

General Meeting

Monday 16 April, 1pm – 2pm

Venue: Quaker Meeting House

Agenda

1. Apologies and Chair's business

Please note that Committee recommend that the meeting agree to postpone the formal approval of previous meeting minutes until the AGM in May, owing to the volume of business to progress in this General Meeting

2. UCU Congress 2018

1. Late motions for Congress received (see appendix 1)

1. Unfair treatment of international staff

Leeds UCU Committee

Please note: This motion is currently too long for Congress. Therefore, Committee ask that the meeting consider and agree the following procedure:

1. Vote on the motion as a whole. If passed, it will inform local policy, **AND**
2. Meeting agrees to endorse Committee in making a 150-word version in time for the Congress deadline, which is in keeping with the spirit and aims of the motion + what will fit with the late motion criteria at Congress

2. UCU structures and decision-making: democracy, transparency, and 'plain English'

Leeds UCU Committee

2. Amendments received for Congress motions

1. SFC 13 A.1: Add at end: Congress resolves to organise a Day of Action and Solidarity in all colleges and universities in support of international staff and students (22 words)

Leeds UCU Committee

3. Congress Delegates

3. Local Motions received (see appendix 2)

1. Another University Is Possible

Barry Ewart

2. Solidarity with Open University

Leeds UCU Committee

3. Solidarity with Liverpool University

Leeds UCU Committee

4. International UCU Members on working visas

Laura Loyola Hernandez and Maki Fukuoka

Please note: Leeds UCU Committee endorses this motion as the basis for agenda item 5

5. Metro Annual Travel Card (staff benefits)

Leeds UCU Committee

6. International Postgraduates

Dima Chami, Kelli Zezulka, and Vicky Blake

Please note: Leeds UCU Committee endorses this motion and recommends it be taken under agenda item 4

4. Anti-casualisation Claim + Postgraduate Solidarity

1. Feedback from recent Postgraduate Mega Meeting (including Anticas Roadshow plans)

2. Local Motion 6: International Postgraduates

5. International Staff in UCU

1. Local motion 4: International UCU Members on working visas

6. USS Dispute

1. Strikes

2. What next?

7. AOB

Appendix 1: motions for UCU Congress 2018

Congress Late Motion 1

Unfair treatment of International staff

Congress notes:

1. The recent strike has brought to the fore the differential treatment for University staff members on visas concerning their participation in industrial action.
2. That the right to strike is protected under art. 28 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU.
3. That reporting unauthorised absence before they reach 10 consecutive days is at the discretion of VCs.

Congress believes:

1. That none should fear reprisal for engaging in lawful industrial action.
2. That our Union has a duty to protect the right to strike for all members independently of their immigration status.
3. That staff from EU countries may be impacted by the same provisions under Brexit.

Congress resolves:

- 1) To establish a new position for a UCU International staff representative
- 2) To demand that our universities commit to protect international staff from any implications arising from participation in strike action.
- 3) To lobby political parties for changes in the current Home office regulations and demand the recognition of an 'equal right to strike' for any worker on visa.
- 4) That the emerged issues are brought to the European Court of Justice if no reassurance or change are achieved at the national level.
- 5) To campaign for the elimination of the NHS surcharge which impact on our international staff.
- 6) To achieve clarity for research leave so it does not count towards the 180 days International staff can leave the country.

Proposed by Leeds UCU Committee

Guidance note:

If passed by the meeting, the meeting will be asked to agree that Committee be permitted to draft a 150-word version of this motion (maintaining its spirit and overall aims) in order to meet both:

- 1) Congress motion word limit
- 2) Congress late motion criteria

Congress Late Motion 2

UCU structures + decision-making: democracy, transparency, and ‘plain English’

Congress notes:

1. Membership and engagement in UCU increased during recent industrial action in both sectors.
2. UCU’s strength lies in functioning as a participatory, lay member-led union
3. Recent disputes highlight:
 - a. Current union processes make it difficult for members to engage with decision-making when the state of information available changes quickly
 - b. A need for clarity and transparency where union structures must produce decisions in complex disputes (particularly where external parties may affect dispute outcomes or increase uncertainty)

Congress resolves to:

1. Publicise plain English explanations of UCU’s decision-making structures including special FE and HE conferences
2. Formalise mechanisms to achieve maximal participatory democratic input from members in circumstances where a special Conference is required but 30 days’ notice is impossible, e.g. Branch Delegates Meetings where:
 - a. Branches receive clear guidance on matters for consultation
 - b. Delegates vote on key issues or outputs, including when meetings are ‘indicative’ in rule

Proposed by UCU Committee

Appendix 2: local motions

Local Motion 1

Another University is possible

Leeds University UCU branch calls upon the UCU NEC to appoint a lead person to carry out a ‘**university ethos, governance, and democracy review**’ amongst its membership.”

Such a review we believe should seek the views of grassroots UCU members at each university in the UK on ‘**reclaiming the university.**’

We would then ask the NEC to compile a report from the submissions received that should also include a concrete set of proposals to make up a manifesto for ‘**another university is possible.**’

We finally believe that after circulating the report to branches that each proposal from the report should then be voted upon at UCU annual conference.

Proposed by Barry Ewart

Local Motion 2

Solidarity with Open University

This branch notes the recent expressions of no confidence in their Vice Chancellor by teaching and non-teaching staff at all levels and specialisms at the Open University. The Open University is a unique asset which delivers high-quality degree education as a civil right, not a commodity to be delivered by neoliberal means. We support the OU branch of the UCU in their opposition to:

1. Substandard management
2. Attempts to erode the OU's academic governance structures and academic freedom
3. Proposed massive job cuts.

This branch resolves to make a donation of £200 to the Open University branch of UCU in the event that they take industrial action.

Proposed by Leeds UCU Committee

Local Motion 3

Solidarity with Liverpool University

This branch notes with concern that the University of Liverpool has announced it intends to axe over 200 staff, purportedly to improve the student experience.

We believe that getting rid of over 200 valuable and experienced teaching and research staff is not the best approach to improving the student experience. Investment in staff would be a better way.

We support Liverpool UCU in their fight against these job cuts.

This branch resolves to make a donation of £200 to the University of Liverpool branch of UCU in the event that they take industrial action.

Proposed by Leeds UCU Committee

Local Motion 4

International UCU members on working visas

This branch notes:

1. That the recent industrial dispute over changes to the USS pension scheme, involving 14 non-consecutive days of strike action, has brought to light a very concerning matter regarding the right to strike of international staff on working visa.
2. The high concern that the current Home Office regulations, by requiring the employers to report the number of unauthorised absences and unpaid leave of their international employees, and by allowing only a maximum of the latter for this particular group of workers, hinder substantially the right to strike of international staff, whose residence in the UK (and that of their family members) depends on their visa's sponsorship.

In order to address these issues in the immediate and longer term, this branch resolves:

1. To establish a new position for an International staff representative in the UCU Leeds branch Committee- this formal position should start no later than August 2018.
2. To fund and organise a legal information session about how the recent strikes effect your Tier 2, Tier 4 and Tier 5 visas and to request that HR arranges new targeted sessions in the future given the Home office constant changes in laws and regulations. The current fee requested by the legal expert is £400 and this General Meeting approves this expenditure.
3. To demand that our local HR commits to the protection of our international staff from any implications arising from their participation in past and future strike action, and that staff is kept up to date of any changes in Home Office regulations. Future legal briefings should be funded by our University on equal terms with other groups of migrant staff.
4. To campaign nationally for the elimination of the NHS surcharge which impact also on our international staff.
5. To campaign for more clarity for research leave so it does not count towards the 180 days we can leave the country. Particularly for those whose aim is to apply for leave to remain.

Proposed by Laura Loyola Hernandez and Maki Fukuoka

Seconded by Gabriella Alberti

Endorsed by Leeds UCU Committee

Local Motion 5

Metro Annual Travel Card (staff benefits)

Leeds University UCU Branch notes that the WY Metro Annual Travel card staff discount has been reduced from 15% to 12% this year. The branch agrees to request that Leeds University management makes up the shortfall to match the 15% discount (currently 3%) from May 2018. This branch believes such a move aligns with the University of Leeds Sustainability, Green Impact, Travel Plan and Staff Benefits agendas.

Proposed by Leeds UCU Committee

Local Motion 6

International Postgraduates

This branch notes:

1. International postgraduates are often subject to discrimination in the course of their studies and employment, including (but not limited to):
 - a. Administrative discrimination, which may include the use of racist or condescending language encoded on university forms or in staff-student interactions. For example:
 - i. English language exams despite holding degrees from UK universities
 - ii. Universities' procedures for facilitating (or impeding) UKBA / police control, for example specifically having to register change of addresses etc.)
 - iii. Requiring international students to describe themselves as 'Other' on forms
 - iv. Apparent default assumptions that international postgraduates are incapable of understanding English
 - v. Indignity when being referred to English language resources at PhD level whereas UK/EU students will be afforded the privilege of talking about 'writing styles' etc.
2. International postgraduates are subject to harassment by virtue of the monitoring attendance demanded by the UK government, but this is worsened by local University practice, where there is a disparity between the practices applied when dealing with international postgraduates and home/EU postgraduates.
3. Many staff are also deeply unhappy about the treatment of international students by the UK government, and about how their policies are translated into University procedures

This branch further notes, in relation to industrial action:

1. International postgraduates did not receive specific communications from their academic departments recognising their right to strike, or any guidance regarding restrictions in relation to Tier 2, 4, or 5 visas.
2. International postgraduates in different departments have reported experiencing harassment to record meetings with their academic supervisors during the strike period, completely contravening the respect for international students to be allowed to observe strike action.
3. Many international postgraduates have been left feeling that the University of Leeds is more invested in protecting the University's image than students' wellbeing

This branch calls on Leeds UCU:

1. To work with Leeds University Union to call on the University of Leeds senior management to commit to, and implement respectful, non-discriminatory administrative processes at all levels, for all staff and students, whether they are classed as international or home/EU, regardless of visa status.
2. To call on University of Leeds senior management to take seriously the experiences and complaints of international postgraduates, who make up a significant percentage of the university's postgraduate student and worker communities.
3. To campaign locally, and within national UCU, for recognition of international students' experiences, including the emotional, psychological and above all intellectual well-being of students.
4. To work with national UCU to recognise:
 - a. that postgraduates are often both staff and student
 - b. UCU has the potential to change the narrative around international postgraduates and staff
 - c. UCU must actively present itself as a union for all academics, emphasising that it is not only for UK/EU academics in recruitment and campaigning materials, and guidance for branches
 - d. Taking such proactive steps will enable UCU to grow radically both in number and understanding of the workers it exists to represent

Proposed by Dima Chami, Kelli Zezulka, and Vicky Blake

Endorsed by Leeds UCU Committee