

UNISON

EDUCATION OFFICER

LEARNING AND ORGANISING SERVICES

JOB BRIEF:

EDUCATION OFFICER (ACTIVISTS), LEARNING AND ORGANISING SERVICES

Introduction

1. UNISON is Britain and Europe's biggest public sector union with more than 1.3 million members. Our members are people working in the public services, for private contractors providing public services and in the essential utilities. They include frontline staff and managers working full or part time in local authorities, the NHS, the police service, colleges and schools, the electricity, gas and water industries, transport and the voluntary sector. We employ 1,200 staff, approximately 370 at our national centre in Euston, central London and the remainder in our twelve regions across the UK - 9 English regions and, Scotland, Cymru/Wales and Northern Ireland.

As well as a Learning and Organising Services Unit at the national centre, each UNISON region has a dedicated learning and organising function delivering workplace representative training and membership development programmes. The Union has approximately 27,000 activists operating within 1000 local branches.

Learning and Organising Services

2. Learning and Organising Services (LAOS) is responsible for the development and delivery of learning opportunities to UNISON activists and members. This ranges from the development of organising, recruitment and negotiating to specialist training across all of UNISON's different service groups, to member development programmes to develop skills for life, confidence and communication skills. LAOS also provides support to staff and representatives in discussions with employers around learning issues.

Each year approximately 10,000 UNISON workplace representatives take part in training and development activity either with UNISON or through TUC/Unionlearn trade union education departments in colleges. In addition LAOS supports a programme of learning to members and potential members in UNISON either directly or through employer partnerships, and oversees strategic projects which promote the development of activist and members. LAOS also delivers staff training on key areas linked to organising, campaigning and mentoring.

The Role

3. The Education Officer is part of a team with responsibility for developing strategy, providing resources and ensuring high quality delivery of a comprehensive

programme of education, training and support, to ensure that all elected representatives in UNISON have the confidence, knowledge and skills to carry out their roles effectively.

The Education Officer is responsible, within assigned areas, for:

- Writing and piloting education materials for UNISON activists, from short workshops to accredited 5 or 10 day courses; writing detailed guidance for tutors on how to deliver the materials, and preparing relevant resources in liaison with specialists in service groups or elsewhere
- Working closely with regions and branches to ensure that training is delivered professionally and in a way that promotes organising, and that appropriate systems are in place to support newly trained activists
- Delivering, and as appropriate designing, a national programme of training aimed at members of national committees, including leadership development
- Designing and delivering tutor briefings to regional staff or external tutors as appropriate.
- Designing and developing E learning training and resources for activists and members, identify ways to convert traditional training courses into blended versions and to also develop new blended courses.

4. LAOS is responsible for ensuring that branches and regions can effectively support and engage new members to enable them to become more active in the union, with a particular focus on members from groups currently underrepresented in UNISON. The Education Officer will support this by

- Developing and piloting appropriate short workshop materials and working with Area and Local Organisers in regions to ensure these are delivered in branches
- Keeping in touch with and providing education support for national self organised groups and other colleagues supporting underrepresented groups of members

5. LAOS provides branches and regions with the methodology and tools to recruit new members and activists and to ensure that they are confident and able to organise and campaign effectively around members' issues. The Education Officer, within designated areas, will support this by

- Promoting organising techniques which engage members and activists in union activity and enable the union to recruit and grow
- Delivering, and designing where appropriate, training for UNISON staff on areas relevant to organising, campaigning and developing members and activists

- Providing direct support to strategic national organising campaigns including facilitation of campaign committees and delivery of training to campaign organisers

6. LAOS provides facilitation support for national committees. The designated Education Officer works with the relevant officers to develop and deliver facilitated events, such as planning or team building days, as required.

7. LAOS provides support to other areas of the union on areas relating to training and development. The Education Officer, within assigned areas, is responsible for managing projects established to deliver UNISON policy decisions related to education. Project outputs may include development of strategy, commissioning of training and development of broader education interventions relevant to UNISON activists and members in line with the union's organising agenda. This involves liaising with other UNISON departments, regions and external bodies.

8. While the Education Officer post is a demanding one, requiring a willingness to travel and deliver training outside London, UNISON is a strong supporter of work life balance. Post holders have leeway in relation to setting dates for teaching commitments outside the UNISON centre and in prioritising workload to ensure work/life balance.

9. The role of the Education Officer is generic and the allocation of areas of work is the responsibility of the Head of Learning and Organising Services. Areas of work are interchangeable and are regularly reviewed in discussion with Education Officers, to ensure that Learning and Organising Services is effectively meeting the needs of the wider union.

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Grade: 3

Hours: 17.5 hours per week

Location: UNISON Centre, Euston Road

Reports to: Head of Learning and Organising Services

Overall summary

The Education Officer's role is to develop and deliver training for UNISON activists, members and, as appropriate, staff, and to provide a wide range of education and organising support to regions, service groups and sectors. Officers are members of a team but will be expected to use their own initiative and take individual responsibility for the effective delivery of work their designated areas of responsibility in accordance with UNISON policies and agreed departmental guidelines.

Key tasks and responsibilities

Specialist education

- Designing, writing and delivering programmes of education relevant to building an organising union, including on equalities and workplace related issues
- Briefing tutors and organisers on course materials and on organising strategies, and supporting regions in the delivery of robust and flexible education programmes at the point of need
- Tutoring, or commissioning tutors, when appropriate, on education courses and facilitating meetings and events
- Providing advice, information, course materials and support to education, organising and other UNISON staff involved in programmes related to learning and organising, at national, regional, branch, service group and self-organised group levels of UNISON
- Developing and managing education related projects relevant to the promotion of an organising union
- Keeping up to date with policy and practice relevant to the role

- Contributing to the policy development and operational running of Learning and Organising Services.

Managerial/ Financial

- Managing, or be a participant in, project teams established to pursue educational or other related aims and objectives of UNISON
- Supervising staff in relation to particular areas of work
- Preparing budgetary submissions and ensuring that activities are undertaken within budgets allocated for activities, and assessing the financial implications of proposals and budgets
- Contributing to the financial and organisational management of the department as required.

Communications

- Keeping in touch with relevant groups of UNISON activists or members and contributing to departmental publications, branch guidance and publicity
- Developing and disseminating promotional material as required
- Developing and maintaining good working relationships with regional and national colleagues

Administration

- Preparing course materials, tutors notes and related resources, reports and project documents in line with UNISON's skills for life policy and departmental guidelines

General/Other

- Representing Learning and Organising Services at external education events and meetings relevant to the department's work
- Deputising, as required, for senior officers
- Undertaking any other responsibilities relevant to the key tasks and responsibilities identified above.

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Person Specification

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race or ethnic origin, gender identity, family situation, sexual orientation, disability, religion or age. This person specification is designed to help members of Interviewing Panels judge the qualities of interviewees in a systematic and consistent way and in accordance with UNISON's equal opportunities policy. It is given to all job applicants for information.

Assessment code

A – application form

PI – panel interview

Heading	Selection criteria	Assessment
1. Thinking skills	1.1 Experience in the design, writing and delivery of trade union education programmes, materials and tutor notes for courses for trade union activists and staff in an organising context	A & PI
	1.2 The capacity to interact with the organising and collective bargaining processes of the union and to provide necessary support to members and activists, using education methods, outside the framework of planned programmes of courses	A & PI
2. Inter-personal & Communication skills	2.1 Use a range of interpersonal skills including <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Influencing and persuading• Facilitating• Teamworking	A & PI
	2.2 A willingness to keep up to date with issues and developments of relevance to the union and its activities and to provide training on those issues when required.	A & PI

3. Initiative and independence	3.1 Ability to take the lead in initiating and developing learning and organising activity as required	A & PI
4. Staff management	4.1 The ability to develop and oversee the work programmes of administrative and organising staff associated with education provision.	A & PI
5. Resource Management	5.1 Experience of project working 5.2 Evidence of time management skills including ability to manage and prioritise work under pressure	A & PI A & PI
6. Physical Skills <i>(with DD modification where necessary)</i>	6.1 Key board skills	A
7. General Knowledge	7.1 Understanding of and commitment to UNISON'S aims and objectives including the principles of equality and democracy and the role of education in achieving these 7.2 Understanding of and willingness to keep up to date with relevant professional and policy developments 7.3 Willingness to undertake such additional duties appropriate to the post and within the ambit of LAOS as may be allocated from time to time. 7.4 Knowledge of ICT packages including Microsoft Office suite	A & PI A & PI A & PI A