

## University and College Union

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**To** Branch and local association secretaries

**Topic** **UCU General Secretary, Trustee, Officer and NEC elections: guidance**

**Action** For information

**Summary** NEC guidance in respect of the forthcoming elections, including hustings meetings

**Contact** Catherine Wilkinson, Head of Constitution and Committees, email [cwilkinson@ucu.org.uk](mailto:cwilkinson@ucu.org.uk); Kay Metcalfe, Administrator, Constitution and Committees, email [kmetcalfe@ucu.org.uk](mailto:kmetcalfe@ucu.org.uk)

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Dear Colleagues

### **UCU General Secretary, Trustee, Officer and NEC elections: guidance**

Nominations in UCU's forthcoming round of elections closed on 23 November 2011. Details of nominations received are set out in branch circular UCU/385, and available with other election information at [www.ucu.org.uk/elections](http://www.ucu.org.uk/elections).

The NEC has agreed guidance in respect of the General Secretary election, and in respect of the Trustee, Officer and NEC elections. That guidance is set out overleaf and drawn to the attention of branches.

The guidance notes for the General Secretary election refers to hustings meetings.

Where hustings meetings are held between now and the end of the ballot period (1 March 2012), the reasonable travel and subsistence expenses of candidates will be met by UCU centrally, provided that all candidates standing in the election are invited to attend. This arrangement applies to the General Secretary election only.

It is for branches/LAs or regional committees to arrange hustings meetings and to invite candidates to them. No requests should be made to UCU head office or regional staff to arrange such meetings.

I would urge branches to consider how hustings meetings can be shared with other branches or co-ordinated within the region to ensure that meetings are as effective and efficient as possible.

The contact details for candidates standing in the General Secretary election are available from Kay Metcalfe at UCU head office ([kmetcalfe@ucu.org.uk](mailto:kmetcalfe@ucu.org.uk)).

Yours sincerely

Terry Hoad  
President and returning officer

## GENERAL SECRETARY ELECTION 2012

### 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 We hope 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 Points 1 and 2 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.
- 4 The Union will distribute election addresses of candidates along with supplementary biographical information, and make these available on UCU's website, and, in the case of 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.
- 5 Other than the specific provision made in paragraph 4 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. Breach of either of these clauses by a candidate may result in exclusion from the ballot.
- 6 In respect of the General Secretary election, from the date on which nominations close (23 November 2011) 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.

## **TRUSTEE, OFFICER, AND NEC ELECTIONS 2012**

### **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 along with supplementary trade union service information as part of the ballot material for any ballots held. The Union will make available on its website the election addresses and trade union service information of candidates.
- 6 Other than the specific provision made in paragraph 5 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. Breach of either of these clauses by a candidate may result in exclusion from the ballot.
- 7 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 NEC candidates. Candidates must not approach UCU staff in relation to campaigning in NEC elections. Candidates should not use member email discussion lists administered by UCU (such as the activists' list) for NEC election campaigning. Candidates may have in their possession email lists based on their personal contacts. Such email lists are a matter for the individual.
- 8 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.

- 9 The principles of 7 and 8 apply equally to any circulations made in hard copy by the branch, such as local newsletters.