

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

**By email**

9 October 2023

Dear Ruth and Shahenda,

**Progressing the Independent review of sector finances**

I am writing to follow up on our positive and constructive initial meeting on the independent review of sector finances on 22 September 2023.

I believe that representatives of both UCEA and the Joint Trade Unions shared a sentiment for the review to be jointly led and owned by both parties. Both sides also agreed that the process and outcomes of the review should help to rebuild confidence and trust in the relationship and should be based upon a spirit of openness and honesty.

We very much look forward to working with you in that spirit of openness and honesty with both employers and trade unions keen to progress this important review.

We agreed that any individual or organisation appointed to undertake the review should have the confidence of both the trade unions and employers. We also agreed to the Union Side's request to enlarge the group which would make the appointment. As I confirmed on in my email of 26 September, we look forward to you notifying us of trade union nominees for this working group.

As you are aware, the two scheduled meetings needed to progress the financial review were unfortunately cancelled. While this unavoidable delay has been unfortunate, as you know, we have canvassed dates for meetings on a weekly basis over October and November to progress this important work and we very much hope that Joint Unions will be able confirm their availability. There is growing concern that we will not allow for sufficient time to complete this detailed review prior to the start of the 2024-25 New JNCHES negotiations.

Finally, please note that alongside prioritising the joint review of sector finances, our commitment to negotiate on the pay spine, pay gaps, workload and contract types remains in place.

As set out in my letter on 4 August, we hope this will provide an opportunity to make substantial progress in these important areas. The employers remain committed to this important phase of New JNCHES negotiations 2023-24, with Acas facilitation or otherwise.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Raj Jethwa". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underneath the name.

**Raj Jethwa**  
Chief Executive

cc Jon Hegerty, UCU