

UCU CONGRESS STANDING ORDERS (as at 29 May 2009)

Extract: rules of debate (relevant to conduct of debate at annual equality conferences and special interest group annual meetings)

B. CONDUCT OF CONGRESS AND CONFERENCE BUSINESS

THE CHAIR OF CONFERENCES

16. The President shall take the Chair at National Congress. If the President is unavailable the Chair shall be taken by the Vice President, if available, or by the Immediate Past President. In the event that none of these Officers are available a person shall be appointed by Conference to take the Chair until one becomes available.
17. The Vice President elected for each Sector shall chair the relevant Sector Conference. In the event that the Vice President is not available a person shall be appointed by that Sector Conference to take the Chair.
18. The quorum for National Congress shall be 150 members, and quotas for Sector Conferences shall be a fraction of 150 members proportionate to the membership of each sector (subject to rounding up to the nearest whole number).
19. The mover of a motion or of a section of the Annual Report, shall be allowed five minutes and all succeeding speakers shall be allowed three minutes, unless shorter periods are determined by a simple majority in a vote of Congress.
20. Speakers shall introduce themselves by name and the body on behalf of which they are speaking, and address themselves to the Chair.
21. No member shall speak more than once on the same motion or amendment except that the mover of the motion shall have a single right of reply before the vote is taken on motions and amendments within that debate. This single right of reply may be exercised at any time during the debate.
22. Congress Business Committee shall advise the Chair, who will advise Congress/the relevant sector conference on the consequential effects on passing an amendment on subsequent amendments, and may also advise that the debate on all the amendments to a motion be taken together if this facilitates debate. The Chair may

also take a motion or amendment in parts for the purpose of voting, or take related motions and/or amendments in a group, in a single debate.

23. At any time a member of Conference who has not hitherto spoken in the debate may move that the motion or amendment under discussion be remitted to the National Executive Committee. The mover of the motion to remit shall have the right to speak to move it. Only one speech against the proposal to remit shall be permitted.
24. A proposal to remit a motion or amendment shall be taken as a procedural motion, but shall be taken as the first vote on the conclusion of the debate on the motion concerned, following immediately after the right of reply is exercised. Remission of a motion requires the body to which it is remitted to report on the motion to the next Congress or sector conference.
25. When the Chair indicates a wish to speak all members of a Conference shall resume their seats and remain silent.
26. The Chair shall decide points of order. Any decision on a point of order may be challenged by a member of a Conference moving the motion "That the ruling be not upheld". If such a motion is moved the person whose ruling has been challenged shall hand over the Chair which shall be occupied in accordance with Standing Order 1 until the motion is carried or defeated. There shall be only one speech for the motion and one against, after which the person whose ruling has been challenged shall be given the opportunity to make a statement before the question is put. The decision not to uphold the Chair's ruling shall require a simple majority of the delegates present and voting in the Conference concerned.
27. A proposal to refer back a paragraph or part of a paragraph of the Annual Report shall be dealt with for the purposes of debate as an amendment not requiring notice, and shall be taken immediately before the vote to accept that section of the Annual Report.
28. At the end of the consideration of each section of the Annual Report, adoption of that complete section (as amended) shall be put formally to the vote.
29. Any procedural motion which is not provided for in these Standing Orders shall not be in order.

Procedural motions

30. Subject to the discretion of the Chair, who shall consider whether there has been a sufficient and balanced debate, a member of a Conference who has not previously spoken in that debate may propose that the debate be closed by moving formally "That the question be now put". If formally seconded, such a motion shall be put to

Conference without debate. No speech may be interrupted for the purpose of proposing such a motion.

Subject to the discretion of the Chair, who shall consider whether the debate has gone on for a reasonable period, any member of a Conference may propose that the debate be closed by moving formally "That the meeting proceeds to the next business", which shall have the effect of closing the current debate without further speeches or a vote, and moving on to the next substantive item of business. It is for the Chair to determine what constitutes the next item of business.

After any amendment has been put, a motion "That the main question be now considered" may be moved and put to the meeting without debate. Otherwise all amendments shall be disposed of and the Chair shall decide whether debate on the main motion is necessary and when the time has come when the main motion may fairly be put.

31. Questions on specific items in the Annual Report or Financial Report or other Reports circulated prior to the Conference shall be submitted in writing to the General Secretary or nominated official before the opening of the First Public Session of Congress or a Sector Conference respectively. Questions on Reports circulated during the Conference shall be submitted in writing to the General Secretary or nominated official as appropriate prior to the commencement of the Session of Conference at which the question is to be answered. Questions on matters of the Order of Business only must relate to the business being (or about to be) transacted and must be submitted in writing to the Chair.
32. In the event of an inconsistency between any adopted paragraph of the Annual Report and a motion duly carried by a Conference within whose remit the matter falls, the motion shall take precedence.
33. In the event of grave disorder the Chair may suspend a session for a period not exceeding 30 minutes. Any subsequent decision to suspend Conference during the same session shall be open to challenge in accordance with Standing Order.
34. 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.

35. Decisions on the circulation of any material within the Congress or conference halls shall be the responsibility of the Chair, who shall ensure that guidance is issued to delegates prior to the commencement of Congress.
36. Only members of a Conference, members of Congress Business Committee, Trustees, members of committees listed in rules 16.6.4 attending under arrangements agreed by the NEC and Union employees may be admitted to a Private Session.
37. It shall not be in order for any participant to smoke in the hall where any Conference meets or in the offices and public spaces adjacent to the hall which are used by UCU for the business activities associated with any Conference.