

# TRAINING PROGRAMME

## January - July 2026



**Learning to Organise: Organising to Learn**



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# What you need to know

## Finding your course:

This programme is organised to make it as easy as possible for you and your branch to identify the courses that suit you. The programme is designed on a month-by-month basis so if the course you wish to attend covers two calendar months you need to look for the relevant start date.

## Timing

Most of our courses run from 9.30am (prompt) to 4.30pm. The start time will be clear in the details that we send you when you are booked on a course. Whatever the final details say, for everyone's benefit, please join online/get there on time and ensure you are able to attend for the duration of the course.

## Venues

We try to run our most popular classroom-based courses in Central London, so these are easily accessible for most by public transport.

## Course fees and expenses

There is no cost to you as an individual. Where we show a course fee that will be paid by the branch. Travel and subsistence fees (as applicable) will also be paid by the branch. They should also pay for any additional childcare costs that arise from attending a course, but you should discuss this with the branch before attending.

A course fee is applicable for all courses except Lost in UNISON induction:-

- The cost for classroom-based courses where lunch and refreshments are provided is £30 per day. For example, if you attend a five-day introductory stewards course the cost to the branch will be £150.
- The cost for online courses is £30 per course. This is on the basis of ensuring there is a consistent approach to both activists education and member learning across all UNISON regions and to reflect cuts to the Union Learning Fund and other learning budgets.

The course fees are claimed via the branch reclaim system. All branches should ensure monies are allocated within their branch budget for training of activists and branch officers, and so for the majority of branches the course fees shouldn't pose a problem.



However, if a branch, particularly those smaller branches with low income, encounter issues and it creates barriers to attending please speak to your Regional Organiser in the first instance. 4

# Registering for a course

## Apply as soon as possible

Please don't leave it to the last minute to apply for a course. Many of our courses are oversubscribed and places are allocated on a first come, first served basis so apply early to secure your place. Details will be provided on deadlines to register to ensure sufficient time for your application to be processed and confirmation & joining instructions sent to you. Approximately 5-7 days before the course starts, Amanda will send you final details including joining instructions. If for any reason you do not receive this information, please contact Amanda at the regional office.

## Online application link

There is an online application link/form for each course. This ensures we have all the necessary information to process your request and contact you with more details. A link for each online application can be found with details of the course here. Alternatively email Amanda Mayers, Education Administrator ([a.mayers@unison.co.uk](mailto:a.mayers@unison.co.uk)) with the course you are interested in, and she will forward this to you.

## Reasonable adjustments

If you require any reasonable adjustments to support you in attending a course please include details on the application so we can make arrangements.

## Time off

At the same time as you apply we strongly advise you begin arranging time off. You have a legal right to reasonable paid time off for training in your union industrial relations duties. You should give your manager at least a few weeks' notice, and if asked to, provide them with information about the content of the course. So, when you complete your registration form, at the same time ask management for time off using your local procedure – don't delay by waiting until your course place is confirmed. If you need help at any stage ask your UNISON branch.

## What the law says about time off

Stewards and other branch officers have rights given by the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992, backed up by the ACAS Code of Practice on 'Time Off for Trade Union Duties and Activities' revised in 2003. [You can find the Code of Practice here.](#)

Union Learning Reps have rights from the same Act and the same ACAS Code of Practice applies. Safety Reps have similar rights described in the Code of Practice and Regulations on Safety Representatives and Safety Committees (1977). These are reproduced as a UNISON publication of the same name. Have a look as well at the UNISON publication 'Time to Act – negotiating time off for trade union duties and activities' stock number 2359. [Click here for the UNISON shop.](#)

## **Paid time off for part-time workers**

If you attend a course for which paid time off is available and those course hours exceed those you normally work then you should be entitled to receive pay or time off in lieu of those extra hours. If you need help with this, please contact your branch secretary.

## **Course numbers**

Many of our courses only run if we have at least 15 participants. Unfortunately, if we don't recruit to this minimum number the course can't run. This is disappointing and frustrating all round. In these circumstances we try to find an alternative wherever possible. We are happy to tell you about numbers in advance if you are anxious to know whether or not your course is likely to run.

## **Cancellations**

If circumstances change and you are no longer able to attend please let us know as soon as possible so the place can be offered to someone else if there is a waiting list. Please note that after you receive final details, we will expect you. If you fail to attend without giving us notice, your branch will be charged a £15 penalty for each day of the course. If the course is cancelled for circumstances beyond our control, we know this is frustrating and will do our best to avoid it or find you an alternative where it is unavoidable.



## **Branch courses and branch development**

As well as courses run at regional level, on some occasions we can help organise courses and sessions for individual branches. For example, if you have sufficient numbers we may be able to arrange for introductory stewards courses at branch level or branch development workshops to support recruitment and organisational effectiveness. Your branch education co-ordinator or branch secretary will arrange local publicity when something is organised for your branch. To find out more your branch should discuss with your regional organiser who can liaise with the education team.

## **Opportunities with the TUC**

We work closely with the TUC education service in London. They help us run many courses, and we encourage UNISON members to attend their courses. Check out their website for the latest on available courses.



# SUGGESTED STEWARD PATHWAY



## 1 Introductory Organising Stewards

The first step in your UNISON education journey. Complete the Introductory Organising Steward course to obtain your ERA accreditation. Attendance on this course is mandatory for all stewards.

## 2 Represent with Confidence

A two day course to help you gain confidence when representing members through interactive practice.

## 3 Employment Law

The course is aimed at those reps undertaking individual casework and collective issues. Build your knowledge of topics such as TUPE, and keep up to date with the most recent developments.

## 4 Speak and Succeed in Public Speaking

Not everyone has the confidence to speak out. Build the confidence to speak up, whether it be at a local branch meeting, with members or when attending UNISON events or conference.

## 5 Equality in your branch

Equality is at the heart of everything our union does, this three day course will help you understand the role you have to play, as well as finding out more about discrimination legislation and promoting equality in your workplace

# Courses at a glance: January

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
<b>Introductory Organising Stewards</b>	16, 23 & 30 January 6 & 13 February	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
<b>Stewards Refresher</b>	21 & 28 January	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>



Lost in UNISON



Introductory Organising Steward



Introductory Safety Reps



Stewards Refresher



Advanced Course



Branch Officer Courses


# Courses at a glance: February

Course Title	Date	Location	
Introductory Organising Stewards	3, 4 & 5 February 10, 11 & 12 February	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Lost in UNISON	17 February	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Introductory Organising Stewards	27 February 6, 13, 20 & 27 March	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>




# Courses at a glance: March

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Represent with confidence	3 & 4 March	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Introductory Organising Stewards	24, 25, 26 & 31 March 1 & 2 April	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Introductory Safety Reps	23 - 27 March	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Stewards Refresher	11 & 12 March	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Equality in your branch	17, 18 & 19 March	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>



# Courses at a glance: April

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
<b>Introductory Organising Stewards</b>	17 & 24 April 1, 8, & 15 May	In person	<a href="#"><u>Register here</u></a>
<b>Introductory Employment Law</b>	28, 29 & 30 April	In person	<a href="#"><u>Register here</u></a>
<b>Advanced Employment Law</b>	28, 29 & 30 April	In person	<a href="#"><u>Register here</u></a>
<b>Branch Treasurer OLBA</b>	29 April	Online	


# Courses at a glance: May

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Branch Treasurer OLBA	1 May	Online	
Lost in UNISON	6 & 7 May	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Stewards Refresher	6 & 13 May	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Branch Treasurer OLBA	7 May	Online	
Branch Treasurer OLBA	15 May	Online	
Introductory Organising Stewards	18 - 22 May	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Introductory Safety Reps	18 - 22 May	Online	<a href="#">Register here</a>

# Courses at a glance: May Continued

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Speak and Succeed in Public Speaking	11, 12 & 13 May	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Branch Welfare Officer	13 & 20 May	Online	
Branch Treasurer OLBA	28 May	Online	

# Courses at a glance: June

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
Introductory Organising Steward	5, 12, 19, 26 June & 3 July	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Dealing with a Disciplinary Case	9 & 10 June	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Stewards Refresher	24 June & 1 July	In person	<a href="#">Register here</a>
Branch Treasurer OLBA	25 June	Online	

# Courses at a glance: July

Course Title	Date	Location	Register here
<b>Introductory Organising Steward</b>	6 - 10 July	In person	<a href="#"><u>Register here</u></a>

# Lost in UNISON

For those newly elected to the role, or anyone interested in finding out more

Many potential stewards are reluctant to commit until they know what's in store. Likewise, many feel overwhelmed when they first start. They are unsure of the role, or what's expected of them, not knowing where to get advice, information and support or how they fit into the bigger union. Lost in UNISON is a new steward induction/taster session for potential and new stewards where you get a grounding in the structures of UNISON, explore the scope of the role, identify sources of support and access further training.

UNISON is committed to helping and developing you through this initial period while you're considering putting yourself forward or recently elected and finding your feet.

We'd like to invite you to attend a steward induction session which will give you some training in steward basics, and will allow you to:

- explore your role
- meet other new stewards
- develop your skills
- gain the experience and confidence to be an effective steward

The course will also look at the difference you can make immediately in your workplace with a bit of basic organising. It's fun and informal and has been developed by existing stewards to meet the needs of new and potential stewards.

**We strongly recommend that once you have completed this training session, you sign up to attend a five-day Introductory Organising Steward course. (See information on ERA accreditation).**



# Introductory Organising Stewards

For newly elected stewards to obtain ERA (Employment Rights Act) accreditation

This course is aimed at newly elected and less experienced UNISON stewards and is delivered either online or in a classroom. It builds on the Lost in UNISON induction session and will help you to understand the steward's role in organising members at local level and to feel confident in carrying out your duties as a steward.

Completing this course ensures that you are ERA accredited.

**All new reps should attend this mandatory Introductory Organising Stewards course within a year of becoming elected.**

In particular the course will help you:

- Work with members to tackle issues in the workplace
- Work with members in resolving cases
- Know where and when to seek advice and guidance
- Understand how procedures work in practice
- Handle grievance and disciplinaries and similar types of cases as the representative of UNISON members within your workplace
- Become certified as competent to accompany members at a disciplinary and grievance hearing in line with Employment Relations Act 1999
- Understand the broader roles in which UNISON operates, including internationally
- Understand the role of an organising union in public services
- Recognise the importance of equalities in UNISON

Employment Rights Act accreditation - As a consequence of the Employment Rights Act the union has a legal responsibility to designate that elected stewards/ reps are 'competent' to represent members at grievance and disciplinary hearings – (known as ERA accreditation/ certification). The union has agreed that it will meet this objective by requiring all new reps to attend the Introductory Stewards course and for other reps who have been activists for a number of years but have not been able to attend any formal training to complete the three-day Stewards Refresher course which will provide them with ERA accreditation/ certification.



# Stewards Refresher

To maintain ERA accreditation



This Steward Refresher course is for UNISON Stewards who last attended training more than five years ago OR reps and branch officers who have never done an Introductory Organising Steward course but have been carrying out the full role of a steward i.e. representing members on grievances and disciplinaries.

It is designed to meet the requirements of the Employment Relations Act (ERA) on re-accreditation, whereby as a

consequence of the Employment Rights Act the union has a legal responsibility to ensure that reps are 'competent' to represent members at grievance and disciplinary hearings – (known as ERA accreditation/certification).

UNISON's NEC determined in 2010 that all UNISON reps should attend a Stewards Refresher course every five years to maintain their ERA accreditation.

The course will provide the opportunity to refresh and update skills as well as to brief on any legislative changes and/or updates to UNISON's policy and procedures.



# Introductory Health & Safety

For new Health & Safety reps

If you have an interest in safety in the workplace and are a new health and safety rep you will get a lot from this course. It deals with the legal framework both domestic and European, of health and safety in the workplace. It covers the employers legal responsibilities and where you and the union fit into this very important process. The course also explores how we can organise around workplace health and safety issues.

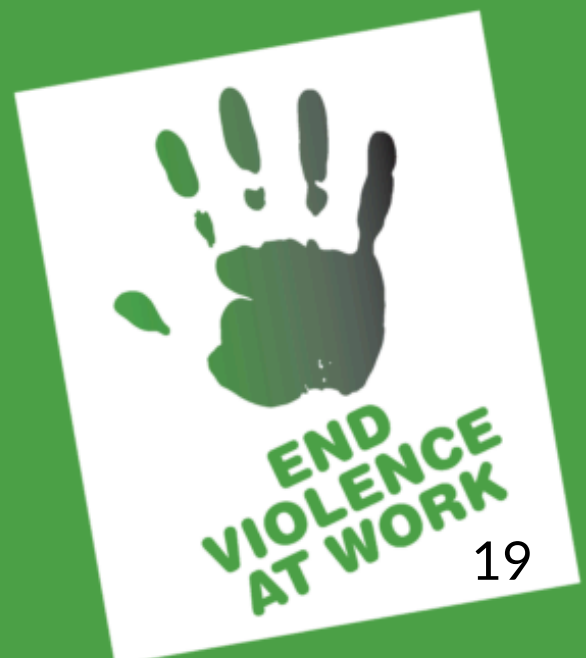


The course will cover:

- The role of a health & safety rep
- Health & safety law
- Facilities, time off and training for health & safety reps
- Workplace Inspections
- Risk Assessments
- Organising around health & safety issues
- Supporting a member to take forward a health & safety issue



**Violence at Work:  
it's not part of  
the job**



# OLBA for Branch Treasurers

The training will be run by UNISON's finance team and will include:

- an introduction to OLBA
- managing your accounts, the current account, income & branch funding,
- entering receipts & payments
- reconciling your accounts,
- reports and performing other administrative tasks on OLBA.

OLBA access for your Branch Treasurer should be available once the branch officer update form has been completed & returned following your branch AGM and RMS has been updated to confirm they hold this position. Any queries regarding OLBA access should be sent to [olba@unison.co.uk](mailto:olba@unison.co.uk).

The £30 course fee will apply.



# Advanced Courses

To further your learning | You must have completed the introductory stewards course first

## Introductory Employment Law

This course is aimed at reps who want to develop their understanding of key issues regarding employment law and to refresh their understanding of new developments. The course is aimed at those reps undertaking individual casework and collective issues. The course specifically looks at TUPE and the wider employment law field.

## Advanced Employment Law

This course is aimed at experienced reps and addresses in practical details, topical employment law issues such as discrimination, dismissal, redundancy, and contractual change. It also deals with the new Labour government's proposals and how they will affect employment law and the rep role in the public sector". **You must have completed the GLR UNISON Introductory Employment Law Course prior to attending this course.**

## Equality in your Branch

Equality is at the heart of everything our union does. This three day in person course is aimed at equality reps, or anyone interested in becoming an equality rep, to help you understand the role as well as finding out more about discrimination legislation and promoting equality in your workplace.

## Represent with Confidence

This two day course allows you to build on your skills learnt after attending the Introductory Stewards course. This course empowers you to:

- Advocate effectively for your members;
- Handle workplace concerns with confidence;
- Navigate sensitive situations professionally



# Advanced Courses Continued

To further your learning | You must have completed the introductory stewards course first

## Speak and Succeed in Public Speaking

Being confident in speaking in public, whether in a members meeting, the branch or at UNISON Conferences is a key activist skill. Another key skill is the art of debate to win people over to the values and ideas of trade unionism.

This 3 day course will cover both skills and give you confidence to speak up, inspire people and get out message out there.

This course will cover:

- How to write an effective speech;
- Techniques and skills in delivering a speech
- Confidence in speaking
- Speaking at UNISON Conferences
- How to debate ideas effectively

## Dealing with a Disciplinary Case

This is a two-day, in person course which seeks to build on the knowledge and skills from the Introductory Stewards course to equip ERA trained Stewards to support members through the disciplinary process.

As well as an overview of the disciplinary process and the various stages this can entail, the tutors will use videos of disciplinary hearings as case studies, linked to activities that explore arguments, used by the employer and how you as the UNISON representative can support your member to respond. The course will show how a typical hearing runs and examines the roles of all participants. If you have limited experience at representing members at these hearings or are going to do so in the future, this course will be a very useful opportunity to gain a better knowledge of this type of hearing.



# Here's what people had to say about our courses!

"I would like to say I have really enjoyed the course, and the way that it was delivered really got me engaged. It was very pleasant listening to you for the past six days and I can see that you are passionate about what you do"

"I wanted to say thank you for the last two weeks. I was feeling overwhelmed at becoming a rep, but you have shared so much knowledge and wisdom that I feel quite confident to go forward.

You have been kind, patient and supportive and created a learning environment that felt like a safe space where no question was a silly one and everybody had the opportunity to contribute. The whole group was great, and you have been an incredible teacher."

