

# UNISON LEARNING AND ORGANISING SERVICES (LAOS)

## GUIDE TO COURSES FOR MEMBERS AND ACTIVISTS 2 March 2009

### Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>3</b>
Learning and Organising Services – What we do .....	3
Regional Education Programmes.....	4
Contact Us .....	4
<b>DEVELOPING OUR ACTIVISTS .....</b>	<b>5</b>
Training is accessible to everyone .....	5
Learning is fun - and it's free .....	5
Time off for training .....	5
Taking credit.....	6
UNISON ULRnet: Developing Online Training and Online Communities..	6
Online Training for Activists.....	6
<b>National Activist Training Programme .....</b>	<b>7</b>
Employment Law Courses .....	7
National Committee, National Service Group and Self-Organised Group Training .....	10
Branch Welfare Officer Training.....	11
Lay Tutor Training Scheme .....	13
Allocation of Course Places .....	13
Cancellation Policy .....	13
<b>LIFELONG LEARNING IN UNISON .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Internal Membership Development Programme .....</b>	<b>16</b>
Return to Learn.....	16
Women's Lives .....	17
Healthcare and Nursing Assistants: Professional Profile .....	17
<b>Learning Partnerships with Employers.....</b>	<b>18</b>
Learning at Work Programme.....	18
Skills for Life at Work .....	19
Study Skills Development.....	21
Open University – Learning in the Workplace: Faculty of Health and Social Care .....	23
Careconnect Learning .....	24

## UNISON Guide to Courses - Introduction

<b>Learning Discounts for Unison Members</b> .....	25
Accounting.....	26
Arts and Crafts.....	27
Business Management .....	29
Childcare and Early Years .....	32
Committee Administration.....	33
Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards.....	33
Counselling and Care Skills .....	34
GCSE's and 'A' Levels.....	35
Health and Social Care .....	36
Housing Professionals .....	38
Languages and Learning Skills.....	40
Law .....	41
Marketing.....	41
Science .....	42
Sport and Recreation Management.....	42
Open University: All Level 1 Courses .....	43
Can't find what you are looking for?.....	44
<b>UNISON's Educational Grants Scheme</b> .....	45

# INTRODUCTION

Education is at the heart of all UNISON's work. It helps members, activists and branch officers to realise their potential and provides opportunities to become more involved in UNISON activity.

UNISON provides a wide range of training and development for activists and members at national regional and branch levels. The majority of these courses are delivered in the regions through the Regional Programme. See overleaf for details of the core courses run at this level. Training for activists at National level complements this provision.

UNISON's courses are run in a friendly and supportive style, where everybody's views and experiences are valued and listened to. Thousands of members have benefited as activists and individuals. In many cases people's lives have been changed as a result of gaining new skills, practical qualifications and more confidence.

## Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) – What we do

LAOS co-ordinates education, training and lifelong learning for members. LAOS works with Regional Education Officers, Learning Development Organisers and groups across the Union, to:

See 'Developing Our Activists' section

- deliver a **National Activist Training programme** that complements regional and branch provision. It includes employment law courses, national committee skills development training, and a national programme of Branch Welfare Officer Training. LAOS also develops bespoke training programmes aimed at achieving UNISON's key objectives on issues such as equal pay, pensions and Meeting the Organising Challenge. Details of these bespoke courses are advertised separately in E-Focus.
- produce course materials for use on national, regional and branch based courses
- co-ordinate UNISON's **Lay Tutor Training Scheme** to help members and activists interested in learning how to run courses or use education methods to encourage greater involvement in branch initiatives
- develop **online training for activists and online communities.**

## UNISON Guide to Courses - Introduction

see “Lifelong Learning in UNISON” section

- campaign for **lifelong learning** - UNISON’s twin-track offer: UNISON membership development began with what is now known as the internal programme, offering member-only courses such as Return to Learn. In recent years UNISON has extended this by securing free workplace learning opportunities, including time off for training. This learning partnership programme is open to members and potential members and covers Skills for Life through to access to higher education. By supporting members and potential members into learning for personal development, we can encourage non-members to join UNISON and members to get more active in their branches. Union Learning Fund support has been instrumental in developing the growing numbers of learning reps who champion this work in their branches. The learning partnership programme requires the agreement of employers and is not available in every workplace.
- negotiate **learning discounts for members**. These include learning for leisure, vocational skills and personal development.
- administer UNISON’s **Educational Grants Scheme**.

### Regional Education Programmes


Your Regional Education Officer has details of your Regional Programme. To apply for courses, complete the form in your regional programme booklet or contact your Regional Education Officer. The following core training is available across regions:

- Stewards Training, including One Step Ahead
- Union Learning Rep training
- Health and Safety Rep Training
- Branch Officer training
- Negotiating Skills training
- Rights at Work – Introductory Law courses
- Equality Issues training including Equal Pay, Work Life Balance and Tackling Racism
- Lay Tutor training
- Strategic Campaigning
- Recruitment techniques
- Pathways into UNISON (for women members)
- Membership Development activity

Regional programmes also include courses to meet specific regional needs.

To contact Learning and Organising Services:

Email:  
[Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk)

 020 7551 1116

UNISON Learning and Organising  
Services,  
1 Mabledon Place,  
London WC1H 9AJ.

# DEVELOPING OUR ACTIVISTS

## Training is accessible to everyone

UNISON training courses are open to all activists. It is UNISON policy that no member should be deterred from applying for a course because of facilitation needs, necessary childcare or other care commitments. Please make your access requirements clear when you complete the course application form. If you have childcare or other caring responsibilities and you are attending training away from home or when you would not normally be at work UNISON will provide a crèche or cover the cost of care.

National Learning and Organising Services and Regional Education Officers work closely with self-organised groups representing women, black, disabled, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered members to ensure that all under-represented groups have access to our courses. Training is key to ensuring that all groups of members are able to participate fully in union activities, including those who work part time, or who are manual workers or low paid workers.

Training helps people challenge discriminatory attitudes and practices both within the union and the workplace. As well as running courses on specific equalities issues such as Equal Pay and Tackling Racism, we also work to ensure that equalities issues are integral to all activist and member training.

## Learning is fun - and it's free

UNISON courses are friendly and informal. They have been specially designed for adults. Training involves practical activities and working with groups of other UNISON members and activists. You don't have to listen to long lectures or take exams.

Training is stimulating and gives you a chance to step back from your job and/or your activist work to think and learn. Skills development and confidence building are important elements of most UNISON courses. You'll be surprised at what you learn on a UNISON course!

UNISON pays for the courses and course materials. Where there is a charge, it is to branches - not to you. If you are interested in finding out more - talk to your branch education co-ordinator or branch secretary.

## Paid time off to train for your union role

- Stewards, health and safety representatives and branch officers have the right to "reasonable" paid time off for training for their activist role under the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, which sets out the basic rules governing the right to paid time off for union duties.
- Union learning representatives (ULRs) gained the same statutory rights as other union representatives under the Employment Act 2002.

## UNISON Guide to Courses – Developing Our Activists

- Activists who work part-time and those who choose on-line training rather than attending a face-to-face course have the same entitlement to reasonable paid time off for training as other representatives.

Practical guidance on how the law should apply is laid down by the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) in their *Code of Practice 3: time off for trade union duties and activities* (April 2004).

<http://www.acas.org.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=274&p=0>

The ACAS code stresses the importance of employers giving paid time off for reps to be trained as soon as possible after they have been elected, for further updating training in specialist areas and where legislative change may affect industrial relations.

UNISON advises activists to give several weeks notice to employers and to provide managers with information about the course as required.

If you or your branch are experiencing difficulties in obtaining paid time off for trade union training contact your regional organiser or regional education officer – by phoning UNISON on 0845 355 0845.

### Taking credit

Some UNISON courses are accredited via the Open College Network (OCN). OCN credits are recognised by many training providers and colleges and are at the level of GCSEs or A Levels. Working towards OCN credits involves keeping a record of the activities on the training course and submitting a portfolio of evidence at the end of the course.

It's up to you whether you want to be assessed for credits or not. Much of the assessment will be done by you and the course tutor, who will be able to help you with putting together your portfolio. There are no exams.

### UNISON ULRnet: Online Communities

UNISON ULRnet, the website for ULRs in UNISON, now has over 250 registered users from across all regions who regularly access the site to exchange ideas and practical advice in the online forums. During 2008 training workshops were held in some regions which offered ULRs the opportunity to develop their ICT skills and learn more about website. The site offers an online support network where ULRs from different regions engage in discussion about lifelong learning and the organising around learning agenda and work closely with Learning and Organising Services.

ULRs need to register to join the site – contact Jane Shepherd, Learning and Workforce Development Officer, [j.shepherd@unison.co.uk](mailto:j.shepherd@unison.co.uk).

### Online Training for Activists

UNISON is continuing development and piloting of the stewards course as on-line training and plans to make this available to all regions in the near future.

*To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf), or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.*

## NATIONAL ACTIVIST TRAINING PROGRAMME

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UNISON's National Programme complements the wide range of training and development available for activists through Regional Education Programmes. The national programme includes:

### Employment Law Courses:

- Work/Life Balance
- Maternity and Parental Rights
- Disability Discrimination Law
- Contracts, Redundancy & Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) TUPE
- Unfair Dismissals & Employment Tribunals
- Race and Sex Discrimination Law

### National Committee, National Service Group And Self-Organised Group Courses:

- Smooth Running – Standing Orders Committee Training
- Speaking with Confidence
- Dealing with the Media

### Branch Welfare Officer Training

- All Branch Welfare Officers dealing with financial assistance applications or giving advice must undertake training for their role. LAOS is co-ordinating cross-regional courses to meet this need.

### Lay Tutor Training Scheme

- Initial training is run in the regions and more advanced training is available to experienced lay tutors within the national programme.

## Employment Law Courses 2008

**All National Employment Law Courses are held in central London**

**Charges:** Branches will be charged a fee per participant of £220 for 5-day courses, £110 for 2-day courses and £55 for 1-day courses. Travel, overnight accommodation, care costs and a £10 per day out-of-pocket allowance will be paid from national level.

*To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf), or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.*

## Maternity and Parental Rights

1 July: Closing date for receipt of applications: 20 May

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This course is for UNISON activists who need to advise members on maternity and parental rights or who are looking to improve on statutory rights through negotiation. It will help you understand the complex law relating to maternity rights and give you an opportunity to compare negotiated contractual agreements with statutory rights to identify opportunities for seeking improvements.

## Disability Discrimination Law

6 – 7 May: Closing date for receipt of applications: 25 March  
4 – 5 November: Closing date for receipt of applications: 23 September

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The Disability Discrimination Act has been in force since December 1996 but people still do not realise how often it applies and how it can be used to put pressure on employers to take positive steps. The course covers identifying potential cases of disability discrimination in the workplace, who the DDA applies to, how to interview members with a potential case, the extent of the employer's duties to make reasonable adjustments, the relationship between sickness issues (e.g. back injury, depression) and the DDA and recognising time-limits. It does not cover how to run a tribunal case.

## Contracts Redundancy & TUPE

20 – 24 April: Closing date for receipt of applications: 9 March  
6-10 July: Closing date for receipt of applications: 25 May  
23 – 27 November: Closing date for receipt of applications: 12 October

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This course covers Interpretation of the contract of employment; unilateral variation of contract; potential rights on redundancy; TUPE; unfair dismissal in context of changing contracts; redundancy & TUPE. It does not cover unfair dismissal in the areas of capability and misconduct.

## Unfair Dismissals and Employment Tribunals

11 – 15 May: Closing date for receipt of applications: 30 March  
5 – 9 October: Closing date for receipt of applications: 24 August

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This course covers the law of unfair dismissal: what makes a dismissal unfair; automatic unfair dismissals; the effect of the new statutory dispute resolution procedures. It follows a misconduct dismissal through every stage of preparation for a tribunal case, finishing with a mock video of the tribunal hearing. It is not expected that activists will represent at actual tribunal cases. However, by understanding the tribunal process, local activists will have a greater understanding of the necessary evidence and what is involved for the member and will be able to support those representing the member. The skills for preparing a case and representing at a tribunal will also be useful for application in internal disciplinary hearings.

*To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf) , or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.*

### **Race & Sex Discrimination Law**

9 – 13 November: Closing date for receipt of applications: 28 September

This course covers identifying potential cases of race and sex discrimination in the workplace; overview of legislation; how to interview members with potential cases; recognising time-limits; understanding the questionnaire procedure; understanding indirect race and sex discrimination; introduction to law on sexual harassment ; pregnancy, maternity and family friendly laws. It does not cover how to run a tribunal case.

### **Introduction to Work/Life Balance**

20 October: Closing date for receipt of applications: 8 September

In recent years, an ever increasing number of laws have been passed to improve work/life balance. This course provides an *introduction* to maternity leave, paternity leave, adoption leave, parental leave and dependant leave; pregnancy; the right for carers to request flexible working; rights of part-timers. Note that there are complex rules in this area. This course can only provide a general overview.

To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf) , or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.

## National Committee, National Service Group and National Self-Organised Group Training

**These national committee skills development courses will be held in central London. There is no charge for these courses.**

### Smooth Running – Standing Orders Committees (1 day course)

6 October 2009

Closing date for receipt of applications 25 August

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This course is aimed at members of UNISON Standing Orders Committees and others who are thinking of getting involved in standing orders committees and want to find out more about what they do. UNISON conferences such as National Delegate Conference, Service Group Conferences and Self-Organised Group Conferences have standing orders committees to organise conference business – the agenda and order of business - and to make sure they run smoothly.

The course will help participants to:

- be effective members of standing orders committees
- understand the role and functions of these committees
- identify what makes an effective standing orders committee
- understand how the conference agenda and order of business are decided upon

### Speaking with Confidence (1 day course)

15 October 2009

Closing date for receipt of applications 3 September

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This course is for activists who speak, or wish to speak, in public. It covers:

- Planning and Preparation
- Practice
- Using presentation aids
- Body language
- Handling nerves

### Dealing with the Media (1 day course)

22 October 2009

Closing date for receipt of applications 10 September

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This course is for members of National Committees, National Service Group Committees and Self-Organised Groups who want to promote news about union activity in the media. It covers:

- What makes news?
- Producing effective press releases
- How the media works
- Developing a media strategy
- Interviewing techniques

*To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf) , or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.*

## Branch Welfare Officer Training

Since 2007, it is a requirement that branch welfare officers (BWOs) providing advice and dealing with applications must attend and complete training for their role. In 2009 training will consist of three modules, split between a one day introduction and a two day follow-on module aimed at providing the specific skills needed. All three modules must be completed to enable you to carry out your role.

**Part one** will provide new BWOs with an induction to their role and will enable them to:

- Understand their role and the confidentiality it involves.
- Understand the UNISON Welfare charity structure and staff responsibilities.
- Understand the application process.
- Understand the key areas which welfare can assist members.

**Parts two/three** are follow-on modules and will further develop BWOs, enabling them to:

- Develop influencing skills.
- Develop communication styles and practice active listening.
- Promote Welfare to managers and as a part of recruitment drives.
- Practice presentation skills.
- Understand the importance of promoting and publicising UNISON Welfare.
- Handle problems in an assertive manner.
- Review their work

Courses will be delivered on a cross-regional basis and new welfare officers should sign up for all three modules when applying for their induction course. Generally, part one must be completed before undertaking parts two/three. BWOs who live nearer to another course location than their regional one can apply for that course. BWOs who are unable to attend their regional course can apply for another date and we will accommodate this where possible.

Course dates and venues are set out overleaf.

*To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf) , or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.*

UNISON Guide to Courses – Developing Our Activists

	<b>INDUCTION – PART ONE</b> Roles, systems and procedures One-day course		<b>PART TWO &amp; THREE</b> Promotion, Communication, Publicity and Influence Two-day residential course	
<b>Region</b>	<b>Course Dates</b>	<b><i>Closing Date for applications</i></b>	<b>Course Dates</b>	<b><i>Closing date for applications</i></b>
<b>N.Ireland, S. West, Cymru/Wales West Midlands</b>	17 March 2009 Bristol	4 February 2009	29/30 April 2009 Bristol	18 March 2009
<b>Northern, North West, Scotland, Yorks. &amp; Humbs</b>	24 March 2009 Manchester	10 February 2009	19/20 May 2009 Manchester	7 April 2009
<b>London South East Eastern</b>	30 June 2009 London	19 May 2009	15/16 July 2009 London	3 June 2009

A further course is being held for welfare officers who completed the introductory training at other events in the past few years and who now wish to complete the remaining modules.

<b>Promotion, communication, publicity and influence – two day residential course (PART TWO/THREE)</b>	
<b>Course Date</b>	<b><i>Closing Date for applications</i></b>
16/17 September 2009 Manchester	5 August 2009

**Charges:** Branches will be charged a fee of £110.00 for the two day course and £55.00 for the one day course. Accommodation, travel and care costs will be paid nationally, as well as a £10.00 per day out of pocket allowance.

To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf), or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.

## Lay Tutor Training Scheme

Tutor training is aimed at members and activists interested in learning how to run courses or use education methods to encourage greater involvement in branch initiatives.

A lay tutor is a UNISON member who has been trained to use education methods to run branch-based training and organising. Anyone who is interested in learning more about how to use education methods is encouraged to apply - no previous qualifications are necessary!

The training, which is accredited by the Open College Network, is in two stages: Stage 1 is run in regions, and involves a 5-day course, a practice tutoring session and an Equalities Module.

The Stage 2 course is run at national level and is also a five-day course.

If you are interested in training as a lay tutor, contact your Regional Education Officer - see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) or phone UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845.

## Allocation of Course Places

In order to ensure the effective application of UNISON Principles of Proportionality and Fair Representation, places are allocated on national courses as soon as possible after the closing date instead of on a first come first served basis.

In the event of courses being oversubscribed, selections will be made on the basis of achieving Fair Representation and Proportionality, as set out in UNISON Rules, and will also ensure a fair spread of participants from regions and sectors where appropriate.

In-depth employment law courses supplement the range of training offered at regional level. They are aimed at experienced activists and this is also taken into account when offering places on these courses.

## Cancellation Policy

Where places on any National Activist Training Programme course are cancelled within two weeks of the start of the course without good reason, a cancellation charge of 50% of the course cost will be levied.

Where places are cancelled within one week of the start of the course, the cancellation charge will be 100% of the course cost.

*To apply for any of these courses, complete the **National Activist Training Course Application Form**, see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3049.pdf) , or email [Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk](mailto:Learning&OrganisingEnquiries@unison.co.uk) if you need a copy sent to you.*

## LIFELONG LEARNING IN UNISON

UNISON recognises the importance of learning to the quality of our members' lives, in the workplace and elsewhere. We are committed to working with our learning provider partners to make learning a part of working and to turning that learning to the advantage of our members and the services they provide.

Whether it is brushing up basic learning skills, developing confidence, studying to further a career or just wanting to learn more about personal interests, UNISON wants to play its part in helping people realise their ambitions. We are committed to providing learning opportunities to members without unnecessary entry requirements and, where possible, in the workplace rather than having to travel to college. We also support the principle that public services are best delivered by qualified staff, and try to ensure that all members have access to appropriate qualifications.

Many UNISON members come to realise that the formal educational system has not been a success for them; or that work and domestic responsibilities have prevented them from developing their full potential. UNISON aims to give all members the opportunity to get back into learning, develop new skills, build self-confidence and experience the enjoyment of learning and the satisfaction of achievement.

Lifelong learning is also about enabling branches to develop, with new activists and members. Our evidence shows that union learning reps are playing a critical role in encouraging colleagues back into learning, and in raising our profile and reaching people who have not previously joined a trade union or become involved in union activities. To find out more about organising around learning in your branch, see the UNISON Branch Guide to Lifelong Learning [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/14459.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/14459.pdf).

### What is available

UNISON, in partnership with leading educational institutions offers a variety of learning opportunities in both vocational and non-vocational fields:

- **UNISON's Internal Membership Development Programme:** this range of 'Introduction to Study' courses is available through UNISON regions and is offered to members only.
- **UNISON's Learning Partnerships with Employers:** using learning providers with whom UNISON has an ongoing relationship, learning is delivered in partnership with the employer and time off or protected learning time is secured for learners. These schemes are open to members and non-members. Programmes require agreement between UNISON and the employer and so are not available in every workplace.

There are currently three main strands to the employer partnership programme:

- Learning at Work Programme: usually delivered in conjunction with the Workers Educational Association (WEA).
- Open University: Faculty of Health and Social Care and Openings courses
- Careconnect Learning: a range of courses particularly around the health and social care area

## UNISON Guide to Courses – Lifelong Learning in UNISON

- **Learning Discounts For UNISON Members :** UNISON has negotiated discounts for members only on a variety of vocational education, leisure interests such as arts and crafts, and personal development courses.
- **UNISON's Educational Grants Scheme:** LAOS operates a small grants scheme for members.

## INTERNAL MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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UNISON's general membership development programme forms part of our Learning at Work scheme. Courses via the Internal Programme are open to members only. All costs are met by UNISON Learning and Organising Services, including teaching, travel, accommodation, stationery and reasonable dependent care. All study is in the student's own time.

The courses are targeted at people without qualifications and cover key communication and study skills including IT, and confidence building. Delivery is through tutor-led group study, usually evening classes, and self study. Each course includes one weekend school. Groups are normally made up of 10 -15 people.

The courses available are 'Return to Learn' and 'Women's Lives' and both are delivered regionally. Publicity is organised, based on branch membership, according to plans agreed between the regional education officer, Learning and Organising Services and the course provider, usually the Workers Educational Association. Members interested in either of these courses should be put in contact with the regional education officer. Where programmes are planned, members will be invited to information meetings. Some courses will be organised within single branches with the branch playing a full part in planning and publicising the programme. In these instances, members should be put in touch with the branch's course contact.

### Return to Learn

This course is suitable for those with few or no qualifications and provides an effective stepping stone into vocational and professional training with a strong personal development element.

*Who can attend:* Members only.

*Content:* Personal development and progression  
Writing skills  
Researching skills  
Using number skills in a project  
Analytical skills  
Using your computer ( where IT facilities are available)

*Credits:* Accredited through the Open College Network (OCN) at Levels 1, 2 & 3.

*Delivery* Usually 12-14 study group sessions (arranged in early evenings) and one residential weekend. All study is in student's own time.

## Women's Lives

Designed as part of UNISON's internal programme, this course is exclusively for women who have experienced little, if any, recent education. It aims to build confidence as well as develop study skills in reading and comprehension, note-taking, writing, analysing and basic research. It has a strong personal development focus with an emphasis on co-operation and mutual support and can provide a stepping stone into vocational and professional training.

<i>Who can attend:</i>	UNISON members only
<i>Content:</i>	Confidence building Women's experiences at work, in family life and in the community Images of women Study Skills in reading and comprehension , note-taking, writing, analysing and basic research.
<i>Credits:</i>	Accredited through the Open College Network (OCN) – 6 credits at Levels 1, 2 & 3
<i>Delivery:</i>	Thirty hours study organised flexibly as eight two-hour study groups and one residential weekend. All study is in the student's own time.

## Healthcare and Nursing Assistants: Professional Profile

**UNISON and The Nursing Times have developed a Professional Profile, especially for Nursing and Healthcare Assistants.**

The Professional Portfolio will enable you to:

- Value your learning, both formal and informal
- Consider and use the skills and knowledge throughout your life
- Use these skills and knowledge positively to shape your future career
- Identify further skills or knowledge you may require to pursue your objectives

It will also provide tips on:

- Writing a curriculum vitae
- Applying for jobs
- Improving writing and study skills

### How to Order

Email [stockorders@unison.co.uk](mailto:stockorders@unison.co.uk) to order a copy. Remember to include your name, your UNISON membership no. and your address for delivery. There is no charge for this item.

## LEARNING PARTNERSHIPS WITH EMPLOYERS

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UNISON has an impressive track record in developing workplace learning opportunities and promoting activities to engage employees in learning. We have established learning partnerships with around 800 employers in the public services and essential industries and trained over 3,000 Union Learning Representatives. ULRs operate in the workplace, working closely with their branches to ensure that learners are encouraged and supported by employers, and to help learners engage and achieve. ULRs have statutory rights to time off for training and to undertake their duties.

UNISON also works closely with employer organisations, government agencies and funding bodies to ensure that learning policy and provision effectively tackles barriers to participation and addresses the needs and circumstances of both workers and their employers.

Partnership working involves employers agreeing to support learning by providing resources such as funding, time-off for learning, access to IT facilities, etc., with UNISON contributing by providing readymade learning programmes, brokered agreements with learning providers and support through ULRs. These schemes are open to members and non-members. The programmes require agreement between UNISON and the employer and so are not available in every workplace.

Ideally employer learning partnerships should be underpinned by formal Union-Employer Learning Agreements although we can begin by working informally with some employers. Indeed informal partnership working can often lead to formal learning agreements being established.

There are currently three main strands to the employer partnership programme:

- **Learning at Work** : usually delivered in conjunction with the Workers Educational Association (WEA). This includes Skills for Life provision and study skills development.
- **Open University**: courses from the Faculty of Health and Social Care, the OU Business School and also Openings courses.
- **Careconnect Learning**: A range of courses particularly around the health and social care area

Sector specific programmes have been developed for the local government and health sectors. Programmes can also be tailored to suit other sectors. Contact Learning and Organising Services for more information.

Details of the programmes available through workplace learning partnerships are set out below.

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

## Learning at Work Programme

The Learning at Work Programme builds on over 15 years of activities by UNISON, with the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) as its educational partner, in providing broad educational opportunities for members and bargaining with employers to open up lifelong learning opportunities and support in employment. Throughout, priority has been given to involving those with few, if any, educational qualifications and over the years, thousands of UNISON members and other public service employees have benefited from the Programme.

The programme includes Skills for Life and Study Skills Development.

It is flexible, responsive to different groups and needs, and open to employees to enter and leave at different points and progress in various directions. At the same time it is a coherent programme with key common features which aim to:

- develop learning skills and build confidence and interest in learning
- provide a friendly and supportive way of learning with experienced adult educators
- recognise learners' strengths and identify areas for improvement
- combine group work with individual attention and support
- promote anti-discriminatory practice
- relate to different aspects of learners' lives
- help learners to progress in their employment, trade union and social lives

The Learning at Work Programme encourages the achievement of qualifications and progression into further education and occupational development. All parts of it can be delivered within the workplace at times and venues convenient for the learner and the employing organisation. It is usually delivered as a partnership between UNISON, the UK's largest trade union, and the Workers' Educational Association (WEA) the UK's largest provider of education and training for adults.

## Skills for Life at Work

Skills for Life have been defined as having the ability to

*"..read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function and progress at work and in society in general."*

In other words, it is not about people having no literacy, language or numeracy skills at all.

Literacy, language and numeracy skills are banded into levels – **Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2.**

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

**Entry Level** has been described as ‘survival’ level skills. It means you can:

- understand the main points of simple, familiar texts;
- write your name and address accurately and complete basic forms;
- do simple number tasks, including change to £20 and basic time-telling;

**Level 1** is recognised as equivalent to GCSE grade D – G. It means you can:

- read and understand simple health and safety information, posters and leaflets
- write personal information and other information on application forms reasonably accurately;
- do basic number calculations accurately, including money calculations, telling the time, simple weighing and measuring.

**Level 2** is the level most employers want as the baseline for their employees. It is recognised as an equivalent to GCSE levels A\* - C. In practical terms it means you can:

- read and understand most health and safety information;
- complete an accident report form accurately;
- do a wide range of number calculations including decimals, percentages, area and volume.

The National Certificates in Adult Literacy and numeracy are equivalent to GCSE grades D-G at Level 1, and A\*-C at Level 2. There is no charge for these National Tests.

In today’s changing world, staff at all levels may need training and support to meet the demands of a modern workplace. Our approach to Skills for Life offers employers strategies to develop and embed a learning culture which sees literacy, language and numeracy skills as opening doors to personal and professional development.

Individuals who do not have English or maths qualifications are often those whose early educational needs were not well served. They will have a great deal to gain from courses that develop their self-confidence along with their English and/or maths and general learning skills. The Skills for Life at Work provision addresses these factors. It combines the strengths of group learning, drawing on adults’ occupational social and life skills to address individual learning needs.

We can:

- analyse and report on learning needs at a departmental level
- raise awareness of Skills for Life and the importance of lifelong learning through targeting key personnel
- reach learners who see education and training as having little to offer them
- build confidence and motivation to learn
- assess individual needs
- provide customised courses as preparation for NVQs and other occupational training, mapped to national standards
- provide opportunities for learners to gain national adult qualifications in English and maths

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

The following courses can be provided free of charge:

- **Communication @ Work**

A Skills for Life course designed to support the literacy and numeracy requirements of core NVQ Levels 1 & 2 units relevant to care, cleaning and catering. The courses will prepare learners for the national tests leading towards a recognised qualification in Adult Literacy/Numeracy at Levels 1 & 2. Understanding NVQs and preparing for the tests are part of the programmes of learning.  
(30 hours literacy/30 hours numeracy)

- **Skills Essentials – MRSA**

This free course for staff working in healthcare aims to develop discussion, writing skills and study skills entirely in the context of MRSA. Communication and study skills are developed through discussion, reading, writing and study of hospital-acquired infections. As well as improving their literacy skills, learners improve their knowledge and understanding of the causes and prevention of MRSA.

The course includes an opportunity to take the National Certificate in Adult Literacy.  
(A 30-hour course)

- **Success in English at Work**

Designed for employees whose first language is not English, this course is for those who are ready to take a qualification in English for Speakers of Other Languages at Entry Level. The course can be taken as 3 units of 20 hours each, leading to unit certification in: Reading, Writing or Speaking and Listening. Alternatively, the course can be delivered as a 60 hour course, integrating all the skills and leading to the National; Certificate in ESOL Skills for Life.  
(60 hours for the full qualification or can be delivered as three 20 hours units)

## Study Skills Development

The following courses are available:

### Learning for You

- A shortened version of the award winning Return to Learn Programme provided in partnership with employers
- Suitable for those with few or no professional qualifications
- Appeals to a range of staff with varying aims: vocational, educational and personal development
- Provides an effective stepping stone into vocational and professional training

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

## UNISON Guide to Courses – Lifelong Learning in UNISON

- This course can be customised to meet learning needs of sector groups of employees.

Content:	Personal Development and Progression Writing Skills Researching Skills Analytical skills Using Your Computer (where IT facilities are available)
Credits:	Accredited through the Open College Network (OCN) at Levels 1, 2 & 3. Learners also have the opportunity to sample and (if appropriate) to take the National Certificate in Adult Literacy.
Delivery:	Delivered over 30 hours in the workplace at times convenient to the individual and the organisation. Study groups supported by an experienced adult education tutor. Some independent study in the learner's own time required.
Fees:	£1,200 for a group of up to 12 learners

### Improve Your Study Skills

- Especially designed for people working within the NHS or in social care who are preparing to undertake professional qualifications
- Suitable for those who want to study for a professional qualification and need to improve their academic study skills
- For people considering career development/change

Content:	Perspectives on Health and Social Care Finding Information about a Subject Essay Writing
Credits:	Accredited through the Open College Network (OCN) Nine credits at Levels 2 & 3 If learners do not already hold a national qualification in English (e.g. GCSE) they will have the opportunity to sample the National Certificate in Adult Literacy and can go on to take the Certificate.
Delivery:	Delivered over 30 hours in the workplace at times convenient to the individual and the organisation. Study groups supported by an experienced adult education tutor. Some independent study in the learner's own time required.
Fees:	£1,200 for a group of up to 12 learners

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

## Open University – Learning in the Workplace Faculty of Health and Social Care

UNISON has been working with the OU Faculty of Health and Social Care to bring learning opportunities into workplaces and take advantage of the resources the workplace and employers can provide. We have developed versions of An Introduction to Health and Social Care (K101) and Openings - Understanding Health, Understanding Management and Understanding Children, for use in the workplace. We aim to organise learning partnerships with employers for Openings and an Introduction to Health and Social Care based on successful partnerships already running throughout the UK.

These programmes require agreement between UNISON and the employer and so are not available in every workplace.

### An Introduction to Health and Social Care (K101)

The K101 programme provides the knowledge, values and skills needed in care work of all kinds. It is suitable for non-traditional learners in the sector with few or no qualifications who are seeking the opportunity to study for a vocationally relevant qualification.

Credits:	The programme offers accredited learning at Higher Education Level 1 with 60 credits awarded on completion.
Delivery:	The course is usually provided through open and distance learning, but in workplace delivery students attend regular study groups. In some cases UNISON organises special skills support.
Fees:	£549 per student

### Openings Programme

The Openings programme of short introductory courses offered by the OU gives learners an accessible introduction to HE level learning. The courses help build confidence, develop study skills and prepare learners to work successfully at degree level.

Courses include: Understanding Children; Understanding Society; Understanding Health; Understanding Management; Making Sense of the Arts; Understanding the Environment; Starting with Maths; Starting with Psychology.

Credits:	Successful completion of an Openings course carries 10 Higher Education credits at Level 1.
Delivery:	The courses are usually provided through open and distance learning, but in workplace delivery students attend three study groups.
Fees:	£110 per student. (Tutorials for work-based groups cost an extra £1,000.)

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

## Careconnect Learning

Careconnect Learning, a UNISON learning initiative, is a national provider of learning and development for the Health and Social Care sectors. Through the UNISON/employer learning partnership model it can offer a range of NVQs and other accredited awards to employees in care homes, domiciliary care, sheltered housing, day care or hospitals. See below for a summary of the courses available.

Funded learning is available for learners who meet with LSC eligibility criteria. Fees will be charged to employers for all other candidates.

Careconnect Learning is the sector provider for *Train to Gain*. Delivery uses a blend of e-learning programmes supported by specialist tutors and assessors. Courses are delivered in the workplace.

### Health and Care courses

- NVQ Level 2 in Health and Social Care
- NVQ Level 3 in Health and Social Care
- NVQ Level 4 in Health and Social Care
- Leadership and Management in Care (LMC)
- A1 Assessor award

### NVQ portfolio includes:

- NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance
- NVQ Level 4 in Advice and Guidance
- NVQ Level 3 in Learning and Development
- NVQ Level 4 in Learning and Development
- NVQ Level 2 in Business Administration
- NVQ Level 3 in Business Administration
- NVQ Level 2 in Customer Service
- NVQ Level 3 in Customer Service

### Skills for Life courses

- National Tests for Adult Literacy and Numeracy. Levels 1, 2 and Entry Level 3.
- Skills for Life screening and full skills diagnostics.
- ESOL Training
- Certificate in Adult Learner support Level 2

### Computer courses

- NVQ Level 2 in ITQ
- NVQ Level 3 in ITQ
- Word Processing - Level 1 - 3
- Using Your Computer – Level 1 - 3
- Spreadsheets (MS Excel) – Level 1 - 3
- Databases (MS Access) - Level 1 - 3
- Electronic Communication (MS Outlook) – Level 1 - 3
- Touch Typing course. Keyboard A – Z (KAZ)

To find out more about **setting up a workplace learning partnership** with your employer, contact your regional Learning Development Organiser – see [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) for contact details.

## LEARNING DISCOUNTS FOR UNISON MEMBERS

This part of the guide outlines learning opportunities for leisure, pleasure and vocational skills where UNISON has negotiated special discounts on standard fees for members.

Each of these **distance learning** courses and study packages are provided by established educational organisations in which you can have full confidence. Be sure to claim your discount when enrolling by enclosing a copy of your membership card.

People join UNISON because they know they will get the best possible protection and representation in the workplace, as well as good learning opportunities. If you are not already a member, see [www.unison.org.uk/join/index.asp](http://www.unison.org.uk/join/index.asp) for the benefits of membership and to download an application form. Alternatively contact your local branch or regional office or call UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845.

**Below is a summary of the learning discounts available to UNISON members.**

<b>Accounting</b>	National Extension College courses: save 10%
<b>Arts and Crafts</b>	Open College of the Arts courses: Save £50
<b>Business Management</b>	Open University - Business School: Save 10% on all standard course fees
<b>Childcare and Early Years</b>	National Extension College courses: save 10%
<b>Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards</b>	National Extension College courses: Save 30% - 35% on the standard course fees
<b>Committee Administration</b>	Provider under review - To be advised
<b>Counselling and Care Skills</b>	National Extension College courses: save 10%
<b>GCSEs and 'A' Levels</b>	National Extension College courses: save 10%
<b>Health and Social Care</b>	Open University - Faculty of Health and Social Care: Save 10% on standard course fees
<b>Housing Professionals</b>	Sheffield Hallam University:) Save £500 - £675 per year on standard course fees
<b>Languages and Learning Skills</b>	Accelerated Learning Systems Courses: Save 20%
<b>Law</b>	ILEX Tutorial College courses: Save 10%
<b>Marketing</b>	National Extension College courses: save 10%
<b>Open University: All Level 1 Courses</b>	10% discount on all OU Level 1 Courses for UNISON members
<b>Science</b>	Open University Science Courses: 10% discount available
<b>Sport and Recreation Management</b>	National Extension College courses: save up to 35% on course fees

## Accounting

An understanding of accounting can help you develop your management skills and give you a broader view of business activity. The following courses are offered by the National Extension College (NEC) with a **10% discount** to UNISON members:

### Accounting for Excellence NVQ Level 2

This course covers a wide range of accounting and business administration skills for the AAT Foundation and S/NVQ Level 2 Accounting qualifications.

### Accounting for Excellence NVQ Level 3

Accounting for Excellence Level 3 offers a route to AAT Intermediate Stage, and S/NVQ Level 3 Accounting. You will cover a range of accounting topics and develop accompanying information technology skills through this course by a structured combination of coursework, practical tasks, activities and full assessment opportunities - all with NEC tutorial support.

### Computerised Book-keeping

Develop computerised book-keeping skills and keep track of finances using Sage Instant Accounts.

#### **To claim your discount:**

Full details of these courses are available on the NEC website: [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk) .  
Alternatively contact them for more information or a copy of their Guide to Courses.

To apply for these courses **contact the NEC** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN.

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## Arts and Crafts: Open College of the Arts

The Open College of the Arts, an independent educational charity affiliated to The Open University and the University of Glamorgan, caters for those who would like to develop their artistic abilities but who wish to or need to work mainly at home.

OCA offers specially written course materials to guide students through a programme of activities lasting up to two years, with regular assistance from tutors who are all practicing artists, designers or writers. Courses are available with either postal tuition or tuition on a one-to-one basis with a personal tutor. Courses can be taken by complete beginners or those who already have some experience but are looking for a more disciplined and wide ranging approach.

Brief details of the courses are set out below with more information available from the OCA website or by contacting them.

### Fees

Course fees range from £450 – 580. **UNISON members and their families are entitled to a £50 discount on OCA tutored courses - enclose a copy of your membership card when enrolling.**

For more information on courses and **to enrol on these courses contact the OCA:**

Open College of the Arts,  
The Michael Young Arts Centre,  
Unit 1B Redbrook Business Park,  
Wilthorpe Road,  
Barnsley S75 1JN

Email: [open.arts@ukonline.co.uk](mailto:open.arts@ukonline.co.uk)  
Website: [www.oca-uk.com](http://www.oca-uk.com)  
Tel: 0800 731 2116

<b>Fine Art Courses:</b> Art and Design Calligraphy Drawing Painting, Printmaking Sculpture Textiles	This wide range of Fine Art courses at various levels will appeal to anyone wanting to begin, or to experiment further with a diverse range of methods and media.
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UNISON Guide to Courses – Lifelong Learning in UNISON

<p>Composing Music (Levels 1, 2 &amp; 3)</p>	<p>These courses will introduce to you to the language of music giving you the confidence to express yourself by writing or performing. These courses are innovative in their use of tutorials and audio-taped responses and establish a close dialogue with a tutor who interacts with you directly on tape.</p>
<p>Garden Design Interior Design</p>	<p>These courses will help you to appreciate good design or to redesign and transform your home or garden. They provide sound introductions to principle, practice and history and allow you to go on to further study.</p>
<p>Digital Arts Photography</p>	<p>This group of courses is offered at a range of levels and has something for beginners and the more experienced who want to take things further.</p>
<p>Understanding Art (Levels 1-3)</p>	<p>These courses have been written to encourage you to look at and respond to art with a greater depth of understanding and appreciation. You are encouraged to respond to art not only by writing about it but also by means of sketches, diagrams or photographs.</p>
<p>Creative Writing (Levels 1, 2 &amp; 3)</p>	<p>This range of courses is designed to bring you to life as a writer. The real skill in writing lies in observing people, action and places and bringing them forward to your readers. Matching close observation to verbal skills and imagination, these courses help you to develop your personal style and to believe in yourself as a writer.</p>

## Business Management

### Open University Business School

The Open University Business School, the business and management faculty of the Open University, is the largest business school in Europe. **Through the partnership between UNISON Learning and Organising Services and the OU Business School, UNISON members studying as individuals and paying their own fees are now entitled to a 10% discount on OU Business School courses at all Levels.**

Choosing from dozens of courses you can work towards a professional qualification or study a single module to refresh or develop a particular skill. Some courses can count towards a qualification if you choose to continue with your studies.

### How to claim your discount

UNISON members paying their own fees will be eligible for a 10% discount. Unfortunately, you cannot claim this discount when registering online. **Please ring the Open University's OUBS team on 08700 100311.** Remember to tell them you are a UNISON member and you are claiming a discount.

When you receive your registration pack you need to complete the registration agreement and return it together with a copy of your UNISON membership card and remaining fee payment.

### Course Fees

Course fee information and details of OU study areas can be found at [http://www3.open.ac.uk/courses/classifications/business\\_and\\_management\\_courses.shtm](http://www3.open.ac.uk/courses/classifications/business_and_management_courses.shtm)

You are eligible to pay a UK course fee if:

- You are able to confirm that you have been living in the European Economic Area (EEA) for at least 3 years before the start of the course; and
- You will be living in the UK for the length of your course or you will be temporarily or unavoidably outside the UK (for a period of no more than 3 years) but are still liable for UK income tax (or are a dependent of someone who lives in the UK or is liable for UK income tax).

### Other help with funding

The government and the Open University fund a range of financial support services to help you with the costs of studying. Around 20,000 OU students each year receive financial support to include:

- help with paying course fees
- help with paying study expenses (such as books and equipment)
- help for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties.

If you have seen an OU course which interests you, you can check your eligibility for a grant by logging on to <http://www.open.ac.uk/coursefinance> .

## Preparing for study

If you are unsure about Open University study and would prefer to “dip your toe in the water” before making a financial and time commitment, why not start with one of the OU’s short **Openings** courses? One of these, *Understanding Management*, is an ideal preparation for study with the OU Business School but other courses include *Understanding Health*, *Understanding Children*, *Understanding Society*, *Breakthrough to Maths, Science and Technology*, and *Making Sense of the Arts*.

**N.B. THE UNISON DISCOUNT ARRANGEMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE OPENINGS PROGRAMME.**

To find out more about *Openings* courses and enrol, ring the Student Registration & Enquiry Service on 0870 333 4340.

## Courses available from the Open University Business School

The main Level 1 introductory courses are summarised below. For full details of all courses and fees see

[http://www3.open.ac.uk/courses/classifications/business\\_and\\_management\\_courses.shtm](http://www3.open.ac.uk/courses/classifications/business_and_management_courses.shtm) .:

### **B120: An Introduction to Business Studies**

This course will introduce you to the different internal and external elements of a business and help you to understand the context in which a business operates. You will explore the common aims and characteristics of business and what makes them different. Business structures, cultures and functions are identified and the political, social, economic, technological and ethical considerations affecting business are introduced. The course consists of five study books: What is a business?; An introduction to human resources in business; An introduction to marketing in business; An introduction to accounting and finance in business; Other ways of looking at business, plus a Study Companion to guide you through the course.

Completion of B120 takes students half way to the award of the OU Business School’s Certificate in Business Studies. The other half can be made up from a range of optional modules.

### **B121: Managing in the Workplace**

If you’ve completed vocational study at level 3 (e.g. NVQ Level 3 in management), and you want to move into undergraduate study, this course is for you. You’ll read about management ideas, and undertake activities that build on the learning and skills that you already have. You will also use your own workplace experiences to develop both an academic understanding of management and valuable study skills. By the end of the course, you will have demonstrated these developments by writing about management and by reflecting upon your own skills as a learner.

### **BU130: Working and Learning**

If you are in employment and want to develop your career by using work-based learning at university level this course is for you. You’ll develop a personal learning contract and be guided through an online course in how to learn through work. Based on your workplace experiences, you’ll develop your skills in: planning, searching,

information handling, critical thinking and analysis. By the end of the course, you will have demonstrated how you have developed your learning by reflecting upon your own skills as a learner and should have a clear view of how you may further your studies.

## Childcare and Early Years

If you already work with children, a new qualification can help you progress in your career. If you want to gain a qualification in working with children but are put off by the idea of going to college every week, distance learning with the NEC will provide you with the same qualifications as college courses. **UNISON members are entitled to a 10% discount on these courses.**

### **Certificate in Children's Care, Learning & Development Level 2**

Develop the skills and knowledge you need to work with children in a variety of settings within a supervised role.

### **Certificate in Children's Care, Learning & Development Level 3**

Ideal for people working, or wanting to work, in settings or services whose main purpose is children's care, learning and development.

### **Certificate in Pre-School Practice**

If you want to start working at a pre-school, you can get started with NEC's Certificate in Pre-School Practice.

### **Diploma in Pre-school Practice**

This popular and flexible course has been revised to meet the new standards.

### **Diploma in Playwork**

The Diploma in Playwork is the ideal distance learning course for anyone working in play settings.

### **Certificate in Professional Development**

This course, for experienced childcare workers, will help you to develop and extend your specialist knowledge.

### **To enrol on courses and claim your discount:**

Full details of these courses are available on the NEC website: [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk) .  
Alternatively contact them for more information or a copy of their Guide to Courses.

To apply for these courses **contact the NEC** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN.

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## Committee Administration (Democratic Services)

This is a combined distance learning and residential course for local government committee staff. It will improve your knowledge and understanding of democratic services and legislation as well as developing your communications skills and working practice. You must have at least 6 months experience of working in committee administration to benefit from this course.

**Course delivery arrangements are under review and an update will be posted on [www.unison.org.uk/laos](http://www.unison.org.uk/laos) as soon as this is agreed.**

## Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards

The Diploma in Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards (DCATS) is an ideal way to develop your career in trading standards, consumer affairs or customer services and UNISON members are entitled to **30% - 35% discount** on distance learning course fees.

To gain the Diploma, you need to prepare a portfolio of evidence for each stage as well as passing the exams. NEC is not a portfolio assessment centre, but you can get guidance on completing this part of the qualification from the Trading Standards Institute at [www.tsi.org.uk](http://www.tsi.org.uk).

The NEC offers qualifications for those who wish to progress their career in Trading Standards:

### **FCATS: Foundation Certificate in Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards**

This course will help you to prepare thoroughly for the Foundation Certificate in Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards (FCATS) examinations.

This is the first stage in gaining the full Diploma in Consumer Affairs (DCATS).

### **Diploma in Consumer Affairs and Trading Standards (DCATS)**

To gain the full DCATS qualification, you must first successfully complete FCATS, then take four of the above service delivery modules and complete the portfolio.

### **Certificates of Competence**

To gain a Certificate of Competence, you must complete the Legal Systems module from FCATS plus one of the service delivery modules, including the relevant portfolio element.

Download a detailed course information sheet from the NEC at : [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk) .  
Alternatively contact them for more information or a copy of their Guide to Courses.

### **To claim your discount:**

To enrol **contact the NEC** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN.

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## Counselling and Care Skills

Counselling is an immensely rewarding field and can bring huge benefits to you and your career, and to the people you work with.

The National Extension College offers a choice of courses to help you develop your skills and achieve nationally recognised qualifications. **UNISON members are entitled to a discount of 10% on the normal fees charged.**

Courses available are:

- A Taste of Counselling
- Continuing Care
- Counselling Theory
- Developing Counselling Skills
- Introducing Counselling Skills
- Nutrition Awareness: Adults
- Understanding Loss and Grief

Full details of these courses are available on the NEC website: [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk) .  
Alternatively contact them for more information or a copy of their Guide to Courses.

### **To claim your discount:**

To apply for a course **contact the NEC** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN.

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## GCSE's and 'A' Levels

The National Extension College provides the widest range of GCSE and 'A' level courses available by distance learning. You can enrol on these courses at any time of the year, and you have up to two years to complete your chosen subject(s). UNISON recommends this range of courses as providing an excellent opportunity to study for GCSE and 'A' level qualifications at home. See below for details of courses available:

**UNISON members are entitled a to 10% discount on the standard fees for any NEC course.**

### GCSEs

The following GCSE subjects are available through NEC:  
Biology; Business Studies; Chemistry; Child Development; English;  
English Literature; French; Geography; History; Human Physiology and Health;  
ICT; Law; Maths (Foundation & Higher); Physics; Psychology; Science;  
Sociology; Spanish.

### A levels

A levels are usually taken as a two-year course. There are two parts to an A level:

- Advanced Subsidiary (AS): The AS level is half an A level and is usually studied in the first year of a full A level course. It is also a qualification in its own right.
- Advanced (A2): The A2 builds on the AS level and is examined at the end of the second year of an A level course.

The following A level subjects are available through NEC:  
Accounting; Biology; Business Studies; Classical Civilisation; Critical Thinking;  
Economics; English Language and Literature; English Literature; Environmental  
Studies; French; Geography; Government and Politics; History; Law; Maths;  
Philosophy; Psychology; Religious Studies; Sociology;

Full details of these courses are available on the NEC website: [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk) .  
Alternatively contact them for more information or a copy of their Guide to Courses.

#### **To claim your discount:**

To apply for a course **contact the NEC directly** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## Health and Social Care

### Open University: Faculty of Health and Social Care

The Faculty of Health and Social Care's courses offer you the opportunity to develop or update your knowledge and skills or gain a qualification in a subject related to your work or personal interest.

**UNISON members paying their own fees can obtain a discount of 10% on the normal fees charged by the Open University for courses in the Health and Social Care programme at Levels 1, 2 and 3.**

One course, Understanding Health and Social Care (K101), is particularly recommended for people seeking to access social work or nurse qualifying courses. See the course summary at the end of this article.

The courses carry credit points towards the Open University's BA/BSc degree programme, and those at level 2 also count towards the Diploma in Health and Social Welfare. The course levels 1 and 2 are equivalent to the level of study undertaken in the first and second/third years of study at a conventional university. Level 3 is equivalent to the final year of studying for an honours degree.

All of the courses can make a significant contribution to the continuing professional development of health care practitioners, and many are mapped against the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework.

### How to claim your discount

To enrol or obtain more information, **ring the Courses Information and Registration Centre on 0870 333 4340**. To claim your discount remember to tell them you are a UNISON member and have your membership number handy.

When you receive your registration pack you need to complete the registration agreement and return it together with a copy of your UNISON membership card and remaining fee payment. The discount arrangement also applies to courses offered by the OU's Business School.

### Course Fees

Course fee information and details of OU study areas can be found at [www.openuniversity.co.uk/unison](http://www.openuniversity.co.uk/unison)

You are eligible to pay a UK course fee if:

- You are able to confirm that you have been living in the European Economic Area (EEA) for at least 3 years before the start of the course; and
- You will be living in the UK for the length of your course or you will be temporarily or unavoidably outside the UK (for a period of no more than 3 years) but are still liable for UK income tax (or are a dependent of someone who lives in the UK or is liable for UK income tax).

### **Other help with funding**

The government and the Open University fund a range of financial support services to help you with the costs of studying. Around 20,000 OU students each year receive financial support to include:

- help with paying course fees
- help with paying study expenses (such as books and equipment)
- help for students with disabilities and specific learning difficulties.

You can check your eligibility for a grant at <http://www.open.ac.uk/coursefinance> .

### **Preparing for study**

If you are unsure about Open University study and would prefer to “dip your toe in the water” before making the financial and time commitment involved, then we would recommend you start with one of the OU’s short **Openings** courses. To find out more about *Openings* courses and enrol, ring the Student Registration & Enquiry Service on 0870 333 4340.

**N.B. THE UNISON DISCOUNT ARRANGEMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE OPENINGS PROGRAMME.**

### **K101: An Introduction to Health and Social Care**

The K101 programme provides the knowledge, values and skills needed in care work of all kinds. It is suitable for non-traditional learners in the sector with few or no qualifications who are seeking the opportunity to study for a vocationally relevant qualification. The programme offers accredited learning at higher education level 1 – with 60 credits awarded on completion. The course is usually provided through open and distance learning, but in workplace delivery students attend regular study groups.

## Housing Professionals

These courses, originally delivered and developed by UNISON, are now delivered by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU). **Discounts of 33% on standard fees are available to UNISON members.** These courses are ideal if you need to plan your studies around your work and personal life.

### Certificate (HE) Housing Practice Distance Learning

This two year course provides a stimulating and practical view of housing. Many Certificate students progress to the Diploma in Housing Professional Studies and BA degree. The course is supported with a comprehensive pack of learning materials reflect the significant changes facing social housing e.g. stock and management transfer, and private finance and allocations. Throughout the course you have a personal tutor to give support and guidance. SHU's distance learner support service provides advice, guidance and access to electronic resources and postal book loans.

This intermediate award offers partial qualification towards membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing. To gain full qualification you need to complete the Diploma in Housing and Professional Studies

#### Entry requirements

You normally need one of the following: BTEC National Certificate; one A level and three GCSEs or equivalent; appropriate work experience in housing.

### Diploma (HE) in Housing Professional Studies

This Diploma course, delivered by Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), is for people currently working in housing management, housing development, or a specialised area of housing.

You will receive a comprehensive learning pack, supported by Blackboard, SHU's online learning environment. You also have a personal tutor who provides support and guidance throughout your course. Many Diploma students progress to the BA (Honours) Housing Professional Studies, which is a part-time top-up degree. Gaining the Diploma award enables students to apply for full corporate membership of the Chartered Institute of Housing

Your learning reflects the significant changes facing today's social housing and includes stock and management transfer, private finance and revised notions of governance.

The course covers several disciplines and professions, including private and public organisations. You study economic, social, legal and environmental issues. It offers opportunities to develop and improve transferable skills and qualities including communication, organisation and personnel management, financial planning and development skills.

The Diploma programme is between 12 and 18 months, depending on prior qualifications

### **Entry requirements**

Normally one of the following: a SHU Certificate in Housing Practice; a HNC in Housing; CIH Level 4 qualification such as a Higher Certificate in Student Accommodation Management; NVQ/SVQ in Housing at Level 4; the first part of a Diploma or BA (Honours) or BSc (Honours) in Housing. In addition we expect applicants to have the support of a social housing organisation.

**Next steps:** For further information please contact the Faculty of Development and Society, Sheffield Hallam University, Collegiate Crescent Campus, Sheffield S1 1WB, phone 0114 225 3697, fax 0114 225 2430, e-mail [g.c.fletcher@shu.ac.uk](mailto:g.c.fletcher@shu.ac.uk). For an application form see [www.shu.ac.uk/study/form](http://www.shu.ac.uk/study/form). If you'd like an informal chat about any of SHU's Housing Distance Learning Programme please contact Dr Rob Hunt on 0114 225 2819, or email [r.j.hunt@shu.ac.uk](mailto:r.j.hunt@shu.ac.uk).

When applying, please remember to have your UNISON membership number to hand to claim your discount.

## Languages and Learning Skills

Accelerated Learning Systems Limited offers UNISON members **a 20% discount** on a range of language courses a programme that can help with developing of better and faster ways of learning.

### Language Courses

#### Online Spanish

Beginner to GCSE-standard internet home-study course incorporating all learning styles in a completely new way

**Cost:** UNISON members: **£23.95** Non-members: **£29.95**

#### Classic Language Course

in FRENCH, SPANISH, GERMAN and ITALIAN

Accelerated Learning beginner to GCSE-standard home-study course includes book, 12 1-hour audio CDs, word cards and **Physical Learning\_DVD**

**Cost:** UNISON members: **£39.95** Non-members: **£49.95**

#### Jump Start Basics Video

in FRENCH, SPANISH, GERMAN and JAPANESE

Giving you enough language and confidence to get by within a few hours  
1-hour VHS video on day-to-day tourist situations

**Cost:** UNISON members: **£11.95** Non-members: **£14.95**

### Master it Faster

An interactive computer delivered programme designed to help you

- acquire skills and knowledge quickly
- produce more thoughtful and creative solutions to problems
- make sense of an ever increasing volume of information
- communicate ideas clearly and sell with impact
- train more effectively and adapt quickly

**Cost:** UNISON members: **£11.95** Non-members: **£14.95**

For full details of these products see [www.acceleratedlearning.com](http://www.acceleratedlearning.com) . To take advantage of these offers, **members should contact ALS Ltd. direct**. Remember to tell them you are a UNISON member to claim your discount and include a copy of your membership card with written orders:

Accelerated Learning Systems Ltd.,  
50 Aylesbury Road,  
Aston Clinton, Aylesbury,  
Buckinghamshire HP22 5AH.

Tel: 01296 631177  
Fax: 01296 631074  
e-mail: [als@acceleratedlearning.com](mailto:als@acceleratedlearning.com)  
[www.acceleratedlearning.com](http://www.acceleratedlearning.com)

## Law

ILEX Tutorial College (ITC), a leading UK law school, offers courses at a range of levels leading to qualifications for paralegals, legal executives and solicitors.

**UNISON members are entitled to a discount of 10% on the normal course fees** (not available on the legal practice course or postgraduate Diploma in Law).

Distance learning courses are available at Levels 2 and 3 for paralegals and a full range of courses is available for legal executives and solicitors. Visit

[www.ilex-tutorial.ac.uk](http://www.ilex-tutorial.ac.uk) for full details of courses or contact them – see details below

### To enrol

To enrol on a course, **members should contact ITC direct**. Remember to tell them you are a UNISON member and enclose a copy of your membership card with your enrolment form.

ILEX Tutorial College,  
College House,  
Manor Drive,  
Kempston,  
Bedford MK42 7AB.

Email: [itslaw@ilex-tutorial.ac.uk](mailto:itslaw@ilex-tutorial.ac.uk)  
Website: [www.ilex-tutorial.ac.uk](http://www.ilex-tutorial.ac.uk)  
Tel: 01234 844300  
Fax: 01234 841373

## Marketing

The National Extension College's Marketing Programme provides an exciting opportunity to develop essential skills and training in this fast-growing field through distance learning.

**UNISON members are entitled to a discount of 10% on the normal fees charged.**

### Business Basics Marketing

This course will help you to understand your customer base, find out what they want and use marketing to get maximum benefit. It will also provide you with a professional qualification

Full details of this course are available on the NEC website: [www.nec.ac.uk](http://www.nec.ac.uk) .  
Alternatively contact them for more information or a copy of their Guide to Courses.

#### To claim your discount:

To apply for the course **contact the NEC** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN.

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## Open University: Science Courses

UNISON members paying for their own study can receive a **10% discount** on Science courses (most courses prefixed with a 'S'); You will need to enclose a copy of your UNISON membership card on return of the registration documents.

For more details of Science Courses that this discount applies to, visit <http://www3.open.ac.uk/study/undergraduate/science/courses/index.htm>

**To take advantage of this offer:** Visit <http://www.open.ac.uk/union/p3.shtml> or Phone 0845 300 60 90, or contact:

Student Registration and Enquiry Service  
The Open University  
PO Box 197  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BJ

## Sport and Recreation Management

The **Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM)/ City & Guilds Higher Professional Diploma** is the ideal qualification to help you progress in your career if you are a sport and recreation facilities managers, sports development officers, duty officers, aspiring employees and/or those wishing to take on a management role in the sector. UNISON members are offered a **35% discount** on this qualification

### Fees

Standard Fee	£1,092
<b>UNISON members</b>	<b>£710</b>

In addition the NEC offer an **ISRM Supervisory Management Certificate at Level 3** and UNISON members are entitled to a **10% discount** on course fees.

Call the NEC on 0800 3892839 for a detailed course information sheet – or visit [www.nec-courses.co.uk](http://www.nec-courses.co.uk)

### To claim your discount:

To apply for the course **contact the NEC directly** and have your membership number to hand to claim your discount.

NEC,  
Purbeck Road,  
Cambridge,  
CB2 2HN.

Email: [courses@nec.ac.uk](mailto:courses@nec.ac.uk)  
Tel: 0800 389 2839 or 01223 400350  
Fax: 01223 400325

## Open University: All Level 1 Courses

If you are a UNISON member and are NEW to studying with the Open University you are entitled to a 10% discount on any Level 1 course that carries 30 or 6 credit points. If you have only taken a 10-point Openings or Short course before, you will be considered to be a NEW student for this offer.

You will need to prove your union membership by providing a copy of your union membership card with the OU course registration documents.  
No retrospective claims are allowed.

Please quote fee code - UL (unionlearn) to claim you discount

**To take advantage of this offer:** Visit <http://www.open.ac.uk/union/p3.shtml> or Phone 0845 300 60 90, or contact:

Student Registration and Enquiry Service  
The Open University  
PO Box 197  
Milton Keynes  
MK7 6BJ

## Can't find what you're looking for?

Union Learning Reps can help workplace colleagues find out more about suitable courses. If your branch doesn't have a union learning rep at present and you are interested in promoting learning in your branch and want to find out more, contact your Regional Learning and Development Organiser – see p.55 for details.

You can also try Learndirect, a national telephone helpline for adult learning and career enquiries - ☎ 0800 100 900 or ☎ 0808 100 9000 if calling from Scotland for advice. They can help you find out where specific courses are run or offer help if you are not sure what course you want to do.

For all school support staff, UNISON has developed an online guide to training, development and career pathways covering current and developing roles within all school sectors – [www.skills4schools.org.uk](http://www.skills4schools.org.uk)

# UNISON EDUCATIONAL GRANTS SCHEME

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This scheme provides financial help to UNISON members:

- on trade union and labour studies courses
- in general non-vocational education
- in vocational education relevant to work in the public services

Applicants for grants must:

1. be a member of UNISON for at least 13 weeks prior to applying for the grant concerned
2. have no subscription arrears
3. continue to pay all membership subscriptions required from him/her throughout the time that they are in education and training supported by the award, unless the NEC dispenses with this requirement in his/her case.

For more information and an application form see [www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3051.pdf](http://www.unison.org.uk/acrobat/B3051.pdf) or phone UNISONdirect on 0845 355 0845.