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GetTheVoteOut A toolkit for UCU branches

An 8-point plan to **GetTheVoteOut** in your ballot

1

Set out a campaign timeline and plan (see Section 1 on page 2)

- ➔ Decide the most effective time to take action and work backwards.
- ➔ Wherever possible, allow at least three weeks for the ballot.
- ➔ Assign roles within the branch (who will lead on negotiations, who will be the key GTVO contact, who will be in charge of communications etc).
- ➔ Agree key points of communication with members (eg once a week) and general or departmental meetings and put them into your timeline.

2

Distil the issue into a key points summary

(see Section 2 on page 3)

- ➔ Describe what the impact of management's proposals might be on staff, students and the institution.
- ➔ Indicate if there are there any specific subject areas or groups of staff at particular risk.
- ➔ Explain the proposed management timescale.
- ➔ If the issue is job cuts, confirm how many jobs are at risk of redundancy, how many have already gone, are the proposals 'VS' or compulsory or both.
- ➔ Set out the reasons given by management and the union's responses to those reasons.

3

Distil the branch's objectives

(see Section 3 on page 4)

- ➔ Set out UCU's key objectives, eg no compulsories, more effective redeployment, proper consultation; management to open the books.

4

Communicate (see Section 4 on page 4)

- ➔ Agree to communicate with every member at least once a week for the period of the ballot.
- ➔ Tailor your message to address members' key concerns.

- ➔ Keep the narrative moving forwards—for example in Week 1 set out our objectives, in Week 2 explain importance of voting to help negotiators, in Week 3 focus on those who haven't voted yet by explaining management's proposals have implications for everyone.

5

Get The Vote Out team actions

(see Section 5 on page 6)

- ➔ Map UCU membership including room numbers, email and phone numbers wherever possible.
- ➔ Divide your mapped workplace into sections.
- ➔ Seek volunteers to help Get the Vote Out.
- ➔ Give volunteers small 'clusters' of members to approach.
- ➔ Ensure everyone keeps a record of their contact with members about the ballot.

6

Campaign materials

(see Section 6 on page 8)

- ➔ Agree what you need (eg leaflet, poster, stickers etc) liaise with your regional office and approach campaigns team for help in advance of ballot.

7

Working with the press

(see Section 7 on page 8)

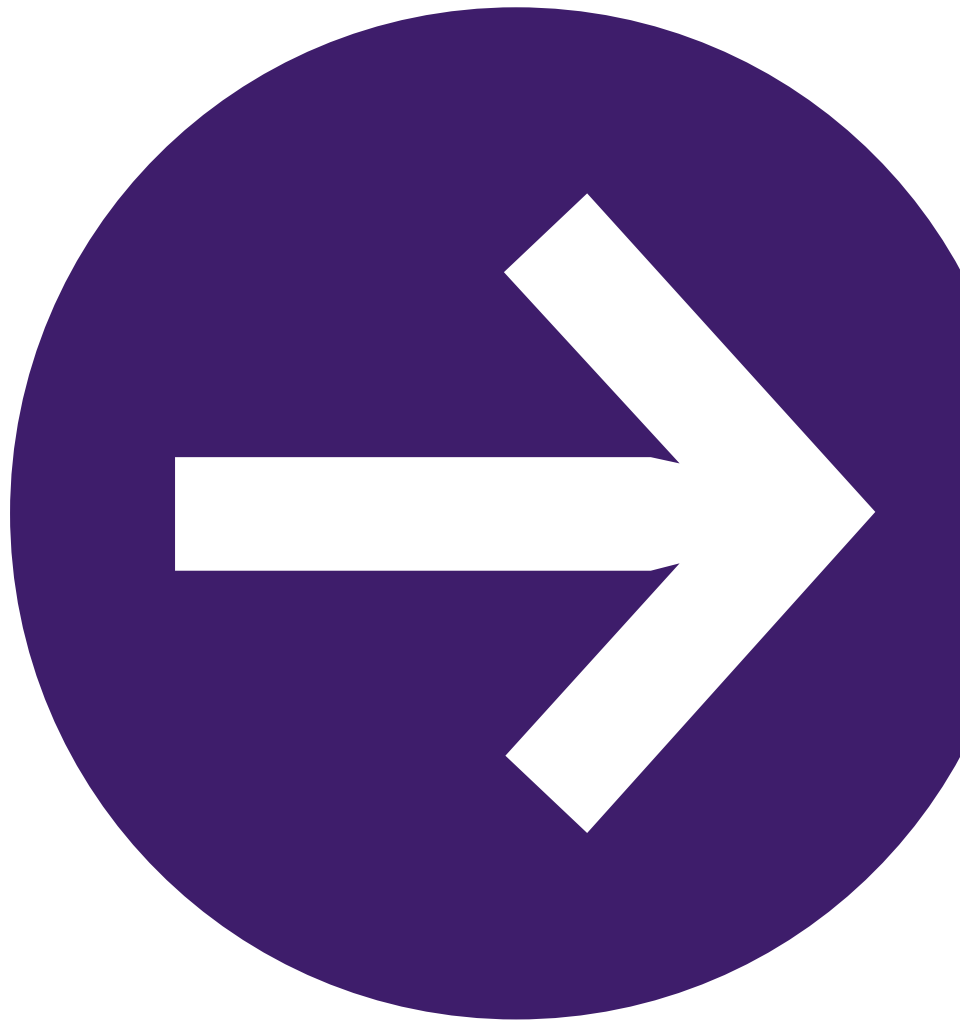
- ➔ Seek advice from UCU press office as early as possible.
- ➔ Agree who will be responsible for press strategy.
- ➔ Identify any good stories (management waste; high pay at the top, certain subjects being decimated).

8

Working with your MPs

(see Section 8 on page 9)

- ➔ Ask UCU's parliamentary team to contact your local MPs.
- ➔ Use your key points summary to provide a short briefing on the main issues.
- ➔ Ask MPs to use their influence to persuade management to negotiate.



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What is 'GetTheVoteOut' (GTVO)?

The GTVO 'model' uses basic organising techniques commonly used in election campaigns and is also based on experiences of community level organising. Many of you will have been personally involved in such campaigns, usually in elections aimed at raising voter participation and as such the following will not be a great surprise to you. However, you may not have applied these techniques to direct a targeted ballot campaign within your own institutions.

Why use a GTVO plan? It works! We can make a significant difference to a campaign, the primary purpose of which is to achieve a high turnout and percentage of yes votes, if we apply a carefully targeted and timed GTVO campaign. We know for example that average turnout for union ballots, including UCU, stands at around 40-42%. We also know that if we look back retrospectively at the actual ballot returns that between 25-30% of UCU members vote in the first week of the ballot or certainly by the middle of the balloting timetable.

This 25-30% will be members who are naturally inclined to vote either because they are strong union members, and so voting is an 'obligation', or because they feel strongly about the issue one way or the other. We also know that following this initial 'high' response, the returns then turn into a trickle. We now have clear empirical evidence that a targeted GTVO campaign in the final full week of the ballot reverses this 'trickle trend' and delivers a significant 'back-ended' boost to the turnout. In each of the campaigns thus far, the vote has doubled between mid to end of the ballot period.

Who are we trying to persuade during a GTVO campaign?

What we also know from these ballot trends is, given that those who are most likely to vote (the 25-30%) will have done so in the first week—these are probably **not** the people with whom we are primarily seeking to engage during a GTVO campaign! The members we must reach out to if we are to be successful are those who are unsure of the issues, may perhaps be fearful of industrial action or are generally disengaged. As such, it becomes clear, and again this has borne true in the previous GTVO

campaigns, that we must try to set a very specific narrative—a narrative which plays to that mass of middle ground: the approximately 70% of our members who are not yet fully engaged. This is not always necessarily the natural audience for a union activist but it **is** absolutely key if we are to run a successful GTVO campaign. What is also true is that through this approach, new members come forward and begin to engage with the processes and the local union.

It is also of course true that there is a natural time in the campaign's development (depending upon progress or otherwise in negotiations) that the narrative and tone of the union's language will need to change. Sometimes this may be during the GTVO campaign itself if management have/have not done something around which we are pretty certain that we can galvanise the majority of our members, though more often this key change will come at/shortly after the ballot result as we move toward detailed planning of industrial action. This is then the time for pure union rallying calls!

Clearly, a significant advantage of running such a high profile GTVO campaign are the by-products that come with it; increased awareness of the union—often resulting in increased membership, and increased grassroots activism due to the ability to break the campaign into small manageable parts—often resulting in an increase of union activists and a stronger, organised, mapped branch.

We all know that unions recruit well when they are campaigning. Visible campaigning helps to build the union and this helps to strengthen our campaign. In the following sections of this toolkit, we try to go step by step through how we have delivered GTVO campaigns with UCU branches.

1: Clear campaign guideline

Setting out a clear timeline for any campaign is of course important—but for a campaign that will involve a ballot it is essential. Branches must fully discuss any intention to move toward a ballot with their regional official. The legal obligations on the union are such that the running of the ballot must be the clear responsibility of a full-time regional official. UCU must win its ballots and must win them well and the secret of this is effective planning. Therefore branches should appreciate the importance of effective timing and timetabling.

Ideally you should start from the date at which you are considering taking action and work backwards from that date in order to ensure sufficient time to build for the campaign, meet the legal requirements and allow for maximum turnout.

The date at which you wish to take action should be considered carefully in terms of possible pressure points on the university/college. Please note that the first day of action must be within 28 days of the ballot closing and notification having been sent to the employer.

It is not advisable to ballot at the end of term or have a ballot running over a vacation/institution closure dates, or at a time at which key committee and branch officers are on leave.

Ballot timetable

(iii) Timetable for ballot and action

It is essential that adequate time be allowed for the following:

- ➔ full membership checks and inputting amendments on to system
- ➔ processing by Electoral Reform Services (who administer the ballot)
- ➔ statutory notice to employers of intention to ballot
- ➔ balloting (three weeks is recommended)
- ➔ authorisation of action
- ➔ statutory notice to employers of result and action.

If you have any questions relating to this section (ballot timetable) you should raise them directly with your regional official).

Understandably, many questions arise from branch officers and from member during a ballot period. We have pulled together an FAQ for this purpose. This must be checked through, updated and amended to the specifics of your situation and your branch before being shared with the wider membership (see [Ballot and strike FAQs and guidance on picketing](#) in Appendix 3, on page 13).

As soon as you have the outline of your ballot timetable you should set out in detail a realistic plan—this should be defined by specific activities on specific dates and if at all possible should include some activity prior to the ballot opening in order that you are all set by the time ballot papers are sent out. This has worked exceptionally well to date and all indications seem to show that GTVO has had a discernible impact on voting intentions. Given the short balloting periods of UCU ballots, activity must be concentrated where possible prior to, but certainly during all full weeks of voting (see [GTVO template timetable](#) in Appendix 4, on page 15).

The branch committee should elect an officer to act as the primary co-ordinator for the ‘Get the Vote out team’, this person should be directly supported by two vice co-ordinators—any of whom can take responsibility on behalf of the branch to sign off campaigns materials, press releases and parliamentary briefings. The three GTVO co-ordinators should work closely with the regional official, the branch development organiser and, where appropriate, the national campaigns team.

2: Distilling the issue

Many of you who are reading this pack will also be responsible for, or heavily involved in local negotiations. As such, you will hold a vast amount of information, much of which in terms of communicating key messages to the audience of a campaign (your members, the press and politicians) will be too detailed, complicated and—undoubtedly—long!

So, how do we distill such a vast amount of information and knowledge into something digestible and understandable to an audience which is wider than the negotiators while still managing to get the key information across? We ask branches to imagine that they are being interviewed for a news slot in which they have just two minutes to present their arguments—of course in many campaigns this ‘imaginary scenario’ will come true. When assessing a campaign, we have to be able to distill the issue and so we ask branch officers these key questions (in this example, the issue is job cuts):

1. How many jobs are at risk and what proportion is that of the University/College staff?
2. Are any specific subject areas at risk?
3. What reason(s) have been put by management?
4. When are the jobs likely to go?
5. Have any gone jobs already gone through VS etc?
6. Are any of the jobs at risk compulsory?
7. What might the impact be?

Answers to these questions enable us to communicate what are often complex and detailed negotiating situations in the following ways:

Example

- ➔ University X has announced a ‘cost saving’ exercise aimed at cutting £35 million over two years.
- ➔ This could mean the loss of up to 700 jobs.
- ➔ Management has launched reviews in nine departments.
- ➔ Any cuts through these reviews are in addition to those made through the ‘cost saving’ exercise.
- ➔ University X is in good financial health with record applications last year, a position conceded by the management.

- ➔ If these cuts are allowed to go through unchallenged, we believe that staff, students and the university will all suffer:
 - hundreds of colleagues may lose their jobs
 - workloads for remaining staff will increase
 - the staff/student ratio will increase.
- ➔ All of this will damage both the academic reputation of University X, not to mention the ‘student experience’, achieving the very reverse of what the management say they want.

Help! For most branches, the justification from management for cuts relates to finances, often including external funding. To pull apart management accounts and expose the folly of their financial arguments can be daunting for already hard-pressed officers. Help **is** at hand! Please speak with your regional official or a member of the campaigns team who will liaise with the UCU research team.

3: Setting out our objectives

In addition to distilling the issue, branches need to be in a position to communicate clearly with a variety of audiences what it is that the UCU is seeking. In simple terms we might of course say ‘no job cuts’, for example, but we need to be more sophisticated than that in order to set the narrative of being a considered and reasonable trade union—not least of all because the majority of our members expect us to take such an approach, and the wider audience of the press, public and parliamentarians aside—we must be able to carry our membership with us in any dispute. In order to do so we must be clear about what it is that we are seeking and this must sound reasonable (see *Who are we trying to persuade during a GTVO campaign?*, on page 1).

Setting out clear objectives in this way also obviously enables you and your members to monitor progress of negotiations and to note and celebrate any successes along the way. The branch negotiators will of course have a more detailed set of objectives that fit it under the headlines.

Using the example above of the issues at University X, we were able to discuss, agree and communicate the following objectives:

Example

- ➔ UCU wants a negotiated solution.
- ➔ We have met the university for talks facilitated by ACAS and we will continue to do so for as long as they are possible and useful.
- ➔ We are working toward:
 - the withdrawal of the threat of compulsory redundancy
 - a freeze on all job losses until their potential impact has been assessed
 - proper consultation with the staff trade unions and student representatives aimed at reducing numbers of jobs at risk
 - recognition of the importance of university charter and statutes.

4: Communications

See also *Who are we trying to persuade during a GTVO campaign?*, on page 1

It is of course vitally important that members are kept informed during the balloting period. Because you will be living and breathing this campaign, it is all too easy for union activists who are involved in detailed, often difficult and complex negotiations to slip into the trap of thinking that ‘everyone knows what is going on and what the latest developments are’. This of course will often not be the case and it is vital that we carry our members with us at each stage. As such, email communications and members’ meetings should be a regular phenomenon throughout any GTVO campaign. Each communication should add something ‘new’—a different angle while still driving home the key message of ‘it is vital that you vote and vote yes in order to strengthen our negotiating position’.

Timing	Message
Week 1 of ballot	Introducing and detailing the issue, make clear reasons for the ballot and urging YES vote
Week 2 of ballot	Updating on any latest developments, rebuffing any management propaganda, urging YES vote
Week 3 of ballot	‘Last chance to vote’

Given our short ballot periods, there is often a good case for all-member messages in addition to those outlined above, every three or so days. This sounds excessive but if the messages are kept short and even tempered then members should be encouraged to read them and they should be persuaded by our sound arguments. Where appropriate, the national campaigns team can be available to read through and suggest any amends to your messages—some ‘distance’ can be helpful in a local ballot.

It is highly likely that the VC/head of college will send out persuasive communications to all staff re the ‘absurdity of a ballot when we all know that education funding is in crisis and that we should be working together to consolidate the future of this university/college’. We need to be able to respond to such propaganda in a reasonable manner and not be distracted by it.

In addition to local emails from the branch officers it can

be helpful to have messages from the general secretary (Sally Hunt) sent out to your members. The emails from Sally can take a slightly different approach, can highlight specific issues, place your situation in the wider context and are often very likely to be read as they come from the email address of the general secretary. In previous GTVO campaigns we have generally sent a 'Sally email' as the ballot opens (see example in Appendix 1, on page 11) and another mid-to end of the ballot (see example in Appendix 2, page 12).

Using new media In addition to the traditional modes of contacting members and the public, the 'new media' such as blogging, micro-blogging such as Twitter, RSS news feeds, social networking sites such as Facebook and online survey and petition services (surveymonkey, etc.) have proved to be effective tools in many local UCU campaigns.

Campaigning on electronic media platforms maintains visibility and drip-feeds communications and news to fellow members, but crucially also to students and the public. A good online presence means you are able to counter misrepresentations of the union quickly, and maintain a high-profile series of clarifications for your actions. The 'new media' are not simply about communicating on a message-by-message basis as we are used to thinking (emails) or of getting digests of our issues out in concentrated bursts (leaflets), but they offer ways of maintaining a presence, a feed of information, and a coverage of activity sustained over a long time.

The hub of a good campaign can be a blog (web log), which is a website set up primarily to post news items or reflections on events. There are many free services that offer a simple to set up account, such as Wordpress or Blogger. These provide ready-made website themes to choose from, and are simple to set up and run. Posting a new message is as simple as filling in an email: you write the header and the body text and press 'submit' and the software produces the web page, url and links to it. There are simple options to add images, media or documents to download, which is as simple as adding an attachment to an email.

Twitter is a micro-blogging service that is another manner in which new blog content can be made available. You can connect your blog to a Twitter account using services such as twitterfeed, so that automatically on posting a blog, your twitter account posts the headline. Other twitter users opt to subscribe, or 'follow' your account, and receive that headline however they use Twitter: on a desktop client, on their mobile phones or from the web. A Twitter account is defined by a name preceded by an @, so @*ucu* is the UCU's account.

Facebook is a very useful forum for campaigning, though members should be careful of what they post there in their own name. Group accounts are possible, but, as with all the above media, caution should be taken in making statements about your institution in such public fora. You can connect a Twitter account and a Facebook account, so that when you update your Twitter profile this automatically updates your Facebook profile. Profile updates, events, photos and media that Facebook users upload then form part of a 'news feed' that all their 'friends' see when they log in. You can set up events or protest groups on Facebook and invite 'friends' to join them, and they can then invite others. This has proven to be a useful way of keeping in touch with students, and getting them to events. Crucially, also, campaign groups can send messages to the large groups of students who have signed up to UCU protest groups on Facebook, bypassing the problems one might face contacting students electronically on university systems.

Key Some jargon explained:

url = *Uniform resource locator*
Web address, to you and me.

html = *Hypertext markup language*
The code behind web pages that your browser reads to present and format the information on the web page.

css = *Cascading Style Sheet*
A set of instructions to your browser that gives a web site a 'theme', so that web authors don't need to define the style (font, layout, size of columns etc.) for each new page in a site that they author; the css does that work for them.

5: 'Get The Vote Out' team actions—who and where are our members

RSS = Really Simple Syndication (or 'Rich Site Summary')

A process used to publish frequently updated work such as blog entries or news headlines. These feeds permit web authors to communicate content automatically. RSS can be read in a web-based or desktop reader, as an email, or via a mobile phone app.

Twitter = A mini-blogging site that permits 140 character posts (or 'tweets') which are read by 'followers' who subscribe to them

Twitter can work like RSS in that it can automatically forward details of an update made on a blog site.

Twitterfeed = A service that facilitates the connection between Twitter and Facebook or a blog using RSS

Any new blog headline will be automatically sent as a 'tweet' to Twitter followers and/or a status update on Facebook.

Facebook = A free social networking site that allows people to design public or private profiles that others (called 'friends') might be permitted to see and interact with

The site facilitates the easy uploading of images and video onto one's profile, messaging privately, publicly or in real-time, the creation of 'groups' for shared interests or protest, and the creation of invitations to events in the real world.

Further education college branches should be aware that the application of the methods below has primarily been tested and proven in the university sector where, for example, it is much more likely that staff have individual rooms. Our experience of running Get the Vote Out campaigns in further education colleges, where staff work in a different way, has lead us toward developing different tactical approaches emphasis. For example, it is far more important to focus on communal areas such as staff rooms and access to buildings and the opportunities/risks that provides alongside phone banking than door knocking per se.

Task 1 The membership should be broken down by:

(1) geographical areas (sites if you work in a split site university or college); then divided into (2) sensibly sized areas which can be reasonably walked (for door knocking purposes) by local reps or volunteers; and finally by (3) departments.

Task 2 The branch officers should immediately contact all members: a 'GTVO preparation' email to all members which provides an update of the dispute to date, sets out our key arguments and asks for volunteers to assist with door-knocking the identified geographical areas or departments (see example in Appendix 6, on page 18).

At the same time, all current reps should be sent an email and asked to make an honest indication of whether they will be prepared to undertake this activity as a matter of urgency (see example in Appendix 7, on page 19).

Task 3 The various geographical areas or departments should then be cross referenced against identified list of reps or ballot volunteers, preferably on a basis that makes sense (departmental rep, geographical proximity, member of specific department). Where there are **no** reps/ballot volunteers an email should be sent to all members in those areas (see example in Appendix 8, on page 20).

Task 4 GTVO membership lists for each and every department should be then be produced and collated into Excel or similar format (you should have access to this information as it will have been collated and sent to ERBS for the purpose of your ballot: if you do **not** hold this

information please contact your regional official or the campaigns team who will put you in touch with your UCU membership contact) with the following columns/cells (see example in Appendix 9, on page 22):

- | | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| ➔ Full name | ➔ Department |
| ➔ Phone number | ➔ Room number |
| ➔ Email address | ➔ Voted? |
| ➔ Notes | |

The collation of phone number, email and room number will take time, it is a laborious task but it **is** essential in order to be able to run a GTVO campaign and to effectively assess voter turnout in specific areas, missing ballot papers etc. GTVO membership data lists should be completed with as much data as possible and circulated to the appropriate identified dep rep/ballot volunteers in advance of the ballot forms arriving, so that two days after the ballot opens (allowing time for ballot forms to arrive at your university/college and allowing for internal mail delivery systems), door knocking can begin.

For further education colleges, where staff rarely have individual work spaces but do frequent collective staff rooms, it is just as important to collect any information there may be relating to room numbers but especially phone numbers. Members may well not be happy about their union membership being revealed in front of their colleagues, so it is vital to be able to phone them.

Immediately prior to ballot opening Email all dep reps/ ballot volunteers thanking them for coming forward and calling them to a meeting to talk them through the data sheets in detail (see example in Appendix 10, on page 22).

At the meeting explain that it is vital that they keep a precise record of all of their GTVO activity (hard copy notations are OK but it is preferable if volunteers can update the Excel spreadsheet for their own area/ department, otherwise there will be a big data inputting job for someone!) in order that at the end of the full Week 1 of the ballot, the data sheets can be collated by the GTVO co-ordinator, discussed at committee and a full assessment made as to where resources/extra support

should be put in the final week/two weeks of balloting. If you have a three week ballot period this collation of data should happen again at the end of Week 2—and a re-assessment of targeted resources should be made.

When the ballot opens Two days after the ballot opens, each dep rep/ballot volunteer should begin approaching colleagues (see *A brief guide for what your dep reps/ ballot volunteers could say* in Appendix 11, on page 24). Where it is not possible to speak to colleagues face-to-face, they should be phoned and at the very least a message left on their answerphones.

Dep reps/ballot volunteers should be asked to make a clear note of areas that have not been possible to access (card access etc) or are open plan areas: these should immediately be set aside into a 'phone-bank pile'. Phone banking lists should be followed up by your committee and shared out again amongst dep reps/ballot volunteers wherever possible. This should form part of your end of Week 1/2 assessment meeting as described above.

In further education colleges, or where staff work in common areas (in FE or HE), the ballot team should be sensitive to the fact that not all members are happy for their union membership to be known to their colleagues. We have found that it is best to visit offices asking to leave a leaflet on every desk. Members often volunteer the information that they have voted and you can record this information. They may also help you with phone numbers for colleagues. But you should also aim to telephone every member and speak to them in person. Where there are common phones, a good idea can be to call and ask to speak to one member, then phone the same number later asking to speak another in the same office. This avoids the obvious impression that you are working through a list of union members' names!

6: GTVO campaign materials

During your GTVO campaign you can expect some help from the campaigns team with materials to raise the profile of your campaign at your university/college and get your key messages across to members, non-members and students (and management!). During the course of a campaign we would usually supply you with the following:

- ➔ **VOTE YES two-sided flyer** VOTE YES plus key headlines on side one, with more details of the dispute and action points on side two; size A5 (210x148mm/ 8.3x5.8ins).
- ➔ **VOTE YES single-sided poster** VOTE YES plus key headlines; size A4 (297x210mm/11.6x8.3ins).
- ➔ **Stickers** These can be supplied as generic designs or produced to support your specific institution/campaign.



In order for us to assist you with producing materials for your campaign we will require the information as covered in **Section 2: Distilling the issue** (page 3) and **Section 3: Setting out our objectives** (page 4).

Please make sure that you plan well ahead for these materials as ideally they should be with you and up around your university/college immediately after the notification of the ballot has been received by your employer and prior to your ballot opening, as this will massively assist in raising membership awareness of the campaign.

You should also ensure that you request enough copies of the leaflets that enable you to give sufficient numbers to your dep reps/ballot volunteers in order for them to take them around the campus during the GTVO campaign and—importantly—put them under the doors of those who are not in during door-knocking.

Many members feel comfortable putting flyers on their doors and should be encouraged to do so: not only does it raise the profile of the campaign, it also gives encouragement to those members who are feeling vulnerable.

7: Getting in touch with, and using, the UCU press office

The UCU national press office is here to help out with your campaigns and take the burden off you. We regularly write press releases in conjunction with branches and are happy to offer advice at any point.

In order to maximise media coverage, though, the following information is very important:

How many jobs are at risk? This is the first question a journalist will want to know so they can assess the impact of the cuts.

Where are the jobs going from? The more detailed we can be the better. If entire departments are at risk we need to get this across to the media.

What is the timescale? Journalists will want to know when the cuts were announced and how and when they will be phased in. It is essential that we are kept up to date on what is happening. If there is an important vote at a meeting then we need to know ahead of time and already be putting the pressure on. Taking a day or two to formulate a response after the decision is not much use. The principal or vice-chancellor will have already announced things with their spin and the press will view the story as old if we have nothing new to add. Sadly, they don't often agree that a new perspective from the union a day or two after the announcement constitutes a new news angle.

Why are these cuts being made? The UCU press office needs to know why the college is making these cuts. What is management telling the branches and staff? Can we dismiss their arguments?

Who will these cuts impact upon? Cuts have consequences on staff, students and the local community. When getting our message across to the press we need to be able to explain why job losses are bad.

Has the institution made cuts in the past? Does your institution have a track record of restructuring or making cuts? If so, how many jobs has it cut in the recent past and from which departments? It helps if we can paint management as making a series of shoddy decisions or putting at risk traditionally good relations with staff.

8: GTVO parliamentary strategy

What action is planned? If the branch is planning to hold a lobby or any kind of protest the press office needs to know so we can tip off the media in advance.

Who is the local contact? The local press will want to speak to people at the branch and it is really important for us to supply them with contact details. Journalists, especially those in television and radio, work to very tight deadlines and need to get hold of people very quickly. It is very helpful, therefore, if we can supply them with the mobile phone number of ideally two people at the branch.

Who is available to speak to the media? Letting us know your availability to speak to the press is essential. There is nothing more frustrating for a local journalist than not being able to get through a branch. This is why again it helps to have two local media contacts.

Bringing the story to life As well as contacts in the branch, we will want people who can bring the story to life. Staff in the threatened departments, students that will be affected and students happy to say that they understand why staff will strike over the issue are ideal case studies for the press.

If you are unsure or have any questions please get in touch with the press office. Our press officers are here to help you:

➔ **Dan Ashley**

Telephone 020 7756 2600 Mobile 07789 518992
Email press@ucu.org.uk

➔ **Vicky Wilks**

Telephone 020 7756 2598 Mobile 07970 383995
Email press@ucu.org.uk

UCU has lots of advice for talking to papers, radio and television on its website. You can read this at www.ucu.org.uk/index.cfm?articleid=2293.

Initial reaction As soon as cuts are announced it is important to have as much up to date information as possible in order to contact MPs.

The very first action would be to let MPs know that something is happening: this may be a brief email just to let them know that they will be receiving more information. Members should note that VCs and college principals will be on the phone and in constant contact with politicians; our job is to make sure politicians get both sides of the story.

Follow-up As soon as possible after the initial announcement, the political team would pull together a briefing based on the information provided by the branch. This would be sent in a cover letter to all MPs who we think would find this relevant. Special attention must be given to the MP(s) where the actual institution falls, even if staff and students live elsewhere. Parliamentary protocol means an MP cannot take up a case for someone outside his or her constituency. This letter can go out in the name of the branch secretary, chair or the UCU political liaison officer. Either way, the letter should be jointly agreed by the branch, the parliamentary team and campaigns to make sure all angles are covered. The letter should seek to set up meetings: these can be in Westminster or in the constituency. The letter should always give the MPs an action to take to demonstrate their support.

Face to face Meetings with MPs should proceed as quickly as possible. The UCU political team will be able to judge what questions MPs will ask based on their records and previous interests: if the meetings are in the constituency, it is worth checking in about this.

Demonstrate support From this point, if there is great support from the MP then an action should be set up in order for them to demonstrate this:

- ➔ an opportunity to address branch/LA meetings
- ➔ an opportunity to record something/write something for the branch blog
- ➔ an alternative vision to sign up to
- ➔ tabling a parliamentary motion.

Not all campaigns will be the same, some politicians will prefer to work 'behind the scenes', others will be happy to shout from platforms. The important thing is to make support public and to make it visible: the method will be different in every area. The VC/principal may not like this. With the above, it is important to judge the political landscape in making support public: if there are three Labour MPs and one Lib Dem, it is not always appropriate to lead with Lib Dem support, for example.

Continued contact Contact should continue throughout the campaign. MPs need to know what is happening at each step. Where ever there is an opportunity for the MP to be seen in public with branch members, we should take this. It lets the MPs show they are supporting and lets constituents know they are involved; it also puts pressure on management knowing that the politicians are on our side.

After the campaign In many campaigns, sustainable links have been built with local politicians and it is very important to maintain these. It is likely branch members will be on first name terms with the MPs and able to ring them up if an issue should crop up again.

Building and keeping good links with your MP(s) is the key to applying real political pressure on your VC or principal.

Appendices

1: Example of general secretary email at opening of a ballot

Dear colleague,

I am writing to invite you to meet me next Monday (22 February) at the UCU General Meeting, Arts A2, 1pm.

I am also writing to ask you to vote yes to taking industrial action in defence of jobs and provision at University X. I ask this of you with a heavy heart. At this time of crisis, staff & management across higher education should be working together to lobby against the most damaging government cuts in a generation.

University X did not create the current national financial crisis, nor of course, is it immune from the recession. However it does have to take full responsibility for the way it is treating its staff in these difficult circumstances.

- University X has proposed to cut 115 jobs across the university in the immediate term and UCU believes that there may very well be more on the way.
- University X has failed to consult or negotiate meaningfully to mitigate redundancy in general and has failed to put forward a single alternative proposal to compulsory redundancy.
- University X has now had UCU's alternative plan, the 'Unique Solution' since before Christmas, yet it refuses to implement this despite the fact that it is a fully viable and constructive way of preventing redundancies.

We have tried to negotiate within the consultation process and we have tried to offer alternatives, but it would appear that the University is committed to implementing its planned redundancies regardless. If the university is allowed to continue in this way, the human cost will be measured not just in the 115 of you who are facing losing your jobs but in every person placed at risk in the next couple of years.

That's why UCU members at University X must act together now.

I know that the your institution has built a world-class reputation on the quality and dedication of its staff. You have a reputation for innovative cross-disciplinary research and programme development which can only be damaged by the kind of cuts being proposed. You also have a reputation for high quality teaching and student support, key for retention figures. As Universities UK - the body representing heads of UK universities - has acknowledged, cuts in staffing will lead inexorably to bigger classes, seminars and lectures. That will be bad for students and for those staff who remain who have to pick up the extra workload.

UCU recognises the difficult economic circumstances now facing universities. That's why we believe it is more important than ever that universities are scrupulous and transparent in planning how they will manage change - the recent intervention by the Visitor Leeds University and previously at Keele University, where due process had been bypassed, demonstrate how necessary this is.

In such a climate, it is vital that universities engage in meaningful and constructive dialogue with the unions. Your branch's 'Unique Solution' makes it abundantly clear that UCU is not opposed to change. But we are absolutely opposed to an industrial relations culture characterised by an attempt to rule by management rule rather than dialogue.

Continues overleaf

I believe that a negotiated solution is possible, and my hope is that your Vice Chancellor takes time to reflect on how to resolve this dispute rather than allowing letters to be issued to staff that sow confusion and create a climate of intimidation across the campus. However, at this stage, a negotiated solution is only possible if we are able to show the union's determination to defend jobs and education. Most of you will have received your ballot papers by now. Every single vote counts, and every vote in support of action strengthens your negotiators' position.

Please use YOUR vote to support the union, to support colleagues and to defend the university that you helped build.

I will be at University X on Monday at the UCU General Meeting at Arts A2, 1pm to answer any questions members have.

If you cannot make that, by all means email me to let me know your views.

Best wishes,

Sally Hunt

UCU general secretary

2: Example of general secretary email *midway* through ballot period

Dear colleague,

I am writing to seek your help. Most of you will have received your ballot papers by now. Please use your vote to support your negotiators' efforts to protect jobs.

The Provost is pressing ahead with a redundancy programme that we believe will cause immense damage to the College, as well as forcing many colleagues out of their posts. A redundancy committee has been set up in Life Sciences to cut twenty academic posts by compulsory means if necessary. A further ten support jobs in Life Sciences, 16 jobs in Registry and 5 more in Arts and Humanities have also been announced. More cuts in other departments are unfortunately being planned.

These cuts are part of a strategy to reduce the operating budget by 6%. Yet the College is in excellent financial health and is forecast to make a 1% surplus ('profit') of £7M this year. There is no deficit and no crisis. So why are there compulsory job cuts?

The effect of these cuts and those not yet announced will be felt by those who remain as well as those who are made redundant. The resultant heavier workloads, larger class sizes, reduced contact time for students and real pressures on academic freedom will pose a serious threat to your institution's deserved international reputation.

So far the Provost refuses to negotiate with UCU to avoid redundancies. As recently as 11 March, we wrote to the College asking for talks. The Provost says he is happy to talk about "the future" but refuses to

Continues opposite

discuss the cuts currently taking place. Yet at other universities such as Leeds and Kent, UCU and management have agreed redundancy avoidance procedures designed to protect jobs and provision. This college is out on a limb in the way it is approaching redundancies and this will have a damaging impact upon staff, students and the reputation of the College.

I know industrial action is an absolute last resort for you and your colleagues, even when jobs are at risk. That is why I will do all in my power – as will your local branch officers – to persuade the College to negotiate so that action is not necessary. I believe that a negotiated solution is still possible. That is why your vote is so important. Every vote counts, and every YES vote strengthens your negotiators' position.

Please use YOUR vote to support the union, to support colleagues and to defend the College that you helped build.

Best wishes,

Sally Hunt

UCU general secretary

3: Strike FAQs and guidelines on picketing

The law is subject to amendment; *always* check the information below with your regional official. If you have a question that is not answered here, please email campaigns@ucu.org.uk. We will do our best to reply to you and/or update the FAQ on the website.

- ➔ What am I expected to do during a strike?
- ➔ Do I have to tell my employer that I am taking strike action?
- ➔ What about my students?
- ➔ Am I breaking my contract by taking strike action?
- ➔ How much money will I lose?
- ➔ How will it affect my pension?
- ➔ What is the law on picketing?
- ➔ I am not a union member. Can I take part in the strike?
- ➔ I am a Research Fellow and fully funded by external bodies but I don't want to cross the picket line. (HE)
- ➔ I am a clinician and a UCU member, and I have clinical commitments on X-day. What can I do? (HE)

What am I expected to do during a strike? Your union will only take strike action once every other avenue of influence

has been exhausted and when your branch officers think there is no other way to make members' views clear. It is a very serious sanction and that's why we ask that every member observes the strike. Every member who does not observe the strike is directly undermining the union's bargaining power and making it harder for the union to protect all its members.

When we call a strike we ask that members do not come into work and do not reschedule their classes. The best possible thing you can do is contact your local rep and volunteer to help out on the picket lines. It isn't illegal, it isn't dangerous and it can be fun.

Do I have to tell my employer that I am taking strike

action? In order to fulfil legal requirements, employers have been provided with statistical information about UCU members taking industrial action, but not individual names. You are under no obligation to inform management in advance as to whether you will be taking part in strike action or action short of a strike. However, if your manager asks you *after* the strike whether you took action, you should answer truthfully.

What about my students? We are a union of professionals and we know that our members don't like taking any action that affects students. It is the same for many public services. However, when we take action, we are generally making a case for greater investment in or defence of the quality of the service we provide. In the case of job cuts, for example, we argue that our students will be hurt far more by management's actions than by our own.

Observing the strike is defending the interests of staff and students alike. Undermining the strike might feel like the right thing in the short term but will only serve to encourage management and we will all suffer more in the longer term. Formally, it is management's responsibility to explain to students if classes are to be cancelled on strike days.

However, you may wish to talk to your students before the strikes explaining why the union is taking this action. We will have a leaflet available explaining to students why we feel it is necessary to take action.

Am I breaking my contract by taking strike action? All effective industrial action may be a breach of your contract of employment. But because UCU has carried out a statutory ballot and the action has been formally called, the law protects workers from dismissal whilst taking part in lawful industrial action or at any time within 12 weeks of the start of the action and, depending on the circumstances, dismissal may also be unfair if it takes place later.

How much money will I lose? You should expect to have a day's salary deducted for taking part in the strike. Some institutions state that 1/260th of your annual salary will be deducted for each day of action. Any loss greater than this may be challenged by the union.

What if I am part time? UCU believe that any deduction must be pro-rata for part time staff. The deduction must only be for your contracted hours. Please contact UCU for support in challenging any greater loss.

How will it affect my pension? In previous one-day strikes it has been the experience of UCU that most university employers do not withhold superannuation contributions and therefore participation in strike action has not generally affected pensions. Also, institutions that do choose to

withhold contributions often make provision for members to make up pension and AVC deficits from their pay. If you are concerned about any effect, contact Geraldine Egan at UCU (gegan@ucu.org.uk).

What is the law on picketing? Peaceful picketing is entirely legal. Picketing should be carried out at or near an entrance or exit from a site at which the pickets work. When others who are not in dispute come into work or use these entrances or exits, pickets must not interfere with them.

The legal categories of people permitted to picket are:

- UCU members in dispute
- former employees who have lost their jobs for reasons connected to the dispute
- UCU officials and NEC members supporting members in dispute, providing they are accompanying union members who work at the location.

Further detailed advice on the picket lines should be issued separately.

I am not a UCU member. Can I take part in the strike?

We would like everyone to respect the picket lines and not go into work, but if you are not a UCU member we will not be able to support you if the college decides to take disciplinary action against you. However, it is your general support that counts—if you can get permission from your line manager to take annual leave or work from home, this would be support.

I am a Research Fellow fully funded by external bodies but I don't want to cross the picket line. (HE) If you are

a UCU member please join the picket line! If you are not, try to arrange to work from home.

I am a clinician and a UCU member, and I have clinical commitments on strike day. What can I do? (HE)

We fully understand that clinical staff including medics and psychologists have professional commitments to provide clinical cover. Clinicians are advised not to withdraw from any commitment to direct clinical care and activities in support of such. Any clinician concerned about the definition of these terms is advised to contact their own professional defence organisation, and ask them to contact the relevant professional body (eg the GMC) on their behalf. UCU will therefore respect this. A clinician who intends to strike should be

aware that this only counts as lawful action as part of the UCU strike and if s/he is a UCU member.

Guidelines on picketing

The point of the picket is to peacefully persuade members not to cross our picket lines ie to not go into work.

Picketing is a legal activity and pickets should wear an armband indicating they are on duty. Placards and posters should be displayed stating 'OFFICIAL PICKET'.

Approaching people All UCU members should be on strike with the exception of members with clinical commitment. You should talk to anyone, a UCU member, work colleague, or member of the public who approaches the picket line. Give them a leaflet and explain the reason for the strike and ask them to support the campaign.

Anyone who decides to cross a picket line must be allowed to do so. But always take the opportunity to talk to them and explain the reasons for the industrial action. Those workers who wish to cross the picket line should be asked not to undertake any duties or responsibilities other than their own ie not to cover for us.

Speaking to non-UCU members If a member of another union, or someone who's not a member of any union, wants to support us by staying away from work, you need to make it clear that if their employers decided to discipline them UCU

wouldn't be able to support them. The individual must then make up their own mind. If they are eligible for UCU membership, their best course of action is to join there and then: they will then have the full protection afforded to any UCU member. Keep membership forms with you for this purpose.

If they do decide they have to go in to work, but would like to support us, then encourage them to come to the X rally – X date and time.

Speaking to students Students are not vulnerable to disciplinary action like staff, so any student who wishes to support us and not cross the picket line should be made welcome. Likewise, any student who wishes to stand near the picket lines should be made welcome, although they would not be legally recognised official pickets (so shouldn't, for example, be allowed to wear an armband).

We will have a leaflet available specifically for students explaining why we feel it is necessary to take this action.

Speaking to people who are not university staff or students You can seek to persuade other workers, not employed at the university or college, not to deliver goods or to enter the work premises, eg post, milk, stationary supplies etc (this is the only form of permitted 'secondary' action).

Mobile numbers of the picket organisers should be available on the day.

4: Strike FAQs and guidelines on picketing

UCU ballot at X institution 200X: dealing with queries FAQs

This guidance refers specifically to the current X ballot.

1 Ballot timetable

- ➔ Opening date of ballot:
- ➔ Closing date of ballot:
- ➔ Ballot result received:

2 Queries about non-receipt of ballot papers

If you receive a query about the non-receipt of a ballot paper please ask the member to wait for 2-3 days after the opening date of the ballot to allow for the post (and any internal mail systems if they usually receive ballots to their work address);

if it has not arrived three days after the opening of the ballot, they should get in touch again and their query will be pursued. (The most common reason for ballot papers not turning up is simply delay in the postal service, which is the reason for not issuing duplicate ballot papers too early in the ballot. If however a member enquires before this date and knows that the paper will not turn up because, for example, they have not notified the membership department of a change of address, the enquiry can be dealt with straight away.) We will have used their stated preferred mailing address, which might be work or home. A member can change this preference if they wish, provided that they give a clear instruction to do so. This request must be passed to

the membership team and the change to that members records will be permanent. Please ask them to email your UCU regional administrator, setting out:

- ➔ their full name
- ➔ the correct postal address for their ballot paper
- ➔ which LA or branch they belong to
- ➔ their membership number (if known)

The RA will carry out the appropriate checks to determine whether a duplicate ballot paper needs to be issued.

A small number of members will not receive ballot papers because they are not included in the ballot. An explanation of which members may not be included is set out below.

Overall ballot questions (eg no-one in my branch seems to have a ballot paper; why have clinical academics been excluded) should be directed to the regional administrator who will pass these on.

Questions about campaigning should go to the regional official or Justine Stephens (jstephens@ucu.org.uk); questions about the dispute itself should go to the regional official.

WHO IS BEING BALLOTTED? (LOCAL DISPUTES)

This is a ballot of UCU members at X to take industrial action, in furtherance of/in defence of X dispute.

If a member contacts UCU to say that they have not received a ballot paper, the points below must be used to check that they are covered by the ballot and that we have their correct mailing address. These checks will be made by a regional administrator. Requests for replacement ballot papers are passed on to Electoral Reform Services (ERS), who deal with sending ballot papers, after the following checks have been carried out to confirm entitlement to vote.

1. Are they a full member?

Only full—ie employed—members can vote (not retired/honorary/attached or student).

2. Are they employed by a relevant institution—associate lecturers etc?

3. Are they excluded for any reason?

A small number of members *may* not be being balloted

(please check with your regional official) including:

- ➔ clinical academics who are former AUT members
- ➔ members who are not directly employed by their institutions, which includes members employed by the MRC, members employed by a university company, by a Students' Union, or any group of members within an LA or branch where these members are *not* employees of the institution concerned.

4. Can new members be balloted?

Members who join the union during the balloting period are entitled to be balloted (so long as there is time to process their membership and dispatch a form from ERS before the ballot closes. Note that members who join during this time but do not make it in time to be balloted are still eligible to take part in industrial action).

Notification of new members are emailed through to branch officers: this information should be passed on immediately to your regional administrator who will endeavour to liaise with ERS to enable the new member to vote in the ballot.

5. Getting a duplicate ballot paper issued

Members' details must be verified before duplicate ballot material is sent—firstly, to ensure that the person making the request is a member properly entitled to vote (see the section above regarding exclusions); and secondly, to make sure anything in the member's record that needs updating is picked up and amended. When the above points have been checked by the RA, names and addresses of members requiring duplicate ballot will be emailed to ERS to issue ballot papers. (If an enquiry is dealt with by a regional administrator and it requires a membership record to be amended, the email should be copied to the membership department, making clear the necessary change.)

Names and addresses for the dispatch of duplicate ballot material will usually be sent to ERS in daily batches. Note that we do not hold ballot papers or election material within UCU's offices, and only the independent scrutineer, Electoral Reform Services (ERS), can dispatch ballot material.

The very last day on which duplicate ballot requests will normally be sent to ERS for processing would be one week prior to the closure of the ballot.

5: GTVO template timetable

Day 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Ballot opens ⇒ Team in place, all department/clusters identified and membership lists distributed
Day 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ All member email to go out urging YES vote ⇒ Email to all reps reminding them to begin door-knocking ⇒ Door-knocking by identified department reps/contacts begins
Day 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Door-knocking continues
Day 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Email letter from General secretary direct to members ⇒ Door-knocking continues ⇒ Ballot team meets to identify initial areas needing more support
Day 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Door-knocking continues ⇒ Request for rep returns by 12pm Friday
Day 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ President/chair all-member email reminding to vote and reminding re EGM ⇒ Ballot team meeting to identify areas where extra support needed
Day 7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ EGM ⇒ Door-knocking continues ⇒ Possible national campaigns and organising team support begins
Day 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Email letter from general secretary to members with urgent reminder ⇒ Door-knocking continues ⇒ Phone banking begins
Day 9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Door-knocking and phone banking
Day 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Door-knocking and phone banking
Day 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Last minute email to members: 'last chance to vote' ⇒ Door-knocking and phone banking
Day 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Last minute door-knocking and phone banking
Day 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Ballot closes 12pm

6: All member example email—'GTV0 preparation'

Dear colleague,

We are emailing to notify you our ballot for industrial action is due to open on X DARE. We are also emailing to ask that on receipt of your ballot, you to vote and to vote yes for (both) strike action (and action short of a strike).

Your ballot paper:

A ballot paper will shortly be arriving, most likely at your workplace, so please check your pigeonholes or your internal mail. If you have not received a ballot paper by X DATE (NB. it is good practice to allow 2-3 working days after the ballot has opened), please email your full details to our office immediately at EMAIL ADDRESS and we will do everything possible to ensure that you get a replacement paper.

Why we are seeking a YES vote:

We have entered a dispute with the college/university because.... (BRIEFLY) insert ISSUE HERE.

We are committed to a negotiated solution and we are doing everything possible to achieve this. However, it is critically important that we are able to show management we are serious in defending members' jobs and defending education at our university.

A clear YES vote for (BOTH) strike action (and action short of a strike) will enable us to say to management that we have our members' support, demonstrate members' feeling and provide us with a full range of options, should we judge that talks are failing and we need to take action. A strong vote for strike action (and action short of a strike) does not mean that we have to take this/these action(s), but it does mean that we *can* take this/these action(s). We believe we have a responsibility to members to be the strongest union we can be and that's why we urge you to vote YES (to BOTH questions).

What YOU can do to help:

Your executive committee will need support from every member in delivering a strong ballot turn-out and yes vote(s). We are seeking volunteers to come forward now who for the two weeks of the ballot can support our 'get the vote out' campaign.

This will involve speaking to members in your department, making sure they have received their ballot papers, keeping and reporting back data collection on localised turn-out to your appointed site contact. If you are willing to take on this small but crucial task for the two weeks of the balloting period, please email: CONTACT

Yours,

X committee, X branch

7: Email to all current dep reps pre ballot (generic)

Dear Departmental rep/contact:

PLEASE READ: IMPORTANT INFO RE BALLOT

I am writing to you to ask for your help during our industrial action ballot. This ballot is absolutely vital for our campaign to defend jobs and education at ----- University/College. We have offered a constructive and viable alternative to the university/college management. However, managers are so far refusing to adopt this alternative solution and refusing to rule out compulsory redundancies. That's what makes this ballot so important. We need to deliver a clear message that shows that members support the union.

I cannot emphasise enough how critical it is to achieve a big turnout in our ballot. Local and national experience shows overwhelmingly that personal contact makes a big difference in building a big turnout. That's why we are asking all reps to help us during the ballot period. The ballot period runs from ---- to -----

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. DOORKNOCKING

We will shortly be sending out to reps a full list of members in their area.

Each list will have names, phone numbers and two columns for recording the results of contact. You can see a mock up of what this will look like in the attached word document.

On the first day of the ballot, we will be asking every rep to begin establishing contact with every member on their list. To help with this, we've provided a short guide to 'door-knocking' at the bottom of this email.

When you have completed each 'contact', please fill in the boxes as per the mock up. If you cannot establish face to face contact, please phone them.

2. REPORTING:

The ballot coordinator and the UCU office will ask for email reports on progress throughout the ballot in order to highlight any areas that look problematic or need more support. This report should be a simple count as follows:

- Number of members in your department (this will be in the list sent to you)
- Number voting (those who state that they have voted)
- Number intending to vote (those who state that they will vote—for follow-up purposes)

3. RETURNS:

On _____ we are asking that all reps return paper or electronic copies of their completed sheets to the UCU Office where the ballot coordinating group will examine them and identify priority areas for the second week of the ballot.

Continues overleaf

4. IMPORTANT NOTE:

This work absolutely must be done, but we do recognise that not everyone will be comfortable with this task. If you feel that you cannot do this, please contact us immediately at [CONTACT DETAILS] to let us know so that we can identify someone else to take it on, for the duration of the ballot.

Please also approach colleagues within your department who may be able to help you as this will help spread the load, but remember to keep a single point of data collection.

A REP'S GUIDE TO DOOR-KNOCKING:

- Introduce yourself and say you are calling on behalf of UCU to make sure that members have received their ballot paper and to see if the members have any queries relating to the ballot'.
- Don't worry if you don't know the answer to their question. Take a note of the query and their details, let them know that you will get back to them and pass all details on to the branch committee.
- If they haven't received a ballot form or have lost their ballot paper, take all their details and pass them on to [AGREED CONTACT]— we will do everything possible to try to get them another form from ERS and but we cannot guarantee this.
- If they ask you to post their form, you may do this, but remind the member that it is a secret ballot and so they must only pass you a sealed envelope. Please pass these on to [AGREED CONTACT] at the end of the day.
- If they ask you how to vote, say that the union recommends that you vote YES to both questions (where applicable).
- You will of course receive the usual concerns re strike action/action short of a strike- particularly in relation to not wanting to hurt students. The key message to get across is that the union wants a negotiated solution but that it needs to show management it is serious and a strong ballot is the best possible backing the negotiators can have.

8: Email for departments where there are no reps/ballot volunteers (generic)

Dear colleague

PLEASE READ: IMPORTANT INFO RE BALLOT

I am writing to you to ask for your help during our industrial action ballot. Your department currently has no representative so we are looking for any volunteers to help us with some vital work during the UCU's ballot period. I would ask you to have a look at the tasks outlined below and if you can help us, please let us know. I would like to emphasise that we are not asking you to volunteer to be a rep. We are only looking for help on this task for the period between ----- and ----- . If you think you can help us, please email [AGREED CONTACT]

This ballot is absolutely vital for our campaign to defend jobs and education at ----- University/

Continues opposite

College. We have offered a constructive and viable alternative to the university/college management. However, managers are so far refusing to adopt this alternative solution and refusing to rule out compulsory redundancies. That's what makes this ballot so important. We need to deliver a clear message that shows that members support the union.

I cannot emphasise enough how critical it is to achieve a big turnout in our ballot. Local and national experience shows overwhelmingly that personal contact makes a big difference in building a big turnout.

That's why we are asking for help during the ballot period. The ballot period runs from -----
to -----(12pm)

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

1. DOORKNOCKING

We will shortly be sending out to reps a full list of members in their area.

Each list will have names, phone numbers and two columns for recording the results of contact. You can see a mock up of what this will look like in the attached word document.

On -----, we will be asking every rep to begin establishing personal contact with every member on their list. To help with this, we've provided a short guide to 'door-knocking' at the bottom of this email.

When you have completed each 'contact', please fill in the boxes as per the mock up. If you cannot establish face to face contact, please phone them.

2. REPORTING:

The ballot coordinator will ask for email reports on progress throughout the ballot in order to highlight any areas that look problematic or need more support. This report should be a simple count as follows:

- Number of members in your department – this will be in the list sent to you)
- Number voting (those who state that they have voted)
- Number intending to vote (those who state that they will vote—for follow-up purposes) –this will be in the notes column

3. RETURNS:

On (day/date), we are asking that all reps return paper or electronic copies of their completed sheets to the UCU Office where the ballot coordinating group will examine them and identify priority areas for the second week of the ballot.

Please also approach colleagues within your department who may be able to help you as this will help spread the load, but remember to keep a single point of data collection.

A GUIDE TO DOOR-KNOCKING:

- Introduce yourself and say you are calling on behalf of UCU to make sure that members have received their ballot paper and to see if the members have any queries relating to the ballot'.
- Don't worry if you don't know they answer to their question. Take a note of the query and their details, let them know that you will get back to them and pass all details on to the branch committee.

Continues overleaf

- If they haven't received a ballot form or have lost their ballot paper, take all their details and pass them on to [AGREED CONTACT] – we will do everything possible to try to get them another form from ERS but we cannot guarantee this.
- If they ask you to post their form, you may do this, but remind the member that it is a secret ballot and so they must only pass you a sealed envelope. Please pass these on to [AGREED CONTACT] at the end of the day.
- If they ask you how to vote, say that the union recommends that you vote YES to both questions (where applicable).
- You will of course receive the usual concerns re strike action/action short of a strike- particularly in relation to not wanting to hurt students. The key message to get across is that the union wants a negotiated solution but that it needs to show management it is serious and a strong ballot is the best possible backing the negotiators can have.

9: GTVO contact sheet

Full name	Department	Phone number	Room number	Email	Voted	Notes
Dr Joseph Bloggs	Department of History	01273 680273	H:171	jbloggs@university.ac.uk	Yes	Strongly in favour
Professor Josephine Bloggs	Department of History	07887 565073	H:23	jbloggs2@university.ac.uk		
Dr Richard Death	Department of History	01892 543576	H:LG01	rdeath@university.ac.uk	No	No ballot paper received

10: Email to dep reps/ballot volunteers immediately prior to ballot opening (generic)

Thank you for volunteering to help us with getting the vote out in our ballot. We would like to invite you to a meeting of our ballot team on _____

In the meantime, however, the role we are asking you to help us with, for the duration of the ballot is as follows:

Your ballot co-ordinator will shortly send you a list of members in your area who we need you to contact

Each list will have names, departments, phone numbers and 2 columns for recording the results of contact.

Continues opposite

As of _____ we are asking you to visit every member on the list.

The aim of this is to establish whether the member has received their ballot paper, has voted, or to encourage them to vote and to establish whether there are any problems (lost ballot paper, don't know the issue etc.)

When you make contact - what shall I say?

- Introduce yourself and say you are calling on behalf of UCU to make sure that members have received their ballot paper and to see if the members have any queries relating to the ballot'.
- Don't worry if you don't know they answer to their question. Take a note of the query and their details, let them know that you will get back to them and pass all details on to the branch committee.
- If they haven't received a ballot form or have lost their ballot paper, take all their details and pass them on to [AGREED CONTACT]. We will do everything possible to try to get them another form from ERS.
- If they ask you to post their form, you may do this, but remind the member that it is a secret ballot and so they must only pass you a sealed envelope.
- If they ask you how to vote, say that the union recommends that you vote YES to both questions (where applicable).

It is generally the case that members do not appreciate being asked how they have voted. It's generally best to respect this, though do make a note of any indications you do get.

• You will of course receive the usual concerns re strike action/action short of a strike—particularly in relation to not wanting to hurt students. The key message to get across is that the union wants a negotiated solution but that it needs to show management it is serious and a strong ballot is the best possible backing the negotiators can have. Alert them to the fact that many ballots have forced management back into serious negotiations and that we really do believe that the best way to avoid having to take action is by having the best possible ballot mandate for our negotiators.

When you have completed a contact:

When you have completed each 'contact', please fill in the boxes as per the form. If you find that upon a return visit you cannot make face to face contact, please phone them. If you KNOW that within the areas you have agreed to cover there are large open plan offices you should set these aside for phone banking. You should aim to get your phone banking done at the same rate as the door to door contacting - i.e. by _____.

At the end of the first week of the ballot, your site ballot coordinator will ask you for your filled in form(s) to be returned. Please ensure you return this form to them by ____ at the very latest, so that we can highlight any areas that look problematic or need more support during the second week of the ballot.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

This work absolutely must be done, but we do recognise that not everyone will be comfortable with this task. If you feel that you cannot do this, please contact us immediately at [AGREED CONTACT] to let us know so that we can identify someone else to take it on, for the duration of the ballot.

11: A brief guide for what your dep reps/ballot volunteers could say (generic)

- ➔ Each door-knocker should open by introducing themselves (where necessary), saying that they are calling on behalf of UCU to make sure that members have received their ballot paper and to see if the members have any queries relating to the ballot.
- ➔ Don't worry if you don't know the answer to their question. Take a note of the query and their details, let them know that you will get back to them and pass all details on to the branch committee.
- ➔ If they haven't received a ballot form or have lost their ballot paper, take all their details and pass them on to your GTVO coordinator who will collate these details and pass them to the appropriate Regional Administrator on a daily basis. The data that will be needed in order to request a replacement ballot paper is: Full name, work or home address (depending on where the majority of your members receive their ballot papers), membership number. UCU will do everything possible to try to get them another form from ERBS but this cannot be guaranteed.
- ➔ If they ask you to post their form, you may do this, but remind the member that it is a secret ballot and so they must only pass you a sealed envelope. Please pass these on to your GTVO coordinator at the end of the day.
- ➔ If they ask you how to vote, say that the union recommends that you vote YES to (both) question(s) (where applicable).
- ➔ You will of course receive the usual concerns re strike action/action short of a strike—particularly in relation to not wanting to hurt students. The key message to get across is that the union wants a negotiated solution but that it needs to show management it is serious and a strong ballot is the best possible backing the negotiators can have.