

UCU SHU Branch Meeting

5 June 2026

There were 141 members present (online).

The draft minutes for 13 May, 20 May and 2 June Branch Meetings were not yet available.

The Chair welcomed members with a strong message of solidarity in the current dispute.

1. Negotiating Team update

The team reiterated the message of solidarity, especially to members placed in redundancy pools, with Law and Criminology particularly affected. The Negotiating Secretary also gave huge solidarity and thanks to the Branch Secretary who is off sick. There were many other messages of thanks and support for the Branch Secretary.

There have been many devastating reports from members, and the union will continue to fight to protect jobs with a unified front. Further ACAS mediated meeting with the employer are planned for next week (date to be confirmed).

Picket lines have been strong and well supported. We are currently planning and scheduling further strike days over the summer and next semester. It is essential that members continue to support current industrial action until the Branch decides collectively to stop.

As well as industrial action, the branch has other powerful leverage for negotiations with the employer including strong media campaign, and political engagement with other UCU branches, trade unions and politicians. All are encouraged to support the upcoming public meeting on 11 June – and to publicise widely.

2. Input from members in redundancy pools

The meeting heard from members affected by the recently announced redundancy pools. There were a number of questions and comments including: support for 121 meetings if on strike days; new grade 8 job description will affect all; clear erosion of terms and conditions and nationally agreed conditions; lack of faith in management's plans for recovery; thanks to negotiators and union officers & reps; collective response from the union (see University of Leicester strategy and other precedents) refusing to participate in interviews as premature; importance of members taking care of their own mental health when taking decision about attending 121 meetings; fears of system favouring some over others; colleagues feeling vulnerable and fearful; it doesn't feel like a fair and equitable process; fears of discrimination; solidarity to all in redundancy pools; behaviour of Vice Chancellor in avoiding negotiations and sowing division between union members and non-members in emails, potential for vote of no confidence in the VC; the cuts will affect all, teaching hours going up significantly and will affect ALs; solidarity to all ALs.

The meeting discussed whether members should attend 121 redundancy meetings which are scheduled during strike days. The Casework Coordinator added that the Branch will try its best to support members with reps from other areas. Members affected to email UCU mailbox for Casework Coordinator to allocate rep.

3. Counteroffer for the next ACAS mediated talks

The wording below was draft open to branch discussion and input.

Sheffield Hallam UCU Branch counteroffer to UEB

In response to the offer from UEB dated 28 May 2026, which was put to members of the Sheffield Hallam UCU Branch in a vote and rejected (114 against, 78 for, 22 abstained), the branch proposes the following counteroffer.

In sum: withdraw the subsidiary company; withdraw the threat of compulsory redundancies; offer an improved pay-out for voluntary redundancy of 8 months' pay; withdraw the new grade 8 job descriptor currently being used vis-a-vis senior lecturer academics in redundancy pools reapplying for their own jobs.

In return we will stand down our current block of strike days and lower the tone of criticism in our public communication about this dispute. And, of course, we will put to members if they are willing to settle the dispute.

There was a range of comments and feedback from the meeting including: subco needs to go now; repeat demands and be strategic to change the narrative and the management line; go into negotiations with firm line and threat of further major strike action; demonstrate the branch as reasonable with possible withdrawal of industrial action; impact on researchers and need to protect research hours, threatening major strike action in September, withdrawal of changes to academic calendars.

The Anti-Casualisation Officer noted that fragmentation of the workforce at SHU began with large number of ALs on zero hour contracts. Although ALs are not included as a distinct line in the dispute, they are covered in line on other issues affected by the cuts and we will be gathering more data.

These comments will be taken into account and included in edits for counter offer taken to upcoming ACAS mediated talks.

4. Suggested further summer/new semester strike dates

The Negotiating Secretary asked members to suggest dates for industrial action that would have most impact over the summer and semester 2, including Open Days, Clearing, Induction and teaching weeks. He noted time needed to notify national union and the employer.

There was no opposition to these dates and strategy for strike action from members.