

Agreed by resolution of the Annual General Meeting held on 29 January 2004, as amended by resolution of the Annual General Meeting held on 04 March 2019.

1. NAME

1.1 There shall be a higher education branch of UNISON – the Public Service Union¹ (hereinafter referred to as “the Union”) established at SOAS University of London² (“the School”).

1.2 The Branch shall be known by the name SOAS UNISON (hereinafter referred to as “the Branch”).

1.3 The Branch will maintain an office at the School’s registered address³ for the time being, subject to agreement on facilities.

2. OBJECTS

2.1 The Branch shall pursue the aims contained in the Union Rulebook, support the objectives agreed by the National Executive Committee and give effect, as far as may be practicable, to the targets set through annual assessment.

2.2 The Branch shall organise and recruit workers for the purpose of improving the effectiveness and extending the influence of members within the workplace, the Union and wider society.

2.3 The Branch has responsibility to carry out collective bargaining. It shall co-operate with all other trade unions organised at the School to encourage a workable and effective arrangement for good industrial relations, for the avoidance of misunderstanding and for the promotion of joint action in all matters of common interest.

2.4 The Branch shall perform such other duties and engage in such other business and campaigning as a trade union may reasonably undertake.

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of the Union and is restricted to employees, or former employees, of SOAS University of London, SOAS Students’ Union, the School’s subsidiary undertakings, and the School’s contractors on site.

3.2 The branch committee or general meeting may decline to support an application for membership, but this must be consistent with the Rules of the Union and with statute. Any such decision must be explained to the individual in writing, together with their rights of appeal.

3.3 Only full members shall be entitled to vote on issues relating to the pay and conditions of members in employment.

¹ UNISON – the Public Service Union is listed as a trade union with the Certification Officer, pursuant to sections 2-4 and 123-125 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

² SOAS University of London is a chartered higher education institution, charity and corporate body.

³ Registered address is SOAS University of London, 10 Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square, London WC1H 0XG.

3.4 Members dismissed by the School, made redundant or undertaking a course of education who notify the Secretary within six months may acquire unemployed membership for up to two years. Such members are not entitled to stand for office.

3.5 A member with at least two years' continuous membership immediately prior to their retirement from employment may apply at any time for retired membership provided they are in receipt of a pension.

3.6. It is the obligation of the member to ensure that the correct subscription is paid to the Union on the date it is due. Any person in three months' arrears of subscription shall cease to be a member.

4 BRANCH STRUCTURE

4.1 There will be an annual general meeting (AGM) to confirm the election of members of the branch committee, to receive the statement of accounts and to appoint auditors. The AGM may, as determined by the branch committee, comprise one meeting or a series of aggregate meetings based on sections or geographical areas in order to maximise the active participation of members.

4.2. The AGM will determine the basis of representation in the Branch and the number of stewards and other representatives to be elected in each work group or workplace.

4.3 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. A general meeting may comprise a single meeting or aggregate meetings based on sections or geographical areas.

4.4. The quorum for any general meeting, including the AGM, is 20% of the membership of the Branch either at a single meeting or through aggregate meetings.

4.5 The Branch may take a decision by means of a branch-wide electronic and/or postal ballot outside of general meetings, at the discretion of the branch committee within the rules of the Union.

4.6 The branch committee will comprise all Branch officers and workplace representatives, and will be responsible for the general organisation and development of the Branch and for policy and decision making on all matters affecting members between general meetings.

4.7 Sections will be established for each bargaining group and workgroup covered by the Branch to provide for the active participation and representation of members in accordance with Rule 8.

4.8 The Branch recognises self-organised groups of traditionally under represented members. Each group may nominate a representative to the branch committee and determine delegations to the relevant conference. See Rule 6.7

5 REPRESENTATION

5.1 The branch shall elect the following officers annually in accordance with Rule 6:

- Chair
- Secretary

- Treasurer
- Membership Officer
- Communications Officer
- Welfare Officer
- Education & Life-Long Learning Officer
- Health & Safety Officer
- International Officer
- Equality & Diversity Officer
- Women's Officer*
- Black Members' Officer*
- LGBT+ Members' Officer*
- Disabled Members' Officer*
- Young Members' Officer* (must be under 27 years of age for whole of term)
- Political Officer (Labour Link) (elected by the members who pay the APF political levy only)
- Others to be determined as necessary for the effective operation of the Branch.

* See Rule 6.7

5.2 Sections shall elect stewards and other workplace representatives annually in accordance with Rule 6, noting that the nomination must be by any two members employed in that section and only members employed in the relevant section may participate in the election.

5.3. Delegates to regional council, service group committee, national delegate and service group conferences will be elected annually at the AGM with regard to proportionality in accordance with Rule 6. In the event of a delegate being unable attend a meeting or conference, the branch committee may appoint a substitute.

6. ELECTIONS

6.1 Candidates may be nominated by the branch committee or any two members (proposer and seconder), with the exception of the Political Officer (Labour Link) who will be a member of the Labour party nominated by Affiliated Political Fund (APF) paying members only, and stewards and other workplace representatives who will be nominated by members employed in their section only.

6.2 Nominations will be invited at least four weeks before the AGM and nomination procedures circulated to members. All nominations must be received by the Secretary in writing at least one week before the AGM or section meeting.

6.3 Each nominee will be notified and given the right to withdraw not later than twenty-four hours before the AGM or section meeting.

6.4 If there is more than one candidate for a branch officer or delegate position, then an election will be conducted via secret ballot of members entitled to vote at the AGM.

6.5 All other elections of branch officers and delegates will be conducted by show of hands of members entitled to vote at the AGM.

6.6 Stewards and other workplace representatives shall be elected at a general meeting or electronic ballot of members employed in the relevant section or by a vote of only members employed in the relevant section held during the Branch-wide AGM. The manner of election for each section will be at the discretion of the branch committee. Elections for workplace representatives held outside the AGM must be reported to the Branch AGM for endorsement and ratification.

6.7 Branch officer positions of Women's Officer, Black Members' Officer, Disabled Members' Officer, LGBT+ Members' Officer, and Young Members' Officer shall be elected annually at general meetings or ballots of the relevant self-organised group or young members' group in the Branch. If the relevant self-organised group or a young members' group is not established in the Branch then these positions shall be elected annually at the Branch AGM by a vote of all Branch members.

6.8 Where no valid nomination has been received before the deadline nominations may be called for from the floor of the relevant meeting.

6.9 Vacancies may be filled by co-option by the branch committee, subject to ratification at the following general meeting.

6.10 All posts shall be open to job share. Job sharers each have voice and vote, but count jointly for the purposes of Rule 7.3.

7. BRANCH COMMITTEE

7.1 The branch committee shall administer Branch affairs in accordance with the current Code of Good Branch Practice.

7.2 The branch committee will normally meet at least once a month and no fewer than 10 times a year.

7.3 The quorum for the branch committee shall be one third of the members of the committee set out in Rule 5.1 (excluding vacant positions). Decisions taken while inquorate are subject to ratification by electronic mail within seven days.

7.4 The branch committee will establish arrangements for the individual representation of members and shall ensure that all sections within the Branch are appropriately and equitably resourced for effective organisation and campaigning on behalf of members.

7.5 Ad hoc or permanent sub-committees may be established within the parameters of the decisions and guidance issued by the branch committee.

7.6 The branch committee may elect to take decisions in-between meetings by means of an electronic ballot of committee members.

8. SECTIONS

8.1 Sections of members based on workgroups or geographical locations will be determined annually by the branch committee as deemed necessary for the effective operation of the Branch.

8.1 Sections comprise all members within the relevant bargaining group and will have autonomy within the Branch in respect of collective bargaining with their employer only, subject to the policies and procedures of the Branch, Region and national Union.

9. CONDUCT

9.1 All meetings will be conducted in a fair and democratic manner and in accordance with prescribed Standing Orders.

9.2 Meetings shall be advertised widely as far in advance as possible. In the case of the AGM, all members will be notified in writing at least four weeks in advance.

9.3 The Secretary will retain copies of the agenda and minutes of all meetings and other appropriate records to enable the Branch to function

9.4 Communications on behalf of the Branch shall be made only by officers or members authorised by the branch committee.

9.5 Members are expected to treat each other with tolerance at all times. The Branch is made up of workers from a complex and diverse range of social, cultural, religious and political backgrounds and it is essential that members respect this in their dealings with one another. It is particularly important that accredited representatives set an example in this.

9.6 The Branch expects its members to behave with dignity and respect when representing the Union at external events or with any third party and that they should abide by the policy and Rules of the Union whenever they act on its behalf

10 FINANCE

10.1 The Branch shall keep proper accounting records with respect to its transactions and its assets and liabilities and will establish and maintain a satisfactory system of control of its accounting records, its cash holdings and all its receipts and remittances, pursuant to Section 28 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

10.2 Funds shall be held in a designated bank account in line with the rules and relevant guidance issued by the Union. Any two of the Treasurer, Chair or Secretary shall be mandated to sign.

10.3 All expenditure, save for that incurred under Rule 12.2, shall be subject to approval of the branch committee.

10.4 The Branch shall elect two honorary auditors at the AGM to ensure the accounts represent a true and fair view. Auditors may not be members of the branch committee although they may attend ex officio any meeting at which the accounts are discussed.

10.5 The financial statement presented to the AGM shall be in the form of an income and expenditure account and a consolidated balance sheet. The Branch shall not publish any accounts that are not audited.

10.6 The Branch shall make an annual return of its income, expenditure, assets and liabilities as prescribed by the NEC and in accordance with the Rules of the Union.

11 AFFILIATIONS

11.1 Affiliations to constituency Labour parties will be decided by the APF membership. General committee delegates must be individual members of the party and live in the relevant constituency.

11.2 Affiliations to trades councils shall be determined by the branch committee or general meeting. Delegates must live or work in the relevant district or borough.

11.3 Donations or other affiliations shall be agreed by the branch committee or a general meeting in accordance with the Union's policies and objectives and subject to provisions of national rule. The branch committee may only approve donations up to a maximum value of £250 without seeking wider branch agreement.

12. EXPENSES

12.1 The Branch shall ensure that no member is debarred or deterred from trade union activity as a result of financial considerations.

12.2 Rates of expenses for attending meetings, training or carrying out other business on behalf of the Branch shall be agreed by the AGM in accordance with the Scheme for Branch Expenses contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

12.3 Any honorarium paid to a member of the branch committee will only be made in accordance with the Scheme for Honoraria Payments in Branches contained in the Branch Finances Handbook.

13. EMPLOYEES

13.1 The Secretary will be responsible for the employment, direction and supervision of any staff employed by the Branch consistent with employment law and current good practice.

13.2 In the event of any first stage hearings of staff disciplinary or grievance matters, the Secretary will be joined by another senior Branch officer other than the Chair.

13.3 Any appeal arising from a first stage grievance or disciplinary hearing will be heard by the Chair and other senior Branch officers not involved at the first stage hearing.

13.4 The contents of any disciplinary or grievance hearing will remain confidential and the outcome only will be reported to the branch committee on its conclusion.

14 AMENDMENT & INTERPRETATION

14.1 Any alteration to these Rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate general meeting.

14.2 The Greater London Region has responsibility to sanction the Constitution. The Branch shall notify the regional committee of any amendment to the Rules in reasonable time.

14.3 Nothing contained herein shall be inconsistent with the Rules of the Union or Region as amended and currently in force.

STANDING ORDERS OF SOAS UNISON BRANCH (made for the regulation of meetings, proceedings and business)

A. Order of business

A1 In the absence of the Chair the members shall elect a Chair pro tempore.

A2 The minutes of the previous meeting will be submitted for approval as a true and accurate record. Objections should only be based on accuracy and not on disagreement with the decisions that were made.

A3 There will be an opportunity to discuss matters arising from the minutes that are not covered by other agenda items. This is not to be regarded as an invitation to continue debate on issues that have been decided or to try and reverse decisions.

B. Motions and amendments

B1 Motions for the agenda may be submitted by the branch committee or any two members (mover and seconder) not less than three days before a general meeting or by any two officers or stewards not less than twenty-four hours before a meeting of the branch committee.

B2 The branch committee shall consider all motions submitted and rule whether they are competent under the Branch Rules.

B3 Emergency motions must relate to matters which have arisen after the deadline and may only be admitted to the agenda with the consent of the meeting.

Order of debate

B4 When an amendment to a motion is moved, no further amendment may be moved until the first one is decided upon.

B5 When an amendment is defeated, a further amendment may be moved to the original motion.

B6 When an amendment is carried, the motion, as so amended, shall become the substantive motion, to which a further amendment may be moved.

B7 A member shall not move more than one amendment to any one motion, nor shall the mover of a motion move any amendment to such motion.

Procedural motions

B8 It may be moved at any time that the question be now put or that the debate be adjourned and the meeting proceed to the next business.

B9 The Chair may advise the meeting not to accept a procedural motion if in his or her opinion the matter has not been sufficiently discussed.

Order of voting

B10 The mover of a motion, including the mover of an amendment which has become the substantive motion, shall have the right of reply. The reply shall be confined to answering the previous speakers and no new matter may be introduced. After the reply the motion shall be put to the vote. The mover of an amendment shall have no right of reply.

B11 Voting shall be by show of hands and a count shall be taken if, in the opinion of the Chair, this is necessary.

B12 The Chair shall have both a deliberative and a casting vote.

C. Points of order

C1 A member may at any stage raise a point of order if he or she considers that the business is not being conducted in accordance with the Branch Rules and Standing Orders.

C2 Any point of order must be raised as soon as the alleged breach occurs or at the earliest practicable moment thereafter.

C3 The Chair's ruling on a point of order is final.

D Mode of address

D1 Members wishing to speak should so indicate and, when called, address the Chair stating their name and any office they may represent.

D2 All questions should be put to the Chair who may ask that a reply be given by the most appropriate officer.

E. Authority

E1 The ruling of the Chair on any question relating to these guidelines shall be final unless, on being challenged by at least ten members, two thirds of those present vote to the contrary.

E2 The Chair shall have the power, with the consent of the meeting, to vary the order of the agenda or introduce additional items if circumstances warrant.

E3 These Standing Orders may be reviewed annually by the branch committee.