

University and College Union – extract from rules

Political fund rules from 18 February 2026

2 Aims and objects

- 2.6 To pursue political objects in accordance with the relevant legislation as set out in Schedule C to these rules.
- 2.10 Notwithstanding any other provision of these Rules no part of any fund of the union, or of any branch/local association, shall be used for, or with a view to, affiliation to any political party.

Schedule C

Political fund rules

Introduction

1. The objects of the University and College Union include the furtherance of the political objects to which section 72 of the amended Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 (the 1992 Act) applies. Those political objects are:

72 Political objects to which restriction applies.

(1) The political objects to which this Chapter applies are the expenditure of money—

(a) on any contribution to the funds of, or on the payment of expenses incurred directly or indirectly by, a political party;

(b) on the provision of any service or property for use by or on behalf of any political party;

(c) in connection with the registration of electors, the candidature of any person, the selection of any candidate or the holding of any ballot by the union in connection with any election to a political office;

(d) on the maintenance of any holder of a political office;

(e) on the holding of any conference or meeting by or on behalf of a political party or of any other meeting the main purpose of which is the transaction of business in connection with a political party;

(f) on the production, publication or distribution of any literature, document, film, sound recording or advertisement

the main purpose of which is to persuade people to vote for a political party or candidate or to persuade them not to vote for a political party or candidate.

(2) Where a person attends a conference or meeting as a delegate or otherwise as a participator in the proceedings, any expenditure incurred in connection with his attendance as such shall, for the purposes of subsection (1)(e), be taken to be expenditure incurred on the holding of the conference or meeting.

(3) In determining for the purposes of subsection (1) whether a trade union has incurred expenditure of a kind mentioned in that subsection, no account shall be taken of the ordinary administrative expenses of the union.

(4) In this section—

“candidate” means a candidate for election to a political office and includes a prospective candidate;

“contribution”, in relation to the funds of a political party, includes any fee payable for affiliation to, or membership of, the party and any loan made to the party;

“electors” means electors at an election to a political office;

“film” includes any record, however made, of a sequence of visual images, which is capable of being used as a means of showing that sequence as a moving picture;

“local authority” means a local authority within the meaning of section 270 of the Local Government Act 1972 or section 235 of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973; and

“political office” means the office of member of Parliament, member of the European Parliament or member of a local authority or any position within a political party.

2. Any payments in the furtherance of these political objects shall be made out of a separate fund of the union. This fund shall be called the political fund.
3. The union shall make clear how much of any regular contribution is for the political fund. The political fund is included in regular contributions, and it is hereby provided that one per cent of each subscription payable by a member under rule 7.2 is a contribution to the political fund. Where a contribution to the political fund would not otherwise be a whole number of pence it shall be rounded to the next lower whole number of pence. The union shall ensure

that members who have opted out do not pay this amount, by reducing or removing it from their contribution.

4. Any member who chooses not to contribute to the political fund of the union shall not be excluded from any benefits of the union or placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under any disability or disadvantage as compared with other members of the union (except in relation to the control or management of the political fund). Any form (including an electronic form) that a person has to complete to become a member of the union must include a statement to that effect, as well as a statement to the effect that the person may opt out of contributing to the political fund.
5. Any member who claims to be aggrieved by a breach of these political fund rules may complain to the Certification Officer. After making such enquiries as they think fit, the Certification Officer shall give both the complainant and a representative of the union an opportunity to make written representations. They may also give both the complainant and a representative of the union an opportunity to make oral representations. After this, if the Certification Officer considers that such a breach has been committed, they make such order for remedying the breach as they think appropriate in the circumstances. Any such order of the Certification Officer may, subject to the right of appeal provided by section 95 of the 1992 Act, be enforced in the manner provided for in sections 82(4A) and 82(4B) of the 1992 Act.
6. Contribution to the political fund of the union shall not be made a condition for admission to the union, and members of the union who choose not to contribute to the political fund must not be placed under any obligation to do so.
7. The union shall ensure that a copy of the political fund rules is available, free of charge, to any member of the union who requests a copy.

Opt-out information notices

8. As soon as possible, and no later than eight weeks after the union votes to adopt political objects, the union shall publish the notice at Appendix 1 to every member.
9. The union will publish the notice using the same methods it normally uses for important information. At present, this includes:

Publishing the notice on the union's website, and drawing further to attention to this notice as part of the union's email communication with members.
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10. The same notice shall be published again, within eight weeks of each ten-year anniversary of a vote to adopt political objects (including any vote that

took place before the commencement of the new section 84A of the 1992 Act, as substituted by the Employment Rights Act 2025), unless the resolution has been rescinded or otherwise ceases to have effect.

Submitting an opt-out notice

11. Any member can give notice to opt out of contributing to the political fund at any time.
To do so, members can:
 - a) Use the official opt-out notice form, or
 - b) Send a written request that clearly states that they do not want to contribute to the political fund. Such a written request can be delivered in person, sent by post, email, or through any electronic form the union provides.
12. Members can get a copy of the official opt-out notice form:
 - a) From the union, by emailing membership@ucu.org.uk, or
 - b) From the Certification Officer by emailing **info@certoffice.org**
13. The official opt-out notice form in use can be found at Appendix 2.
14. When the union receives an opt-out notice from a member, it will send the member an acknowledgement to the address provided.

When the opt-out notice takes effect

15. The opt-out takes effect on the earlier of:
 - a) Within one calendar month of the opt-out notice being received
 - b) 1 January in the year following the year in which the notice is given.
16. The union shall make sure that members who have opted out do not pay into the political fund.

Withdrawing an opt-out notice

17. Any member who has opted out of contributing to the political fund may withdraw their opt-out at any time. Doing so means the member will start contributing to the political fund again. To withdraw an opt-out notice, the member should give the union an opt-out withdrawal notice, which is a written statement saying they wish to withdraw their opt-out notice and start contributing to the union's political fund again.
18. The opt-out withdrawal notice can be delivered in person, sent by post, email, or through any electronic form the union provides.
19. When the union receives the opt-out withdrawal notice, it will send the member an acknowledgement to the address provided and process the withdrawal of the opt-out notice as soon as reasonably practicable.

Transitional arrangements for members who joined the University and College Union between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026

Between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026, members were not automatically opted in to the political fund. Instead, they had to actively opt-in. The Employment Rights Act 2025 has amended the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, so that new members are treated as opted-in unless they choose to opt-out. The following rules explain how unions must handle members who joined between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026.

Default opt-outs for certain members

20. Any member who joined the union between 1 March 2018 and 17 February 2026 and was not contributing to the political fund immediately before 18 February 2026, is treated by law as having given an opt-out notice under the new section 84 of the 1992 Act, substituted by the 2025 Act. This opt-out remains in effect until the member gives a withdrawal notice in accordance with these rules. The union does not need to take any action to process these opt-outs, as they apply automatically under the law. This automatically applied opt-out notice is treated as effective from 18 February 2026 and will remain in effect until the member gives an opt-out withdrawal notice to cancel it (as addressed above in paragraphs 17-19).

Transitional period for opt-in withdrawals

The following rules (21-24) apply to members who joined the union between 1 March 2018 and 18 February 2026 and submitted an opt-in notice that remains in force on 18 February 2026. These rules cover the four-week period until (and including) 17 March 2026. After that period, these members will be captured by the processes described earlier in these rules.

21. Any member who joined the union between 1 March 2018 and 18 February 2026 and, during that time, submitted an opt-in notice, may for a short period give a withdrawal notice under section 84 of the 1992 Act, as it stood before the 2025 Act.
22. During the transitional period until (and including) 18 March 2026, if a member who submitted an opt-in notice wishes to stop contributing to the political fund, they may give the union an opt-in withdrawal notice, which is a written statement saying they no longer wish to contribute.
23. The opt-in withdrawal notice can be delivered in person, sent by post, email, or through any electronic form the union provides.
24. The opt-in withdrawal notice takes effect one month after the date on which it is given.

Appendix 1: Opt-out information notice

Notice to Members in accordance with the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992

The University and College Union has a political fund. This fund is used for activities connected with political objects as defined by section 72 of the above Act. All spending on these activities comes from this separate political fund.

Every member has the right not to contribute to the union's political fund. To exercise this right, you must give the union an opt-out notice.

You can give an opt-out notice in any of these ways:

- **Via the union's on-line membership portal**
- **Deliver it in person, by post, or through a person you have asked to deliver it on your behalf**
- **Send it by email to membership@ucu.org.uk**

A form of opt-out notice can also be obtained:

- **From the union, by emailing membership@ucu.org.uk or**
- **From the Certification Officer by emailing info@certoffice.org**

If you later change your mind, you can give a withdrawal notice to cancel your opt-out. This will put you back into contributing to the political fund.

Date	
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Appendix 2: Opt-out notice

University and College Union	
Political fund opt-out notice	
I do not want to contribute to the union's political fund. By giving this notice, I will be exempt from making any payments to the political fund.	
Signature	
Print name	
Branch	
Membership number (if known)	
Postal or email address	
Date	

Annex 3

Political Fund Rules: Northern Ireland Members

1. The objects of the University and College Union shall include the furtherance of the political objects to which Article 46 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995 (the 1995 Order) applies, that is to say the expenditure of money –
 - (a) on any contribution to the funds of, or on the payment of expenses incurred directly or indirectly by, a political party;
 - (b) on the provision of any service or property for use by or on behalf of any political party;
 - (c) in connection with the registration of electors, the candidature of any person, the selection of any candidate or the holding of any ballot by the union in connection with any election to a political office;
 - (d) on the maintenance of any holder of a political office;
 - (e) on the holding of any conference or meeting by or on behalf of a political party or of any other meeting the main purpose of which is the transaction of business in connection with a political party;
 - (f) on the production, publication or distribution of any literature, document, film, sound recording or advertisement the main purpose of which is to persuade people to vote for a political party or candidate or to persuade them not to vote for a political party or candidate.

Where a person attends a conference or meeting as a delegate or otherwise as a participator in the proceedings, any expenditure incurred in connection with his or her attendance as such shall, for the purposes of paragraph (e) above, be taken to be expenditure incurred on the holding of the conference or meeting.

In determining, for the purposes of paragraphs (a) to (f) above, whether the trade union has incurred expenditure of a kind mentioned in those paragraphs no account shall be taken of the ordinary administrative expenses of the union.

In these objects –

"candidate" means a candidate for election to a political office and includes a prospective candidate;

"contribution", in relation to the funds of a political party, includes any fee payable for affiliation to, or membership of, the party and any loan made to the party;

"electors" means electors at an election to a political office;

"executive" means the principal committee of the union exercising executive functions, by whatever name it is known

"film" includes any record, however made, of a sequence of visual images, which is capable of being used as a means of showing that sequence as a moving picture;

"political office" means the office of member of the Assembly, member of Parliament, member of the European Parliament or member of a district council or any position within a political party.

2. Any payments in the furtherance of such political objects shall be made out of a separate fund of the union (hereinafter called 'the political fund').
3. As soon as is practicable after the passing of a resolution approving the furtherance of such political objects as an object of the union, the executive shall ensure that a notice in the following form is given to all members of the union in accordance with this rule:

Trade Union and Labour Relations (NI) Order 1995

A resolution approving the furtherance of political objects within the meaning of the above Order as an object of the union has been adopted by a ballot under the Order. Any payments in the furtherance of any of those objects will be made out of a separate fund, the political fund of the union.

A member who is willing to contribute to that fund must give the union notice in writing to that effect. No member is required to contribute to the fund unless he/she has given the union such notice.

A member who, having sent a notice that he/she wishes to contribute to the political fund, subsequently decides to cease contributing must send the union a written notice of withdrawal. A notice of withdrawal will take effect from the next 1 January after it is given.

Both a notice and a notice of withdrawal may be given by being delivered at the head office or a regional office of the union personally or by an authorised agent or by post.

This notice shall be published to members by such methods as are customarily used by the union to publish notices of importance to members and shall include the following minimum requirements. The notice shall be published to members by email and published on the union's website. The Secretary of each branch shall also take steps to secure that every member of the branch, so far as is reasonably

practicable, receives a copy of the notice, and shall supply a copy to any member on request. The executive shall provide the Secretary of each branch with a number of copies of the notice sufficient for these purposes.

4. Any member of the union may at any time give the union written notice of his/her willingness to contribute to the political fund.
5. Any member of the union who has given notice of willingness to contribute to the political fund may at any time withdraw that notice by giving the union written notice of withdrawal.
6. A notice of willingness to contribute to the political fund or a notice of withdrawal may be given by being delivered at the head office or a regional office of the union personally or by an authorised agent or by post. If a member gives notice at his branch, the Secretary of the branch shall on receiving it send the member an acknowledgement of receipt of the notice and inform the General Secretary of the name and address of the member.
7. A member who gives a notice of withdrawal shall cease to contribute to the political fund of the union as from the first day of January next after he or she gives that notice.
8. The executive shall ensure that contributions to the political fund from members are levied and made separately from contributions to any other fund of the union.
9. A member who is not a contributor to the political fund of the union shall not be excluded from any benefits of the union, or placed in any respect either directly or indirectly under any disability or disadvantage as compared with other members of the union (except in relation to the control or management of the political fund) by reason of not being a contributor.
10. Contribution to the political fund of the union shall not be made a condition for admission to the union.
11. If any member alleges that he or she is aggrieved by a breach of any of these rules for the political fund, being a rule or rules made pursuant to Article 57 of the 1995 Order, he or she may complain to the Certification Officer, and the Certification Officer, after making such enquiries as he or she thinks fit and after giving the complainant and a representative of the union an opportunity of being heard, may, if he or she considers that such a breach has been committed, make such order for remedying the breach as he or she thinks just under the circumstances. Any such order of the Certification Officer may be enforced in the manner provided for in Article 57 (4B) of the Order.

12. The executive shall ensure that a copy of these rules is available, free of charge, to any member of the union who request a copy.
13. The executive shall also send to the Secretary of each branch sufficient copies of these rules for distribution to each member.
14. The Secretary of each branch shall, so far as possible secure that each member of that branch receives a copy of the rules.
15. The Secretary of each branch shall supply a copy of these rules free of charge to each member who requests a copy.
16. A copy of the rules shall also be supplied by the Secretary of each branch to every new member on his or her admission to the union.