

Raj Jethwa
UCEA
Via e-mail

05 September 2023

Dear Raj

Thank you for your letter of 4 September and for your letter dated 4 August.

As the Joint Unions noted in the letter dated 29 June, we are willing to re-enter negotiations on pay spine reform, contract type/casualisation, workload, and equality pay gaps. We also confirmed that we are willing to meet to discuss sector finances with an independent facilitator. We are willing for these negotiations and discussions to commence as soon as possible. Our position has not changed since we issued that letter.

I would, however, like to reiterate that at the heart of this dispute is the fundamental issue of UCEA's unwillingness to recognise our justified demand for a resolution to our dispute on pay. This is of particular import considering UCU members have overwhelmingly rejected the pay offer imposed by UCEA of between 5% and 8%.

Until UCEA recognise the continuing impact of the cost-of-living crisis and that staff working within the sector, including our members, must be remunerated in line with the skills and expertise they bring to the sector, we will remain in dispute.

As I previously highlighted, UCU entered the most recent talks with UCEA with optimism that we could de-escalate the dispute and eventually reach a resolution.

Unfortunately, the multiple pathways to a resolution we put forward were rejected by UCEA. Every single way out was rejected, often without a clear rationale for doing so.

After our last set of meetings, I, UCU negotiators and our members have been left questioning whether UCEA ever had a serious intention to consider an interim agreement, or an intention to address the wider issues of the dispute.

It has had the unfortunate effect of showing that the future of students, and the health, safety and wellbeing of staff are not your priorities.

UCU is willing to end our dispute and enable universities and our members to return to normality. However, this will require a negotiated settlement and movement from UCEA on pay for 2023-24.

The issues under dispute are of prime importance to our members; there is still time to avert this long-running dispute continuing into the coming academic year.

Our door remains open for talks should UCEA's aspiration to improve the industrial relations climate within the sector mean that you are willing to enter genuine dispute-settling negotiations.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jo Grady". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "J".

Dr Jo Grady
General Secretary