

# University of Birmingham UCU

**General Members Meeting**

**Wednesday, 1 October, 12:30 to 13:30**

# General Members Meeting

## 1<sup>st</sup> October 2025



1. Welcome, 12:30
2. Motion 1: Unite-UCU, 12:35 VOTE
3. Local Negotiations Update, Inviting People to Respond 12:40
  - a) JNCC (Promotion Pathways, Additional Voluntary Contributions for Pensions; Motion 2 in progress: Resisting UoB use of Surveillance to monitor Professional Services Staff
  - b) Harassment and Bullying
  - c) Flexible Working
  - d) NB: Workload and Safety are both part of our local negotiations, but will come later in the agenda
4. Motion 3: Health and Safety Workplace Inspections - Claim / Motion, 12:55 VOTE
5. National Pay and Redundancies Campaign, 13:00
6. Motion 4: BUCU supports BUnison, Mike Moore (Co-Branch Secretary) 13:10 VOTE
7. Workload Working Group and Campaign Update, 13:20
8. Next GMM, 27 October - Call for members to contribute to the agenda; discussion by Ben Pope and Sean Wallis on National Pay and Redundancies Campaign, 13:25
9. AOB

# Motion 1: BUCU Branch calls for resolution of the UCU- UNITE DISPUTE (1/2)

This branch notes:

1. The Unite LE127 branch which represents staff working for UCU has been in dispute over a 'Safe and Professional Workplace' since March 2024, and have taken 26 days of Strike action.
2. This dispute covers a wide range of issues related to health and safety, racism and bullying in the workplace, and the breakdown of industrial relations.
3. UCU staff have experienced a rise in days of sickness absence due to work-related stress and mental health from 123.5 days in 2022 to 912.5 days in 2024.
4. In November 2023 the HSE issued UCU with a Notification of Contravention.
5. During the most recent period of strike action, Unite UCU has reported that UCU edited the out-of-office replies of striking UCU staff to remove reference to the strike, and threatened striking staff with disciplinary action if future auto-replies mention strike participation.
6. During the strike action taken by Unite UCU, the webpage providing advice to UCU members on strike out-of-offices was taken down.
7. UCU's current FAQ on the dispute includes information on multiple ongoing disciplinary cases, which risks prejudicing the outcome of these cases and is not in the spirit of the ACAS guide on discipline and grievances at work.
8. UCU's Rule 29 specifies that the elected UCU National Executive Committee maintains a certain level of oversight in relation to the conditions of employment of staff.
9. UCU Trustees are directly responsible for the assets of UCU and our good standing as an organization

# Motion 1 (continued 2/2)

BUCU believes that:

1. A trade union has an obligation to model good employment practices
2. The work that UCU staff provide to our branches is valuable, and we expect them to have access to the same fair work practices that we fight for as a union.
3. Should our union engage in problematic employment or strike breaking practices, there is the risk that our own employers may observe this behavior and use it against UCU members.

BUCU:

1. Calls on Jo Grady and UCU SMT to enter negotiations with Unite UCU without preconditions.
2. Calls for a stop to the threat of punitive deductions for ASOS –this breaches UCU and TUC policy and only serves to undermine all of us, not least those UCU members currently involved in legal test cases against punitive deductions after taking lawful industrial action.
3. Shares the linked open letter (<https://tinyurl.com/UCUOpenLetter>), which calls on the NEC and UCU Trustees to try to bring about an end to the ongoing dispute, and encourages all branch members to sign it.
4. Encourages members to consider making a donation to the Unite LE127 Strike fund: <https://unite-ucu-strike-fund.raiselysite.com/>
5. Agrees that Unite UCU can publish the list of the branch committees that have signed up to this request.

# Vote

- Yes: 100%
- No
- Abstain

# Local negotiations update

## 1. JNCC

- a) Promotion Pathways
- b) Additional Voluntary Contributions for Pensions
- c) Motion 2 in progress: Resisting UoB use of Surveillance to monitor Professional Services Staff

## 2. Harassment and Bullying

## 3. Flexible Working

4. NB: Workload and Safety are both part of our local negotiations, but will come later in the agenda

# Motion 2: Process for Responding to Reported Health and Safety Hazards (1/2)

BUCU notes:

1. The University has statutory duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977.
2. The University must provide a healthy and safe working environment and consult meaningfully with trade unions.
3. Currently, there is no clear or effective process for addressing hazards identified by the union, especially where management practices cause risk. This gap undermines compliance and staff wellbeing.

BUCU inspections have highlighted hazards including:

1. Bullying, harassment, and intimidation.
2. Excessive workload and long hours.
3. Work-related stress and mental health impacts.
4. Without a defined process for escalation and resolution, hazards remain unaddressed, exposing staff to harm and the University to legal liability.

# Motion 2 (continued 2/2)

BUCU resolves:

1. To call on the University to establish and publish a clear process for responding to hazards reported by unions.
2. To require management acknowledgment within five working days.
3. To call on the University to engage in cooperative work with the trade unions to resolve reported hazards: for example, a joint investigation (union and management representatives) must begin within ten working days, with findings shared in writing.
4. To call on the university, in the event of a confirmed hazard, to agree a written action plan with the unions when including timescales for implementation and monitoring.
5. To call on the University to encourage staff to raise health & safety concerns and to make an explicit statement of protection from any form of detriment, in line with UK law and University policy.



# Vote

- Yes: 100%
- No
- Abstain

# National Pay and Redundancies Campaign

# Motion 3: BUCU supports BUnison

This branch notes:

1. That colleagues in the University of Birmingham's UNISON branch—representing support staff at the university—have voted to take strike action over their pay and conditions
2. That to support its members taking this action, the UNISON branch will provide top-ups to their national strike pay, covering members who lose more than £50 through strike pay deductions.
3. That the leaders of the UNISON branch have requested our support in their action.

This branch believes:

1. That struggles against overwork and stress, and for fair pay and conditions, are shared ones that unite both our unions. An injury to one is an injury to all.
2. That the university relies on all workers regardless of grade or role, and that we together share a collective endeavour in the provision of research and higher education as a public good.

This branch resolves:

1. To donate £500 from our brunch funds to the UNISON branch strike fund.

# Vote

- Yes: 100%
- No
- Abstain

# Workload Working Group and Campaign

- We have had two meetings so far for the Academic Staff Working Group.
- We are in the process of negotiating a second Workload Working Group for Professional Services staff.
- At the second meeting in late September, we discussed TRAC. Inconsistencies between the the Colleges in terms of points assigned to leadership roles was acknowledgment. Currently, there is room for devolved autonomy in School-specific activities.
- BUCU questioned the disconnect between TRAC and the actual workload allocation and whether the increase in student numbers is reflected in the workload allocation. BUCU also highlighted the importance of having management principles to safeguard fairness, transparency and the right to dispute workloads at the local level. BUCU also asked that HSE management standards be considered.
- For the next meeting, it was agreed that the College-level frameworks of workload allocations would be shared with the BUCU representatives.

# Next General Members Meeting

- Monday, 27 October, 12:30 to 13:30
- Call for members to contribute to the agenda
- Discussion by nationally elected negotiators Ben Pope and Sean Wallis on National Pay and Redundancies Campaign

AOB