

University and College Union

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To	Branch and regional committee secretaries
Topic	On-line interim Congress, 28-30 October 2020: arrangements including registration and deadline for late motions
Action	Register delegates; submit late motions and amendments; withdraw previously submitted motions where appropriate
Summary	Arrangements are now confirmed for an interim on-line Congress meeting – a full schedule of deadlines is set out in this circular. See also www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020
Contact	Catherine Wilkinson, Head of constitution and committees (cwilkinson@ucu.org.uk) – Congress business; Sue Bajwa, Conference officer (sbajwa@ucu.org.uk) – Delegate registration

On-line interim Congress meeting

28-30 October 2020

An on-line interim Congress meeting will take place on 28-30 October 2020.

This will include sessions of the HE and FE sector conferences on Thursday 29 October.

The first report of the Congress business committee was published in May as branch circular UCU/1010, see <https://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu1010.html>

1. About the event

1.1 The aims of an on-line interim Congress

This event will be on-line, and it is being referred to as an 'interim Congress' to emphasise the temporary nature of the measures being taken. The arrangements described have been agreed by the NEC's strategy and finance committee. The majority of the committee agreed that Congress could not be conducted on-line without some significant departures from usual practice. What is set out here shows the union doing its best in difficult circumstances to deliver a productive and democratic interim Congress whilst being honest about the limitations.

A move will be made away from the rapid progression through a large volume of motions, with procedural interruptions, to a smaller core agenda with the aim of

taking decisions on key issues and priorities and setting the union's direction in key areas, not least its position on urgent matters relating to the Covid 19 crisis, including equality issues.

The key points are:

- The creation of a reduced, 'core' agenda
- The replacement of standing orders with temporary principles for conducting this meeting
- Advance notification of all delegates' speaking requests.

The on-line Congress meeting will include voting on motions.

1.2 The creation of a core agenda

A reduced, 'core' agenda will be created by a meeting of the NEC's sub-committee chairs and the Congress business committee.

Noting that this meeting takes place outside of usual practice, including in respect of certain rules and standing orders, no rule changes will be ordered within the agenda.

Late motions will be ordered, but priority will be given to late motions that allow the union to set general points of principle rather than address individual local situations only.

Branches and other submitting bodies – in particular if submitting late motions – are asked to withdraw any motions that are out of time, already current policy, or are no longer a priority.

Congress will be asked to adopt the agenda at the start of the on-line meeting. It will not be possible to challenge the agenda 'from the floor'. However, there will be a process for making representations about the agenda in advance – this is included in the timetable below.

1.3 Principles for the conduct of business

In addition to changes to the ordering of business, Congress will be asked to suspend its usual standing orders and adopting instead a temporary set of principles for the conduct of business. Those principles are appended to this circular.

The arrangements for the submission of late motions and amendments are set out in this circular.

Advance notice will need to be given of delegates who wish to speak in debate; a call for this will be made when the final 'core' agenda is issued. The deadline for delegates to make their requests will be Friday 22 October 2020.

1.4 Timetable

- 12 noon, Friday 2 October: Deadline for amendments and late motions
- Friday 9 October: meeting of NEC committee chairs and Congress business committee (the 'agenda group') to agree a core agenda for the on-line interim Congress
- No later than Tuesday 13 October: final core agenda published. Instructions included for making representations in respect of the agenda. Call for advance notice of speaking requests.
- Friday 16 October: deadline for registration of delegates
- Wednesday 21 October: deadline for nominations for Congress business committee, HE negotiators, FE negotiators, FE ratification panel, USS negotiators, and appeal panel members (calls made in separate circulars – see www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020 for nomination forms)
- 12 noon, Thursday 22 October: Deadline for delegates to submit their requests to speak. Deadline for representations in respect of the agenda.
- Friday 23 October: agenda group meet to consider representations. Deadline for advance notification of speaking requests.
- Monday 26 October: any amendments to agenda published to branches
- Wednesday 28-Friday 30 October: on-line interim Congress meeting

Congress sessions will take place on Wednesday 28 and Friday 30 October, 11:00-13:00 and 14:00-16:00, with a short break included in each session. Sector conferences will take place on Thursday 29 October. FE sector conference will take place in the morning, 10:00-13:00, and HE sector conference in the afternoon, 14:00-17:00, with short breaks scheduled into each conference.

UCU is aware that difficulties can arise for some members if they are asked to spend long unbroken periods focussing on a screen. For this reason, the sessions are limited in length and additional short breaks will be included.

2. For action: amendments, late motions, delegate registration

2.1 Withdrawal of motions

Branches and other submitting bodies whose motions appear in the Congress business committee's first report (UCU/1010) are urged to withdraw any motions which are no longer timely, which re-state existing policy, or which are no longer a priority for the submitting body. Withdrawals can be notified by email to congressmotions@ucu.org.uk

Any branch submitting a late motion is expected to withdraw one or more of its motions previously submitted.

2.2 Submission of amendments

The deadline for receipt of amendments to motions set out in UCU/1010 (CBC's first report, <https://www.ucu.org.uk/circ/html/ucu1010.html>) is **12 NOON ON Friday 2 OCTOBER**. Branches can submit one Congress amendment, and two sector conference amendments.

However, branches and other submitting bodies should note the process for the creation of a core agenda described above. Where motions are not ordered for debate, amendments to these motions will not be ordered. Branches are encouraged to submit amendments only where they are considered of critical importance.

Each amendment should indicate clearly:

- i. whether it relates to a Congress motion or sector conference motion
- ii. the number of the motion to which it refers
- iii. the way in which it relates to the motion (eg. 'add at end') and
- iv. the way in which the amendment was approved by the branch/local association or other submitting body.

Amendments must add no more than 75 words to the motion which they amend. (Congress standing order 5 refers to '75 words excluding rubrics or deletions'.) Amendments may not change the substantive policy of the motion (standing order 49iv). Amendments may be approved by a quorate meeting of a branch committee.

Amendments can be submitted by branch/local association secretaries using the on-line form at <http://www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020>. Please submit each amendment separately.

The receipt of all amendments will be acknowledged. If you do not receive acknowledgement, please contact UCU **before the deadline for receipt of amendments** (12 noon, Friday 2 October) – by email to Catherine Wilkinson (cwilkinson@ucu.org.uk).

2.3 Submission of late motions

Due to the length of time that has elapsed since the original motion deadline, and the extraordinary circumstances of the pandemic and its dramatic impact on members, the considerable scope for late motions is recognised.

Noting the need to create a small, core agenda, **it is not expected that late motions will be ordered which relate only to the local circumstances of individual branches**. It is hoped that late motions will enable the union to adopt key points of principle that will set the union's direction as it continues to deal with the challenges and conflicts that now face our members and the tertiary education sectors. This does not change the union's commitment to

support branches at a local level.

Branches that submit late motions are expected to withdraw any motions submitted by the original motion deadline (as ordered in CBC's first report, UCU/1010).

Late motions must satisfy all the following criteria (in accordance with Congress standing order 10):

- i. it is urgent or timely and requires a decision of Congress or sector conference;
- ii. it could not have been submitted within the prescribed time limit; and
- iii. it has been approved in accordance with the standing orders of Congress and the branch/local association rules – Congress standing orders require general branch meeting to be called to approve motions.

In submitting a 'late' motion the submitting body must explain how the above criteria are met. Late motions can be submitted by branch/LA secretaries using the on-line form at <http://www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020>. Alternatively, they can be submitted by email to congressmotions@ucu.org.uk – emails must provide all the information required including details of how the motion was approved.

The receipt of all late motions will be acknowledged. If you do not receive acknowledgement, please contact UCU **before the deadline** (12 noon, Friday 2 October) – by email to Catherine Wilkinson (cwilkinson@ucu.org.uk).

3 Registration and delegate entitlement

3.1 Registration

All delegates for this on-line Congress should register by **Friday 18 October**. Full details can be found at www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020

The registration form can be found at <https://ucu.wufoo.com/forms/ucu-interim-congress-2020/>

3.2 Access

UCU is aware that difficulties can arise for some members if they are asked to spend long unbroken periods focussing on a screen. For this reason, sessions are limited in length and additional short breaks will be included.

Documents relevant to the conferences can be provided in hard copy as well as electronically.

The registration form includes space for disabled members to inform UCU of any additional needs, and we will contact delegates about their requests. If you have any specific access queries please contact Sue Bajwa sbajwa@ucu.org.uk in the

first instance.

3.3 Technical assistance

There will be opportunities to log-in to the secure Congress site on a test basis ahead of the event. All delegates are asked to take the opportunity to do this. There will be help available for technical queries, however, delegates should be aware that there are issues that it will not be possible to resolve – such as broadband and hardware issues.

3.4 Delegate entitlement - Congress

Delegate entitlement is on the same basis as for all Congress meetings: for institutions with over 100 members, one delegate per 400 members or part thereof. (Where there is more than one branch in an institution, the entitlement applies collectively to the members in all branches in that institution.) This is based on the membership census date of 1 December 2019. A full table of Congress delegate entitlements by institution will be made available at www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020 . Information can also be requested from Sue Bajwa at UCU head office (sbajwa@ucu.org.uk).

Institutions with fewer than 100 members must form aggregations of small branches. Each aggregation must total at least 100 members, and has the right to send a delegate to Congress. Queries about aggregation should be directed to your regional office or to Sue Bajwa (sbajwa@ucu.org.uk) in the first instance.

Sector committees in English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are each entitled to one delegate to Congress and the sector conferences. Where there is both an FE and an HE sector committee in the region, the two delegates should reflect, where possible, a gender balance.

3.5 Delegate entitlement - sector conferences

All branches are entitled to send delegates to sector conference on the basis of one delegate per 400 members or part thereof, up to a maximum of six delegates. (Aggregation does not apply to sector conference delegates.) A full table of sector conference delegate entitlement by branch will be made available at www.ucu.org.uk/congress2020.

Appendix 1: Principles for the conduct of the on-line interim Congress 28-30 October 2020

The agenda

1. Motions for this Congress meeting are those submitted by branches by the original motion deadline of 13 March 2020, plus any late motions and amendments received by the deadline of 12 noon on Friday 2 October.
2. From these motions, a group comprising the chairs of the NEC's sub-committees, chair and vice chairs of its sector committees and the Congress business committee (the 'agenda group') will meet to identify a small number of motions from each sub-committee section of the agenda, plus a group of late motions, to create a 'core' agenda of motions which will be moved, debated and voted on at this on-line interim Congress meeting. The agenda group may also identify a small number of 'reserve' motions to be taken if all 'core' motions have been dispensed with and time remains on the agenda. As a guide, it is expected that not more than 12 core Congress motions will be identified, and not more than 12 core motions in respect of each sector conference.
3. No rule change motions will be taken by this meeting of Congress.
4. No late motions will be accepted after the deadline of 2 October 2020. No emergency motions will be accepted during the course of the Congress meeting.
5. Following the publication of the core agenda, representations about the ordering of motions can be made in writing in accordance with instructions issued by UCU head office, to be received not later than 12 noon, 22 October 2020. The chairs of NEC sub-committees, chair and vice chairs of sector committees and the Congress business committee will meet to consider such representations.
6. The conference will be asked to adopt the agenda as circulated by the agenda group, and any amendments to that agenda recommended by the agenda group as a result of any representations received.
7. No business that does not appear on the agenda will be brought before the conference.

The agenda will include addresses from the President and General Secretary and an update report from the Honorary Treasurer on the union's finances.

Conduct of business

8. The chair of Congress and the sector conferences shall be as set out in the Congress standing orders. The quorum for these conferences shall be as set out in the Congress standing orders.
9. All delegates who wish to speak in the debate of motions, including movers and seconders of motions, shall give advance notice of their wish to speak, including

an indication of whether they will speak for or against a motion, in accordance with instructions issued by UCU head office, which will include a deadline for such notification. The submission of a request to speak in a debate does not guarantee that a delegate will be called to speak. The chair will order and call speakers with due regard to a balanced debate, the participation of different delegates across the conference, and the time available.

10. Movers of motions shall be allowed five minutes, and all other speakers three minutes. At the discretion of the chair these times may be reduced. Speakers shall introduce themselves by their name and the branch or other body that they represent.
11. The movers of motions shall have a right of reply which will be exercised at the close of the debate on that motion or group of motions.
12. No points of order, points of information, or procedural motions (that the question be now put; that the meeting proceeds to next business) or challenges to the chair shall be taken at the conference.
13. A motion to remit any motion on the core agenda or any reserve motion to the NEC (or HEC or FEC as appropriate) shall be taken only if advance notice of the motion to remit has been received in accordance with point 6 above.
14. The chapters of the NEC's report to Congress shall be moved formally.
15. Any questions on the annual report shall be submitted in writing not less than five working days ahead of the opening of the meeting and shall be answered in writing, ahead of the conference if practical.
16. It shall not be in order for any participant on the floor of, or addressing, Conference, to utter or display offensive language (including discriminatory language) or criticisms of individual Union employees or individual members who have no right to address Conference and complaints against whom should be pursued through properly established procedures. In the event that any of these occur, the Chair shall immediately ask the participant to withdraw the remarks and apologise to the Conference and the individual(s) concerned. If the participant refuses to do this, or persists thereafter, the Chair shall exclude that individual (or individuals) from the rest of the Conference proceedings. (Congress standing order 36).

Voting on motions

17. Voting on motions shall be conducted electronically within the on-line conference. The chair will allow not less than 30 seconds for votes to be cast. No decisions of the conference will be deemed to have been made without such a vote having taken place.

Technical issues

18. The decisions of the meeting shall not be invalidated by reason of any individual member's difficulty in participating for reasons of broadband, software or hardware failure.

Suspension of the on-line event

19. The chair shall have the discretion to suspend the on-line conference in the event of disorder or serious technical failure.

Election of the Congress business committee

20. A call for nominations to the Congress business committee shall be made and nominations dealt with in accordance with the standing orders of Congress, except that any ballot required will be conducted electronically shortly after the event among the relevant delegates who participated in the conference.