



EDUCATION PROGRAMME FOR ACTIVISTS 2025





**‘Knowledge is power.
Organisation is power.
Knowledge and organisation
mean the right to life, liberty
and the pursuit of happiness.
Knowledge and organisation mean
the opening of the cage door’.**

— Mary Macarther, The Women Worker

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Course Notes – How to apply

Welcome to Unison’s Northwest Regional education programme for 2025. For each course you want to attend, complete an application form or apply via the website and make sure it is authorised by your Branch secretary or Branch Education Co-ordinator. Once completed send it to:

northwestlearningandorganising@unison.co.uk

NW Unison Education
Unison
Arena Point
1 Hunts Bank
Manchester
M3 1LN

Your application will be acknowledged on receipt and before the course starts you will be sent joining instructions.

Costs

There are no charges for you as an individual.
Your branch will be charged at a rate of £25 a day.

Your branch will be responsible for these costs and will be invoiced directly from regional office after each course. Your branch will also be responsible for funding travelling expenses. Please see your branch secretary for forms.

**Courses will start at 9:30am and finish at 4:00pm approx.
Unless otherwise stated.**

Child and dependent care

Unison will endeavour to provide child and dependent care support for all those requiring it to attend courses. Assistance is available to fund child and dependent care, at home or at a crèche, should that be necessary, if you require such assistance, please let us know as soon as possible.

Equal opportunities and facilities for disabled members

No Member should be deterred from applying for a course because of individual circumstances.

Unison believes that venues should be accessible. We are more than happy to discuss individual needs or requirements before the course if it would be helpful. Please tell us if you have specific needs.

Cancellations

If you need to cancel your place, you must notify us immediately. Failure to do so might deprive another member of a place and your branch might have to pay for the costs.

Contact us:

Bob Kelly – Regional Education Organiser
b.kelly@unison.co.uk
0795 7506 031

General Enquiries

northwestlearningandorganising@unison.co.uk
0161 661 6751
Website Learning
UNISON College – UNISON North West



Activist Training

The goal is, as set out in the NEC scheme of accreditation (as amended by motion 12 National Delegate Conference 2022) that all Unison representatives must attend:

- Appropriate introduction training for their role within 1 year of appointment.
- Equality training within 2 years of induction.
- ERA Refresher training within 5 years of accreditation.

All representatives and branch officers to attend:

- Challenging Racism in the Workplace course within a maximum of 3 years of appointment.

Organising Steward's Programme

All new stewards are expected to attend the full programme of steward's courses.

The first course for new Stewards is the Organising Steward, followed by Developing Representational Skills and Negotiating Skills. There are also a number of other optional courses see below:



The Organising Steward

The Organising Steward course has been designed for newly elected and less experienced UNISON stewards organising in the workplace. As a steward you are a vital link in the union chain and have an important role to play in organising members at local level.

The course covers the following subjects:

- The Role of the Rep
- Organising
- Unison structure
- Representing members

The courses take place over 5 days usually 1 day a week for 5 weeks or in 3 and a 2 day block at locations around the region-9.30-4.00 pm each day lunch provided.

Before you come on the Organising Steward Course however you should talk to your branch mentor about the tasks you could be doing in the workplace.

Look at the Unison E-note for new stewards.

Visit <http://learning.unison.org.uk>

Starting Dates:

Manchester, Arena Point (3 and 2 day blocks)

March 24th, 25th, 26th, 31st and 1st April
May 12th, 13th, 14th, 19th, 20th
November 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 11th

Manchester, Arena Point (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

3rd February — 5 Mondays
2nd June — 5 Mondays
15th September — 5 Mondays

Manchester, Arena Point (5 day Block)

July 28th, 29th, 30th 31st and 1st August

Liverpool (3 and 2 day blocks)

March 24th, 25th, 26th, 31st and 1st April
May 12th, 13th, 14th, 19th, 20th
November 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 11th

Liverpool (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

3rd February — 5 Mondays
2nd June — 5 Mondays
15th September — 5 Mondays

Preston (3 and 2 day blocks)

March 24th, 25th, 26th, 31st and 1st April
May 12th, 13th, 14th, 19th, 20th
November 3rd, 4th, 5th, 10th, 11th

Preston (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

3rd February — 5 Mondays
2nd June — 5 Mondays
15th September — 5 Mondays

Carlisle (3 and 2 day blocks)

March 10th, 11th, 12th, 17th, 18th
August 4th, 5th, 6th, 11th, 12th

Carlisle (5 Day, 1 Day a Week)

17th October — 5 Fridays

Follow on courses for Stewards Advanced Representation Skills

This is a three day follow-on course for people who have completed initial basic training (The Organising Steward and/or the Health and Safety Starter Courses) but who now need extra skills knowledge and practice in case handling.

Manchester 3 day block

11th, 12th and 13th March
21st, 22nd and 23rd October

Negotiating Skills

Negotiating through collective bargaining takes place at many levels from raising members issues with line managers, work rotas, overtime, local agreements or terms and conditions. This course will help participants to:

- Develop and practice negotiating skills
- Be more effective team negotiators
- Understand the process of negotiating and be familiar with different styles of negotiating
- Understand how to prepare, present and negotiate on a claim
- Develop good practice in negotiations.

Manchester (3 day block)

8th, 9th, 10th April
18th, 19th, 20th November

Introduction to Employment Law

This is a 3 day follow on course for stewards or union representatives who wish to know the basics of employment law. The course includes the following: Background to the law, Contracts of Employment, Unfair Dismissal, Tribunals and Equality Law

Manchester

28th, 29th, 30th January
9th, 10th, 11th September

National Online Courses

Organising Steward Courses

25th February to 25th March

UNISON Online Stewards Course Spring 2025 | UNISON College

11th August to 15th August

UNISON Online Stewards Course Summer 2025 | UNISON College

17th November to 21st November

UNISON Online Stewards Course Autumn 2025 | UNISON College

Visit the Unison website to register [Events](#) | [UNISON College](#)

ERA Stewards Refresher Course

UNISON 5 Year Rule

If you undertake representative work or casework for UNISON then you need refresher training at least every 5 years.

Think of it, as your vital continuing professional development as a UNISON rep or your 'licence to practice'.

On the refresher course you will learn about current protocols in the union when representing members. How to organise around issues in the workplace to lessen the amount of individual casework required and look at recent legal changes and how these may affect the way we represent.

The course is best run in the branch - see your Regional Organiser to get a course off the ground. The events lists below are what we refer to as 'mop up' events. For people from branches where only one or two people need 'refreshing' i.e. too few to run a branch based course.

Course Dates:

Preston

13th February Thursday
12th June Thursday
9th October Thursday

Liverpool

20th February Thursday
26th June Thursday
16th October Thursday

Manchester, Arena Point

27th February Thursday
3rd July Thursday
23rd October Thursday

Carlisle

6th February Thursday
5th June Thursday
2nd October Thursday

Online

6th March Thursday
30th October Thursday

Health and Safety Starter

If you are a new Health and Safety Rep this three day course is the first you should take. Your role and the rules and regulations governing health and safety at work are outlined. You will receive a resource pack and details of the UNISON support for Health and Safety reps and issues.

The course will help you to organise around health and safety issues in the workplace. Some of the subjects covered include:

- The role of the H&S Rep
- Organising around H&S
- H&S Law
- SRSC Regs
- Inspections
- Safety Committees
- Risk Assessment

Start Dates:

Manchester, Arena Point (3 Day Block)

18th, 19th and 20th February
15th, 16th, 17th July
25th, 26th, and 27th November

Liverpool, (3 Day Block)

18th, 19th and 20th February
15th, 16th, 17th July
25th, 26th, and 27th November

Preston (3 Day Block)

18th, 19th and 20th February
15th, 16th, 17th July
25th, 26th, and 27th November

Carlisle (3 Day Block)

2nd, 3rd, 4th April
9th, 10th, 11th December

National Online Courses H&S Courses

25th February

Organising for Health and Safety Online
Spring 2025 | UNISON College

11th August

Organising for Health and Safety Online
Summer 2025 | UNISON College

17th November

Organising for Health and Safety Online
Autumn 2025 | UNISON College

Visit the Unison website to register
Events | UNISON College

Learning Reps Course

To be able to work effectively as union learning representative (ULR) you need to build a broad knowledge and understanding of education and training matters. Equally, if not more important, is a good understanding of how the union works and your workplace context.

Knowing who to talk to and when, who makes the decisions and how, what policies and guidelines can help is fundamental to ULRs making a successful case for members.

This course will help you:

- Understand union structures, and how your union organises around priorities and learning
- Build a broad perspective of where you fit in the scheme of things
- Find out about developments in learning and appreciate issues affecting learning
- Work with members and other reps to define priorities
- Take a planned approach to your own and your members' development
- Develop the skills of putting the union case on learning
- Work collectively as part of the union team

Manchester

17th, 18th and 19th March

Liverpool

7th, 8th and 9th October

ULR courses can be run on demand. If you are interested in ULR training or becoming a ULR please contact Diana Warren

d.warren@unison.co.uk

Branch Officers

This course is designed for new branch Officers, Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, Education Coordinator, lifelong Learning Coordinator, Equalities Officer, Young Members etc.

The course is designed for you to understand how the branch works and your responsibilities and will cover the following subjects:

- Branch structures
- Organising in the branch
- Meeting Skills
- Finding new activists
- Supporting new activists

The course is a three-day block

Liverpool

30th April 1st and 2nd April

Manchester, Arena Point

9th, 10th and 11th July

17th, 18th and 19th September

Equality in your Branch

This course will enable branch officers and reps to:

- Understand the roles of the branch Equalities Co-ordinator, Equality Reps and Self-Organised groups officers.
- Develop their understanding of Equality in Unison
- Promote equality organising in their workplace and branch
- Develop realistic action plans

Manchester City Centre

5th February

3rd April

24th July

12th November

Liverpool City Centre

24th September

Building a Powerful Workplace Union Organising to Win

This one day course is to help branches build campaigns in their workplaces. Based on successful campaigns run in the region it will teach skills in planning campaigns, mapping, recruitment, finding new activists and sustaining an organised workplace.

They can be run in branches or workplaces on request and tailored to branch or workplace needs:

Manchester 23rd January
Liverpool 15th May
Manchester 6th November

Supporting New Activists

Becoming a new union activist can be quite daunting, so if we are to keep and develop these potential reps or branch officers then we need to support them. This one day course will:

- Concepts of coaching and mentoring in UNISON
- Skills required by mentors and buddies
- Systems which need to be in place in the branch to enable the mentoring process

Liverpool 20th March
Manchester 25th September



Challenging Racism in the Workplace

A one-day essential course for all activists. The course will include:

- Language and terminology
- Unconscious Bias
- Everyday Racism
- Allyship
- Embedding anti-racism into a workplace

Manchester City Centre

21st February
23rd May
28th October

These courses will be tutored by Show Racism the Red Card
Please visit their website for more information

<https://www.theredcard.org/>



Green Skills

This course aims to:

- To introduce participants to the interaction between humans and their environment and their impact upon it
- To enable participants to plan a strategy for their branch to engage around environmental issues on a workplace and wider level

Manchester

22nd May
3rd December

Young Members Political School

This is a residential course spread over 2 days. The course will cover current political issues that particularly effect young members. It is a good chance for young members to be introduced to Unison and network with other young members. The course is open to any member in the region who is under 30 years of age.

Liverpool City Centre

Friday 28th March

Saturday 29th March



Short Courses

These courses can be run on demand from a branch, a group of branches, service group or SOG:

- Disability Discrimination
- H&S Inspections
- Risk assessment
- TU History
- Mental Health awareness
- Stress in the Workplace
- Economics for Everyone

Workshops

We also offer short workshops that can be run online or face to face for branches either as part of a development day or a branch meeting.

- Workplace contacts
- One to one conversations
- Knowing your members
- Fundamentals of organising
- Running Campaigns
- Unison structures
- Writing motions

If you want training on other subjects or issues and it is not on the list then please contact us. We will endeavour to provide the training.

Contact Bob Kelly for more details

b.kelly@unison.co.uk



Whether you're looking for a reps course or you want to refresh your skills as an experienced rep or you're simply interested in becoming a union rep, we have a course for you <https://www.tuc.org.uk/TUCcourses>

You can choose from classroom or online training, a webinar or an eNote you should be able to find training that suits you.

TUC Education trains union reps to work with union members and officers to make a difference in their workplace. Training is run in partnership with further education colleges and online across the UK. Union reps attend from a wide range of industries and unions.

Whether you are a:

- Shop steward
- Workplace rep
- Safety rep
- Union learning rep
- Equality rep
- Green rep
- Or other trade union rep

You will find training available that will give you the skills you need as a rep to be effective in the workplace.

Training includes classroom and online versions of:

- Union reps stage 1
- Employment law
- Health and safety stage 1 and 2
- Union learning reps stage 1 and 2

The online programmes are freely available for self-study and can be accessed as soon as a rep takes office, at a time and place most convenient, using a smart phone, tablet or computer. And of course, the online programmes can enhance the delivery of classroom courses.

If you want updates on a particular workplace issue then eNotes and webinars are a great place to start.

eNotes are short, bitesized chunks of online learning that contain a mix of text, video and quizzes.

Webinars are short briefings held on the internet for an online audience. New webinars on issues affecting reps are run regularly.

To look for TUC courses, training, events, webinars and eNotes visit <https://www.tuc.org.uk/training>

Despite cuts to funding and budgets the TUC Education Units in the NW are still offering courses for stewards and reps. There is a full range of courses on offer at the following centres:

Warrington & Vale Royal College

Rick Cayzer
(Contact for courses in Cumbria)
Tel: 01925 494637
Email: rcayzer@wvr.ac.uk

Stockport College

John Handley
Tel: 0161 296 5728/5720
Email: john.handley@stockport.ac.uk

Wirral Met College

Charles Wilson
Tel: 0151 237 2750
Email: CharlesWilson@wmc.ac.uk

The Manchester College

Mike Dearing
Tel: 0161 920 2835/2261
Email: MDearing@tmc.ac.uk

Please contact the centres directly or visit the TUC Education website <https://www.tuc.org.uk/training>

Members' Education

UNISON has a proud history of providing high quality learning opportunities for our members. We work with trusted national institutions like The Open University and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) and a host of local providers, delivering courses regionally and individual learning online. We believe learning is best delivered collectively in the workplace and do all we can to support branches to organise that. We can deliver a range of courses but here is an example of subjects we cover:

- Awareness raising courses including Menopause in the Workplace; Neurodiversity; Dementia Awareness; Mental Health Awareness
- Confidence boosting courses including Return to Learn; Women's lives; Power to be you; Get that Job and Reaching Your Goals
- IT Courses e.g., Everyday Excel and Working with Word
- Wellbeing courses e.g., Mindfulness for Stress; Managing Workplace Stress - Staying Strong
- Skills based courses including Literacy and Numeracy Skills (Everyday maths) and Introduction to British Sign Language

To get the best member learning we need Union Learning Representatives in every workplace, who will find out what members want and help coordinate delivery with us. Training on the role will be provided.

For more information on member learning or on being a ULR contact Diana Warren d.warren@unison.co.uk



UNISON COURSE APPLICATION FORM

Application Details	
Name	Contact Telephone
Address	Unison Membership No.
Postcode	Branch
Preferred E-Mail address	Position Held

We use this information to add your name to the training database for this event and update your membership details.

Course Details
Course Title
Venue Location
Course Dates

No member should be deterred from applying for a course because of individual needs. Please give details of your access, dietary requirements, learning support requirements and other needs here – use a separate sheet if you need to –

This information tells us if you have any specific requirements that will help you to fully participate in the course.

Branch Authorisation	
I have informed my branch that I have applied for the course and I am starting to make arrangements for time off to attend	
Signature of applicant	Date
The above named has branch approval to attend	
Signature from Branch	Date



NW UNISON EDUCATION

Unison, Arena Point, 1 Hunts Bank, Manchester M3 1LN