and probably finally, as the result of a confidential settlement to the costly 18-month dispute over his allegations of "soft marking" of honours students.

The union of academics, the National Tertiary Education Union, confirmed yesterday that Dr Steele's resignation from the university was a condition of the settlement, which was announced late on Friday after more than a month of private mediation.

Dr Steele was dismissed by Wollongong vice-chancellor Gerard Sutton in February



**Outspoken critic:** Dr Steele

last year after refusing to disassociate himself from reported remarks that he had been "instructed" to upgrade the honours marks of two allegedly poorly performing stu-

dents in the university's biological sciences department in 1997 and 2000.

The university denied the allegation and Professor Sutton accused Dr Steele of breaching his contract of employment by defaming the university.

In a taped departmental discussion and before a Senate committee last year, Dr Steele denied he had made the quoted remarks. But he continued to criticise the handling of the two students' assessments.

Last April, he was reinstated, given about \$100,000 in back pay and sent on paid leave after the university lost a Federal Court case

and appeal over the dismissal's legality.

In all, four judges have ruled that the university should have used misconduct proceedings under its academics' enterprise agreement before deciding on the dismissal.

After his reinstatement, Dr Steele was formally charged by the university with misconduct but refused to face an inquiry, claiming it would be a "kangaroo court".

Instead, the molecular biologist sought a payout, that would have funded his research for several years.

On Friday, the university and the union said the dispute had ended. There was no word of any financial payout.