

UNISON

UNISON College – Regional Learning and Development Organiser

Northern Ireland Region

JOB BRIEF

UNISON is the UK's leading public sector trade union, with over 1.3 million members working in the public services, private, voluntary and community sectors and in the energy services. 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. The Northern Ireland Region has over 45,000 members working primarily in health, social care, education and the community & voluntary sectors.

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 training and development programmes. The Union has approximately 27,000 activists operating within 1,200 local branches. Over 3,000 of these activists are Union Learning Representatives.

This is a key post in the UNISON NI staff team. The post holder will work with the Regional Organiser (Education) and the Regional Management Team helping to meet the aims and objectives of UNISON Northern Ireland.

UNISON is committed to improving the working lives of its members and securing equality and rights for their families and communities. This role is at the heart of our mission - helping to develop and support the education and training interventions and projects that will enable us to meet our objectives.

Learning and Organising Services

1. 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 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 activists and members. LAOS also delivers staff training on key areas linked to organising, campaigning and mentoring.

The UNISON College

UNISON College brings together the learning, education, and training that we provide for UNISON members and activists into one coherent offer.

Building on our long tradition of providing high quality training, it will equip our activists with the confidence, knowledge and expertise they need to advocate for our members, and empower our members to take control of their lives and shape their careers.

The Role

2. The Learning and Development Organiser is part of a team with responsibility for 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 Learning and Development Organiser will work with the branches, the education team and wider organising team to identify member learning, help create bespoke learning packages to assist members with continuous professional development and encourage engagement with their union.

The Learning and Development Organiser is responsible, within assigned areas, for:

- Raising awareness of education materials for UNISON activists and members, from short workshops to accredited 5 or 10 day courses;
- Working closely with branches to identify appropriate courses that can be promoted to UNISON activists and members to ensure that appropriate systems are in place to support all learners;
- Contributing to reports, agendas and minutes as appropriate;
- Supporting a programme of regional and local learning projects working with branches, national departments, educational providers and employers.

3. 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, and in line with Union Learning Fund (ULF) priorities. The Learning and Development Organiser will support this by;

- Promoting, delivering and developing appropriate short workshop materials, and working with the Regional Organiser (Education) and regional organising staff to ensure these are delivered in branches;
- advising branches on establishing Branch Education Teams, recruiting ULRs and establishing ULR support networks;
- assisting regional organising staff and branches in the preparation of local learning agreements with employers, and supporting negotiations of learning and apprenticeship agreements.

4. 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 Learning and Development Organiser, working closely with the Regional Organiser (Education), within designated areas, will support this by:

- Promoting education and organising techniques which engage members and activists in learning activity and enable the union to recruit and grow;
 - Identifying specialist learning initiatives / resources to meet members' needs;
 - Raising awareness about learning initiatives and promoting these including how these impact on the bargaining / negotiating agenda.
- 5 LAOS provides support to other areas of the union on areas relating to training and development. The Learning and Development Organiser is responsible for supporting ULF projects established to deliver UNISON learning. Project outputs may include recruitment of ULRs, mentoring ULRs and recruiting learners relevant to UNISON ULF activity and in line with the union's organising agenda. This involves liaising with other UNISON departments, regions and external bodies.
- 6 The Learning and Development Organiser post will require a willingness to travel and promote learning, UNISON is a strong supporter of work life balance. Post holders have leeway in relation to setting dates for meetings and other commitments and in prioritising workload to ensure work/life balance.

UNISON's Aims

The key aims of the union as detailed in our Rule Book seek to:

- i) Extend and promote our influence in the workplace and in the Community.
- ii) Promote, safeguard and facilitate participation by all members in the union's democracy, with special regard to women, members of all grades, black members, disabled members, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender members.
- iii) Provide effective standards of service in the areas of representation and advice, information to members on the work of the union, the provision of financial benefits and the maintenance of educational facilities for members.

Working Time

While the Learning and Development Organiser post can be a demanding position, requiring some attendance at meetings outside of the conventional working day, UNISON is a strong supporter of the work/life balance ethos and has a cross union flexible working policy. Post holders will therefore prioritise their working arrangements in such a way as to demonstrate by example their personal commitment to these aims.

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JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: UNISON College – Regional Learning and Development Organiser

Grade: 5

Hours: 35 per week

Reports to: Regional Organiser (Education). Strategic responsibility for the Regional Learning and Development Organiser lies with the Regional Manager with responsibility for Education and Training

Location Northern Ireland region

The job will require extensive travelling within the region and occasional national briefings and induction. A car is not provided but own car user mileage is paid.

Summary

- To support the development of a high quality and sustainable infrastructure of Union Learning Representatives in UNISON.
- To ensure that the learning agenda is integrated into the organising, negotiating and representational work of the region.
- To support the development and delivery of UNISON College NI.
- To ensure members are aware of and use the UNISON College NI.

Key Tasks and Responsibilities:

Specialist/Technical

To work with organisers, branches and members to develop a bespoke education package for UNISON NI members.

To assist branches and Regional staff in the preparation of local learning agreements with employers and to support negotiation of learning agreements.

To work with regional colleagues and branches to raise awareness about specialist learning initiatives to support the recruitment of ULRs and promote the learning agenda.

To work with branches and Regional colleagues to raise awareness about specialist learning initiatives including how these impact on the bargaining/negotiating agenda.

Interpersonal & Communication Skills

To carry out outreach, make presentations, motivate and enthuse ULRs and regional colleagues to put the case for learning as part of a broader organising agenda.

To encourage, support, train and mentor Union Learning Reps and members to enable them to access development opportunities within UNISON and support the development of effective networks.

To ensure that the learning agenda is integrated into the organising, campaigning, negotiating and representation work of branches.

To advise branches on establishing Branch Education Teams, recruiting ULRs and establishing branch based and Regional support networks.

Work with regional Service Groups, self-organised groups and special issue groups to develop strategies for linking learning to recruitment, organising and negotiating campaigns particularly in national branches/regional employer partnerships. This includes working directly with regional employers alongside the service group and developing strategies for building branch education teams and Union Learning rep capacity as part of national learning agreements.

To promote learning initiatives in accordance with the Union Learning Fund and UNISON's strategy on widening participation in learning.

Administrative

To record data and reports as required by UNISON regional committees and UNISON Learning and Organising Service (LAOS).

Collate and verify outcomes from ULF regional projects and prepare reports in accordance with the Union Learning Fund guidelines.

Oversee the delivery of training or services by UNISON partners.

Analyse the learner equality data to target learning provision, prepare reports, agendas and minutes as appropriate.

Assist the Regional Organiser (Education) with the development and organisation of member and activist education in the Region including the Regional Education Programme.

To liaise as appropriate on learning and training issues with Regional organising staff.

General/Other

- Any other duties relevant to the overall responsibilities of the post

Financial

To work within an agreed budget, monitor spend and carry out cost analysis of projects and make recommendations for saving / value for money. Support the ULF project to submit expenditure claims.

To maintain accurate financial records.

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PERSON SPECIFICATION

UNISON is an equal opportunities employer, committed to providing equal opportunities regardless of race, marital status, 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 the 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.

Heading	Selection criteria
<p style="text-align: center;">(1) Specialist / Technical</p>	<p>1.1 Experience of developing solutions to resolve problems including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An understanding of lifelong learning within a trade union setting and understanding and appreciation of the link between learning and union organising; • Experience of supporting and innovating in the delivery of adult education; • Ability to keep abreast of developments relevant to lifelong learning nationally; • Ability to create work plans with target branches, employers or groups of members that may not fully appreciate the organising and recruitment potential that lifelong learning provides the union; • Identify opportunities and build support for learning led organising campaigns. <p>1.2 Learning and Development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can demonstrate continuous personal learning and development.
<p style="text-align: center;">(2) Interpersonal & Communication skills</p>	<p>2.1 Excellent communication skills including ability:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to communicate and network effectively with people at different levels and across a range of organisations, including branch officers, members, employers, regional and national colleagues, ICTU, WEA and other learning providers; • to make presentations, motivate and enthuse branches to put the case for learning as part of a broader organising agenda; • to encourage, support and mentor potential and actual Union Learning Reps and enable the development of effective networks; • to contribute to the development and promotion of learning publicity materials.

	<p>2.2 Experience of effective Team working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working effectively with other staff, lay reps and external organisations.
(3) Initiative and Independence	<p>3.1 Ability to work quickly to high standards of accuracy and quality.</p> <p>3.2 Ability to work on own initiative and as part of a team.</p>
(4) Resource management	<p>4.1 Ability to monitor and control budgets and ensure value for money and the effective use of resources.</p> <p>4.2 Ability to maintain accurate administrative systems.</p> <p>4.3 Ability to plan and organise a complex programme of work.</p> <p>4.4 Ability to develop and implement learning led organising campaigns and work programmes in conjunction with a range of stakeholders including setting standards, monitoring and evaluating progress and tracking impact for learners and for UNISON.</p>
(5) General Knowledge	<p>5.1 An understanding of and commitment to the principles of equality and democracy.</p> <p>5.2 An understanding of the role of trade unions and the social and political environment in which the union operates.</p> <p>5.3 Understanding of UNISON's policies and procedures or demonstrable capacity to develop such understanding based upon previous experience and/or interests.</p> <p>5.4 Knowledge of the socio-economic and political context of lifelong learning.</p> <p>5.5 IT literate with an ability to understand and use both industry and specialist software including excel.</p>
(6) Physical Skills	<p>Ability to travel</p>