

BUCU Committee Guidelines and Procedures 2024-25

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Introduction

These Guidelines and Procedures lay out how the BUCU committee should conduct business under the amended branch rules as adopted at our 2019 AGM. The aim is to frame collective decision making of the branch committee and to help make decision making fair and democratic. The underlying principles of these guidelines are openness and accountability.

The BUCU committee is elected to represent all members of the union and should seek to have representation from the different constituent parts of the membership in terms of contractual status, faculties and protected / minority characteristics.

Content & scope of the guidance

This guidance is the product of consultation and suggestions made by committee members who volunteered to draft this document. It covers four main areas:

- i. procedures for reaching committee and branch decisions;
- ii. guidelines for communications within the committee and committee organising;
- iii. guidelines for communicating with members on a regular basis;
- iv. conduct during industrial action by other campus unions.

The major principles underlying these guidelines and procedures are the following:

- promote *attendance, active participation, and healthy debate* in all meetings;
- address points raised in a *respectable and timely* fashion;
- build towards *consensus* as far as possible;
- reduce *confusion, tension, and misunderstanding*;
- respect *work-life balance* (including union work) and *facilitate asynchronous discussion*;
- be considerate of others' *needs and capacities*.

The following majority rules are used at several points in this document:

- A **simple majority** requires >50% of votes cast.
- An **absolute majority** requires >50% of voters.
- A **supermajority** requires $\geq 2/3$ of voters.

General conduct

BUCU committee members have an equal standing on the committee and business should be conducted in a constructive and respectful manner where everybody can speak freely.

All committee members have an obligation to abide by the Rules of the University and College Union, and shall refrain from;

- conduct detrimental to the interests of the Union,
- any breach of these guidelines, BUCU Rules, Standing Orders or directions (properly made in accordance with these Rules or Standing Orders)
- all forms of harassment, prejudice and unfair discrimination whether on the grounds of sex, race, ethnic or national origin, religion, colour, class, caring responsibilities, marital status, sexuality, disability, age, or other status or personal characteristic.

Members of the committee should be courteous to each other in their communications and interactions being mindful of the variety of political views held within the committee and the constraints on time to fulfil a role within the meagre time allowed under the facilities time agreement.

There is no expectation that committee members should undertake work for the union outside of their normal working hours.

What is unacceptable behaviour?

Harassment occurs when an individual is subjected to unwanted conduct which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual.

Bullying is offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour: an abuse or misuse of power through means intended to undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient.

(These definitions are taken from the AoC-joint union agreement on harassment and bullying. The definition of harassment is also the statutory definition.)

The description of unacceptable behaviour which the committee has agreed covers harassing and bullying behaviour, is behaviour which:

1. Is threatening, intimidating or verbally abusive;
2. Is discriminatory—including ageist, disablist, homophobic, racist, sexist and transphobic language;
3. Is derogatory or malicious;
4. Makes unsubstantiated allegations about others;
5. Makes inflammatory statements;
6. Prevents other UCU members from participating in the business of the branch.

It is the collective responsibility of all committee members to call out inappropriate behaviour and ensure that the committee business is conducted in accordance with these guidelines and the union rules. This can be done at the point in the meeting where this occurs or can later be brought to the attention of the Branch Secretary or Branch Administrator. See appendix 5 'Procedure for complaints internal to the committee'.

Procedures for reaching committee and branch decisions

Decisions of BUCU are made at three levels:

- by general members;
- by the BUCU committee;
- by individual branch officers.

The General Members Meeting is the supreme decision making body of the branch and the BUCU committee is answerable to those meetings.

Any member of the branch can propose a motion to a GMM and if requested a committee member must assist them in preparing the motion and sending it to the branch secretary 72 hours before the meeting.

The BUCU Committee will bring branch resolutions to our members on all major negotiating decisions of the branch so that we can keep our members informed and engaged, and so that our branch negotiators have the support and legitimacy of the wider branch behind them.

In practice, not all decisions can be put to general members, such as decisions on the day-to-day running of the branch, and not all of these decisions will need to be approved by the full BUCU committee; for example, if it falls wholly within an officer's portfolio. However all officers and members of the committee are answerable to the committee where all members have an equal vote. Decisions of the committee over-rule those made by individual officers or committee members.

Committee meetings

In accordance with the branch rules the committee shall meet at least once a term and not less than once every four months. However, given the size of BUCU it is likely that a meeting once a fortnight during term time will be preferable and then as the committee sees necessary outside of term time. We may occasionally want to call an irregular meeting, as per [branch rule 7.2](#):

*“If presented with a written request signed by half of the members of the committee, the Chair / President must call a meeting of the committee to take place **not later than 5 working days** following the day on which that written request is received.”*

Such a meeting can be called sooner than 5 working days if there is an **absolute majority** on the committee wanting to do so, however, to encourage attendance and participation in these meetings, we should aim to have **at least 3 working days** notice before such a meeting, unless there are pressing issues that need to be dealt with and cannot wait.

The schedule for regular committee and general members meetings will be set out in the first meeting of the new committee each year. To promote attendance and trust, regular meeting times and locations must only be changed by a **supermajority** of the committee.

Agendas

It is the duty of the branch secretaries to draft agendas ahead of meetings so that committee members can adequately prepare. For this to take place, committee members should submit all major discussion points and proposals **at least 1 working day** prior to a committee meeting, i.e. noon on the working day before the meeting. If a proposal has an accompanying document, this should be shared via Google Drive and should *not* be amended after submission.

The branch secretary is the *only* person allowed to 'block' a proposal and should do so only where it breaches the branch rules or this committee guidance document. Where a proposal is blocked, the secretary should give an explanation and add the proposal as a priority item at the next committee meeting.

An example agenda is provided in appendix 1.

Chairing

Committee meetings should be chaired by the branch secretaries in the first instance, notwithstanding the branch rules, or the branch chair/President or other officers or committee members if the secretaries are unable to attend.

The timing of each agenda point depends on which items are deferred at the start or during the meeting. It is the duty of the secretary (or the committee member chairing the meeting) to prepare

indicative timings for each agenda point before a meeting and to keep participants to time during a meeting.

All participants are responsible for refraining from inappropriate or unwanted behaviour, to minimise interruptions, going off topic or dominating conversation. In such an event, it is the responsibility of the secretary (or the committee member chairing the meeting) to intervene on behalf of the meeting. To do so, the branch secretaries are invited to familiarise themselves with the [UCU 'Running formal meetings' guidance](#). For additional advice secretaries can also consult the [Seeds for Change guide on 'facilitating meetings'](#).

Online meetings

Where the committee decides to hold a virtual committee meeting via an online platform this should be conducted in line with the guidance laid out above. It is likely that an online meeting will require more careful facilitation and the chair of the meeting may need to make use of mute options and ask for attendees to raise their hands or indicate when they want to speak.

Committee Decisions

As per [branch rule 7.1](#), decisions at committee meetings are reached by a **simple majority** when the meetings are **quorate (1/3rd of committee present)**. It is good practice for decisions to be made on the basis of a clear and succinct written motion, which has been shared in advance of the meeting (**at least 3 working days** is best practice). However, we acknowledge that this is not always possible, and on occasion the need for making decisions arises within the meeting itself. On such occasions, the Chair will endeavour to ensure as much clarity and specificity about the decision being taken as possible, and the decision should be recorded in the minutes as a motion which has passed.

Branch motions can take the form of being either 'Committee Motions' or 'General Members Motions':

- 'Committee Motions' are those which direct the day to day work of committee members, or are more 'administrative' in nature (e.g. suggest amendments to committee processes).
- 'General Members Motions' are those which either affirm or alter the more general position of the branch on certain matters.

It is good practice for any 'General Members Motions' that arise from committee members to be ratified at a committee meeting before submission to a GMM - whilst also noting that any member, including members of the committee, can submit a motion to a GMM at any time. Any proposed branch resolutions to be approved at subsequent general members meetings should, as best practice, be shared with the full committee **at least 3 working days** prior to the committee meeting and then shared with all members 1 working day prior to a general members meeting.

Whether a particular motion is better suited as a 'Committee Motion' or 'General Members Motion' is subjective, and there may be political considerations at play (e.g. passing a motion in a GMM may make it 'stronger'). If there is disagreement about whether a motion should be regarded as a 'Committee Motion' or a 'General Members Motion', then a vote (**simple majority**) should be taken.

In line with the guiding principles, the committee should also attempt to build towards consensus as far as possible, and take steps to ensure that all members of the committee are able to be involved in the decision making processes. For major decisions relating to outstanding disputes, industrial action, terms and conditions of our members, the committee should normally look to bring such

issues to members in a general members meeting. Such issues may be brought on behalf of the committee where there has been a **quorate vote**, or by individual members of the committee in accordance with [branch rule 13.3](#), which also states that all motions for a branch meeting “should be submitted to the Secretary and communicated to members in advance of the meeting.”

For ongoing business the committee can make decisions asynchronously via Google Chat (1st preference) and/or email & WhatsApp. For a formal committee decision to be binding the branch committee should allow **at least 3 working days** for the vote and make all committee members aware of the vote via Google Chat, WhatsApp, and email. The poll can close early if an **absolute majority** is achieved. Where committee members are proceeding with existing business, such approval will not be necessary. All online decisions must be listed in the Committee Meeting chat to be put on the agenda of the next committee meeting for ratification and minuting. Where committee members are proceeding with existing business, such approval will not be necessary.

General members meetings (GMM)

Agendas

GMMs are held monthly and follow a similar format to committee meetings. Points are very brief and should refer members to the [website](#) and to recent BUCU Update emails (sorted by date). To avoid running over 50 minutes, the committee must prioritise which items go to a GMM monthly. For example:

1. Secretary’s report (welcome and introduction of agenda points) [5 minutes];
2. Chair/President’s report (a report of ongoing disputes and negotiations, limited to what needs to be shared before we can discuss ways of moving forward) [5 minutes];
3. Proposals and resolutions [30 minutes, including: x3 comments on current situation; discussion of proposed way forward; amendments of resolution; vote];
4. Campaign announcements and upcoming dates [10 minutes].

Items under point 3 must be submitted to the branch secretaries **at least 3 working days** prior to a GMM, and shared with members **at least 1 working day** before the meeting, in order that the full membership can be made aware of important upcoming decisions.

For general guidance on the conduct of members meetings, see the [standing orders \(appendix 1\) of the branch rules](#).

Procedure for dealing with motions from members to General Members Meeting

The way that motions are written and what they ask for is crucial to their success in being passed. When a member submits a motion for a General Members Meeting it is the committee’s duty to assist the member in presenting it in a way that optimises the potential for it to be passed. The motion should be:

- **Structured:** to include background information, opinion and resolutions called for
- **Clear:** avoiding jargon and detailing what action is required and who will undertake the work
- **Concise:** keeping to a maximum of 500 words where possible, using bullet point style information

When a motion is presented by a member it should be circulated in its initial draft to the committee and a call out should be made for a committee member to work with the member to review the motion if necessary.

The committee member should:

- offer assistance in redrafting the motion in accordance with the branch motion template, the member can elect to forward the motion as it stands;
- not seek to alter the political aim / spirit of the motion;
- ensure the motion is clear in what is being asked of who;
- run through the process of presenting and speaking at the meeting;
- encourage the member to make a commitment to being part of any team to carry out work required.




Chairing

In accordance with the branch rules, it is the responsibility of the branch Chair / President to chair general members meetings.

Decisions

Decisions in GMMs are reached by a **simple majority** when the meetings are **quorate (at least 5% of membership or 25 members, whichever is smaller)**, as set out in the [standing orders \(appendix 1\)](#). Any motion to make changes to the Branch Rules requires a 2/3s supermajority

Online / hybrid meetings

We will use the university zoom accounts to host online meetings, or to host online participants to hybrid meetings. Members can use the Raise Hand feature in zoom to raise points of order or information. When voting using zoom, a green tick  will indicate a vote FOR a motion, a red cross  will indicate a vote AGAINST a motion, and a cup  will indicate ABSTAINING from the vote; other reactions and non-reactions will indicate an abstention. Variations of these reactions may be used for proposals with more options. After each vote, the host (usually chair/president and/or secretaries) should clear reactions to avoid confusion over what members are voting on.

Guidelines for communications within the committee and committee organising

Keeping up to date with everything is impossible. Yet we are required to reach collective decisions in meetings and sometimes asynchronously. Circulating information in advance and through brief, accessible sources, can help overcome this problem as can careful management of our communication platforms.

It should generally be the duty of the secretaries to keep the committee updated on outstanding topics of discussion and committee decisions, but it is also our collective duty as committee members to communicate in a way that facilitates good decision-making.

To help maintain a healthy work-life balance (including union work), it is advisable to use the Do Not Disturb features available on [Android phones](#) or [iPhones](#). There is no expectation to respond to messages immediately outside of normal working hours. WhatsApp groups can also be [muted](#), which might be useful during periods of extended leave.

Using Google Chat for discussions

Google Chat is the primary communication platform for committee business. We organise our discussions using separate spaces, listed below. Those in **bold** are spaces where everyone on the committee should be a member.

- Anti-casualisation issues: this is the space for discussion of casualisation issues, including the PGRs (post-graduate researchers) as staff campaign, and should be managed by the anti-casualisation officer.
- **BUCU Committee Main Space**: this is the main space for general-purpose discussions that do not fit into other spaces.
- **Committee meetings**: this is the space to discuss timings and agenda for committee meetings. Online votes should be taken and recorded in this chat.
- **Equalities Area**: this is the space for discussion of equality issues, which cuts across our industrial disputes, and should be managed by the equality officer.
- Get The Vote Out: this is the space for current and upcoming Get-The-Vote-Out campaigns (i.e. balloting for industrial action).
- **Industrial action space**: this is the space for current and upcoming industrial action.
- **JNCC planning zone**: this is the space for discussing upcoming Joint Negotiating and Consultative Committee (JNCC),
- **Member updates**: this is the space to discuss items for weekly member emails.
- Social Media: this is the space for social media posts and should be managed by the communications officer.

The secretaries should be space managers for every space; if you are not a member of any of these groups and should be / want to be, please contact the secretaries. The secretary should also remove members from all spaces once they have left the committee.

For major disagreements, members are encouraged to bring the discussion to the next committee or members meeting and not to try to fully resolve it via spaces if the discussion is becoming unproductive, excessively long, and/or there are no clear proposals. Members should be reminded to keep to all conversations comradely and supportive and where necessary space managers should remove any abusive content.

To streamline discussion, replies to a particular message (e.g. the proposed agenda for an upcoming meeting) should be made [in thread](#), and any links shared should be accompanied with a short justification of its relevance to that space / discussion.

The committee may take a decision online where it is not practical to wait until the next committee meeting, or where a routine decision just needs to be documented (e.g. approval of a small item of non-controversial expenditure). Such committee decisions should only be made in the **BUCU Committee Main Space** and are subject to the committee decisions guidelines discussed above.

Using Google Drive for documents

The committee has a [shared Google Drive](#) that should be accessible to all; please contact the secretaries if you have issues accessing it. The branch secretaries endeavour to keep this drive up-to-date and as tidy as possible, with all documents and resources of shared interest as well as to facilitate access. Sensitive membership data should always be password protected. Officers may wish to use a particular folder for work within their remit.

All documents that the committee needs to use should be placed within the shared drive, *not* on your personal drive; this is to ensure there is a standard place to find documents rather than trying to find documents through our assorted communication channels. Proposals brought to the committee

should be shared with the secretaries **at least 1 working day** before a meeting, and should *not* be amended after submission.

If a document is a draft, it should be marked as such by appending “DRAFT” in the filename. If the authors are leading the work on a particular document / proposal, they may wish to restrict access to only accept comments from others instead of allowing direct editing. Once the document is finalised, the “DRAFT” can be removed from the filename and share access should be reinstated for all committee members; we trust that our committee members are responsible adults, and Google Chat stores multiple versions of files should we need to restore older versions.

When posting a link to a Google document in a Google Chat space, you will be presented with options to share that link with the space; this is the quickest method of sharing documents with the committee.

Using WhatsApp

The BUCU Committee WhatsApp group is intended for online votes, notifications, brief and/or urgent messages (e.g. “What is the meeting link?”, “What time are we meeting today?”), and directing people to google chat but not long-form discussions; if conversations become too involved, it is our collective responsibility to redirect that discussion towards the appropriate Google Chat space. There is no expectation on committee members to catch-up on WhatsApp after a period of leave. Important messages from Google Chat should be cross-posted to our WhatsApp group, directing discussions towards Google Chat.

Using email

The committee mailing list (committee@birminghamucu.org) is used to send draft meeting agendas and members’ updates, as well as forward communications with management and other emails of interest. As with WhatsApp, we should direct most discussion of these items towards Google Chat.,

Guidelines for communicating with members on a regular basis

There are four main channels for communicating with members on a regular basis:

1. Emails: ‘BUCU Updates’ & ‘BUCU Negotiations’
2. BUCU website
3. Social Media
4. WhatsApp

Commissioning communications and proposals to members

General communications with members should normally be circulated in the following forms:

- BUCU Updates emails
- BUCU website
- Social media
- WhatsApp

With the exception of emergency resolutions, any proposed resolutions from members should normally be submitted to the branch Secretary **at least 3 working days** prior to the next general members meeting. In accordance with the branch rules, all such resolutions should be circulated with members **at least 1 working day** in advance of the general members meeting.

Regular announcements or proposals to be circulated via the BUCU Updates emails should be sent to the branch secretary (via the Members Updates space), while website posts or suggestions for social media should be sent to the communications officer(s) (via the Social Media space). The branch secretary should commission regular all member BUCU Update emails, at least once per committee meeting (i.e. fortnightly during term time).

For any communications with members via the BUCU members mailing lists, the full text should be posted or linked to on the Members Updates / Social Media space, and cross-posted to WhatsApp and the committee mailing list. These posts need to be submitted **at least 1 working day** before the scheduled email. Any committee member can **veto** by posting in the Members Updates / Social Media spaces and/or WhatsApp/email. After a veto, the email is treated as a committee decision and is then bound by the normal requirements for approving a committee decision as laid out in prior sections.

BUCU Update mailing list

'BUCU Updates' is a regular, integrated and official source of information about local and national union affairs signed-off by the BUCU committee. It is administered by the branch secretaries using a shared 'MailChimp' account.

The content is selected for relevance to BUCU members. Sections should be brief (max. 200 words each) and populated with links to external content such as BUCU social media, press articles, official UCU announcements, resources, policies, and 'Branch Action Notes' (BANs). Extended content should be written up for the website and not included in the content of the email unless absolutely necessary. The secretary will set a deadline of **2 working days** prior to sending for submissions from committee members, with a further deadline of **1 working day** for suggested edits on received submissions, to enable ample time to compile them into an update.

An example BUCU Update template is provided in appendix 2.

BUCU Negotiations

BUCU Negotiations emails should be topic-specific emails with the specific issues highlighted in the subject title (for example 'BUCU Negotiations—College workload models'). These should give local updates on negotiations with university management, and highlight major or important updates, changes, or consultations that members need to be aware of. These emails may be university-wide or targeted at specific areas of the university where staff are affected by local issues.

These should normally be drafted by the branch chair / president or negotiation team, and be sent on behalf of the BUCU committee.

BUCU Website

The BUCU website is administered by the communication officer, with the assistance of the branch secretary who will ensure that necessary branch matters are recorded and publicised through the website. The website is also used to publicise pieces contributing to a wider conversation on workplace issues, including opinion pieces by committee members, branch members, sister unions, and notable figures in the labour movement. It is a useful platform for more in-depth content, and links to the website can ensure that regular members' emails are kept concise.

Social Media

The social media officer oversees the use of social media and web profiles on behalf of the branch ([rule 8.13](#)); if this post is unfilled the committee must decide which member(s) should fill this role. This includes managing and administrating the branch's Facebook profile, page and group; twitter account; and WhatsApp group. All members are invited and encouraged to engage with BUCU's online presence by producing and sharing content as well as engaging BUCU in conversation with other union branches.

Appendix 1—Example Agenda

This is an indicative agenda for a normal committee meeting lasting an hour and a half:

1. Secretary's report (welcome, introduction of agenda points and selection of items to defer to the next meeting) [5 minutes]
2. Chair/President's report (a report of negotiation meetings, limited to what needs to be shared before we can discuss ways of moving forward) [5 minutes]
3. Casework report [5 minutes]
4. Other officer reports, e.g. pensions officer [5 minutes]
5. An item of extraordinary importance (e.g. an emergency resolution) or proposals relating directly to officer reports [10 minutes]
6. Ongoing disputes [15-20 minutes]
7. Proposals [10 minutes]
8. Ongoing campaigns (over which we are not in local dispute) [15-20 minutes]
 - a. Equality
 - b. Casualisation
 - c. Health and Safety
9. AOB
10. Upcoming dates

Appendix 2—Example BUCU Update template

BUCU Updates are dated and distributed to all BUCU members using a set template with distinct sections:

1. A summary of the email in short one line bullet points with hyperlinks to external content;
2. Important dates and deadlines in the union calendar (e.g. meetings, ballots, consultations);
3. A brief summary paragraph of local UCU affairs (if necessary);
4. A digest of ongoing campaigns and local branch updates (e.g. pay, casualisation, equality, workloads, health and safety);
5. Recent UCU success stories and external content (e.g. petitions);
6. A list of UCU training currently on offer;
7. Committee signature
8. Links to BUCU web and social media profiles, contacts for assistance and how the committee work info

Mailchimp view:

Birmingham UCU
The University of Birmingham Branch of UCU



BUCU Update #21

30 May 2019

In this week's update:

- Next branch meeting;
- [Living wage event with MP Liam Byrne \(Today, 12:30pm\)](#);
- [Our University campus protest event \(5th June, 12:30pm\)](#);
- [UNISON strike ballot](#);
- [CoSS workload indicative ballot](#);
- [Dr Jo Grady elected UCU General Secretary](#);
- [Branch delegates' report from UCU Congress](#);
- [Pensions update](#);
- [UoB Dubai update](#).

Appendix 3—UCU equalities policy on conduct of members

- UCU Equality Groups Conference 2019, 'Conference: Expectations of members' conduct': [UCU equality group conferences 2024 - Expectations of members' conduct](#)
- UCU, 'Rule 13: Procedure for the Regulation of the Conduct of Members' (June 2022): [Rule 13: Complaints procedure for possible disciplinary offences](#)

Appendix 4—BUCU Guidelines on Disability-related Lexicon

1. UCU officially follows the social model of disability – a perspective on disability (oppression) developed and pushed for, collectively, by the Disabled People’s Movement in the UK since the 1970s. It is also considered a ‘tool’ for transforming society & many other unions in the UK have officially adopted it. The social model (which itself has been changed over time, becoming an umbrella model – but that might be a discussion for another time) takes a collective perspective on disability politics and posits that there is a distinction between an impairment, chronic illness, etc and ‘disability’ – the latter being the result of oppression and exploitation in current capitalist societies. So, a person with an impairment is disabled by society.
2. We should avoid the use of terms/expressions such as ‘this is mental/crazy/mad/lame/dumb’, ‘they are a bit autistic’, ‘management were blind to...’, ‘there are blindspots in X policy’, a policy is ‘idiotic’, something has fallen on ‘deaf ears’, ‘their silence is deafening’, ‘crippled by’, ‘they’re acting bipolar’, ‘this is OCD’, ‘confined to a wheelchair’, and so on. These are the oppressors’ terms that reproduce the disablist idea that certain mental distress-, chronic illness, impairments, deafness and so on are defects and negative aspects of a person.
3. Seek to use the term ‘disabled person’ as a default, unless a person has chosen to use a particular term (i.e. experiencing mental distress, being neurodivergent, chronically ill, deaf or Deaf, having an impairment, or if they use a particular diagnosis).
4. The (often employer-driven, but not only) idea that we need to value the ‘advantages’ that neurodivergent people bring to the workplace has disablist undertones due to it creating a hierarchy of impairments/neurodivergence manifestations according to perceived productivity levels. Also, not all features of an Autistic person, for instance, will be perceived by employers as a ‘strength’ – so that kind of talk of strengths has the effect of creating divisions between groups of workers. Also, this kind of talk seeks to set neurodivergent people apart from the larger community of disabled people, and it also portrays them as not needing reasonable adjustments etc.
5. Try to get into the habit (which does take time) of anticipating other people’s experiences and accessibility requirements when you’re organising/pushing for something. This habit can become seamless over time, once you’ve increased your anticipation strategies more and more. For instance (just as a very simple example), you can go to your Zoom settings to enable (once and for all) the setting that enables live captioning. This way, you know for sure that if/whenever someone needs to display captions, they can do so because you’ve offered that option.
6. Use the term ‘neurodivergent people’ rather than ‘neurodiverse people’ – neurodiversity is a very general term about how society overall is ‘diverse’ in terms of neurotypes – and, for instance, we don’t say that a woman is ‘gender-diverse’ (we also don’t say she’s gender-divergent, but the term neurodivergent has reached most collective consensus among Autistic, ADHD, Dyslexic, Dyspraxis people and others).
7. ‘Disabilities’ (as a plural of ‘disability’) has no meaning other than to reproduce the oppressors’ idea that there is such a thing as a countable ‘disability’ (AKA something deficient that needs to be fixed, to integrate them into society) within a person’s body/mind. Using the term ‘disabilities’ leads to a collapsing of the social model’s distinction between

impairment/chronic illness/mental distress/deafness (i.e. a feature of a person) and disability (a form of oppression).

8. 'People with disabilities' (from the perspective of the social model), equally, has no meaning – other than to be oppressive and serve the state/professionals/etc's agenda of identifying a 'problem' within a person that the former then have authority to 'fix' (or to push the individual to 'fix themselves') as a condition for social integration. Worth also adding that 'people with disabilities' is generally a term that is quite popular in the US, though in the UK, most people and institutions that seek to take the collective perspective of the Disabled People's Movement seriously, do not use the term 'people with disabilities'.
9. It is the case that many (more or less) problematic terms are often used by members themselves or by management etc – and, within certain contexts, it might feel easier to just repeat the language of the member, in relation to themselves or others. However, as trade unionists / collectivists, and subscribers to the Social Model of disability, it is our job to educate others and to avoid repeating harmful/depoliticising/meaningless/confusing discourses that can have material consequences for disabled people in general, and also in our particular workplace. It doesn't mean that we need to antagonistically 'police' people's language, but it's important to develop the skill of making alternative suggestions.
10. In terms of 'ableism' vs 'disablism' – the former term has become so prevalent everywhere over the past ~5 years that it almost feels odd to stress its problematic assumptions, from a political and trade union perspective because it's so popular (even UCU nationally use it in their documents).
 - a. In short, 'ableism' assumes that discrimination takes place because disabled people 'lack ability'.
 - b. 'Disablism', a term used for decades but that has somehow lost its grip due to other liberal models being developed recently, stresses the injustice that disabled people are subjected to – similar to racism, cisheterosexism, etc.
 - c. I never use the term 'ableism' (and many others don't either), but can understand why one might just use it nowadays by default as a way of 'fitting in' with the general discourse.
 - d. If you're interested in delving a bit deeper into this, I recommend this blog post by a disability studies scholar: <https://stillmyrevolution.org/2013/01/01/disablism-or-ableism/>
 - e. In terms of 'disablement' (which I've included in the title of this Officer role) – whilst disablism is an action or assumption that is discriminatory, disablement is a wider process of oppression/exploitation.
 - f. The term for people who are not disabled is 'non-disabled people' – and not 'able-bodied people'.

Adopted by the BUCU committee, 20 November 2023

Appendix 5—Procedure for complaints internal to the committee.

BUCU Committee shall where possible resolve disputes between committee members and deal with inappropriate behaviour through mediation where it is appropriate.

Complaints internal to the committee are issues that arise from;

- the conduct of committee members during a committee meeting of general members meeting;
- breach of the guidelines and procedures during discussions of union business formal or informal, in person or online;
- conduct in a union social.

Procedure for complaints

1. Where ever possible, inappropriate behaviour should be challenged at the point it occurs. The chair should stop the business to hear the complaint and, if necessary, a vote of the committee should be taken to determine a) was the behaviour inappropriate / a breach of the guidelines, and b) an acceptable resolution, so that business can resume. However it is accepted that whilst the behaviour may be curtailed during a meeting there may be underlying issues that the offended party may wish to take up further.
2. The details of the complaint should be set out in writing or verbally to the Branch Secretary or Branch Administrator to act as the mediator
3. The mediator should present the complaint to the other party and record their initial response
4. The initial response should be relayed to the complainant to see if that resolves the matter.
5. If necessary a mediation meeting should be offered for which there is no obligation to attend. Follow on mediation meetings may be needed where all issues are not satisfactorily resolved at once.
6. If the matter is resolved the mediator may propose training to be undertaken, action to avoid reoccurrence of the inappropriate behaviour or provide a short report to the committee.
7. If the matter is unresolved the mediator should report back to committee and the matter could then move to UCUs Rule 13 complaints procedure.

This procedure should not be used where a potential criminal offence has been committed and does not have any impact on a member's right to take a complaint under Rule 13.