

University and College Union

Carlow Street, London NW1 7LH, Tel. 020 7756 2500, www.ucu.org.uk

To	Branch and local association secretaries
Topic	UCU Congress 2026: calling notice
Action	Congress and sector conference motions to be submitted by 12 noon on Friday 13 March.
Summary	Calling notice of Congress 2026 including deadlines for motions and amendments.
Contact	Catherine Wilkinson (cwilkinson@ucu.org.uk); Anna Costi (acosti@ucu.org.uk); demservices@ucu.org.uk

Dear Colleagues

UCU CONGRESS, 27 - 29 MAY 2026, HARROGATE
CALLING NOTICE
including call for motions

UCU's annual Congress will be held at Harrogate Convention Centre from Wednesday 27 May – Friday 29 May 2026. This will include meetings of the Higher Education and Further Education Sector Conferences on Thursday 28 May 2026.

Congress 2026 will be held in a hybrid format. Delegates can register to attend in person or remotely. All members, whether attending in person or remotely, will have voting and speaking rights.

This circular is the calling notice for this meeting of Congress and the sector conferences and includes the following information:

1. Timetable of key dates
2. Submission of motions (**deadline: 12 noon, Friday 13 March 2026**)
3. Information about delegate entitlement

Information about Congress, including standing orders, can be found on-line at www.ucu.org.uk/Congress26. This page will be updated with links to relevant documents as the timetable progresses.

Information about the registration of delegates is being sent in a separate branch circular (UCU/2201) and will also be made available at www.ucu.org.uk/Congress26.

Information about the work of the Congress Business Committee and a call for nominations to vacancies arising from the close of Congress 2026 are set out in UCU/2202.

Yours sincerely

Jo Grady

General secretary

1 Congress 2026: Timetable of key dates

Friday 30 January	Calling notice issued, including call for motions. Delegate registration opens (UCU/2201). Call for nominations to Congress Business Committee (UCU/2202).
Friday 27 February	Date by which the NEC's report to Congress is expected to be available
12 noon, Friday 13 March	Deadline for the receipt of motions for Congress and sector conferences at UCU head office
Friday 27 March	First meeting of the Congress Business Committee, to order motions submitted
Week ending Friday 3 April	First report of the Congress Business Committee issued by the end of this week, setting out all motions received
Friday 24 April	Deadline for the registration of Congress delegates (see branch circular UCU/2201)
12 noon, Friday 1 May	Deadline for the receipt of amendments to motions for Congress and sector conferences at UCU head office
Friday 8 May	Second meeting of the Congress Business Committee, to order amendments received
Week ending Friday 15 May	Second report of the Congress Business Committee issued by the end of this week, setting out motions and amendments, and order of business
Monday 11 May, 17:00	Deadline for receipt of nominations to the Congress Business Committee (call for nominations: UCU/2202)
Thursday 21 May (provisional date)	Mailing to delegates requesting their Congress papers in hard copy.
Tuesday 26 May	Meetings of the National Executive Committee and Congress Business Committee (Harrogate/ online)
Wednesday 27 May –Friday 29 May	UCU CONGRESS, Harrogate / online, including sector conferences

The Congress Business Committee will determine the timing of sessions of Congress and the Sector Conferences. Sector Conferences will take place on 28 May. Sessions will begin not earlier than 09:30 on Wednesday 27 May, and Congress **will close not later than 15:00 on Friday 29 May**. In addition to a welcome reception at 19:00 on the evening of Tuesday 26 May, a meeting for new delegates will take place at 18:00.

2 Submission of motions

2.1 **All motions must be submitted by the deadline of 12 NOON on FRIDAY 13 MARCH 2026.**

2.2 Motions from branches and local associations must:

- a. be properly approved by a quorate branch or local association general meeting
- b. if the branch meeting called to approve the motion was inquorate, be properly approved in accordance with Congress standing orders and local rules
- c. be given a title of not more than 10 words
- d. be not more than 150 words in length (excluding the 10 word title)
- e. be clearly submitted to Congress or to a Sector Conference
- f. be within the number of motions allowed: one per branch submitted to Congress, two per branch submitted to a Sector Conference.
- g. be certified by the local secretary or other officer of the submitting body.

2.3 **Rule changes**

Motions to change the rules are not subject to the 150 word limit, nor is there a limit to the number of rule changes a branch or other submitting body can submit. Motions to change the rules must describe exactly how the existing rules should be altered – the exact text to be added and/or deleted, and where in the existing rules those additions and deletions occur.

Rule changes must be accompanied by a brief description of the purpose of the changes, that is, the effect it is designed to achieve (**not an argument in support of the rule change**), which may not be immediately clear.

Changes to the standing orders of Congress are dealt with in the same way as rule changes.

2.4 **Motions submitted by other bodies (including regional committees)**

Regional committees, UCU Cymru, the Northern Ireland Council and the UCU Scotland Executive Committee are each entitled to submit two motions to Congress, and the sector committees of these bodies are entitled to submit two motions to the relevant sector conference. UCU's national equality standing committees and employment special interest group committees are also entitled to submit two motions to Congress and two to each sector conference.

2.5 **What is Congress business, and what is Sector Conference business?**

Matters that are not particular to either sector should be submitted to Congress (for example: public sector cuts; campaigns which cover both sectors; union organisation; equality – unless calling for specific action in one sector only; international issues). Professional and employment matters particular to a sector should be submitted to the relevant sector conference, including pay and contractual issues in that sector. Examples of other sectoral business in recent years include, in FE, pay, OFSTED, workloads in FE, safe working environments, and FE class sizes; in HE, pay, the USS pension scheme, REF, university

governance, workloads in HE.

2.6 Motions can be submitted by local officers using the following methods:

- i. On-line submission form available at <https://www.ucu.org.uk/congressmotions>. The form will ask for all the information required. **Branches are asked to use this form wherever possible.**
- ii. Submission by email to congressmotions@ucu.org.uk. Emails must provide the following information:
 - the body to which it is submitted (Congress, or HE or FE sector conference)
 - the title (not more than 10 words)
 - the motion text (not more than 150 words)
 - a statement to say that the motion was passed by a quorate branch meeting, and the date of that meeting
 - if the branch meeting called to approve the motion was inquorate, how the motion was approved in accordance with Congress standing orders and local rules
 - the name and the position of the branch officer submitting the motion

2.7 Receipt of all motions will be acknowledged. If you do not receive acknowledgement, please contact UCU before the deadline for receipt of motions by emailing demservices@ucu.org.uk. UCU cannot accept responsibility for failure of electronic communication. **Branches are advised not to leave the submission of motions to the last minute.**

2.8 Motions received after the deadline will be ordered onto the agenda only if the Congress Business Committee considers them to be urgent, timely, requiring a decision of Congress or Sector Conference and could not have been submitted by the deadline (standing order 10). Any branch submitting a motion after the deadline should explain why the motion meets these criteria.

3 After motions are received: the role of the Congress Business Committee

- 3.1 The Congress Business Committee (CBC) is responsible for ordering the business of Congress. The matters that CBC consider include:
 - a. Whether any motion received after the deadline for the submission of motions is urgent, timely, requires a decision of Congress or Sector Conference and could not have been submitted by the deadline
 - b. Whether any motion submitted to Congress is properly the business of a Sector Conference, or vice versa

- c. Whether any motion is out of order
- d. Whether any motions should be composited, or re-drafted as an amendment to another motion, and the text of those composites or amendments
- e. The ordering of motions for debate using headings from the NEC's report to Congress, and the scheduling of sections of business within the Congress timetable.

3.2 The Congress Business Committee's second report, containing the ordered motions and amendments, forms the Congress agenda. Congress is asked to adopt the report. It is possible for elements of the report to be challenged from the floor of Congress.

3.3 A call for nominations to vacancies arising on the Congress Business Committee from the close of Congress 2026 is set out in UCU/2202.

4 Delegation entitlements for Congress

5 Entitlement to Congress delegates is one delegate per 400 members or part thereof in an institution. (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 2025. A full table of Congress delegate entitlements by institution is available at www.ucu.org.uk/congress26. Information can also be requested from the democratic services team (demservices@ucu.org.uk).

5.1 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.

4.3 Additionally, each of the English regions, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland shall be able to send up to four observers to National Congress – at least one from FE and at least one from HE; these observers will be able to attend all events at Congress and relevant Sector Conferences, but will not be eligible to propose or speak to resolutions.

6 Delegate entitlement for sector conferences

6.1 All branches are entitled to send delegates to sector conference on the basis of one delegate per 400 members or part thereof. A full table of sector conference delegate entitlement by branch is available at www.ucu.org.uk/congress26.