

Planning a recruitment campaign

The branch/Local Association (LA) should always be actively recruiting new members. Planning a campaign does not mean that recruitment is an activity which takes place between or on certain dates and not at other times.

However, having a campaign with clear goals and a timeline is a helpful way of preparing for and monitoring recruitment activities. It provides a context and a motivation for more people to get involved in recruitment activities by linking them in to a more visible and public recruitment strategy.

Your recruitment campaign needs to be based on activities that will help you to achieve your numerical goals and allow you to assess how many new members you have gained as a result of them, eg recruitment mailings or office visits.

Think about how to involve your general membership in recruitment throughout the planning process. If every current member of your branch/LA recruited a colleague to the UCU your membership would double! Your goals are probably more modest than a 100% increase in membership, so if you can involve even a fraction of your membership in your recruitment campaign it can make a huge difference in meeting your goals. Your retired members are also a great resource for recruitment. Make sure there are opportunities for members to participate and support the campaign.

Examples of recruitment activities

Information stalls

You can raise the visibility of the union and initiate conversations with potential members by holding information stalls at various times during the year outside dining areas, common rooms or the entrance to the library. You may want to do this in collaboration with other unions. Arrange a rota for staffing the stalls during the lunchtime session. Ask passers by whether they are union members and invite non-members to join. Make sure that you have information available about other unions for those who are not eligible for UCU membership.

Recruitment mailings

Send a mailing to all non-members inviting them to join the UCU and enclosing a membership application form. You can generate a list of non-members by comparing your list of members to a list of all eligible staff. Send a copy of the letter to departmental

representatives along with a list of non-members in their department who have been sent the mailing and a request for them to follow up.

You can refine this strategy by putting together a mailing directed at a particular staff group, eg hourly-paid teaching staff, part-timers or contract research staff. A targeted mailing will be most effective if it highlights specific issues or services or is part of a larger campaign to address an issue of particular relevance to these staff.

If your recruitment mailing is part of a larger campaign then keep it separate from other communications to which you want a response, eg surveys or petitions, to avoid the suggestion of an ulterior motive, which could reduce your response rate. However, always include contact information on surveys and petitions so that if people are interested in more information they know how to reach you.

Recruitment meetings for those with special interests

Organise social events or informational meetings or campaign meetings for members and eligible non-members around an issue of current concern, e.g. casualisation, equality, workload issues etc.

Make sure that you publicise the meeting to non-members and make it clear that they are welcome. At the meeting welcome non-members; have membership materials available; circulate a sign-up sheet; and make sure that participants know what you are going to do next about the issue under discussion and how they can support you.

Recruitment weeks

Run a 'join the union' week, maybe with the other campus trade unions. Over the course of the week put the spotlight on UCU, try lots of different activities to recruit new members. For example:

- Get your student newspaper to run an article on your recent activities.
- Put up posters in every department.
- Send out a recruitment letter to every non-member.
- Hold information stalls outside dining areas, common rooms or library entrance.
- Send members a letter asking them to recruit a friend and enclose a membership application form.

Laboratory and office visits

The most effective way to recruit new members is to talk to them. It is helpful to set time aside specifically for this purpose. It may be easier for departmental representatives to initiate recruitment conversations if they work in pairs. You may prefer to contact individual members of staff in advance by email or phone to arrange an appointment. For guidance on how to have a recruitment conversation, see *How to approach a potential*

member and *Answering questions*. You can set goals as a branch/LA for how many recruitment conversations or office and lab visits should take place each week.

Recruit a colleague campaign

Dedicate an issue of the newsletter to your recruitment campaign to make sure that your members are aware that you are engaged in a recruitment effort and that they understand why it is important for UCU membership to grow. Explain the campaign and its goals. Set out your timetable of events and invite members to volunteer, eg to staff a publicity table. Send out publicity materials with the newsletter and ask members to display them. Attach an application form and a direct debit mandate to each newsletter.

Send a letter to every member asking them to invite a colleague to join UCU.

Write regular articles in subsequent newsletters informing people of upcoming events, opportunities to help, and the progress of the campaign.

Include contact information for committee members and departmental representatives in each newsletter. Encourage departmental representatives to discuss the campaign with colleagues.

Logistics: timeline and resources

Once you have decided on the actions that you are going to take:

- Decide a timetable for the events you are going to organise.
- Create a list of the resources you will need in terms of money, materials, and person hours.
- Order any national posters or leaflets you need from the membership department.
- Who will create your local recruitment materials? What will they cost?
- How long will it take to create and assemble the materials you need?
- How many volunteers do you need to recruit to assist you? Who will recruit them? Who can help you? Which jobs need to be done by committee members and what can departmental representatives, members and retired members do? How can you go beyond the 'usual suspects' and recruit new volunteers?
- Make sure that your departmental representatives have all the materials that they need to recruit new members.
- Provide departmental representatives with lists of the members and non-members in their departments and always let them know about new staff in their departments.
- Agree a timetable for committee or sub-committee meetings to monitor progress.

Finally, don't forget to set the date of the final review meeting at which you will assess the campaign as a whole.