

SHU UCU – Branch Meeting 17 September 2025 (hybrid)

There were 81 members present (55 online and 26 in person).

The minutes for 20 August 2025 UCU SHU branch meeting were approved.

1. Branch Secretary Update

The Branch Secretary gave an update:

Financial information from recent ICC (Information and Consultation Committee) meeting showed that SHU has higher than expected cash surplus and lower budget deficit.

This raises questions about necessity of further £45m cuts which could equate to large numbers of staff, further emphasising the importance of current ballot and action to challenge cuts..

Restructure plans in college of SSA mean further job losses. Members were encouraged to get in touch with UCU reps or via UCU mailbox if they are affected or have information or concerns about other colleagues. Current restructures may not affect all members, but this is the precursor to further cuts and job losses. This makes it even more important to stand and support all members in whatever area; and to vote in ballot to defend jobs and members integrity.

The branch will continue to support members, including running in person meetings alongside online all staff briefings. Members are encouraged to submit questions to the all staff briefings.

The meeting noted that a National Ballot for industrial action will be also be running this autumn.

There was input from other officers and a range of comments and questions from the floor including: anger over SHU mismanagement; cuts fuelling a cycle of decline; the need for taking strong strike action in order to force management to implement different path forward.

2. Local ballot campaign

The statutory ballot for industrial ballot is live, and the Get The Vote Out (GTVO) coordinator reiterated the key messages and need for a strong mandate. The branch is aiming for a powerful turn out so members will be contacted by officers and reps. Members were encouraged to have conversations with colleagues and to urge them to vote.

Key dates:

- Rally – Wednesday 24 September in order to show the union's strong presence on campus and hear messages of support.

- Replacement ballot paper link – live until 26 September
- Last safe postal date – 26 September.
- Ballot closes 1 October

3. Motion: Student Support

The motion was proposed by Alex Marshall.

The motion was seconded by Bob Jeffery.

No-one spoke against the motion.

The Branch notes:

- *At the last Clearing Open Day, SBS "waived the GCSE check" for Maths and English.*
- *The given reason was "to aid processing" due to "approx 20 students who are awaiting their GCSEs"*
- *For international students the IELTS requirement of 6.0 or higher remains in place.*
- *Students from poorer backgrounds often work long hours to make ends meet, reducing their ability to take on extra study.*
- *The member raising the issue noted that every "will be able" in the GCSE pass criteria represents something students without it may be unable to do (Appendix I).*

The Branch believes:

- *The motivation is not inclusiveness but administrative convenience for an underresourced team, with no concrete plans to support students, and is doubtful Hallam will provide resources to include them.*
- *Accepting any student without the support needed sets them up to fail, which in turn requires mental health support.*
- *Any increased support required, whether academic or pastoral, will result in further work intensification.*
- *English language requirements for International but not Home students is potentially discriminatory, while accepting fees from poorer students without sufficient support is essentially extractive.*
- *The member raising the issue noted that every "will be able" in the GCSE pass criteria represents something students accepted without it are entitled to support with (see Appendix II).*

The Branch resolves to:

- *Request assurances that this is a temporary decision by SBS, with no plans to institutionalise it or expectations that other sections follow suit.*
- *Request an outline of academic and pastoral support to be offered to students accepted without core qualifications.*
- *Request guarantees that any further downward changes to entry requirements will include a clear, work-planned support plan.*
- *Ask members to submit examples of their disciplines providing additional support for students, reducing demands on students or both in response to lower-tariff entries.*

Appendix I (abilities of incoming students):

Students yet to pass GCSE English may be unable to read fluently and write effectively. They may be unable to demonstrate a confident control of Standard English and unable to write grammatically correct sentences and analyse texts.

They may:

- *be unable to read a wide range of texts, fluently and with good understanding*
- *be unable to read critically, and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing*
- *be unable to write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately*

Students yet to pass GCSE maths may not have a strong mathematical foundation if they go on to study [or use] mathematics at a higher level post-16.

They may:

- *not possess a fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts*
- *be unable to select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems*
- *be unable to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions*
- *be unable to comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.*

Appendix II (demands on staff):

Students accepted to Sheffield Hallam who are yet to pass GCSE English will be entitled to help to read fluently and write effectively. They will be entitled to help to demonstrate a confident control of Standard English and will be entitled to help to write grammatically correct sentences and analyse texts.

They will:

- be entitled to help to read a wide range of texts, fluently and with good understanding*
- be entitled to help to read critically, and use knowledge gained from wide reading to inform and improve their own writing*
- be entitled to help to write effectively and coherently using Standard English appropriately*

Students accepted to Sheffield Hallam who are yet to pass GCSE maths will be entitled to opportunities to acquire a strong mathematical foundation if they go on to study [or use] mathematics at a higher level post-16.

They will:

- be entitled to opportunities to acquire a fluent knowledge, skills and understanding of mathematical methods and concepts*
- be entitled to help to select and apply mathematical techniques to solve problems*
- be entitled to help to reason mathematically, make deductions and inferences and draw conclusions*
- be entitled to help to comprehend, interpret and communicate mathematical information in a variety of forms appropriate to the information and context.*

The meeting voted on the motion:

- For: 68
- Against: 0
- Abstain: 2

The motion was carried.

4. Any other business

Sheffield Trades Council is hosting meeting of Zarah Sultana re Your Party at SADACCA, at 7pm on Wednesday 24 September.