



UCU Congress and Sector Conferences

24-26 May 2025

ACC, Liverpool

Fringe meetings and social events

All events take place at the Congress venue, ACC, Liverpool

Fringe meetings take place in rooms in the Upper Galleria. These rooms are well signed within the venue, and all can be accessed via the escalators or lifts from the Galleria.

Friday 23 May (evening)

Early registration

Lower Galleria 16:30-19:00

Early registration will be available from 16:30-19:00, and delegates already in Liverpool are encouraged to register. Everyone attending Congress needs to register their arrival in order to receive their name badge, without which there is no entry to the Congress Hall. An electronic voting key card and delegate bag will also be distributed at registration.

Friday evening events continue overleaf

Friday 23 May (evening), continued

Introduction to Congress

18:00-19:00

Hall 2B (Main Congress hall)

Chaired by Alan Barker, Chair of Congress business committee

Join members of the Congress business committee (CBC) for a friendly overview of Congress - including the role of CBC, and the procedures that operate when motions are debated and voted on. Maxine Looby, president and chair of Congress, will also take this opportunity to welcome delegates and set the tone for a constructive and inclusive event. Aimed at new delegates, but open to all. This session will also be available for those attending Congress on-line.

Congress 2025 Welcome Reception

19:00-20:00

Hall 2A (Exhibition and catering area)

Delegates are warmly invited to attend a welcome reception. This is an opportunity for members to meet over a glass of wine with a welcome from UCU president Maxine Looby.

Fringe meetings, Saturday 24 May, 13:00-13:50

Future of Work in Post-16 Education

Room 11B

Delegates are invited to hear the latest developments in the New Deal for FE campaign and discuss the next steps that are to be decided at Sunday's FE sector conference.

The New Deal for FE campaign is focused on winning a new deal that will achieve parity with schoolteachers' pay, national workload agreements and binding national bargaining. Also the campaign champions the vital role of Adult and Community Education, and ending insecure contracts in the sector. We are at a critical point in FE and it's now time to escalate the campaign and win a New Deal for FE. Key speakers will be UCU President Maxine Looby, UCU Vice President David Hunter, and Paul Bridge, UCU Head of Further Education.

More with less: Surviving the cuts

Room 11C

Redundancies are impacting staff working conditions, causing excessive workloads and stress. Staff who remain are expected to do more with less and experience fear, isolation, survivor guilt, and grief following the departure of co-workers. Risk assessments not only identify the increased workloads of those still in post but also the enormous stress and pressures they face. This fringe meeting will explore experiences from branches and ideas on how to organise and fight back.

Saturday 24 May, 13:00-13:50, continued

Saving jobs and building power: Fighting redundancies in HE

Room 4

Regional officials and branch officers talk about hard-won successes in the fight against redundancy threats in the HE sector. Hear about different strategies to support members and how to access support as a branch. Find out how different branches have defeated compulsory redundancies and built branch strength and increased membership numbers in the process.

Saturday 24 May, evening

Protect Education NOW: UCU campaigns reception

18:00 – 19:00

Hall 2A (Exhibition and catering area)

Delegates are invited to our annual Congress drinks reception hosted by UCU campaigns. Speeches will be kept to a minimum, with the emphasis on coming together to socialise and reflect upon the change and uncertainty that has unfolded over the last year and how our campaigning has and will continue to rise to the challenge. Like you, we are very proud to be a part of UCU, so come and join us to meet new and old acquaintances and to relax after a busy day of Congress business.

Film Showing - UNDERCOVER: Exposing the far-right

18:30 – 20:00

Room 4

A thrilling feature documentary, directed by Havana Marking, goes undercover with the UK's leading antifascist group as they undertake a secret investigation. Hidden cameras reveal how far right activists aim to radically shift mainstream politics, how vulnerable communities are targeted and how a new generation of well-funded and media-savvy influencers are using discredited "race science" to legitimise prejudice. Things get very tense when a million-dollar money trail to Silicon Valley is discovered...

Fringe meetings, Sunday 25 May, 13:00-13:50

Protect Education NOW: Campaigning for sustainable funding of post-16 education

Room 4

Post-16 education is in crisis and needs urgent investment. Thousands of jobs are at risk, whilst high workloads, unfair pay gaps and use of insecure contracts continue. Delegates are invited to our lunchtime Campaigns fringe event where will discuss building upon the recent success of UCU campaigning effort.

Curriculum under attack – defending equality

Room 11B

Across higher and further education, funding cuts and course closures disproportionately impact marginalised groups, threatening diversity and inclusion. This fringe event will explore how these attacks on the curriculum undermine equality and access to education, particularly for those with protected characteristics. Join us to discuss strategies for resisting these cuts, advocating for inclusive education, and ensuring that opportunities remain open for all, regardless of background or identity.

What impact will the Employment Rights Bill have?

Room 11C

At Congress last year, we considered the promises Labour was making on employment law matters. With Labour now in power, they have brought forward the Employment Rights Bill. With solicitors from Thompsons we will consider real life examples of employment issues that have arisen for trade union members in their workplaces, and whether the Bill (when law) will help, hinder or make no difference to similar situations.

Sunday 25 May, from 19:00

Congress dinner with drinks reception

Congress dinner will be at the Hilton Hotel, in the Grace Suite.

Drinks will be served from 19:00. Delegates will be invited to move into the dining room from approximately 19:45. A disco will follow.

*Note: Delegates must register in advance for this event and were asked to do so as part of their registration for Congress. Please bring your dinner ticket with you. **If you have booked to attend but no longer wish to do so, please contact Sue Bajwa at the Congress registration desk.***