

BRANCH RULES

1. BRANCH NAME

The Branch shall be “(The Birmingham University”) Branch of UNISON.

2. RELATIONSHIP TO NATIONAL ORGANISATION

- a) Branch rules shall be in accordance with National rules, decisions of the Annual Delegate Conference and the NEC.
- b) Any member may have a copy of the current Rule Book
- c) The Branch shall make an audited annual return of Branch income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the NEC and in accordance with National Rules.

3. AIMS OF THE BRANCH

The aims of the Branch shall be in accordance with the aims and values of UNISON as set out in the Rule Book

4. MEMBERSHIP

- a) Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of the Union
- b) The Branch aims specifically to encourage membership (and the holding of office in the Union) within underrepresented and hard to reach groups such as young people, ethnic minorities, and those in precarious and casualised work.
- c) Applications for membership take effect from the date at which completed forms are received by the Branch or at Regional/National level and the first contribution is made.
- d) A meeting of the Branch or Branch Committee may decide not to support a membership application but such a decision must be consistent with the Rules and with Statute. Such a decision must be explained to the individual in writing, together with their rights of appeal.
- e) All members must comply with the Rules
- f) The NEC may terminate an individual’s membership in accordance with the Rules

5. BRANCH STRUCTURE

- a) There will be an Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Branch to elect Branch Officers and members of the Branch Committee
- b) Other general meetings may be called by the Branch Committee or by 20 members of the Branch or 5% of the membership, whichever is the greater
- c) The AGM will determine the basis of representation in the Branch and the number of Stewards to be elected in each work group or workplace

6. BRANCH OFFICERS

- a) The Branch shall elect the following Officers annually:
 - i. Branch Chairperson
 - ii. Branch Secretary
 - iii. Treasurer
 - iv. Labour Link Officer
 - v. Communication Officer
 - vi. Education Officer

- vii. Equality Officer(s)
 - viii. Welfare Officer
 - ix. Health & Safety Officer
 - x. Environmental Officer
 - xi. Others to be determined as necessary for the effective operation of the Branch
- b) All roles can be shared if the officers so wish
 - c) Branch Officers may be nominated by the Branch Committee or any two members, with the exception of the Labour Link Officer who must be a member of the Labour Party and elected by Labour Link members only
 - d) All nominations must be received in writing prior to the AGM
 - e) Each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw prior to the AGM.
 - f) If there is more than one candidate a vote will be held.
 - g) The vote may be conducted by a show of hands or by a ballot
 - h) In the event of a ballot, official papers will be supplied and each member of the Branch shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each post to be filled.
 - i) Arrangements may be made for a postal ballot if appropriate.

7. BRANCH COMMITTEE

- a) Representation on the Branch Committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:
 - Branch Officers
 - Representatives of self-organised groups
 - One or more Stewards from each work group or workplace
- b) The Branch Committee shall administer Branch business in accordance with the National Rules and guidance. To do this, the committee shall:
 - i. Meet to discuss and vote on issues no less than 6 times per year
 - ii. Meet in person, online or a combination of the two to allow as many members to access the meeting as possible
 - iii. In urgent cases, decide on matters without meeting using online decision making tools (subject to adequate notice and all votes receiving a quorate number of votes)
 - iv. Approve the co-option of officers to vacant committee roles, subject to approval at the next branch meeting
- c) Accessibility to committee meetings will be supported through the selection of appropriate venues for in-person meetings and by support, training and the provision of equipment as required for online meetings
- d) The quorum for the Branch Committee shall be 33% (one third) of the members of the committee
- e) The Branch Committee will establish arrangements for representation of members and any difficulties will be referred to the Regional Organiser in the first instance.
- f) Any member may attend the branch committee to participate in discussions and observe (but not vote)

8. CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

- a) All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner.
- b) All meetings should be advertised widely as far in advance as possible.
- c) The procedure to be used at the meeting should be explained clearly.
- d) The quorum for Branch meetings shall be 40 members.

- e) When a Branch meeting is not quorate it will be designated an Extraordinary Executive Committee Meeting. Exceptions to this will be the AGM and any meeting where voting on changes to pay, terms and conditions are required.
- f) The Branch Secretary and Branch Chair (or next most senior branch officers should these posts be vacant) decide on the appropriateness of holding either a formal virtual or a traditional meeting.
- g) Accessibility to branch meetings will be supported through the selection of appropriate venues for in-person meetings and by support, training and the provision of equipment as required for online meetings
- h) Meeting invitations for both virtual and in person meetings, along with an agenda and relevant meeting papers, will be sent to invitees in advance of any meeting (except in cases of genuine emergency where this is not possible)
- i) Branches must maintain records of meetings, financial records, books of accounts and other appropriate records to enable the Branch to function

9. MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Communications to the media on behalf of the Branch shall be made only by Officer(s) authorised by the Branch Committee

10. AFFILIATIONS

- a) Affiliations to relevant constituency Labour Parties will be decided by APF membership.
- b) This branch shall be affiliated to Birmingham Trades Union Council (BTUC)
- c) Affiliations to other external bodies which support UNISON aims and objectives may be agreed at the AGM or any other branch meeting

11. FINANCE

- a) The Branch shall keep a Unity Trust Bank account in the name of the Branch and will maintain a financial record of all assets and transactions in accordance with UNISON guidelines
- b) Any honorarium paid to a branch officer will only be made in accordance with the Scheme for Honoraria Payments in Branches contained in the Branch Finances Handbook. Honoraria, if recommended by the committee, must be authorised at the Annual General Meeting.

12. DONATIONS

- a) Donations shall be agreed by the AGM or Branch Committee in accordance with the Union's policies and objectives and subject to provisions of National Rules.

13. EXPENSES

- a) Rates of expenses for members attending meetings on behalf of the Branch shall be in line with the Scheme for Branch Expenses contained within the Branch Finance Handbook and subject to the approval of the AGM.

14. BRANCH STAFF

- a) A staffing subcommittee consisting of the chair, secretary and treasurer will be responsible for the employment, direction and supervision of any staff employed by the branch consistent with employment law and current good practice. Day to day supervision of any employed staff will fall to the branch secretary.

- b) In the event of any first stage hearings of staff disciplinary or grievance matters, the branch secretary will be joined by another senior branch officer other than the branch chair.
- c) Any appeal arising from a first stage grievance or disciplinary hearing will be heard by the branch chair and other senior branch officers not involved at the first stage hearing.
- d) The outcome of any disciplinary or grievance hearing will remain confidential and the outcome only will be reported to the branch committee on its conclusion.

15. APPROVAL/ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES

- a) Branch Rules must be agreed by 66 % (two thirds) of members present and voting at a quorate Branch meeting.
- b) Branch Rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON's procedures.
- c) Any changes to Branch Rules must be agreed and approved in the same way