

## General Election 2017 – a UCU guide to lobbying candidates

The government has announced a snap general election for Thursday 8 June 2017. The weeks running up to the election are a great opportunity to ensure that further, higher and adult education are on the agenda of the people who will be representing you in the coming years.

### ***Why should I contact candidates?***

Candidates from all parties will be looking to secure as many votes as possible, which means responding to the concerns of people in their constituency. Whether it's pledging support to a local campaign or influencing national party policy, your candidates will be keen to do whatever it takes to win your vote.

Benefits of contacting your local candidates during the election campaign include:

- establishing a relationship with the person who will become your next MP
- influencing candidates' views on issues of local concern
- raising candidates' awareness of education related issues
- getting commitments on education policy from candidates before the election.

### ***What should I talk to them about?***

Regardless of where you live in the UK, education is central to the economic and social wellbeing of your area, so your parliamentary candidates will want to be fully informed about both local and national education issues.

UCU has created a manifesto for the 2017 election, outlining some of the key national education and employment issues which the next government should focus on. A shorter Scottish manifesto is also available. You can download both versions from the [UCU policy hub](#) and send them to your candidates.

Candidates may also be interested in local issues affecting jobs and learning opportunities, so if you're concerned about cuts or closures in your area then it's worth mentioning.

### ***How do I identify candidates in my area?***

UCU's [public affairs team](#) can help you identify your local candidates as well as providing you with contact details and background information where available – just email [publicaffairs@ucu.org.uk](mailto:publicaffairs@ucu.org.uk). Alternatively you can find your local candidates and their contact details by inputting your postcode at <https://whocanivotefor.co.uk/>.

## ***How do I organise a hustings event?***

Election hustings are a good way to get candidates together to debate policy issues. As this election has only been announced with a few weeks' notice, you'll need to act quickly if you want to organise a local hustings event. To make sure that all candidates get a fair hearing, there are also a few rules you need to follow, so here are some top tips for a successful event:

- Work with other unions and the students' union to organise the event and spread the word.
- Invite candidates as soon as possible, as their campaign diaries will fill up quickly!
- If the event is open to the public:
  - invite all candidates standing in the local constituency, OR
  - be sure that the candidates invited represent a variety of views across the political spectrum
  - you must have objective reasons for choosing not to invite certain candidates – it can't be because you don't like their views or policies!
  - objective reasons might include a candidate's lack of local profile, the party not having much local support in recent elections or there being too many local candidates to include all of them in a debate.
- If the event is only open to UCU members you can be more selective about which candidates you wish to invite.
- Allow each candidate at the event a fair chance to answer questions and respond to points made against them by other candidates.
- For more information and full details of the rules governing hustings, read the **Electoral Commission's guide to hustings**.

## ***Make sure you're registered to vote!***

The deadline for registering to vote is 22 May 2017 – if you're not already registered visit [www.gov.uk/register-to-vote](http://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote).

You can also use the joint **UCU and NUS poster** and **leaflet** to encourage other staff and students to make sure they're registered!

## ***More information***

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the UCU public affairs team by emailing [publicaffairs@ucu.org.uk](mailto:publicaffairs@ucu.org.uk) or calling 020 7756 2596.