

BRANCH STANDARDS

Branch organisation and branch life are essential to allow for membership participation, democracy and a sense of ownership of the union and for growing Unite.

A vibrant branch life in the union will increase participation with members having a direct influence over decision making thereby making the branch, and through the branch the wider union, directly relevant to them.

Strong membership participation in branches that are organising branches, with a focus on equalities, will ensure that members are active in the community beyond the workplace, particularly in the political life of the community, assisting in building Unite across Britain and Ireland.

Branches that are democratic hubs and are well administered will qualify for branch administration funds to be remitted from the union (10 per cent of membership income less deductions for the central strike fund and to cover for employer check-off charges where applied). Branch administration will be remitted if Unite branches satisfy the following criteria:

1. The branch must meet all rulebook requirements regarding regularity of meetings (which should be properly notified to all members) which must include at least an AGM and the election of branch officers, which under Rule include:
 - chair
 - secretary
 - treasurer
 - equalities officer
2. Other than where the Rule Book allows for a branch secretary to also hold the office of treasurer, members should not usually hold more than one branch officer position.
3. The branch must ensure that elections for the above positions are carried out fairly and democratically. The branch must comply with instructions from regional office to hold such elections triennially at the appropriate point in the calendar and to hold by-elections as necessary.

4. Proper financial records must be maintained, which includes non-audited accounts returned quarterly and audited accounts returned annually to the regional office of the union; branches should ensure that it elects auditors, usually at the same time as its branch officers.
5. Branches must conduct regular membership audits so that membership records may be maintained up to date via the branch secretaries' portal or, in the case of a branch having no computer access, by close liaison with the Regional Office.
6. In cases of grievance and discipline it is an aspiration of the union that branches would take responsibility to provide representation including at appeal hearings; however, it is recognised that many branches will not, at the moment, be able to provide that service.
7. The branch must commit to the campaign for 100 per cent union membership in the workplace(s) which it covers, and must assist, either with full time officials/organisers or on its own initiative, in developing union organisation on "greenfield" sites where and when appropriate in accordance with agreed targets and strategies.
8. Branches have an obligation to promote equal opportunities and tolerance inside and outside the workplace and take action to stamp out sexism, racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination.
9. The branch should play a part in the broader labour movement locally, including affiliating to the local Trades Council where there is one and, where sought by branch member(s) who is/are member(s) of the Labour Party, to the local Constituency Labour Party (in accordance with Rule 22) where branch representation on the CLP GC will be taken on by a branch member, in line with Party rules. Further branches should support shop stewards' combine committees where appropriate and give support to community and retired members' branches.
10. The branch must be conscious of Unite policy on industrial and political issues at all times and must not use union resources, including use of the logo, to publicly campaign against union policy.