The Rt Hon Lucy Powell MP
Secretary of State for Education
Sanctuary Buildings
20 Great Smith Street
Westminster
London
SW1P 3BT

21 July 2026

Dear Secretary of State,

On behalf the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (UCEA), we write to offer our congratulations on your appointment as Secretary of State for Education. As you will be aware, UCEA represents 168 Higher Education institutions (HEIs) as employers in relation to pay, pensions and reward issues.

On behalf of our members and the HE workforce, we look forward to working with you and wish you every success in this role. UCEA is committed to working with you and your officials to help realise the Government's agenda for education. From our perspective as employers, this means helping HEIs to be truly responsible for their sustainability. This will better allow them to focus on the role HE in support of the Government's aspirations for young people.

You may be aware that we have been in discussion with Ministers and DfE officials regarding HE membership of the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) and that your department has been in discussion with HM Treasury on this issue. The sector was grateful for the acknowledgement in last Autumn's Post-16 education and skills white paper of the challenges.

Despite the recent announcement of the reduction to employer contribution rates from April 2026, the requirement to offer TPS and pay the full employer contribution rate without the funding support that was been granted to schools and further education colleges has created significant additional financial pressures on many HEIs, and continues to pose substantial risk of significant job losses, particularly in local communities in which these HEIs are important anchor institutions.

We know that you will have several pressures and calls on your diary, but we would very much welcome the opportunity to meet you to brief you on this important issue, as well as understanding how we can help you to deliver your wider agenda for higher education.

Yours sincerely,

Raj Jethwa
Chief Executive
UCEA

Professor Sir Nishan Canagarajah
President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Leicester
Chair of the UCEA Board

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