1) BRANCH NAME

The branch shall be called the UNISON University of Sussex Branch.

2) AIMS OF THE BRANCH

The aims of the branch shall be in accordance with the aims and values of UNISON as set out in the Rule Book.

3) MEMBERSHIP

Eligibility for membership shall be in accordance with the Rules of UNISON.

Applications for membership will normally take effect from the date at which completed forms are received by the branch or at regional/national level (including online), and the first contribution is made.

All members must comply with UNISON rules, and shall not bring the branch or the union into disrepute.

4) BRANCH STRUCTURE

There shall be an Annual General Meeting of the branch to elect branch officers to the branch committee. This will be held between 1 January and 31 March.

Other General meetings may be called by the branch committee or by 20 members of the branch or 5% of the membership, whichever is the greater.

The quorum for a General meeting shall be 20 members in total.

The AGM shall determine the names and numbers of Stewards and rep’s for the coming year.

As a guide, the ratio of Stewards to members should be about 1:20 but this may vary.

The branch committee will comprise all branch officers, stewards, health and safety reps and equalities reps.
Additional recruitment along with other factors may result in further activists being accredited at any time.

The branch committee will be responsible for the general organisation and development of the branch and for policy and decision making on matters affecting all members within the branch, between general meetings.

5) BRANCH OFFICERS

The Branch aims to elect the following officers annually:

Chairperson
Secretary
Treasurer
Education Officer
Equality Officer
Health & Safety Officer
Environment Officer
International Officer
LGBTQ+ Officer
Women’s Officer
Young Members Officer
Retired Members Secretary (elected by retired members only)
Recruitment Officer
Welfare Officer
Communications Officer
Labour Link Officer (elected by Labour Link members only)
Membership Officer
Other officer posts can be determined as necessary for the effective operation of the branch. On occasion a job share for an officer post will be required.

Branch Officers may be nominated by the branch committee or any single lay member. The Officers shall be elected from the membership of the Branch.

In the event of a member being suspended from employment the Committee retain the right to reject nomination.

Nominees have the right to withdraw.

If there is more than one candidate a vote will be held. Only those members attending the AGM will be able to vote.

The vote may be conducted by a show of hands or by a secret ballot by those attending the branch AGM.

In the event of a ballot, official papers will be supplied and each member of the branch shall be entitled to one vote in respect of each post to be filled. Arrangements may be made for a postal ballot if appropriate.

6) BRANCH COMMITTEE

Representation on the branch committee will be agreed by the AGM and will include:

- All elected Branch Officers
- Representatives of self-organised groups
- One or more Stewards from each work group or workplace.

The Branch Committee shall administer branch business in accordance with the national rules and guidance.

The Branch Committee should meet no less than eight times a year.

The quorum for the branch committee shall be 33% (one third) of the members of the committee.

The branch secretary will establish arrangements for representation of members. They will also determine when and if a case shall be escalated outside of the branch for a legal assessment, representation etc.
The branch committee may, where appropriate, appoint sub committees’ to focus on specific projects. Each sub-committee must appoint a Chair to lead and report back to the branch committee at an agreed schedule, normally at the next branch meeting.

7) CONDUCT OF MEETINGS

The Chair will conduct all branch meetings in a fair and democratic manner.

All branch meetings should be advertised widely as far in advance as possible to the appropriate audience.

Any procedures to be used at the meeting should be explained clearly and in advance if appropriate.

The branch will maintain records of committee and stewards meetings, as well as financial records, books of accounts and other appropriate records to enable the Branch to function.

Where appropriate branch committee decision making can be made remotely eg via email or using any other method approved in advance by the committee.

8) MEDIA COMMUNICATIONS

Any communications to the media on behalf of the branch (outside of social media), shall be made only by officer(s) authorised by the Branch committee. Any social media that the branch has shall be managed by the branch committee and will always look to promote the branch and its members in a positive manner.

9) AFFILIATIONS

It will be for the branch committee to decide by quorate majority what, if any, affiliations it has within UNISON rules. Any affiliation must be to support and/or grow the trade union movement in general or an area represented by a branch officer.

10) DONATIONS

The branch committee may consider donations at any time in accordance with the union’s policies and objectives and subject to provisions of national rule. Any donations accepted or provided by the branch must be to support the trade union movement and associated Labour movements in the UK and overseas or any area represented by a branch officer.
Each branch committee meeting shall consider requests to make a donation of no more than £100 and decide on one recipient by a show of hands, with the chair having a casting vote in the event of a tie.

11) FINANCE

The branch shall keep a Unity Trust Bank account in the name of the branch and will maintain a financial record of all assets and transactions in accordance with UNISON guidelines.

Expenses for any members on branch business shall when possible be agreed in advance and claimed for after the event and when any receipts have been provided. Any claims are subject to the discretion of the Branch Committee, but can adjusted by the Branch Committee.

Petrol allowance is paid in accordance with the HMRC scales. Which is currently quoting 45p per mile (to be reviewed and updated at each AGM) based upon standard maps directions eg Google Maps/AA Route Planner.

The Branch reserve the right either via the full committee or the branch executive to make branch discrepancy payments when applicable.

12) HONORARIUMS

Honorariums can be paid each year to those determined by the branch committee, in line with regional guidelines. The amounts will be determined at the final branch committee meeting prior to the AGM where approval will be required

Payment will be made once ratified by, and as soon after, the AGM nationally with tax being deducted at source.

13) Branch Staff

The branch may employ staff to assist in any tasks deemed necessary by the majority decision of the branch committee. If an employment contract is issued the postholder will be supervised and managed by the branch secretary. If not a member of the branch they will become eligible for membership of UNISON or an other trade union.
14) Campaigns

The branch committee will agree at the first branch meeting following the AGM specific campaigns for the upcoming year. Campaigns may be delegated to a sub-committee that will report to the branch committee as per branch rules. Campaigns must support the local or wider trade union movement.

15) Motions

The branch committee will seek opinion from the membership and draw up a list of Motions based on this opinion. Motion proposals will be presented to the membership either electronically or in a general meeting. The membership shall select, through a majority vote, the Motions that the committee will then take to appropriate conferences.

16) APPROVAL/ALTERATIONS TO BRANCH RULES

Branch rules must be agreed by two thirds of members present and voting at a quorate Branch meeting.

Branch rules must be approved in accordance with UNISON procedures.

Changes to branch rules must be agreed and approved in the same way.