

UNIVERSITY AND COLLEGE UNION

Extracts from Rules: Officer and NEC elections

September 2025

15 Officers of the union

- 15.1** The Officers of the Union shall be: Vice-President; President-elect; President; Immediate Past President; Honorary Treasurer.
- 15.2** Each year there shall be an election of a member to the office of Vice-President for one year from the end of National Congress, which member shall then become President-elect for the next year, the President for the next year and then Immediate Past President for the next following year.
- 15.3** The Vice-Presidency will alternate each year between a Further Education member and a Higher Education member, and only members of the appropriate Sector may be nominated for election each year.
- 15.4** The Honorary Treasurer will be elected to serve a term of two years, starting at the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following election.
- 15.5** All members are entitled to vote in the elections for Officers.
- 15.6** No-one who would, on taking office, have completed six or more continuous years' service as Honorary Treasurer is entitled to serve again in that office except after an interval of one year or more.
- 15.7** For the purpose of these Rules concerning the election of Officers, Trustees and ordinary members of the National Executive Committee, the time between the end of each annual meeting of National Congress and the end of the next annual meeting, will be regarded as one year.
- 15.8** Candidates for Officers of the Union must at the time of submission of nomination be in qualifying employment under rule 3.1.1, or have been in qualifying employment within the preceding 12 months.
- 15.9** Between 7-14 days after a ballot for General Secretary or Officers of the Union has opened, a UK-wide hustings event will be held to ensure that all members and candidates have access to a fully accessible hustings event. This event will be video-recorded and edited before distribution to all members. Reasonable traveling and subsistence expenses will be made available to candidates, paid from union funds.
 - 15.9.1** The location of this event may not occur at the home branch of any participating candidate, and the location will rotate to a different region from the previous year, with due consideration to accessibility depending on candidates' locations.
 - 15.9.2** If it is not possible to hold the event physically for any reason, it will be held online.

- 15.9.3** All members eligible to vote in the relevant election will have the opportunity to submit questions in advance of this event.
- 15.10** The date for the event will be chosen in consultation with all candidates, and will be finalised no later than one month before the beginning of the ballot period.
- 15.10.1** If a candidate prefers to attend electronically rather than in person, or to pre-record a statement and answers to questions, this will be facilitated. Candidates who are disabled, impaired or have a long term health condition will be able to make this known and have their adjustment needs accommodated to avoid any disadvantage by reason of disability.
- 15.10.2** If a candidate cannot make the session due to illness or emergency, they will be given an opportunity to record their responses on another date, to be included in the recording for members.
- 15.10.3** Candidates may choose not to attend.
- 15.11** During the relevant ballot period, any other branch organising a hustings event will provide candidates with 30 days notice, making every effort to make the event accessible to all candidates, including facilitating electronic attendance. Reasonable traveling and subsistence expenses will be made available to candidates, paid from branch funds, on the basis that all candidates standing for a given position are invited to attend.

18.7 Election of the National Executive Committee

- 18.7.1** All ordinary members of the National Executive Committee will be elected to serve a term of two years, starting at the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following election.
- 18.7.2** The object of Rules 18.7.1 and 19.1 to 19.8 is that, in every year, elections are held for approximately half of all seats on the National Executive Committee.
- 18.7.3** No-one who, on taking office, would have completed six or more continuous years' service as an ordinary member of the National Executive Committee is eligible to serve again as an ordinary member except after an interval of one year or more.
- 18.7.4** Candidates for the National Executive Committee must at the time of submission of nomination be in qualifying employment under rule 3.1.1, or have been in qualifying employment within the preceding 6 months and shall provide proof of such qualifying employment in the form determined by the returning officer.
- 18.7.5** The membership numbers used to determine the number of geographically-elected seats will be the number of members recorded by the General Secretary on the first day of the month prior to the notice calling for nominations being issued as described in Schedule A.

18.8 UK-elected members of the National Executive Committee

18.8.1 There will be nine UK-elected members of the National Executive Committee who are elected by and from members of the Higher Education Sector.

18.8.2 Of the UK-elected Higher Education members elected:

- i. at least two will be employed, or, if unemployed, have been most recently employed, in a pre-1992 institution;
- ii. at least two will be employed, or, if unemployed, have been most recently employed, in a post-1992 institution;
- iii. at least two will be employed, or, if unemployed, have been most recently employed, in an academic-related role.

For each year's election under Rule 19.1 the quota in each category will be reduced by the number of serving UK-elected members in that Sector who were elected to that category and whose term on the National Executive Committee continues beyond the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following the election.

18.8.3 A member will be counted as fulfilling as many of the criteria described in 18.8.2i-18.8.2iii as are appropriate, except that any one member will not both fulfil 18.8.2i and 18.8.2ii.

18.8.4 There will be five UK-elected members of the National Executive Committee elected by and from members of the Further Education Sector.

18.8.5 Of the UK-elected Further Education members elected:

- i. at least one will be employed, or, if unemployed, have been most recently employed, in adult continuing or community-based education.

For each year's election under Rule 19.2 18.8.5.i will not apply if there is already a serving UK-elected member in that Sector who was elected to that category and whose term on the National Executive Committee continues beyond the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following the election.

18.9 Geographically-elected members of the National Executive Committee

18.9.1 The areas that will be regarded as geographical constituencies are: Scotland; Northern Ireland; Wales (as defined by national boundaries); and within England, the following combinations of Regional Development Agency Regions as at the date of the formation of the Union: the North West (North West RDA); the North East, (North East and Yorkshire and the Humber RDA); the Midlands (East Midlands and West Midlands RDAs); London and the East (London and Eastern RDAs); the South (South East and South West RDAs). The National Executive Committee shall determine the allocation to a geographical constituency, of members whose institutions cross these boundaries or whose institutions are outside of these boundaries.

18.9.2 In each Sector, there will be one geographically-elected member of the National Executive Committee for every 5,000 members or part thereof in each geographical constituency, subject to a geographical constituency having at least 500 members. Geographically-elected members will be elected by and from

members in the relevant Sector, whose institution is based in that geographical constituency. For the purposes of 18.9.2 only, the Scottish Retired Members Branch shall be treated as a Higher Education Sector branch.

18.9.3 Where vacancies and/or casual vacancies result in there being no geographically-elected member of the National Executive Committee for a particular Sector within a particular geographical constituency, the National Executive Committee shall invite the regional committee(s) within the relevant geographical constituency to send an observer with speaking rights from the relevant sector to any meetings of a national sector committee.

18.10 National Executive Committee: quota for women

18.10.1 If a geographical constituency is entitled to four seats on the National Executive Committee, at least one will be filled by a woman; if entitled to five or six seats, at least two will be filled by women; if entitled to more than six but fewer than eleven seats, at least three will be filled by women; and if entitled to eleven or more seats, at least four will be filled by women.

18.10.2 Of the four or five UK-elected Higher Education seats for which elections are held each year, the minimum number of seats that must be filled by women is three, minus the number of women serving in UK-elected Higher Education seats whose terms as ordinary members of the National Executive Committee continue beyond the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following the election.

18.10.3 Of the two or three UK-elected Further Education seats for which elections are held each year, the minimum number of seats that must be filled by women is two, minus the number of women serving in UK-elected Further Education seats whose terms as ordinary members of the National Executive Committee continue beyond the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following the election.

18.10.4 Rules 18.10.1, 18.10.2 and 18.10.3 apply only insofar as there are sufficient women candidates.

18.10.5 If in any election it is not possible to fulfil both Rule 18.8.2 and Rule 18.10.2, priority shall be given to fulfilling Rule 18.8.2. If in any election it is not possible to fulfil both Rule 18.8.5 and Rule 18.10.3, priority shall be given to fulfilling Rule 18.8.5.

18.11 Equality seats

18.11.1 There will be two national executive committee seats for representatives of disabled members, at least one of whom shall be a woman. One seat will be reserved for a representative from the HE sector and one seat will be reserved for a representative from the FE sector. Candidates for election to these seats must state that they are a disabled member.

18.11.2 There will be two national executive committee seats for representatives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) members. One seat will be reserved for a representative from the HE sector and one seat will be reserved for a representative from the FE sector. Candidates for election to these seats must state that they are LGBT+.

18.11.3 There will be two National Executive Committee seats for representatives of black members, at least one of whom shall be a woman. Candidates for election to these seats must state that they are a black member.

18.11.4 There will be two National Executive Committee seats for representatives of migrant members, at least one of whom shall be a non-EU migrant member. Candidates for election to these seats must state they are a migrant member.

18.11.5 There will be three National Executive Committee seats for representatives of women members of the Higher Education Sector. Candidates for election to these seats must state that they are women in that Sector.

18.11.6 There will be two National Executive Committee seats for representatives of women members of the Further Education Sector. Candidates for election to these seats must state that they are women in that Sector.

18.11.7 All members are entitled to vote in elections to the equality seats.

18.12 Seats for casually employed members

18.12.1 There will be two national executive committee seats for representatives of casually employed members, one from FE and one from HE. To be eligible for election to one of these seats a member must be employed on a casual contract in their main employment, or, if not employed at the time of nomination, have been most recently employed on a casual contract in their main employment.

18.13 Seats for members in land-based education

18.13.1 There will be one national executive committee seat for a representative of members in land-based education, to be filled by a member of either sector. To be eligible for election to this seat a member must be employed in land-based education in their main employment, or, if not employed at the time of nomination, have been most recently employed in land-based education in their main employment.

18.14 Seats for members in prison education

18.14.1 There will be one national executive committee seat for a representative of members in prison education, to be filled by a member of the FE sector. To be eligible for election to this seat a member must be employed in prison education in their main employment, or, if not employed at the time of nomination, have been most recently employed in prison education in their main employment.

18.15 Change of category during term of office

18.15.1 A UK-elected member of the National Executive Committee whose employment changes between Sector, or a geographically-elected member whose employment changes between Sector or between region, is entitled to continue to serve the term to which they were elected, unless they choose to resign.

18.15.2 A member of the National Executive Committee for whom a category under Rules 18.8.2, 18.8.5, 18.12.1 or 18.13.1 was taken into account at the time of their election, is entitled to serve the full term to which they were elected

irrespective of any subsequent change in the status of the member which would result in a change of category for that member.

19 Scheduling of National Executive Committee and Trustee elections

- 19.1** Four or five UK-elected Higher Education members of the National Executive Committee will be elected each year to serve a term of two years beginning at the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following election.
- 19.2** Two or three UK-elected Further Education members of the National Executive Committee will be elected each year to serve a term of two years beginning at the end of the annual meeting of National Congress following election.
- 19.3** Biennial elections will be held for geographically-elected seats in North West; Midlands; South, in those years when elections in the regions listed in Rule 19.4 are not held. The geographically-elected seats for Scotland will be elected in accordance with Rule 36.1.
- 19.4** Biennial elections will be held for geographically-elected seats in Northern Ireland; North East, London and East, in those years when elections in the regions listed in Rule 19.3 are not held.
- 19.5** The regionally-elected seats for Wales will be elected in accordance with Rule 36.3.
- 19.6** Biennial elections will be held for those seats described in Rules 18.11.1 to 18.11.4 for two representatives of disabled members, two representatives of LGBT+ members, two representatives of black members, and two representatives of migrant members, for the seat described in rule 18.13.1 for a representative of members in land-based education, and for the seat described in 18.14.1 for a representative of members in prison education, in those years when elections are not held for seats described in Rules 18.11.5 and 18.11.6 for women members.
- 19.7** Biennial elections will be held for those seats described in Rules 18.11.5 and 18.11.6 for women members, in those years when elections are not held for those seats described in Rules 18.11.1 to 18.11.4.
- 19.8** Biennial elections will be held for those seats described in Rule 18.12.1 in those years when elections are not held for those seats described in Rules 18.11.5 and 18.11.6.
- 19.9** Trustees will be elected in whichever years are necessary in order to ensure that the vacancies created by Trustees whose terms expire at the end of the next annual meeting of National Congress are filled.

20 Officer, Trustee and National Executive Committee nominations and elections

- 20.1** The procedure for the nomination of candidates and conduct of elections is as set out in Schedule A to these Rules. Nominations may only be supported by members who are eligible to vote in the election in which the candidate wishes to stand.

20.2 Members may be concurrently nominated for more than one vacancy for ordinary members of the National Executive Committee, and for any Officer or Trustee vacancy. Nomination to each vacancy will require a separate nomination to be submitted in accordance with Schedule A.

20.3 If, for any vacancy for an Officer, Trustee or ordinary member of the National Executive Committee, the number of eligible candidates does not exceed the number of vacancies the General Secretary will, within 14 days of the close of nominations, declare the eligible candidate or candidates elected.

20.4 If, for any vacancy for an Officer, Trustee or ordinary member of the National Executive Committee, the number of eligible candidates exceeds the number of vacancies, a ballot will be held in accordance with Schedule A. All ballots will be concluded, so far as practicable, not less than 21 days before the next annual meeting of National Congress.

20.5 Ballots for election to offices that are to be taken up on the same date will be counted in the following order:

- i. Trustee;
- ii. General Secretary;
- iii. Vice-President;
- iv. Honorary Treasurer;
- v. Geographically-elected HE and FE members;
- vi. UK-elected HE and FE members;
- vii. Representatives of disabled members;
- viii. Representatives of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans (LGBT+) members;
- ix. Representatives of black members;
- x. Representatives of migrant members;
- xi. Representatives of women members for HE and FE Sectors;
- xii. Representatives of casually employed members;
- xiii. Representative of members in land-based education;
- xiv. Representative of members in prison education.

and after a candidate is successfully elected, votes for that candidate will be disregarded in subsequent elections.

20.6 When a casual vacancy ballot is being conducted in the same ballot period as ordinary full term vacancies, ballots to elect members to full term vacancies will be counted first, in the order determined by rule 20.5. When more than one casual vacancy is being conducted in the same ballot period, casual vacancies will be counted in the order set out in rule 20.5. After a candidate is successfully elected to any vacancy, votes for that candidate will be disregarded in subsequent ballot counts.

21 Officer, Trustee and National Executive Committee vacancies and casual vacancies

21.1 A vacancy in the presidency will be filled by the President-elect and the Vice-President succeeding early. A vacancy in the President-elect will be filled by the Vice-President succeeding early. An Officer who succeeds early will continue to

serve to the end of the term to which they were originally elected. A vacancy in the office of Immediate Past President will not be filled.

- 21.2** If a vacancy or casual vacancy arises, or is due to arise, in the office of Vice President, a by-election will be held. The term of office of a person elected to fill a vacancy in the position of Vice President will begin as soon as possible after election, but not before the vacancy has arisen. The person elected to that office will succeed to the office of President Elect, and then to the office of President, and then to the office of Immediate Past President, in accordance with the succession applicable to the original vacancy, subject to the provisions of rule 21.1.
- 21.3** If a vacancy arises, or is due to arise, in the office of Honorary Treasurer, a by-election will be held. The term of office of a person elected to fill a vacancy in the office of Honorary Treasurer will begin as soon as possible after election, but not before the vacancy has arisen. It will end at the end of the annual meeting of National Congress that is one year after the annual meeting of National Congress following election.
- 21.4** If a vacancy for an ordinary member of the National Executive Committee is the result of no nominations being received in accordance with the Rules, in the case of a two-year post, a by-election will be held during the normal election period one year after the original election. The term of office will be from the declaration of the ballot result until the expiration of the original term of office.
- 21.5** If a casual vacancy arises, or is due to arise, for a period of one year or more, for an ordinary member of the National Executive Committee, a by-election will be held. The term of office of a person elected to fill such a vacancy will begin as soon as possible after election, after the vacancy has arisen. It will run for the period that the person causing the vacancy was elected to serve.
- 21.6** If a casual vacancy arises for a period of less than one year for an ordinary member of the National Executive Committee, no by-election will be held.
- 21.7** If a casual vacancy arises in the position of Trustee, a vacancy for a new Trustee to be elected for a term of five years will be advertised in the notice issued under paragraph 3 of Schedule A. If there are no nominations to a Trustee vacancy, this vacancy will be re-opened the following year as a vacancy for a five-year term as Trustee.
- 21.8** The schedule for any by-election will be determined by the returning officer. Except in respect of any dates fixed by the calendar, by-elections will be conducted in accordance with Schedule A to these Rules. Normally, nominations to a casual vacancy will be called for after the close of the Congress meeting at the end of the election year in which the vacancy arises.

22 Termination of office

- 22.1** An Officer, Trustee or ordinary member of the National Executive Committee may resign by written notice to the General Secretary, and resignation will take effect

from the date of receipt of that notice by the General Secretary, or on a later date if specified.

22.2 Any Officer, Trustee or ordinary member of the National Executive Committee will cease to hold that office if as an ordinary member they are elected to the office of an Officer under Rule 20 or if they cease to be a member of the Union.

22.3 No member may hold more than one of those offices listed in Rule 20.5.

SCHEDULES TO THE RULES

SCHEDULE A

Conduct of ballots to elect Officers, Trustees and Ordinary Members of the National Executive Committee

- 1** Every year, the National Executive Committee will appoint an independent scrutineer qualified to be appointed for the purposes of Section 49 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992. The scrutineer will be responsible for supervising the secure conduct of all ballots to elect Officers, Trustees and ordinary members of the National Executive Committee.
- 2** The President will act as returning officer for the election of Officers, Trustees and ordinary members of the National Executive Committee, and will comply with reasonable directions of the independent scrutineer.
- 3** Between 1 September and 30 November annually, the returning officer will publish to all members a notice that states:
 - a. the vacancies that will exist for Officers, Trustees and ordinary members of the National Executive Committee at the end of the next annual meeting of National Congress;
 - b. the information that is required in order for a valid nomination to be made;
 - c. the last date for the receipt of nominations by the returning Officer, which must not be
sooner than 28 days after the publication of the notice, and between 31 October and 31 January;
 - d. the date by which candidates must submit their election addresses, which will not be sooner than 14 days after the last date for the receipt of nominations;
 - e. the name and address of the independent scrutineer.
- 4** In the event of a casual vacancy arising, the returning officer will publish a notice that states:
 - a. the casual vacancy or vacancies that exist, and the term of office of the vacancy or vacancies
 - b. the information that is required in order for a valid nomination to be made

- c. the last date for the receipt of nominations by the returning officer, which must not be sooner than 21 days after the date on which the notice is published to members
- d. the date by which candidates must submit their election addresses, which may be the same as the last date for the receipt of nominations
- e. the name and address of the independent scrutineer.

5 Every nomination to a vacancy for an ordinary member of the National Executive Committee must be supported by:

- a. the signed consent of the candidate;
- b. a statement confirming the position to which the candidate wishes to stand; their Sector; their gender; their region; any category described in paragraph 18.8.2i-18.8.2iii of the Rules that apply; and the category as described in Rule 18.8.5i if it applies;
- c. either (i) the identifiable signatures of ten members of the Union who are entitled to vote in any ballot held to fill that position, not more than five of whom may be from the same branch/local association, or (ii) a statement signed by the Presiding Officer or Honorary Secretary of a local association or branch that the nomination has been adopted by a resolution at a quorate general meeting of that branch/local association;
- d. a statement confirming that, at the time of nomination, the candidate is in qualifying employment under rule 3.1.1, or has been in qualifying employment within the preceding 6 months, unless a pattern of casualised work in the post-16 education sector can be proven within the preceding 24 months, and shall provide proof of such qualifying employment, normally in the form of a payslip dated within the preceding 6 months, or as otherwise determined by the returning officer. If geographical and/or sectoral criteria apply, these should be reflected in the proof of qualifying employment;
- e. any further information reasonably requested by the returning officer in the notice published to members under paragraph 3 of this Schedule;

all of which must be received by the returning officer not later than the deadline set under paragraph 3 of this Schedule.

6 Every nomination to a vacancy for an Officer or Trustee of the Union will require:

- a. the signed consent of the candidate;
- b. a statement confirming the office to which the candidate wishes to stand, and their Sector;
- c. either (i) the identifiable signatures of twenty members of the union who are entitled to vote in any ballot held to fill that position, not more than ten of whom may be from the same branch/local association, or (ii) a statement signed by the Presiding Officer or Honorary Secretary of a branch/local association that the nomination has been adopted by a resolution at a quorate general meeting of that branch/local association;

- d. for officer nominations, a statement confirming that, at the time of nomination, the candidate is in qualifying employment under rule 3.1.1, or has been in qualifying employment within the preceding 6 months, unless a pattern of casualised work in the post-16 education sector can be proven within the preceding 24 months, and shall provide proof of such qualifying employment, normally in the form of a payslip dated within the preceding 6 months, or as otherwise determined by the returning officer. If sectoral criteria apply, this should be reflected in the proof of qualifying employment;
- e. any further information reasonably requested by the returning officer in the notice published to members under paragraph 3 of this Schedule;

all of which must be received by the returning officer not later than the deadline set under paragraph 3 of this Schedule.

- 7** Within 14 days of the closing date for nominations, the returning officer will provide branches/local associations with the following information:
 - a. the names of all nominations received for all vacancies publicised;
 - b. the way in which each nomination was supported;
 - c. in the case of any uncontested nominations, a declaration that those candidates are elected to take up office at the end of the next annual meeting of National Congress;
 - d. if there are more eligible candidates than vacancies for any Office or any vacancy for ordinary members of the National Executive Committee, a schedule for elections to these vacancies, including the date on which it is expected that ballot papers will be sent to members, and the date by which ballot papers must be returned, which will not be sooner than 21 days after the papers are sent to members.
- 8** All candidates will have the opportunity to provide an election address. Election addresses will conform to any regulations governing election addresses that have been approved by the National Executive Committee and are currently in force.
- 9** All candidates who submit their completed nomination not less than ten working days before the closing date for nominations, shall be informed, not less than five working days before the closing date for nominations, whether there is any defect in their nomination, including any discrepancy in the membership standing of persons providing supporting signatures under paragraph 5c or 6c of this schedule.
- 10** All ballots will be counted by the Single Transferable Vote (STV) in accordance with the method determined by the independent scrutineer. The independent scrutineer will supervise the counting of ballots in the order set out in Rule 20.5, paying due regard to any quota or other requirement set out in the Rules of the Union.
- 11** In the event of any postal, administrative, or other doubt or difficulty, the returning officer will seek the advice of the independent scrutineer.

- 12** As soon as is practical after receipt of the independent scrutineer's report following the close of any ballot to elect Officers, Trustees, or ordinary members of the National Executive Committee, the returning officer will make available to members the results of those elections.
- 13** A copy of the scrutineer's report of any election will be provided to any member on written request to the General Secretary.