

Shahenda Suliman and Ruth Smith
Joint Union Side Secretaries
Joint Higher Education Sector Trade Unions

By email

4 August 2023

Dear Ruth and Shahenda

Review of sector finances and terms of reference phase two New JNCHES negotiations 2023-24

Further to your email on 2 August 2023, I am writing to follow-up on the proposal of an independent review of the HE sector finances. We hope through the review we can come to a better understanding of the sector's finances and ability to pay uplifts which has been the cause of much of the difficulty in negotiations over pay in recent years.

We also consider that it would be helpful to meet with the five sector trade unions to discuss matters relating to the wider dispute. I hope you will agree that significant progress was made earlier this year under phase two of the 2023-24 New JNCHES pay negotiating round when terms of reference for further negotiations were agreed through Acas collective conciliation on significant issues of importance to employers and unions alike. These included the pay spine, workload, contract types and pay gaps.

UCEA therefore proposes that we convene a meeting with all five Joint HE Trade Unions to firstly seek to finalise and agree the terms of reference and membership of the independent assessment of sector finances and, in quick succession, further meetings, as required, with the aim of finalising the terms of reference on the other matters to enable us to begin the important work in each of the four areas identified within them. We propose that we jointly approach Acas to consider facilitation of these meetings. We recognise that each union will wish to be represented by its full New JNCHES negotiating team, given the broader agenda.

In the interests of ensuring there is no misunderstanding, the purpose of the meeting will not be to discuss the 2023-24 pay uplift. The 2023-24 negotiations on pay have concluded and as we have previously communicated, there is no opportunity for us to make an improved offer on pay.

Subject to your acceptance of our proposal, we propose that we jointly approach Acas to consider facilitation of these meetings.

I would be grateful if you could make arrangements to forward this letter to the other trade unions.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raj Jethwa". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Raj Jethwa
Chief Executive