



The Rt Hon David Willetts MP
Minister for Universities and Science

Ms Sally Hunt
General Secretary
University and College Union
Carlow Street
London
NW1 7LH

Our ref: 279262
Your ref:

23 February 2012

Dear Sally,

**NEW MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN UK HEI'S AND
COLOMBIAN MINISTRY OF SCIENCE COLCIENCIAS**

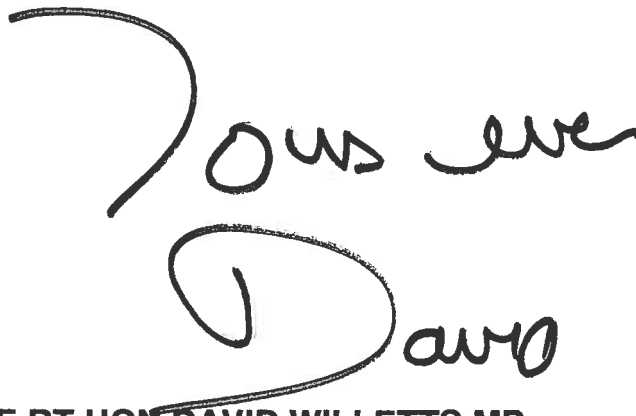
Thank you for your letter of 19 January, about new memorandums of understanding between UK HEI's and Colombian ministry of science COLCIENCIAS.

The UK enjoys a strong relationship with Colombia in education, partly as a result of the excellent work that British Council is undertaking across Colombia. There is potential to increase collaboration and to share policy and technical expertise between UK and Colombian universities. The agreements that were signed during President Santos's Guest of Government visit to London reflect the ongoing discussions that are taking place between our universities. We also look forward to sending a UK delegation of science and innovation experts to meet representatives from Colombian universities, research institutes and the government to explore opportunities for further collaboration – all of which will support Colombia's modernisation programme.

Our relationship with Colombia has shifted from one defined by the problems to one defined by opportunity in which we still give due attention to the problems. Our work on Colombia's problems - drugs and human rights - has not changed. We are working harder on the various opportunities our countries offer each other, including trade, science, innovation, education and climate change.

Our Embassy in Bogotá has made a number of representations to the Colombian government on behalf of Ms Obando, including to the Director of the Presidential Programme for Human Rights. We have also previously raised the case together with EU partners, during the EU/Colombia Human Rights Dialogue. In addition, Embassy staff have been in contact with Ms Obando's lawyer about her case.

The British Embassy in Bogota previously raised Dr. Beltran's case with the Colombian Government but has not done so since he was found innocent.

A handwritten signature in black ink. The first line reads "Yours ever" and the second line reads "David". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

THE RT HON DAVID WILLETTS MP