

Delegates' report on UCU Congress 2026

Congress 2026 was hybrid, Weds 27 to Fri 29 May, with the in-person arm held in Harrogate, West Yorkshire. Around 300 delegates attended in all, about 2/3 from HE, with the greatest attendance on the first two days.

UCL UCU is entitled to eight delegates, but had only four this time: Danielle Lamb, Alex Mabanta, Nalini Vittal, and Bella Vivat, with two other UCL UCU members: Victoria Showunmi and Sean Wallis attending as national delegates. Danni, Nalini, and Bella are all members of the UCL UCU Executive Committee, as are Victoria and Sean. Alex is a doctoral student and recent member.

Our delegates attended in a mixture of online and in-person, and could not attend every session. However, all four attended on the first two days, and two on the third (both online).

Congress Day One is for joint business: debates on Education Committee or Equality Committee Motions, or changes to Rules. Day Two is for 'sector conferences': FE (FESC) and HE (HESC). Day 3 returns to joint business, with debates on strategy, recruitment, or other campaigns.

See <https://www.ucu.org.uk/Congress26> <https://www.ucu.org.uk/media/15762/UCU2220.pdf>

UCL UCU submitted Motions to both overall Congress and HESC. All of these have been debated and approved by members over the academic year. Your delegation duly voted as you instructed.

Our branch motions were numbered at Congress 2026 as follows (HE refers to HESC):

1: Valuing post-16 Education (by National Executive Committee (NEC))

Amendment 1A.11 by UCL UCU, asking to link 'wages not weapons' campaign. Carried.
Motion carried as amended.

7: Resisting Earned Settlement proposals (by UCL UCU)

Amendment 7.A.1: to delete last point 'd' on signing a statement. Carried.
Motion carried as amended.

HE13 USS pension Composite motion by UCL UCU and others: Against Conditional Indexation.

Taken 'in parts': Lost the first two resolutions (to actively resist CI).

Amendment HE 13A.1 (UCL UCU and others): to call a dispute if employers impose CI.
Carried.

HE13 without first two points as amended. Carried.

HE21 Serious political campaign to defend HE.

Amendments 21A.1: to specify modern languages and other 'at risk' subjects, and 21A.2: widen campaign to non-teaching categories of staff and post-16 education. All Amendments carried, and Motion as amended.

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Our delegates spoke for our Motions and Amendments as above, and supported or opposed Amendments and/or other Motions, where relevant, supporting other Motions or Amendments in line with existing UCL UCU branch policy:

<https://ucl-ucu.org.uk/about/branch-policy/>

Congress cannot debate all Motions and Amendments. This year, for lack of time, several Motions were referred back to central UCU mechanisms, such as the Higher Education Committee. However, all UCL UCU Motions and Amendments were debated live, and did not experience any such delay.

Congress also held elections to national posts, conducted by secret ballot. Sean Wallis was re-elected as a national HE negotiator. All results and a fuller Congress report listing the vote count are available on the UCU website: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/Congress26#Elections>

Congress is a wonderful opportunity to connect with colleagues from other branches, some of whom, e.g. Nottingham, shared their experiences of fighting repeated, large-scale staff cuts. Learning from colleagues about what has worked, what hasn't, and how we can support them, is a really valuable part of Congress.

We hope we will again have a full delegation at next Congress in 2027. We encourage UCL UCU members to volunteer to attend next year, so that you can meet fellow UCU members from across the UK, directly influence national policy, engage in democratic decision-making, and represent the views of our branch colleagues.