Workplace Representative Courses

- Guidance for branches -

Application procedure

Course applications are administered by the Region’s Learning & Member Development (LMD) Team. The team can be contacted by emailing LMD@unison.co.uk.

* Applicants should complete a course application form and proportionality and fair representation form. Links to these forms can be found with the course advertisement.
* Completed forms should be emailed to LMD@unison.co.uk by the advertised closing date.

Please encourage applicants to meet the course application closing date so the LMD Team know whether courses have sufficient numbers to make them viable. Please also ensure any applications passed directly to the branch are forwarded to the above email address in time to meet the closing date.

Late applications may be accepted subject to availability of places. Please contact the LMD Team to check the course status.

Courses are free to individual workplace reps. The course fees shown are therefore payable by the branch, along with the applicant’s travel/subsistence expenses. Hence the Region will seek branch approval for each applicant’s attendance on the course.

Course support

If you have not already done so, please try to allocate a buddy or mentor to support your new rep both during the course and going forward as they embark on their role. The LMD Team will ask whether arrangements are in place when contacting the branch for application approval.

Confirmation of a place on a course

Places are allocated after the course closing date and not on a first come, first served basis.

Every effort will be made to accommodate all course applicants. Where courses are however over-subscribed, information on the proportionality and fair representation form will used to allocate places via a selection procedure in line with the definitions of proportionality and fair representation in the 2019 UNISON Rulebook, sections 2.14.2 and 2.14.3.

All applicants will be contacted after the closing date via email to confirm whether they have a place. Applicants who have been allocated a place will be provided with joining instructions containing details of the course arrangements.

Applicants who have not heard from the Learning & Member Development Team by two weeks after the course closing date should email LMD@unison.co.uk . Applicants should NOT attend a course if they have not received confirmation of their place. Doing so creates problems in terms of room capacity, course materials and catering arrangements and breaches the Region’s selection and branch approval procedures. Consequently, admittance to the course can be refused.

Activist positions on the membership system

Please ensure your appointed reps are showing as such on the membership system. Failure to do so may mean your rep misses out on mailings relating to their role and in the case of stewards, their ERA accreditation cannot be confirmed if they are not already on the system as an untrained steward. If you have any difficulties updating the system, please either contact the Region’s RMS team at e.rms@unison.co.uk or the Learning & Member Development Team at LMD@unison.co.uk for assistance.

Course fees

Course fees are indicated for each course advertised on our web pages. Branches will be charged course fees by automatic deduction after the course has finished and will receive notification of intention to deduct funds.

Expenses

Travel and subsistence costs are paid by the branch. Please make your reps aware of the branch’s procedure for claiming expenses.

Facilitation / special dietary needs

If an applicant has a specific facilitation requirement that will assist them to fully participate in the course, it is important they provide full details on their course application form. The same applies to delegates with specific dietary requests. Please note that catering arrangements cannot be changed on the day of the course.

Accommodation

Workplace reps courses are non-residential, unless otherwise stated. If your delegate requires overnight accommodation, the branch is responsible for booking this and for the payment of any associated costs.

Course cancellations

If a delegate cannot attend a course it is essential they urgently contact the Learning & Member Development Team at LMD@unison.co.uk who will seek to fill the place from waiting lists.

Course cancellations will be charged as follows:

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| Scenario | Cancellation charges |
| Cancellation notified after the closing date but before the start of the course and a replacement delegate can be found | No charge |
| Cancellation notified after the closing date but before the start of the course and a replacement delegate cannot be found | Course fee charged or actual course costs (i.e. venue costs etc.), whichever is the greater |
| Failure to attend the course  | Course fee charged or actual course costs (i.e. venue costs etc.), whichever is the greater |
| Cancellation of facilitation arrangements | Facilitation costs charged |

Appeals against cancellation charges should be directed to the Regional Organiser (Education) in the first instance.

Time off to attend workplace rep courses

Stewards, health & safety representatives and union learning representatives have a legal right to paid time off to attend relevant training. Please encourage your rep to arrange time off with their employer as soon as possible and assist them should they have any difficulties in this regard. The ‘Application to the Employer for Time Off’ form is available on the LMD web pages.