

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION
GENERAL SECRETARY AND NEC ELECTIONS 2023-24

GUIDANCE NOTES

- 1 Candidates are asked to take note of the Union's wish that their campaign materials and comments, although vigorous and critical, will not be gratuitously offensive, abusive or defamatory, nor refer in a derogatory way to the race, religion, sexual orientation, age or other personal characteristic of candidates.
- 2 It is expected that particular care will be taken not to make any such remarks about members of UCU staff who may not be in a position to reply.
- 3 Candidates are encouraged to campaign through the positive promotion of their candidacy, rather than through negative campaigning about other candidates.
- 4 Points 1, 2 and 3 do not in any way infringe the right of a candidate to write an election address with the content they wish, recognising that all liability for ALL remarks in a candidate's election address rests with the candidate and not the Union.
- 5 The Union will distribute election addresses of candidates as part of the ballot material for any ballot held. The Union will make available on its website the election addresses of candidates.
- 6 For candidates for the post of General Secretary, equal access will be allowed to the UCU members' email list for the purpose of giving all candidates the opportunity of making four electronic communications to all members on this list in the period between the close of nominations and the close of the ballot. The returning officer will issue advice to all candidates on the timing, word limit and other features of any such communications. A candidate may decline all or any such opportunity to make an electronic communication. This will not affect the opportunity of other candidates to make such communications.
- 7 Other than the specific provision made in paragraphs 5 and 6 above, candidates are not permitted the use of UCU funds or resources for the purposes of campaigning. Except as permitted by UCU, use by candidates of sensitive personal data held by UCU or any of its officials and/or officers (elected or paid) is not permitted under any circumstances.
- 8 Email lists which are held by UCU's head offices and regional offices are a resource of the union and cannot be used for campaigning by General Secretary or NEC candidates. Candidates must not approach UCU staff in relation to campaigning in General Secretary or NEC elections. Candidates should not use member email discussion lists administered by UCU for election campaigning. Candidates may have in their possession email lists based on their personal contacts. Such email lists are a matter for the individual.
- 9 The use of email lists held by branches, for contacting all branch members, is a matter for branches. Use of them (or not) for election campaigning must be a

decision of the branch, not of an individual who has access to such a list because of their role within the branch.

- 10 A branch may wish to promote a particular candidate, and it can do so. However, the NEC recommends and encourages branches to circulate information about all candidates standing in any one election. This allows members, as voters, to make better informed decisions, and reduces the likelihood of complaints (whether justified or unjustified) or accusations of unfairness.

The language of any communication should be measured. Any opinions expressed about candidates and their suitability for election should be fair and grounded in fact. Branches should note that they are liable for any defamatory statements made about candidates in their communications.

Branches should deal with any emails relating to NEC elections in the usual way that they administer emails to members, and must not release contact details of members, including email lists, directly to candidates.

- 11 The principles of 9 and 10 apply equally to any circulations made in hard copy by the branch, such as local newsletters.
- 12 In accordance with rule 15.9 (appended), candidates in General Secretary and Officer elections will be invited to participate in centrally organised hustings between 7 and 14 days after the ballot has opened.
- 13 In accordance with UCU rule 15.11 any branch organising a hustings event will provide candidates with 30 days' notice, making every effort to make the event accessible to all candidates, including facilitating electronic attendance. Reasonable traveling and subsistence expenses will be made available to candidates, paid from branch funds, on the basis that all candidates standing for a given position are invited to attend.

Guidance note: appendix – UCU rule 15.9

15.9 Between 7-14 days after a ballot for General Secretary or Officers of the Union has opened, a UK-wide hustings event will be held to ensure that all members and candidates have access to a fully accessible hustings event. This event will be video-recorded and edited before distribution to all members. Reasonable traveling and subsistence expenses will be made available to candidates, paid from union funds.

15.9.1 The location of this event may not occur at the home branch of any participating candidate, and the location will rotate to a different region from the previous year, with due consideration to accessibility depending on candidates' locations.

15.9.2 If it is not possible to hold the event physically for any reason, it will be held online.

15.9.3 All members eligible to vote in the relevant election will have the opportunity to submit questions in advance of this event.

15.10 The date for the event will be chosen in consultation with all candidates, and will be finalised no later than one month before the beginning of the ballot period.

15.10.1 If a candidate prefers to attend electronically rather than in person, or to pre-record a statement and answers to questions, this will be facilitated. Candidates who are disabled, impaired or have a long term health condition will be able to make this known and have their adjustment needs accommodated to avoid any disadvantage by reason of disability.

15.10.2 If a candidate cannot make the session due to illness or emergency, they will be given an opportunity to record their responses on another date, to be included in the recording for members.

15.10.3 Candidates may choose not to attend.

15.11 During the relevant ballot period, any other branch organising a hustings event will provide candidates with 30 days notice, making every effort to make the event accessible to all candidates, including facilitating electronic attendance. Reasonable traveling and subsistence expenses will be made available to candidates, paid from branch funds, on the basis that all candidates standing for a given position are invited to attend.