

27 June 2016

The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills
Department of Business, Innovation and Skills
1 Victoria Street
LONDON
SW1H 0ET

Dear Sajid

Following last week's referendum result, I am writing on behalf of members of the University and College Union (UCU) to seek urgent assurances on the government's support for the further and higher education sectors, now and in the future.

As I am sure you agree, universities and colleges are a key part of our economy and society. Not only do they improve the life chances of millions of students and their families and provide a vital part of the UK's research capacity; but they are very significant employers and net contributors to local economies.

The result has a number of implications for universities and colleges, not least in terms of the financial impact. Both further and higher education institutions receive significant funding from EU projects, and students from across the EU support thousands of jobs in the education sector.

The result will also have an inevitable effect on policy development. During the campaign, the skills minister warned that the apprenticeship levy may be postponed in the event of a leave vote, and other policy areas like higher education funding and regulation cannot now be divorced from the broader context of EU withdrawal.

Lastly, in a sector with a highly internationalised workforce which itself teaches a diverse student body, there will be a significant impact on staff and students themselves.

In order to effectively plan for the future, universities and colleges therefore need clarity on the measures which government will put in place to mitigate any negative impact of EU withdrawal.

That must include a clear plan for stable, long-term funding to replace any loss of income from EU sources, as well as urgent clarification about the impact of the result on further and higher education policy, including the apprenticeship levy. There must also be a clear consideration of how we can ensure that the best and brightest staff and students from across the EU will continue to be supported to work and study in the UK.

The UK now faces a period of considerable political and economic uncertainty, but universities and colleges are the driver for the skills and knowledge which are the bedrock of a stable and outward-looking economy and society. We now need decisive action from the government to reduce uncertainty and ensure that our further and higher education sectors can remain strong and vibrant.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet you on this matter and hope that in the meantime you will be able to reassure staff and students that the government will give the sector the support it needs.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sally Hunt". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line underlining the name.

Sally Hunt
General Secretary