

Being a UCU activist: The role of the rep

The main role of the branch/local association (LA) representatives and activists is to sustain the branch/LA. This can be broken down further into five main areas, namely:

Recruiting

- attending new staff inductions
- following up new staff after induction
- identifying existing non-members
- systematically approaching existing non-members
- encouraging, supporting, training and organising others to do all of the above

Organising

- talking and listening to members' and non-members' views
- finding out their problems and concerns
- identifying areas with low levels of membership or membership involvement
- educating and informing members on issues of importance to them
- encouraging members to get involved
- keeping track of who wants to be involved
- encouraging them to attend and participate in branch/LA and committee meetings
- identifying, supporting and developing other activists
- arranging and attending branch/LA committee and members' meetings
- distributing leaflets and newsletters
- organising around issues of concern to members
- involvement in establishing strategy for the branch/LA
- encouraging, supporting, training and organising others to do all of the above

Representing members

Member representation can be either collective or individual. This involves:

- keeping up to date with procedures, agreements, policies and contractual conditions at your workplace
- keeping up to date with where to find information if you, or members, should need it

Collective representation

- attending branch/LA committee, department or other groups of members meetings to listen to their views and help them make decisions about the course of action
- taking up issues with management

Individual representation

- interviewing individuals to listen to their views and help them decide a course of action
- providing or obtaining support, advice and assistance to individuals
- accompanying individuals at meetings or hearings with management
- representing individuals at meetings or hearings with management

Campaigning

Campaigning can be on local, regional or national issues of importance to UCU and may include broad campaigns (so long as they do not contravene UCU policy) – for example against racism or privatisation – and community or other union campaigns

Other tasks

- keeping in contact with your regional officer
- keeping in contact with other unions in your workplace
- keeping up-to-date membership records
- keeping records of the branch/LA
- keeping records of meetings
- keeping records and notes of individual representation work