

Developing a branch website

The proliferation of new software packages, especially those like Wordpress, now make developing a website for your branch a much easier prospect than it used to be.

Branches can easily use WordPress packages to run blog-style websites.

For a UCU branch, a website is a 'shop front' for members and potential members. Your site can show the union in action on local issues.

They can act as newsletters which you link to in your emails, allowing you to write more extended arguments and make cases at greater length.

These are now very simple to write up and maintain—as simple as using Word.

How to get your blog set up

UCU is able to offer the hosting of local branch sites/blogs using the popular WordPress blogging software. This enables branches to have standalone web sites, hosted independently of any web facilities their institution may have, and enabling the option to have a free and hosted site where institutions don't offer this for their campus unions.

You can see examples of UCU branch blogsites and find out how to get your own blog set up here: <http://web.ucu.org.uk>. Here are just a few:

- <http://ucuglasgow.wordpress.com>
- <http://www.leedsucu.org.uk>
- <http://www.ucu.essex.ac.uk>
- <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/ucu>
- <http://bath.web.ucu.org.uk>

Tips for making a good UCU blogsite

Keep it updated! It is absolutely vital to keep your site ticking over. Even if your post simply points members to the next meeting or announces a newsletter, keep it updated. This is far easier with a blogsite than a website.

Things visitors to your blogsite should see

As well as the latest local news update, your visitors should be able to see:

- How potential members can join—you can link to or take text from our general recruitment leaflets
- Make sure you include the online joining link: <https://join.ucu.org.uk>.
- How members can get more involved in the branch: explain what reps do and how important they are, but also encourage people to act as a local contact for the union.
- A list of local representatives and their contact details.
- Who to contact if they have a workplace problem.
- Details of local and national successes - good news stories that show UCU protecting members.
- If you need help or advice on how to do this, contact web@ucu.org.uk.

This factsheet is one of a set that can be downloaded from www.ucu.org.uk/buildtheunion, and also includes: Using email effectively; Newsletters; Organising effective branch meetings; Using consultations and surveys; and Maximising participation in ballots and elections.

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