

Towards a UCU Policy on Professionalism

1. Introduction

2. The sectors in which UCU members work are littered with the corpses of failed attempts at institutionalisation and regulation (or de-regulation) of professional requirements and recognition. Too often the arrangements have been dominated by employers or government and have resulted in the imposition of demands on staff that merely add to their ever-increasing workloads with little or no regard to their actual professional needs. They have been about productivity rather than quality; prescription rather than autonomy; being called to account, rather than genuine accountability.
3. Our alternative is an attempt to get the balance right, giving a central role to the voice of the profession, while recognising the wider society's legitimate interest in standards and accountability. The UCU can play a central role in this project, but whether the UCU can itself become the professional body, bearing in mind its responsibilities to its members as a trade union, is less clear.
4. The main propositions underpinning this paper are:
 - That professionalism in our education service is under serious attack from a culture of managerialism, a lack of respect for the expertise, views and commitment of professional staff and the imposition of ever-increasing workloads.
 - That there is an absence of acceptable institutional arrangements that would support the development, defence and recognition of UCU members' professionalism.
 - That UCU needs to own a clearly-articulated, persuasive version of professionalism that can be deployed in support, defence and recognition of its members.
 - That UCU should be pro-active in promoting the contribution that UCU members make to delivering and supporting high quality teaching and research – their professionalism is the foundation of that contribution.
 - That UCU and its members have an urgent need to develop this concept of professionalism.
5. Although this paper developed from ideas and writings on teacher professionalism, it is recognised that there are members whose primary roles are not focused on teaching and research. However, it is the contention of the paper that although the analysis and argument are derived mainly from pedagogic examples, they are transferable and applicable to the essence and activities of all professional roles in education.

6. Definitions of professionalism

7. Among the common elements running through the various definitions of traditional professionalism, a number of common elements predominate. These include:
 - A definable group of workers usually dealing with 'complex and unpredictable situations';
 - Extended and systematic preparation with an intellectual component taught in an institutional setting that upholds quality and competence of the profession;
 - A body of specialist knowledge and expertise including the use of skills based on theoretical and applied knowledge;
 - The use of those skills in accordance with the professional values and ethics that provide the state and the public with the means through which accountability is exercised;
 - Through this accountability, the profession and the professionals are accorded trust and freedom from unnecessary state micro-management and interference. This allows the professionals to have some autonomy in their work;
 - The updating and extension of the specialist knowledge and skills through continuing professional development;
 - A code of professional conduct orientated to the 'public good' and an expectation that the profession's members will observe certain norms or codes of conduct;
 - Emphasis on service ahead of personal reward; an expectation that the profession's members will demonstrate a high level of personal integrity;
 - At times some professions have also controlled entry into their ranks¹.
8. The traditional concept does not meet the needs of UCU and its members since some of its characteristics do not apply fully to UCU members. Nonetheless there are positive features of traditional professionalism which can continue to be utilized in any rethinking of a modern professionalism for UCU. These would include the idea of the professional 'mandate' or 'bargain' through which there is a degree of autonomy of practice in return for this privileged position not being abused.
9. In addition to this traditional approach, two other conceptions of professionalism are current: the managerialist and the democratic.
10. Managerialism and managerial professionalism have increasingly come to dominate education in the UK. Under this approach professionalism becomes divorced from the social and political context in which it is practiced. It relies on regulation and compliance rather than springing from the lived experience and knowledge of the participants, the professionals. Such a concept leaves aside the realities of the particular situation and context in which the professionalism is practiced.

¹ David Crook 'Some historical perspectives on professionalism' in *Exploring Professionalism* ed. Cunningham (IOE, 2008) Page 16

11. The way that this managerialism is being imposed in UK education can be seen in the current government's proposals for initial teacher education. By moving teacher education from higher education and into schools, future teachers will be driven to focus on the skills involved in teaching without a theoretical underpinning and understanding of the processes of teaching and learning. The conclusion that can be drawn from what is being proposed for initial teacher education is that the professionals involved are not trusted by the government and that this process is now controlled via rules or 'standards' that in turn reflect the features and values of an audit culture. Thus managerialism will be driven into the very hearts of future teachers. In the words of Coffield 'practitioners will become regarded as licensed deliverers of nationally produced materials, targets and provision - licensed rather than as trusted public professionals'.²
12. Managerialism and its values also produce what Stephen Ball calls 'performativity'.³ The increasing domination of managerialist values when set against the education values that UCU members hold becomes internalised. Conflicts and tensions between these 2 sets of values can work to as Ball puts to 'eat in the soul of the professional'.⁴ This can become a hollowing out of professionalism making it ripe for first marketisation and then privation
13. Against managerial professionalism, Sachs⁵ and others such as Whitty⁶ and the RSA⁷ have put forward the concept of a democratic or activist professionalism and identity. Democratic professionalism re-conceptualises professionalism in the light of developments in education, and especially in teaching and learning, so as to take account of the social and political context that education professionals and UCU members are now facing. Such an analysis will describe how UCU's members' professional identities have been formed and shaped, and how these may need to be redefined and re-focused to that of a democratic or activist identity.

² Frank Coffield 'Just suppose teaching and learning became the first priority' LSN 2008

³ Stephen J Ball 'Performativity, privatisation and the State' in 'Cunningham ed., op cit, pages 51-52

⁴ Stephen j Ball 'Performativity, privatisation and the State' in Cunningham ed., op cit, pages 51-52

⁵ Judyth Sachs 'Teacher Professional Identity: competing discourses, competing outcomes' University of Sydney Nov 1999

⁶ Whitty Cunningham ed., op cit, Page 44

⁷ Louise Thomas 'Re-thinking the importance of teaching curriculum and collaboration in an era of localism' RSA March 2012

14. A UCU concept of professionalism and professional identity

15. At the core of democratic professionalism is an emphasis on collaborative, cooperative action between education professionals and other education stakeholders. This encompasses strategies for education development, skill development and work organisation. The professional's responsibility reaches beyond the single site, classroom, lecture hall, laboratory or workshop and includes contributing to the institution, the system, other students and the wider community. It embraces the collective responsibilities of professionals themselves as a group and to other professions. Democratic professionalism involves being sensitive to a range of stakeholders, some of whose voices have been silenced in traditional professionalism. It seeks to demystify professional work and forge alliances between educationalists and the excluded, students, and wider communities. It allows different viewpoints to build a more democratic education system and ultimately a more open, more democratic society.
16. Part of the democratic professionalism that is at the core of a UCU concept of professionalism are the activities undertaken by UCU members and developed over time in relation to students and learners. As professionals UCU members form communities of practice that can acknowledge new knowledge, changing circumstances and new learners. These can produce new problems for the professional who needs the capacity to respond to new and unexpected situations.
17. Among the key elements of this professionalism are autonomy; empowerment in relation to teaching and research that values individual and collective professional effort; proactive engagement: challenging inequality and injustice (for example if colleagues are treated unfairly); responsibility, but not a responsibility just to the employer/management (for example it might involve highlighting issues on behalf of students or applicants), and positive reactivity, recognising threats in the changing political environment to preserve professional knowledge and skill, expertise and most of all professional discretion.
18. UCU's professionalism is based firmly within a concept of democratic professionalism. It is sited within a lived context of political and social realities. It is not a neutral professionalism that seeks to defend narrow, sectarian, vested interests. It is active and dynamic and seeks to build a better and more humane society. It seeks to defend and assert long standing educational values such as the liberating and empowering force of education and learning, equality of opportunity and inclusiveness.
19. UCU, in seeking to formulate its concept of professionalism and to advocate its acceptance in the wider context of society, will need to challenge some of the trends and developments that accompany marketisation and privatisation of the institutions in which UCU members are employed.
20. The institutional environment in which education professionals work has become bureaucratised and increasingly marketised and is characterised by low trust in practitioners' professionalism. There is increased reliance on mechanistic quality

assurance policies and procedures at both national and institutional level which are implemented by regulation and the imposition of arbitrary benchmarks. Training and development become standardised, well defined, and unproblematic and based on a seemingly unchanging body of knowledge and skill. The scope of professionals to make their own judgments becomes ever more limited.

21. For UCU, professionalism means re-building trust among students, learners, colleagues and the general public so that the ability of professionals to make judgments about their own work is restored. This professional bargain or mandate means that professionals will exercise their knowledge and skills according to a set of values and ethics. The position of power that this expertise gives is used positively for the good of the client, or in the case of UCU members, the student and learner, and not abused. In return the public and the state demonstrate trust in the profession. This is expressed in terms of autonomy for the professional in her/his work, and a limit to the interference and micro-management by the state. It is through this 'bargain', where competence and integrity are exchanged for the trust of students/clients and society, that professional freedom will be free from unwarranted and unnecessary supervision and interference. It should also provide the professionals with protection against dilution from cheap or unqualified labour.
22. UCU members are proud of, and celebrate their autonomy and professionalism, but this has to be allied to accountability. UCU's concept of professionalism is not just about protecting our own interests. At the core of our members' professionalism is a concern about students and learners and a desire to deliver the highest quality of services. In campaigning and fighting for its members' professionalism, UCU also fights for education and learning. This also links to UCU's industrial strategies aimed at securing salaries and rewards that recruit and retain the highest quality staff and ensure working conditions which foster and protect professionalism. It also links to UCU's concerns about the governance of the institutions and services in which UCU members work. The structures and form of institutional governance are increasingly under threat from marketisation and privatisation. An important aspect of UCU's professionalism will be a need to further expand, with partners such as students, joint principles which bind professionalism closely to the restoration of institutional democratic governance.
23. Part of the UCU 'professional mandate/bargain is academic freedom. In this context this means freedom, within the law, to hold and express opinions; to question and test established ideas and received wisdom; and to present controversial or unpopular points of view⁸. Educational professionals must be free to explore all appropriate knowledge and be free of undue and unnecessary external control. The underpinning ethics and values that education professionals uphold are a key element of a democratic society. For example, assessment of learning should be a matter for professionals, to be exercised impartially on the basis of their skills and knowledge. Professionals cannot be put under pressure to change their assessments for reasons other than those which may arise normally in the course of assessing learning.

⁸ Education Reform Act 1988, s 202(2)(a)

24. Standard definitions of professionalism stress the holding of specialist knowledge and expertise as one of its characteristics. Specialist knowledge and expertise have been used to reinforce claims to professionalism by new groups. Concepts of autonomy and accountability used by traditional professions have been utilised by these new professions. This gives an appearance of public accountability and control. As professionals, UCU members have a deep knowledge of a particular subject area or set of activities and are self-motivated to develop this knowledge. They have sophisticated skills that are based upon this self-development, aligned to an active awareness of the ethical impact of their work within wider social and political contexts. UCU professionals have to be able to make decisions autonomously at all levels of their work, yet monitor the standards of their work and influence these in the light of their evaluations. They are innovative and have reciprocal and community-orientated attitudes to other professionals within their spheres of activity.
25. This 'subject' knowledge is supplemented by practical knowledge of how to manage and in cases limit the demands that are being made on them and their colleagues. This will include the ability to defend their and others' rights in often complex circumstances and being able to understand, if not always agree, with different perspectives and perceptions.
26. The UCU member as an education professional understands professional action to be an active and reciprocal process, combining research and reflection. It is created and re-created by groups as well as by individuals, with a range of possible outcomes and wider benefits from learning at the level of the individual, the group, the community and society.
27. UCU's concept of professionalism acknowledges that specialist knowledge can be relative and provisional and is dynamic and continually growing and developing. The educational professional must take account of this growth in knowledge in their subject/discipline. Indeed they may well be contributors to this growth of new knowledge. Keeping abreast, and for some the creation of new knowledge, through 'scholarly' activity, research and continuous professional development (CPD), is an essential element of UCU's professionalism. For UCU members it must be part and parcel of their work as professionals and be integrated into normal workloads, not become an addition to normal workloads, and not undertaken as extra, unpaid overtime. Employers must accept, support and encourage this approach. Here professional issues meet the industrial relations agenda of UCU. Professionalism has then to be part of the broader agenda of collective organising and bargaining.
28. An education professional must be a self-critical, competent practitioner responsible for his/her own decisions and actively engaged in continuing development of themselves and their discipline. Professionals have to experiment with new approaches and techniques, to be critical about their own performance in relation to their objectives and those of their students. In other words they have to find out how effective the learning or particular activity has been and to ask for help from those who have greater knowledge and skill. Development is not a clean linear movement. It is jerky and untidy. It can include dangers such as getting blocked or picking up poor learning habits. To develop as an education professional requires a belief that improvements can

be made. It also requires an open and enquiring mind – one that is interested in learning and in how to enable learning to occur.

29. Professional training and development need to operate throughout a professional's working life. It has to operate in the arenas of subject, discipline, pedagogy and research. Training and development need to keep abreast of development in subject areas and in teaching and learning.
30. Democratic professionals are not static. Guile and Lucas in their writing in 'The Learning Professional'⁹ speak of those with a positive approach to professional development that seek out opportunities for this within institutional constraints in order to extend their professional understanding of skills rather than just reflect on those they have. They write of an extended concept of professionalism that goes beyond reflection and becomes a dynamic activity.

31. Professional values and ethics

32. The second area that needs more examination and analysis in creating a UCU concept of professionalism concerns the kind of values and ethics that should underpin any notion of educational professionalism. A set of ethics and values and its application are key defining elements of any concept of professionalism. It is professional practice exercised according to a set of values and ethics that underpins what has been referred to above as the professional bargain or mandate.
33. UCU and its members bring a set of values and ethics that contrasts with the set of values that now predominate in UK education. These latter values derive from and are part of the dominant paradigm of managerialism, marketisation and privatisation. UCU's professionalism is built around long standing education values of empowerment, equality of opportunity, inclusiveness, sustainability and the liberation that the creation, dissemination and utilisation of knowledge and learning bring to society and individuals.
34. Sometimes sets of traditional values and ethics have been brought together in a code of professional conduct, often with a professional body as their guardian and ultimate authority. Breaches of professional conduct in many professions could lead to policing of the membership and potentially leading to expulsion from the professional body and loss of the 'license to practice'.
35. However, for UCU and its members, ethical practice goes beyond merely abiding by a code of conduct. The education professional needs to be more than simply aware of and accept the contents of any code. They will also need to consider carefully the implications of any code for their practice and use any code to reflect on and refine their practice over time. A code of conduct can provide a backdrop to reflective practice. It does not tell the professional in detail how to act. The nature of professional

⁹ D Guile and N Lucas 'Rethinking initial teacher training and professional development in FE: towards the learning professional' A Green and N Lucas 'FE and lifelong learning: realigning the sector for the 21st Century' 1999 Bedford Papers Institute of Education.

practice is the requirement to make sensitive and sensible judgments within the spirit of any code of conduct. As a trade union it would not be appropriate for UCU to 'police' its members in terms of their professionalism. This does not mean condoning 'unprofessional' and 'inappropriate' behaviour. As a trade union UCU must defend all its members, even if this may only amount to ensuring that there is a proper process for judgments to be made in cases of alleged 'unprofessional behaviour'.

36. The central features of a profession in terms of ethical conduct, integrity and moral probity remain part of modern professionalism. But the major changes in society mean growing complexity, uncertainty and unpredictability in the ways in which these attributes are deployed. This can undermine previous certainties in relation to professional practice. Modern professionalism has to reinterpret these central features for the realities of the current paradigms of education. It has to move away from the characteristics that accompanied traditional professionalism which were often class based, privileged, male and patriarchal.
37. Ethical values and codes are and should be based on recognised and valued standards that the professional creates and maintains. However, professional standards have been absorbed and recreated by managerialism. In the hands of managerialism, professional standards can become opaque, complex and over elaborated. Professional standards need to be reclaimed from managerialism and be recreated by the professional practitioners themselves. Only if this is done, can these professional standards be owned by the professionals.
38. Ingrid Lunt ¹⁰ suggests a number of underpinning principles and ethics that might inform the basis for a new professionalism and which are relevant to UCU members:

- *Competence*: this becomes reframed as an understanding which accepts the provisional and contested nature of knowledge and therefore competence. Traditional notions of professional competence carried with them a lifelong licence to practice for those achieving any entry qualification and met standards set by the professional body. This is no longer adequate or acceptable in a fast changing world. Professionals need to learn from experience and update their competences and ensure that their knowledge, skills and understanding are up to date. This then ties into lifelong learning, CPD and revalidation as a formal and compulsory part of any licence to practice. This can lead to enhanced professional practice. Such a reframing extends the usual notion of competence and implies an ability and willingness to learn from mistakes and reflect on practice and think through both successful and unsuccessful situations. Such a notion must then be supported by proper and real opportunities to engage in development.
- *Respect*: a reframing and extension of the notion of respect implying an ability to listen, to help and to empower: an attempt to achieve greater equality and

¹⁰ Lunt in Cunningham ed., op cit, pages 90-93

mutual understanding and give validity to student/learner views through a partnership approach to the provision of services. It also means inter-professional collaboration and team work and a different mode of relating to other professionals and an extended notion of respect and acceptance. It means respecting the inherent dignity of all regardless of gender, culture, social, class, ethnicity, nationality, religion, age, sexuality or perceived ability. It is a stance based on empathy, care and compassion.

- *Integrity*: this implies self-awareness and a realisation of one's own values, prejudices, beliefs, limitations and fallibility. It means an ability and willingness to reflect on and use previous practice and the ability to reflect on the professional relationship of all parties involved in development. It implies a commitment to ethical intelligence and sensitivity.
- *Responsibility*: this involves an acceptance of dilemmas inherent in professional work and the increased complexity of the current and future professional-student relationships. It can call into question lines of professional responsibility and therefore accountability in the one-to-one relationship between the professional and the student or colleague that is implied in the traditional professionalism. Given the current situation across education when education and learning as a public good and service are being challenged and eroded, and where there are finite resources but infinite demands and contentious priorities, education professionals are required to take difficult decisions which must be taken with responsibility. There are also issues around the nature of knowledge reflecting its potential contestability and provisionality. Professionals have the responsibility to work to a professional ethic that promotes evidence-based practices with demonstrable value for their students and themselves.

39. These new values can be set alongside long established education values and have implications for professional practice. They begin to set out a reformed ethical code that can be used as a basis for the trust to be accorded to educational professionals by the public and the state. Trust is thus earned and deserved.

40. A UCU professional identity

41. From the concept of professionalism that UCU considers fitting for its members, UCU will also need to establish an accompanying professional identity for its members. Again it is useful to return to Sachs's work. She formulates an activist identity which emerges from democratic professionalism. This can be characterised as arising from: 'the open flow of ideas, regardless of their popularity which enable people to be as fully informed as possible. It is focused around faith in the individual and collective capacity of people to create possibilities for resolving problems. It uses critical reflection and analysis to evaluate ideas, problems and policies. It is concerned for the welfare of others and the common good.....It recognises the dignity and rights of individuals and minorities. This new democratic or activist professional identity understands that

democracy is not so much an ideal to be pursued as an idealised set of values that must be lived and that must guide professional life.' ¹¹

42. Democratic professionalism and activist professionals are then concerned to reduce or eliminate exploitation, inequality and oppression. Accordingly the development of this identity is deeply rooted in principles of equity and social justice.
43. Discussions around this concept of an activist professional identity involve the nurturing of communities of practice. These are not located in ivory towers, but develop in larger contexts – historical, social, cultural, and institutional and with specific reference to resources and constraints. Within these communities, there are various levels and degrees of expertise that should be seen as a shared set of professional resources. Communities of practice require sustained engagement, and at the same time demand discussion and debate to share meanings about both the subject and practice of education and learning. They can become a force to be reckoned with and involve both the engagement and stimulation of the imagination of professionals. This is fundamental to the development of an activist professional identity. Communities of practice provide the conditions and the opportunities for the role of the activist professional to be legitimated, recognised and practiced.
44. Communities of practice and an activist identity exist alongside one another. They reinforce and support each other. Democratic professional identity provides the conditions for the development of communities of practices. These communities of practice are collegial, and negotiated. They can form and reform around specific issues or around other perhaps longer standing issues within the subject. Communities of practice are primarily concerned with engaging with some activity, but also in figuring out how this fits into the broader scheme of things.¹² These communities need academic freedom to flourish, because this allows free debate and discussion. Education unions must encourage and support these communities of practice.
45. These communities of practice will need to develop and enhance critical pedagogies and practices. Critical pedagogies and practices should stress the need to understand the wider social conditions and structures in society. They should also be looking for ways to use this learning whilst at the same time seeking opportunities for action through and as learning. The aim is to enable people through education and learning to interrogate their lived experiences, and find ways to transform their lives and affect the conditions in which they live and seek ways to be truly human.
46. The starting points from which the democratic/activist professional works collectively with her/his fellow professionals to achieve their strategic ends operates by developing networks and alliances between professionals and the wider communities that they

¹¹ Sachs 'Teacher Professional identities: competing discourses, competing outcomes' Journal of Education Policy `6:2, 149-161 1999

¹² E Wenger 'Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity' 1998 Cambridge University Press 1998

seek to serve. These alliances are not fixed, but form and reform around different issues and concerns. The democratic or activist professional takes responsibility for their on-going professional development and work in communities of practice which develop in larger historical, social, cultural and institutional contexts. The education professionals re-conceive themselves as agents of change rather than its victims. But it is not an easy path as the neo-liberal and continuing government policies constantly threaten to undermine the professional's morale and the public's trust.

47. The notion of dual professionalism, professionalism in the specialist activity and professionalism in the delivery of the professional services, has become almost axiomatic in current discussions of professionalism. UCU's definition of professionalism would be to extend this and to recognise the multiplicity of professionalisms and identities that many UCU members have. These exist both in relation to their subject or discipline and as a teacher, researcher or other professional role. This is why UCU's professionalism is defined as relating to UCU members' broad educational role.
48. UCU members acknowledge the existence and utility of other professions within education and learning. UCU's professionalism is a collaborative professionalism that works alongside other professionals who are not teachers. This collaborative professionalism recognises the values of and respect for other professions and their professionalism. Such collaborative professionals work alongside one another sometimes in and through multi-agency approaches and teams. This means active collaboration with other professions and para-professions. There need to be opportunities for an education professional to pursue all their professional interests and identities. Sometimes there can be tensions between these myriad professions and identities. Sometimes education professionals' first loyalty may be to their subject professionalism and culture. This has to be recognised and worked with. UCU's reframing and reclaiming of professionalism enables UCU members to engage with multiple professionalism and identities across UCU membership. It also enables and empowers collaborative professional links with other professionals working alongside UCU members but whose roles are not primarily involved in direct delivery of knowledge and learning. It achieves this by focusing on what different professionals have in common, by emphasising the benefits of professional solidarity and the importance of professional vigilance.
49. UCU's professionalism has to be aware of the changes and developments in education and learning that are taking place. It must understand that if many of these developments can be seen as a possible dilution of professionalism and practices, others can, if engaged with and approached positively through the analysis that comes from democratic professionalism, be used for the immense benefit of students and learners as well as education professionals.

50. Next Steps

51. This paper is a stage in what must be a continuing discussion within UCU about its members' professionalism. The concept will need to evolve over time, not least because

it is based in real social and political contexts and these constantly change. So UCU's professionalism will develop within this.

52. There will need to be further exploration of a number of issues, including:

- The particular dimensions of UCU's professionalism in the various sectors and roles in which UCU members work. There are specific issues in these sectors that will need to be encompassed in further iterations of UCU's concept of professionalism, especially in relation to the smaller sections of UCU members, and to UCU members who work part time and on casual contracts.
- A further development of UCU's concept of professionalism will also have to examine the tensions between the collective in professionalism and the need to protect the individual. The collective is an integral part of UCU professionalism as is fitting for a trade union, and collective activity and action is one of the underpinning elements of UCU professionalism. Professionalism should also be about protecting and promoting opportunities for the individual in their practice.
- Links need to be made between the UCU's concept of professionalism and the other areas of UCU's work. There will need to be clear links to industrial relations: policies on pay and conditions of service can promote and support professionalism and vice versa.
- UCU needs to make stronger links between professionalism and policy development and formulation within UCU in relation to education and learning policies and practices, and in UCU policy on institutional governance.
- Professionalism is and should be integral to UCU's campaigning and lobbying work. If UCU can incorporate its concept of professionalism into this work it can offer solutions, comfort and support to UCU members in their daily lives and also ensure that UCU campaigns are built around strong and profound educational values. This also assists in UCU's recruiting and organising work. UCU should be an organisation which promotes and fosters professionalism, for professionals by fellow professionals.
- UCU's concept of professionalism has equality and diversity and inclusiveness at its core. The concept is a powerful tool to promote and fight for equality issues as an essential part of education professionalism and practice. Further work is required to explore equality and diversity aspects of professionalism and to ensure that UCU's concept is further developed to recognise and encompass these values.
- Further work needs to be carried out around the multiple professionalisms and identities that UCU members can have. This should inform the development of further links and discussions with subject/discipline professional bodies. One area for such discussions would be the exploration of overlaps and junctions in the CPD needs of different groups of UCU members.
- Strong professions have tended to have or to create effective structures to support the professional development, training, qualifications and accountability of their members. These structures are largely owned by the professions themselves and serve to defend and promote both the professional standards

and the aspirations of their members. UCU should examine and its policy with respect to future sectoral professional bodies. Although UCU is a professional body, it does not nor can it have a policing role in relation to the professionalism of its members. To do so would set up irreconcilable conflicts of interest given that the UCU's central role is to represent and defend its members. However it needs to further define its relationship to this aspect of the remits of other professional bodies.

- Essential elements of UCU's professionalism are communities of practice. They are a part of the democratic professionalism that is at the core of a UCU concept of professionalism. These can be a crucial part of a truly member-led, bottom-up democratic professionalism. Communities of practice can be a crucible for the development of ideas and discussions of the subject/discipline. Through activities generated in communities of practice over time in relation to students and learners, new knowledge, changing circumstances, professional practice and issues can be explored and sometimes resolved. Communities of practice can increase the capacity and opportunities for professionals to respond to new and unexpected situations and learn from these both as individuals and as a collective. UCU should recognise the importance of communities of practice among and for its members. It should seek to support and promote existing communities of practice within its membership, and where it can to seek to promote and support new ones.
- The effects of 'performativity' can engender personal conflicts, tensions and struggles in professionals which are often experienced as depression, frustration and stress and perhaps cynicism and even nihilism. However Ball writing with Olmedo¹³ takes the analysis of performativity further and points out how these processes also engender resistance, albeit often individual or small scale. In so far as these individual and small acts of resistance can create a re-imagining of power, this involves bringing the professional back into an active and political position, that of the democratic professional activist. Such a professional takes up positions in relation to new discourses and truths and looks critically at the meaning and enactment of policy. It implies an analysis of the structural conditions of the educational system alongside a critical scrutiny of one's own practices. UCU must recognise and support these practices of resistance. It should offer analysis and coherence so that these small acts are linked to UCU's strategies in industrial relations, policy formulation and campaigning.

¹³ Stephen J. Ball & Antonio Olmedo (2013): Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neo-liberal governmentalities, *Critical Studies in Education*, 54:1, 85-96 2012

53. Conclusions

54. It will be a hard and long struggle to gain acceptance of a UCU concept of professionalism among a wider audience. However in undertaking this, various strands of UCU's work come together. A democratic professionalism can only exist properly where there is the work culture, conditions of service and remuneration to foster and maintain it. It is through this professionalism that UCU members show their true accountability to their students and learners, their colleagues and society and so earn trust and autonomy. This professionalism enables UCU and its members to have a very strong basis for the promotion of its campaigns in defence of education values in the face of the neo-liberal managerialist onslaught that seeks to consign education and learning to the market where education can be bought and sold and profits made.
55. A UCU concept of professionalism is necessary because the concept of professionalism is part of the struggles for liberation, emancipation, equality and inclusiveness. These go to the heart of what UCU and UCU members are: democratic professionals, activists and trade unionists. In the words of Bea Groves, part time tutor, UCU member and current IfL President:

'This professionalism goes beyond the current corporate use of the term professional as a pacifier to placate a workforce which is routinely treated as a source of inexpensive, compliant, eminently replaceable 'drones'. In effect, many of these educational businesses don't really want nor need professionals. Professionals would be far too much trouble to manage, as they demand a majority say in their own work practices at every level, ask too many awkward questions about management integrity or standards, and are insufficiently 'corporate' to conform unquestioningly to bureaucratic systems. The net result of such corporate cultures is an increasingly 'infantilised' workforce which has little sense of itself, little reciprocity, diminished pride in its work, and ends up inadvertently lowering the very standards of learning it purports to sustain. The great unspoken irony of course, is: that we try to cultivate autonomy and expertise in our students, but often find it denied to us in our day-to-day work'.¹⁴

¹⁴ Bea Groves