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 as soon as possible and submit it by the advertised closing date.
* All course applications or queries should be emailed to LMD@unison.co.uk

Please encourage applicants to meet the course application closing date so the LMD Team know whether courses have enough applicants to make them viable.

Please also ensure any completed application forms 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.

Course fees

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. Please make your reps aware of the branch’s procedure for claiming expenses.

The relevant 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.

Branch approval

The LMD Team will seek branch approval for each applicant’s attendance on the course and would appreciate a prompt response from the branch to approval requests.

Course support for new reps

If you have not already done so, please try to allocate a buddy or mentor to support your new representative both during the course and going forward as they embark on their new role.

Confirmation of a place on a course

Course places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Provided the course still has places available, course places will be confirmed on receipt of applications, with places offered to applicants subject to branch approval.

This is a change to our previous procedure. The change has been made due to lower overall course demand and to provide applicants with the maximum possible time to arrange time off to attend courses. Every effort will be made to accommodate all course applicants who apply by the stated closing date.

Nearer the time of the course, applicants will be provided with joining instructions containing details of the course arrangements. Applicants who have not received joining instructions from the Learning & Member Development Team by two weeks after the course closing date should email LMD@unison.co.uk

Should there be insufficient applications to make a course viable, applicants will be contacted as soon as possible to confirm course cancellation and directing them to other available training.

Applicants should NOT attend a course if they have not received confirmation of their place and joining instructions. Doing so creates problems in terms of room capacity, course materials and catering arrangements and breaches the Region’s branch approval procedures. Consequently, admittance to the course can be refused.

Time off to attend workplace representative courses

Stewards, health & safety representatives and union learning representatives have a legal right to paid time off to attend relevant training, regardless of whether the course is face to face or online.

Please encourage your representative to arrange time off with their employer as soon as possible and assist them should they have any difficulties in this regard. UNISON’s latest Bargaining Guide on facility time can be found here <https://www.unison.org.uk/content/uploads/2018/06/Securing-and-defending-facility-time-for-union-reps-0222.pdf>

There is an ‘Application to the Employer for Time Off’ form available on the LMD web pages, which representatives can use to apply to their employer for time off. A copy of this form should then be kept by the branch and representative as a record of what has been agreed. You do not need to send the completed time off form to the region.

Activist positions on the membership system

Please ensure your appointed representatives are showing as such on the membership system. Failure to do so may mean your representatives miss 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.

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 when applying. 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 representative 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.