



## Branch Meeting Agenda

Date: 3 March 2026

Time: 13.15-14.05

Location: 3E 2.4 and Microsoft Teams

1. Welcome and Apologies
2. Negotiations Update - *Sandhya Moise*
3. Research Facilities Update
4. Motion 1 (for UCU Congress): Transparency - *Michael Carley*
5. Motion 2: Building the SoS Campaign: A Dispute with the Secretary of State for Education over Higher Education Funding – *Tyrone Falls*
6. Motion 3: UCU Branch response to VC's directive to lower postgraduate entry requirements – *Joel Lazarus*
7. Any Other Business

## **Motion 1 (for UCU Congress) - Transparency**

**Proposer:** Michael Carley

**Secunder:** Ben Ralph

Insert new rule

4.2.1: The union will routinely publish information which it holds, according to a publication scheme agreed by the National Executive Committee. The scheme shall be compliant with guidance for public authorities issued by the Information Commissioner's Office under Section 20 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, and at least as much information as is specified in the ICO's guidance shall be published.

Purpose of change: UCU is not a public authority and does not fall under the Freedom of Information Act, in the way that the vast majority of our employers do. The rule would have the effect of requiring the union to act as if it were covered by the act, making it at least as transparent as we expect our employers to be. Although the union is not covered by the act, it should behave as transparently as possible in its decision-making, and the requirements set by the act are a reasonable minimum standard. The information which should be published according to a publication scheme is described by the ICO: <https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/foi/publication-schemes-a-guide/>.

## **Motion 2 - Building the SoS Campaign: A Dispute with the Secretary of State for Education over Higher Education Funding**

**Proposer:** Tyrone Falls

**Secunder:** Ben Ralph

This branch notes:

1. UK Higher Education is in crisis, and tens of thousands of jobs have been and are at risk of being lost. Multiple UCU branches have taken or will take industrial action in response to their local disputes.
2. The government's Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper proposes new conditions and a tiered approach to university funding.
3. The ballot on the 2025/26 Joint HE Trade Union National Claim failed to reach the legal threshold to take strike action.
4. The SoS Dispute Motion (HE14) overwhelmingly passed at the UCU Higher Education Sector Conference 2025 and resolves to open a trade dispute with the Secretary of State for Education over HE funding (wording of which can be [found here](#)).
5. A similar motion was passed within Unison Education Service Group
6. The HE14 motion included a reference to legal advice that shows the viability of a trade dispute with the Secretary of State over the funding of HE.

This branch believes:

1. The strategy for the SoS Dispute is the result of a long-term, democratic, rank-and-file campaign organised by workers across higher education; and this campaigning needs to continue to make the dispute happen.
2. The government's [Post-16 Education and Skills White Paper](#) will further deepen the funding divide between pre and post-92 HE institutions in the sector by entrenching a tiered funding model and introducing maintenance grants based on the government's "industrial strategy" rather than educational interest.
3. A well-organised national-level dispute is necessary to challenge the systemic erosion of working conditions across the sector.
4. A well-organised national-level strategy is necessary to link up as much as is feasible and practicable the local battles over job losses, restructurings and course closures that we are seeing at different universities.
5. Collective action from all university unions is required to compel the government to reform the funding model.

This branch resolves:

1. To recommit to the "SoS campaign" agreed in the HE14 motion and call on HEC to: begin the process of opening the dispute with the Secretary of State for Education over HE funding; to provide regular updates on the progress of the dispute; to materially support the SoS campaign and fund related meetings in different regions.

2. To call on the HEC and general secretary to organise a strategy to link up the various ongoing local disputes into a more national coordinated fight over job losses and declining conditions in the sector.
3. To send members to the next cross-branch strategy workshop hosted by the University Rank-and-File Network.
4. To organise an open general meeting with other campus unions to discuss the funding model and the dispute strategy.
5. To call on the UCU general secretary to work with other higher education unions to establish a democratic “Higher Education Workers Conference” to plan the next steps in the dispute.
6. To build awareness locally by contacting the student union and other relevant student groups, the local MP, the local press and relevant community groups to discuss the SoS campaign and support a funding model that guarantees job security in the sector, free education for all with liveable maintenance grants for all.

### **Motion 3 - UCU Branch response to VC's directive to lower postgraduate entry requirements**

**Proposer:** Joel Lazarus

**Secunder:** Mihika Chatterjee

This motion is in response to a directive issued in November last year from the Vice Chancellor to lower postgraduate entry requirements and equivalences for degrees awarded by Chinese universities.

This branch notes:

1. We recognise the current reality in which, like all universities, the University's continued financial health depends on 'sustaining our international recruitment' and that the University is competing in a global marketplace.
2. We also acknowledge efforts to reassure concerns around maintaining high 'academic standards' (in terms of entry grades and equivalent entry requirements to home students) at the University.
3. We also note how the University's reticence to lower entry requirements in the name of widening participation contrasts with its willingness to do so in the name of attracting international students.

This branch believes:

1. Whilst this action may well mean that Bath's minimum thresholds for MSc courses are now in line with identified competitor UK universities who had already lowered their Chinese equivalency thresholds, this move looks very much like the early stages of a 'race to the bottom' in which entry requirements are repeatedly lowered in an increasingly desperate bid to maintain competitiveness and revenues. This can lead to the offering of places to students not yet possessing the necessary linguistic and study skills to pursue Masters-level study, thereby placing an excessive burden on teaching and administrative staff.
2. Whilst the lowering of entry requirements is not problematic per se, the guiding principle should be weighted far more towards advancing social equity than responding to the vagaries of market conditions.

This branch resolves:

1. Given the acutely competitive conditions we face, we ask the University's leaders to specify their strategy for the University to lead within the community of international universities rather than merely follow movements in the global higher education marketplace.
2. The wording of these requirements undergo extensive consultation with the DoS' of programmes and teaching committees, so they are in line with existing practices and the intellectual direction of travel for specific programmes, while taking into consideration the University as well as the sector's concerns.