

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION
GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION 2019

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 paragraph 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 candidates. Candidates must not approach UCU staff in relation to campaigning in the General Secretary elections. Candidates should not use member email discussion lists administered by UCU (such as the activists' list) 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.

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.

- 10 The principles of 8 and 9 apply equally to any circulations made in hard copy by the branch, such as local newsletters.
- 11 In respect of the General Secretary election, from the date on which nominations close (8 April 2019) until the end of the ballot period hustings meetings may be held, and reasonable travelling and subsistence expenses of candidates paid out of union funds, provided that **all** candidates standing in the General Secretary election are invited to attend such hustings.
- 12 UCU staff members involved in the administration of the General Secretary election will act in a non-partisan way to all candidates and must not be asked for preferential treatment by any candidate or their supporters. Any member of staff found to be electioneering or showing favour to one particular candidate in the course of their normal employment will face formal disciplinary action. Any staff member refusing to act in a partisan way will be protected from any disciplinary action.
- 13 During the period of the election, starting from today's NEC decision (1 March 2019), UCU will ensure equal access to media and public pronouncements for all candidates. Any statement released by UCU in the name of any staff member or UCU officer standing as a candidate will count as one of their allocated emails.