5 December 2019

Dear Vicky,

At the end of the meeting between UCEA and UCU representatives on 26 November we undertook to take soundings from the collective of 147 HE institutions who are participating in the 2019 JNCHES negotiating round and write to you further when we had done this. We also indicated that we anticipated we would want some further engagement to take our discussions forward. To this end, we would like to propose the following date(s) for us to meet again: 11 December 3.00 to 5.00pm. We could also offer 17 December from 2.30 pm if this was helpful.

We noted that the three areas around which UCU has focussed its campaign in this dispute do interconnect and that UCU also believes there is an interconnection with pay. We have been and remain clear that we have no mandate at all from the collective of employers to re-open discussion of the final offer on pay.

We, acting on behalf of the collective employers, share their view that you are raising some serious concerns. UCEA had already made some offers of sector-level work on the three areas of gender/ethnicity pay, casual employment arrangements and workload back in April of this year. These offers were not given any real attention in our discussions earlier in the year, but you are now clear that these are matters on which you wish to press UCEA to go further. While these are not matters that fall within the scope of JNCHES, we do think there is some scope for further consideration of sector-level work on the three issues. Our participating HEIs have of course noted that actions they take in these areas would be likely to have implications for pay for a range of colleagues within their institutions.

We know that all the sector employers we represent want to provide a work environment where people feel valued, treated fairly and with respect. The sector institutions are also very clear that they hold the responsibility as autonomous and distinctive institutions to develop solutions and approaches to the challenges in these areas that are relevant to their circumstances. They would also all expect to do this in a way that listens to and involves
their staff representatives and you will know that there is significant work already under way within many institutions that is addressing these areas.

The institutions we represent are very clear that actions on these issues will be for them as individual institutions to determine, listening directly to the concerns their own colleagues raise and developing approaches that fit the issues and needs they have. However, there is support from them in our discussing at a sector level the kind of support and encouragement that could frame their work and inform some of the approaches they may consider.

In considering the concerns that you have raised around **casual employment arrangements**, we think we can discuss some broad principles and expectations.

- This might include, for example, how institutions provide options for greater certainty of hours for individuals requesting this who are engaged on genuinely casual contractual arrangements; arrangements for an individual who believes their hourly paid engagement does not provide fair terms for the work expected of them to have such a concern examined; and developing plans around meeting the expectations of the Concordat to Support the Career Development of Researchers.

- In considering the concerns that you have raised around **gender pay gaps** we think we might discuss some expectations, such as high-level commitments from sector employers that have a gender pay gap and challenges with gender distribution in the workforce, to being in the vanguard of organisations that is active in seeking to close this. Also, that institutions would work with a wide range of stakeholders – including students and recognised trade unions – in both developing and reviewing action plans and that plans will reflect both institutional distinctiveness, size and resources. We would also be interested in working together with the trade unions on developing an HE specific ‘checklist’ of suggestions for areas of employment policy, practice and other themes which institutions might consider in examining blockages and enablers to women’s career progression and issues around representation in certain gender dominated roles.

- **UCEA** has already offered a piece of sector-level work to take forward and support institutions in examining **ethnicity pay** – we set this out in April, and we would suggest that this is a solid contribution the trade unions and UCEA could make in this area to support all HE institutions. We could also indicate some expectations that, where not already under way, institutions would place a high priority on work to examine their BAME distribution in the workforce and data on ethnicity pay and developing plans for interventions that will help them address the issues this highlights.

- In considering the concerns that you have raised around **workload** we think we can discuss some broad principles and expectations. These might, for example, cover
matters such as having or putting in place systems to enable individuals to raise concerns about their workload demands and to have this fairly assessed; addressing culture and behaviours that may compound the pressures individuals may be under, such as protocols for both students and colleagues around expectations of responses to ‘out of hours’ communications; and developing procedures, relevant to their own institutional context, by which they can assure themselves that individuals are given achievable and equitable work demands against the expectations of their role.

In summary, we believe we have sufficient support from the sector employers we represent to have some constructive dialogue on these three important matters and we very much hope this will be something you wish to engage in with us.

Please do get back to me as quickly as possible regarding a date for our next meeting.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Fairfoul

Chief Executive

cc. Paul Bridge