

2024 National Higher Education Conference Bulletin

July 2023

Conference Team
 Ruth Smith (policy)
 Josie Irwin (standing orders)

020 7121 5123
 020 7121 5601
 020 7121 5355

This bulletin contains the timetable and information for
2024 National Higher Education Service Group Conference.
 Please note that both motions and delegations can only be submitted online.
 There are no paper forms.

The 2024 National Higher Education Service Group Conference will be held at the Leonardo Hotel, from 9:30am until 5pm on Thursday 1st February 2024

Leonardo Hotel Milton Keynes
 Midsummer Boulevard
 Milton Keynes, MK9 2HP
 England
Tel: 01908 843700

Web: <https://www.leonardohotels.co.uk/hotels/milton-keynes/>

Timetable

	Time	Dates
Deadline for Submission of Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 12 October 2023
Publication of Preliminary Agenda		Thursday, 02 November 2023
Deadline for Submission of Delegates on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 09 November 2023
Deadline for babysitting and crèche requests on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 23 November 2023
Deadline for reasonable adjustment requests for access on the OCS	4:00pm	Thursday, 23 November 2023
Deadline for Amendments to Motions on the OCS	12:00pm	Thursday, 07 December 2023
Publication of Final Agenda		Thursday, 04 January 2024
Deadline for reasonable adjustment requests for travel	12:00pm	Thursday, 18 January 2024
Deadline for Submission of Emergency Motions on the OCS	10:00am	Thursday, 25 January 2024
Deadline for Submitting Change of Delegates on the OCS	11:59pm	Monday, 29 January 2024

This bulletin and other documents are available for download on the website at <https://www.unison.org.uk/events/2024-nhec>

There are NO paper forms for motion or delegation submission. You must use the Online Conference System (OCS) instead. See next section for full information.

Information on how to submit motions and delegations using UNISON's Online Conference System (OCS)

Which branch officers can use the OCS? Motions and delegations can be submitted at branch level by either the Branch Secretary or Branch Chair. The non submitting branch officer will receive e-mail copies of the motion or delegation submission as soon as it is submitted. Branch employed staff will also be able to enter motions but will not have authority to submit them on behalf of a branch. At regional level, the regional head of the service group will be authorised to submit the motion/delegation, with the chair of the regional committee receiving an instant e-mail copy. This process is replicated at national level for national bodies and their relevant chairs and secretaries.

Which members can use the OCS? When a member is registered as a delegate to a conference, they will receive an e-mail informing them of this as long as their e-mail address is listed on the RMS. They can then access the OCS to upload a photograph, make online requests for services such as reasonable adjustments and crèche places, which should be made by the deadline stated.

How will these people access the OCS? Users access the OCS via the UNISON website at www.unison.org.uk and clicking on 'My UNISON' - which is located at the top of the front page. Using your UNISON membership number and surname, register once and you will be issued with a password. For subsequent access, simply click on 'My UNISON' and then 'Sign-in now' and you will need your membership number and the password you were issued. Branch employed staff should call their regional contact.

What if the correct branch people have accessed 'My UNISON' but then cannot access the OCS? Key to accessing the OCS is ensuring that the data held on UNISON's membership system, the RMS, is correct. It records which members hold the key positions of Branch Secretary and Branch Chair. If this information is incorrect, or if it changes, the branch needs to ensure that the RMS records are updated immediately. Then the individual should call their regional contact.

What else needs to happen? It will help the system to function if these key branch people also have an e-mail address stored on their RMS records. Please contact your branch or regional RMS team urgently, to make this happen. Each delegate within a delegation should also have their date of birth stored on the RMS.

Delegates to Conference: It is important that we collect e-mail addresses for those members wishing to participate in any way in the conference. The e-mail address can be any one that you have easy access to e.g. your personal e-mail, branch e-mail or that of a friend or relative.

- If you already have an e-mail address and access to the UNISON website, the quickest way to update your details is to go to the UNISON website and click 'My UNISON' – you will need your UNISON membership number.
- If you don't have an e-mail address or don't have access to the UNISON webpage, you can contact UNISONdirect on 0800 0857 857 and provide them with the details of your preferred e-mail address to update your UNISON Membership records – you will need your UNISON membership number.
- Or, you can contact your local UNISON branch and provide them with the details of your preferred e-mail address to update your UNISON membership records – you will need your UNISON membership number.

Key contacts:

If you have a 'My UNISON' registration issue: UNISONdirect on 0800 0857 857

If you have an OCS issue, please contact your relevant regional contact. Listed below are the Conference contacts for each region, who can also assist with online conference registration:

Region	Contact	Tel	E-mail
Eastern	Amanda Tickner	01245 608909	a.tickner@unison.co.uk
	Yvonne Gilbey	01245 608901	y.gilbey@unison.co.uk
	Viv Wortley	01245 608915	v.wortley@unison.co.uk
East Midlands	Colleen Forrest	0115 847 5468	eastmidlandsadminteam@unison.co.uk
	Wendie Taylor	0115 847 5415	
	Jennifer Rimmer	0754 566 0750	
	Donna Franklin	0115 8475 5414	
	Admin team	0115 847 5435	
Greater London	Shelley Davey	0207 535 6648	glrconference@unison.co.uk
	Lorraine Tant		
	Cally Thompson		
Northern	Allison Jackson	0191 245 0805	a.jackson2@unison.co.uk
	Catherine Davison	0191 245 0830	c.davison@unison.co.uk
Northern Ireland	Elizabeth Robinson	02890 270190	e.robinson@unison.co.uk
North West	Kim Scott	0161 661 6777	k.scott@unison.co.uk
	Gillian Gorman	0161 661 6743	g.gorman@unison.co.uk
Scotland	Rosaleen Rodgers	0141 342 2816	r.rodgers@unison.co.uk
	Jean Fraser	0141 342 2880	j.fraser@unison.co.uk
South East	Claire Harvey	0754 566 0341	communicationsteam@unison.co.uk
South West	Jenn Gollings	01823 285336	sw.events@unison.co.uk
	TJ Milburn	01392 442676	
	Carol Thyer	01823 285301	
Cymru/Wales	Beverley Powell	02920 729475	b.powell@unison.co.uk
West Midlands	Claire Kenny	0121 685 3174	c.kenny@unison.co.uk
	Kate Walker	0121 685 3164	k.walker@unison.co.uk
Yorkshire & Humberside	Laraine Senior	0113 2182333	l.senior@unison.co.uk
	Nicky Miller	0113 2182325	n.miller@unison.co.uk

Disenfranchised Branches

Branches are reminded that under Rule D.1.3.3.1 you will be disenfranchised from sending delegates to attend National Delegate Conference and Service Group Conferences for the remainder of the financial year following the year to which the financial return applies, if you did not submit your annual financial returns (Rule G.10.1) to your UNISON regional office by no later than **15 March each year**.

National and Regional Representation

The following bodies are eligible to send two delegates (at least one of whom should be female) who shall be entitled to speak but not vote:

- National Self-Organised Groups
- Regional Service Groups
- National Sector Committees
- National Young Members' Committee
- Private Contractors National Forum

Delegates must be members of branches in the Higher Education Service Group.

Branch Representation

Branches are entitled to send one delegate for every 150 members or part thereof. Representation is based on membership as at **30 September 2022** (as the membership figures for **30 September 2023** will not be available before the date of the conference).

Proportionality and Fair Representation

Proportionality and Fair Representation rules are based on the NEC's Scheme of Branch Representation for National Delegate Conference.

- If the delegation only comprises one full delegate, then this delegate may be male or female.
- The gender make up of the delegation is based on the gender make up of the branch.
- UNISON's proportionality rules mean that the total branch delegation, including any sharers, must be made up from the same proportion of women and men as there are in the membership of the branch.
- When calculating proportionality, each sharer counts as one delegate.
- If a branch is unable to elect enough women delegates to meet proportionality, then the women's places on the delegation must remain unfilled. This is consistent with the approach to proportionality taken elsewhere in the union.
- Branches with over 300 members must include one low paid woman member in the delegation (low pay seat rate is £11.80 per hour)
- Branches with over 450 members must include one young member in the delegation (i.e. Age 30 or under at end of conference).
- Branches can send two people, in any gender combination, to share one of the delegate places. However:
 - (a) If the entire delegation entitlement comprises of just the two sharers, then at least one must be female.
 - (b) if they are sharing the low paid seat, both sharers must be low paid;
 - (c) if they are sharing the young members' seat, both sharers must be young members.

i.e. sending one sharer to meet either the low paid or young member requirement is not sufficient.

- Branches must include Black members in their delegation in proportion to the workforce profile of the employers covered by the branch.
- Branches should endeavour to include disabled members and LGBT+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender plus) members in the delegation.
- Overall, branches should also consider factors such as the balance between full time and part time workers, manual and non-manual workers, different occupations and skills.

Transgender Members

UNISON applies strict rules on proportionality in branch conference delegations, to ensure proper representation of women. Members who are in the process of transitioning gender may not yet have changed their UNISON membership details. For example, a member may wish to attend the Higher Education Conference as a woman, but still be attending work as a man. Members will be registered for the Higher Education Conference as the gender in which they will attend the Conference, irrespective of their gender recorded on the UNISON membership system.

To ensure that branch delegations including transgender members are not rejected on grounds of proportionality, please contact the Conference Office on 020 7121 5123 with information on any online delegate submissions which include members attending conference in a different gender to that recorded on the RMS. Their confidentiality will be respected at conference.

Fitness to Attend Conference

With the introduction of Fitness to Work sick notes are slightly different now. Members who are off sick from work may have an illness/condition which means they can't perform some tasks but can perform others. They may have a fitness to work certificate which means they return to work with certain caveats – e.g. places limits on the types of tasks they can perform at work and duration.

So if a member is not at work and off sick and wants to attend the Higher Education Conference they need to ask for a note from their GP indicating they are fit to attend the conference (travel/sitting for long periods). We also advise them to get a note from their employer agreeing to their attendance at conference, as this may be a different activity from those at work which they are not able to do.

Members should send a copy of the Fitness to Attend note to Tracey Ayton Harding, Head of Conferences and Designated Health & Safety Manager, in advance of the conference. This information will be treated in confidence.

Appeals

Regions monitor the delegations submitted by branches to ensure compliance with the scheme. Branches have a right of appeal against a decision by their region that their proposed branch delegation is not in line with this scheme.

My Requirements *IMPORTANT INFORMATION*****

Requesting personal requirements such as Reasonable Adjustments or Personal Assistants on the Online Conference System (OCS) can only be done in the “my requirements” section by the registered delegate themselves. Once a delegate is registered, the OCS will automatically send out an e-mail to the person with a web link which they can click on to access the OCS and input the personal requirements they require. For any assistance please contact your regional conference contact from the list in this bulletin.

Reasonable Adjustments

UNISON aims to provide a fully accessible event to disabled members in accordance with our duties under the Equality Act. Requests for reasonable adjustments must be submitted by **4pm, Thursday, 23 November 2023**

For any reasonable adjustments required, please complete the request online by the stated deadline. Authorisation for personal assistance/facilitation is required from your Branch Secretary so that this expenditure will be approved.

Please remember that BSL Interpreters will only be available if requested in advance.

While we work within the context of the social model of disability this does not mean that UNISON can automatically provide all resources that are requested as adjustments. We have to consider the finite resources available both in terms of space and finances in order that we can balance our commitment to the social model with the resources available, and channel them to where they are needed most. Where resources are allocated, this is done on the understanding that the member will use the resources at all times that they are in the conference hall. Failure to do so may result in the resources being reallocated.

Members requesting seating, tables, footrests, which impact on the space available on the floor of conference, will be asked what barriers they face that require this adjustment for their participation.

While not requesting detailed personal information, UNISON will require sufficient information in order to understand the barriers faced to get the right resources to the right people for this Conference. This will assist us in making adjustments that are meaningful and appropriate to the individual.

The union will determine the allocation of limited resources. If necessary, this may include reserving the right to seek additional information.

We will apply a necessary cut off point for requests, as close as possible to the conference while not impacting on the requirements to produce regional seating plans in good time for advance circulation. The deadline is **4pm, Thursday, 23 November 2023**. We will retain a limited ability to respond to unexpected circumstances that affect a delegate at short notice prior to the conference.

All travel requests (including upgraded or 1st Class Travel or driving) as a reasonable adjustment must be reviewed and authorised by the Head of Conferences.

Reasonable adjustment requests for travel should be made by 12pm Friday, 05 January 2024

Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP)

If a delegate or visitor from your branch requires a PEEP for the venue, please ask them to indicate this with their online request.

Crèche and Babysitting

Please note that crèche provision is available **for delegates only** for children up to and including the age of 16 years. Arrangements have been made for Nipperbout, the company contracted to provide crèche facilities at all UNISON national conferences, to provide babysitting. Should you require this service please complete the request online by

12pm, Thursday, 23 November 2023. Delegates are reminded that the cost for babysitting is borne by the branch so authorisation is required from your branch secretary so that this expenditure will be approved.

Language

The language we use is important and reflects deep-rooted and long-standing power structures and beliefs. Racist, disablist, sexist, transphobic, ageist, biphobic or homophobic language will not be tolerated. Generalisations are seldom helpful and seldom true: please avoid making them. Jokes or comments based on sexist, racist, disablist, ageist, homophobic, biphobic or transphobic ideas should not be made. Remember that some of us do not identify on the gender binary, so expressions such as 'sisters and brother' do not include us all.

Conduct of delegates

All delegates, visitors, staff and facilitators are expected to behave in a courteous manner. Aggressive, offensive, intimidatory, disrespectful or unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated. This applies to all aspects of communication, at or in connection with the conference, including postings on social media. Complaints will be treated seriously. As trade unionists we do not expect any of these problems to arise, however issues of unsatisfactory conduct by anyone attending conference can be raised with the conference information desk.

Please help us to help the environment

We're doing our best to reduce the environmental impact of our conferences. This year, we are providing all delegates with the chance to opt out of being sent paper copies of our conference materials as part of the delegates' despatch. All these documents will be available online on the UNISON website. You can then download them onto your laptop or tablet to view online while you are at conference. If you wish to opt out please indicate this on the "My requirements" screen options on the Online Conference System (OCS). If you do not opt out, you will be sent all documentation in hard copy form.

Change of Delegate

Branches may change delegates up to the start of Conference. A member registering as a substitute branch delegate must have been eligible to represent the branch at the closing date for registration of delegates **12pm, Thursday, 09 November 2023**. Any changes must be in accordance with the Scheme of Branch Representation.

After **11:59pm, Monday, 29 January 2024** no more changes to the delegation can be made on the OCS. If a branch needs to make an emergency change to its delegation after this date then an 'Emergency Change of Delegate' form will need to be completed.

This form will be available on the UNISON website from **Tuesday, 30 January 2024** and will also be available from the conference desk.

Conference Budget and Expenses

The conference budget covers travel costs for branch delegates and regional and national representatives to conferences. Branches cover subsistence and accommodation for branch delegates, plus incidental travel.

Travel Arrangements

Please consider the impact on the environment when making your decision on how to travel to Conference.

Branches are asked to book all travel arrangements for Conference through Stewart Corporate Travel via email at unison@stewarttravelmanagement.com or call [0800 091 4272](tel:08000914272). Please advise Stewart Corporate Travel if your delegates have railcards. Branches are reminded that:

- Travel costs for **Delegates and Sharer 1s only** will be funded from National Office.
- Travel costs for **Visitors and Sharer 2s** must be paid for by the branch. Please note that a booking fee is applicable – further details from Stewart Corporate Travel.

Conference Travel should be booked by the cheapest possible means.

Driving is discouraged for conference unless delegates are travelling together or as a reasonable adjustment. Total reclaimable will be the cost of standard tickets or cost of car travel – whichever is the lesser.

The 250 mile / upgraded or 1st Class travel rule is not applicable for conference travel

All travel requests (including upgraded or 1st Class Travel or driving) as a reasonable adjustment must be reviewed and authorised by the Head of Conferences.

Reasonable adjustment requests for travel should be made by 12pm Friday, 05 January 2024

Accommodation

Booking accommodation – please book any accommodation required with a reputable provider with a generous cancellation policy.

Please ensure that members have written confirmation of any booked and paid for accommodation.

Submitting Motions, Amendments, Emergency Motions

Motions should be submitted via UNISON's Online Conference System (OCS). The Preliminary Agenda will be published on **Thursday, 02 November 2023**. The Final Agenda will be published on **Thursday, 04 January 2024**.

Annual Report

The Annual Report of the Higher Education Service Group Executive will be published by **Thursday, 04 January 2024**. If your branch wishes to raise questions on the Annual Report, these must be submitted in writing and received by **5pm, Thursday, 25 January 2024**. If you have not received an acknowledgement of receipt of your question within 5 working days, you should contact **Jack Robinson on 020 7121 5323** or e-mail: education@unison.co.uk.

If any branches have supplementary questions to their original written question then it would be helpful if advance written notice could be given of this, so that any additional information requested can be sought prior to the start of Conference. This process should enable Conference to deal with the Annual Report simply and quickly and leave more time for the discussion of motions.

Any questions on the **Annual Report** should be addressed to **Ruth Smith**, Senior National Officer, **UNISON**, 130 Euston Road, London NW1 2AY or emailed to ruth.smith@unison.co.uk.

Arrangements for Distribution of Card Voting Booklet

Your branch will be issued with your voting booklet at the venue. It can be collected at conference. The card vote collection point will be located near the conference enquiry desk in the venue.

Prepaid Cards

Union Income Ltd have agreed to provide a corporate version of its prepaid card still with the UNISON branding. If your branch requires a prepaid card then this is the card that is the preferred option above others generally available.

An application will normally take about **14 working days** to turnaround and you can request an information pack and application form by contacting:

UNISON Prepaid Plus Customer Services, 39-51 Highgate Road. London NW5 1RT or email customerservices@unisonprepaid.com.

Credit Cards

If your branch does not specifically require a prepaid card the other best option is a credit card from Unity Trust Bank called Unity Corporate MultiPay Card. It is more flexible and is linked to branch current account. Details of the Corporate MultiPay card and further information on how to apply are available from their website at www.unity.co.uk/multipay. To help branches switch to this Unity Trust credit card, the bank has agreed to waive the one off administration fee of £50 for all current ALTO card customers who apply for a Multipay card.

Data Protection

The information you provide via the OCS, in addition to your information held on UNISON's membership database, will be used for the organisation and administration of Conference. It may also be used for statistical purposes as this helps us plan future conferences. We will process your personal data in compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA) and the EU General Data Protection Regulation 2016 (GDPR). You can find out more about how UNISON processes your personal data by going to unison.org.uk/privacy-policy or emailing dataprotection@unison.co.uk.

To: Branch Secretaries of all UNISON Branches
Secretaries to Regional Higher Education Committees
Secretary to the National Higher Education Service Group Executive

August 2023

Dear Colleague,

**UNISON HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE 2024 –
ADVICE FROM THE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE**

This circular sets out advice from the UNISON Higher Education Standing Orders Committee on the submission of competent motions, amendments and emergency motions to the UNISON Higher Education Conference.

Branches and other submitting bodies are often disappointed when motions are ruled out of order by the Standing Orders Committee because of a technicality, for example, where the motion has been drafted in a way which conflicts with the UNISON Rule Book or standing orders.

Please take the time to read the advice and guidance contained within this bulletin as it will aid you in drafting motions and ensuring they are not ruled out of order.

The Standing Orders Committee hope that these guidelines will be useful in assisting branches, regions and national committees to prepare motions for Conference and will reduce the number ruled out of order. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Finally, please assist in the preparation of Conference by submitting motions and amendments in good time, and well within the specified deadlines.

Yours sincerely,

Josie Irwin

Josie Irwin

Secretary to the Higher Education Conference Standing Orders Committee

Tel: 020 7121 5355

Email: j.irwin@unison.co.uk

2024 NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS COMMITTEE

Guidelines for Submitting Motions, Amendments and Emergency Motions

Each year the Standing Orders Committee (SOC) issues guidance to submitting bodies on what to be aware of when submitting motions and amendments to the Higher Education Conference. The SOC is not able to vet or approve motions prior to their submission; however the following guidance is detailed advice and branches and other bodies planning on submitting motions should find it helpful.

The Standing Orders Committee decides whether motions are competent or out of order. We do not approve the policy content of the subject matter but we do decide whether the motion is competent for debate.

1. Submitting bodies

The bodies who can submit motions and amendments to the National Higher Education Conference are:

- Higher Education Branches
- Higher Education Service Group Regional Executives
- National Higher Education Service Group Executive
- National Black Members' Committee
- National Disabled Members' Committee
- National Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Plus Committee
- National Women's Conference
- Private Contractors' National Forum
- National Young Members' Committee

2. Subject Matter

All motions, amendments and emergency motions submitted to the agenda for Higher Education Conference **must** be relevant to higher education. Motions that are relevant to the union as a whole rather than to higher education should be sent to National Delegate Conference.

a) Staffing

Motions dealing with staffing matters are not appropriate for Higher Education Conference. The National Executive Council (NEC) and the General Secretary have responsibility for the employment of staff under Rule D.2.10. 1 and D.10.2

b) Industrial Action

Rule O – Industrial Action gives exclusive power to the NEC to authorise industrial action. To be lawful, industrial action must relate to a trade dispute as defined by s.218 of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.

Motions calling for industrial action over privatisation or 'the cuts' do not fall within the legal definition of a trade dispute and so must not be debated as this would put the union in legal jeopardy.

**2024 NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS
COMMITTEE**
Guidelines for Submitting Motions, Amendments and Emergency Motions

Any motions relating to industrial action must not contravene Rule O which relates to industrial action or Rule B.4.5 which requires the union to act lawfully.

Motions or amendments must not describe previous or current trade disputes as being 'against privatisation' or similar words, as this could leave the union open to legal challenge.

c) Political Fund/Labour Link

Matters relating to the Labour Party, both in relation to internal issues and in respect of matters to be pursued at Labour Party Conference, are properly dealt with by the Affiliated Political Fund through its own structures, not Higher Education Conference. The rules governing the Political Fund include both the Affiliated and the General Political Funds.

The term 'UNISON sponsored MP' is inaccurate as it is illegal to 'sponsor' MPs to undertake advocacy. A motion or amendment which uses this term will be ruled out of order. Submitters of motions and amendments may refer to UNISON's parliamentary group of MPs or the relevant group in the devolved institutions or the European Parliament.

d) Motions relating to Legal services

Rule K of the Rule Book gives absolute discretion to the NEC in relation to the provision of legal services to members. Motions that request that specific legal action is taken by the union will be ruled out of order.

e) Legal proceedings

The Higher Education Conference cannot compromise existing or potential legal proceedings for either party in a case. Proceedings include potential, past or current Rule I disciplinary issues.

If there is a possibility that a motion may prejudice proceedings, the SOC will seek legal advice. If the advice is that a motion either directly or indirectly refers or could lead to reference to a particular case either expressly or by implication, or if a decision at Conference could be used in a case by any party, the SOC will rule the motion out of order.

On some very limited occasions it may be necessary to rule a motion out of order, not because of its content, but because it would be impossible to debate the motion without the details of a particular legal case arising.

Motions that call on the Union to break the law are not competent.

3. Submitting Motions

Motions/amendments, etc must be submitted electronically using the Online Conference system (OCS).

**2024 NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS
COMMITTEE**
Guidelines for Submitting Motions, Amendments and Emergency Motions

As well as supporting UNISON's environmental policy by moving away from a paper-based system, this allows greater transparency and accuracy in all submissions. All items are time and date stamped by the system to ensure there is no dispute about the date and time of submission.

4. Competency

Motions **must instruct** the Higher Education Service Group Executive to actually do something. Motions that "call upon conference" or make general statements without a specific instruction to the Higher Education Service Group Executive will be ruled out of order.

Motions can only instruct the Higher Education Service Group Executive. Motions that instruct other parts of the union for example Labour Link, TUC, will be ruled out of order.

Motions can ask the Higher Education Service Group Executive to **"work with"** other parts of the union but **cannot** ask that the Higher Education Service Group Executive "obtain the support" of any other parts of the union or outside body as this implies that the Higher Education Service Group Executive **must** obtain the support – and this cannot be guaranteed. To be competent, any instruction should say **"seek to obtain the support"** of the body.

5. Amendments to motions

Amendments are subject to the same rules as motions set out above. They should not be used to promote essentially alternative motions or as a substitute for voting against a motion. Therefore amendments are likely to be out of order (as wrecking amendments) if they:

- Introduce a direct negative into the motion
- Reduce the motion to a mere re-statement of existing policy
- Seek to change fundamentally the purpose of the motion.

Amendments to a motion cannot be submitted by the branch / body that submitted the original motion.

Once a motion has been ruled out of order it **cannot** be amended and it **cannot** be submitted as an emergency motion.

6. Emergency Motions

An emergency motion should be submitted, in accordance with Rule P.11. Branches which submit emergency motions during Conference will have to provide the Standing Orders Committee with details of their branch rules covering advance notice for convening meetings and branch quorum.

The Branch/Region/Committee will have to show:

- 1) The matter could not be raised in debate on the agenda

**2024 NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS
COMMITTEE
Guidelines for Submitting Motions, Amendments and Emergency Motions**

- 2) The action called for is not covered by another motion, amendment or composite
- 3) The facts giving rise to the subject matter have occurred since the closing date for the submission of motions and amendments. It is not sufficient that the branch was not aware of the facts until after the closing date.
- 4) The subject of the emergency motion cannot be dealt with through normal channels, other than at Higher Education Conference.

The motion should be accompanied by an explanation of the reasons why it could not be submitted in accordance with the normal procedures and deadlines. The strict application of these criteria will ensure that only matters of a genuine emergency will be admitted onto the agenda.

7. Emergency motions amendments

Amendments to emergency motions can be considered for admission to the agenda by the SOC. However the same criteria that applies to the submission of emergency motions must be adhered to.

Also any amendments must meet the same criteria as other amendments submitted to the agenda.

8. Motion Competency Checklist

All motions must be considered by a quorate meeting.

The content of the motion:

- Must be appropriate for Higher Education Conference.

The subject matter:

- 1) Must be wholly or predominantly relevant to higher education.
- 2) Must have clear action points for the Higher Education Service Group Executive to carry out.
- 3) Must only instruct the Higher Education Service Group Executive; although it may instruct the Higher Education Service Group Executive to liaise with / call upon other sections of the union.
- 4) Must not relate to general (citizenship) issues which are properly a matter for National Delegate Conference.
- 5) Must not relate wholly or predominantly to the business of another service group; or to policies for the Labour Party which are the business of the Political Funds.
- 6) Must not commit Higher Education Conference to spend national funds.
- 7) Must not contravene UNISON's rules.
- 8) Must not contain instructions for unlawful action.
- 9) Must not refer to legal proceedings which are a matter for the NEC.
- 10) Must not refer to staffing issues.

**2024 NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION CONFERENCE STANDING ORDERS
COMMITTEE**
Guidelines for Submitting Motions, Amendments and Emergency Motions

9. Best practice on writing motions and amendments

- 1) Submitters are encouraged to write clear, succinct motions that include specific proposals for action
- 2) Any quotations from other source documents must be identified with quotation marks
- 3) Wording should avoid language which may cause offence
- 4) Links to websites are not appropriate in motion text
- 5) General advice is available from SOC members on:
 - drafting motions and amendments prior to deadlines; and
 - guidance and assistance on procedures and standing orders.

However, receiving advice from individual committee members does not guarantee acceptance onto the agenda, as each motion and/or amendment is considered by the whole committee and decisions made collectively.

- A useful suggested format for the layout of a motion includes:
 - *“This Conference believes/supports/notes/recognises etc....”*
 - *“This issue is relevant and important to higher education because.....”*
 - *“This Conference instructs/calls upon the Higher Education Service Group Executive to take the following actions.....”*

10. Contact Details

The contacts for the Higher Education Conference Standing Orders Committee are listed below:

Secretary	Josie Irwin 020 7121 5355 j.irwin@unison.co.uk
Administrator	Dan Simmonds 0207 121 5389 d.simmonds@unison.co.uk