



Equalities for trade union representatives

TUC Diploma

Unions have always been at the forefront of the drive for equality at work, whether through the struggle for equal pay, through tackling racism or working for equal access to learning and skills. This Diploma is designed to bring together all the threads of the equality agenda so that reps have a thorough grounding in union policy, best practice and equality law.

Who is the Diploma for?

The Diploma is designed primarily for experienced trade union representatives whose role would benefit from a wider understanding of equality issues. It is intended to help students understand equality issues in the workplace, current equality legislation and how it can be applied to their own organisation. The Diploma also develops values and skills needed for higher level study and activism.

How long is the Diploma?

This Diploma is organised as a:

- one-year, day-release course (one day per week, for 36 weeks spread over three terms); or
- one-year, half-day and evening course (for 36 weeks spread over three terms); or
- two-year evening course (one evening per week, for 72 weeks spread over six terms).

The Diploma will also be available online for reps who need a more flexibly delivered programme. Reps will access the course via the internet and work interactively on tasks with tutor and other participants. For further details contact Craig Hawkins, Online Learning Officer, Trades Union Congress, Congress House, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS
t: 020 7079 6947 e: chawkins@tuc.org.uk

Aims of the Diploma

The Diploma will:

- provide guided learning through which the learner may become more effective as a union representative, particularly on equality issues
- promote an understanding of trade union values and policies on equalities
- deepen and extend the capacities of learners, enabling them to apply for full-time officer posts or higher education opportunities
- strengthen understanding of trade union and workplace issues and offer up-to-date detail of new developments in the law and policy
- build learners' knowledge of equality issues in the workplace
- support learners' ability to build workplace equality and tackle issues at work

- develop personal/study skills, the ability to work collectively, and generally improve the confidence of learners to study at a higher level.

Working collectively and co-operatively is particularly important to trade unionism, and teaching and learning methods on the Diploma programme are designed to enhance the capacity to do so. These will include:

- discussion groups
- paired work
- group analysis of documents or case studies
- interviews with members or other people
- workplace activities and report backs
- consultation exercises or surveys
- self, peer and group evaluations.

The basic values that guide trade unionism – fairness, equality, justice and democracy – are values that have been incorporated into programme content and methods. This means that the process and content of the programme are complementary – what is to be studied is reinforced by the way it is studied.

What subjects will be studied?

The Diploma is accredited by the National Open College Network and is divided into several modules.

Three subject modules:

- equality issues at work
- equality and the law
- working for equality.

These are intended to build on from learners' interest in equalities, by identifying key issues and questions, analysing research or other commentaries – working towards an informed opinion of the subjects of study.

Four study skills modules:

- communication and study skills for trade union representatives
- legal skills
- information communication technology
- a research project.

The purpose of these is to enable learners to develop the kind of skills needed to make the most of the subject modules. The ability to find and understand information quickly, to take notes and write in a structured way, to analyse, criticise and communicate information will make the challenge of study more enjoyable and fulfilling.

The three subject modules

Equality issues at work (nine OCN credits)

This module focuses on three main topics: different equalities themes; union and workplace policies and practices; and using trade union values to build the case for equality.

The module will help you to understand:

- the workplace in equality terms
- different equalities themes and protected characteristics
- union and workplace equalities policies and practices
- trade union principles of equality.

Equality and the law (nine OCN credits)

This module focuses on two main topics: UK equality legislation and UK institutions and procedures for equality.

The module will help you to understand:

- the context for legislation on equality
- current UK equality law
- equality legislation and how it impacts on the workplace
- UK institutions that deal with equality
- procedures that can be used in equality cases.

Working for equality (nine OCN credits)

This module focuses on three main topics: equality theory and practice; equality tools; and using union equality structures and strategies.

The module will help you to understand:

- differences in the theory and practice of equality
- development of equality policies
- the use and value of equality tools
- union structures and strategies in working for equality
- the equality bargaining and campaigning agenda.

The study skills modules

The study skills units comprise:

Communication and study skills for trade union representatives (six credits)

- read and respond to written materials
- produce written materials
- prepare and make a presentation to a group
- take part in discussions and work collectively.

Legal skills (three credits)

- legal reasoning in case law
- locating and using legal resources
- using the law in negotiating
- employment tribunal preparation.

Information communication technology (three credits)

- prepare and input data
- display and present information
- present data
- use database, word processing and spreadsheet applications.

Research project (nine credits)

- project planning
- research skills
- presenting the project.

The research project will be undertaken with guidance and support from your TUC tutor. It will develop your skills in choosing, researching and presenting a substantial piece of work.

Entry requirements

Union representatives who wish to take this course should have:

- previously attended an Equalities Award programme or the Union Reps Stage 1 and Stepping Up Stage 2 Certificates programme; or
- achieved a suitable equivalent to the above through their own union's courses or from elsewhere.

Your tutor is likely to interview you before acceptance on the programme to make an assessment of suitability for the Diploma.

Achieving the Diploma

To achieve the Equalities for Trade Union Reps Diploma participants are required to:

- successfully complete all seven modules
- gain at total of 48 credits (27 credits from subject modules at Level 3, 21 credits from study skills modules at Level 2 or 3).

Course fees

TUC Education will meet your course fees, provided that your nomination for the course is approved by an affiliated union. However there are some publications which are important references. These may not be supplied, and reps should talk to union officers for help in meeting costs and other associated expenses.

Time off to learn

Union representatives who wish to attend TUC programmes in working time should first ask their employer for time off with pay. The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992 and the Safety Representatives and Safety Committee Regulations 1977 give accredited union and safety representatives a legal right to reasonable time off with pay to attend courses approved by the TUC or

their union. Guidance towards establishing what constitutes reasonable time off can be found in the ACAS Code of Practice (www.acas.org.uk/publications/pdf/CPo3.pdf). Representatives who find difficulty in obtaining paid time off to attend TUC courses should seek assistance from their senior union representative or full-time union officer.

Online learning should not be seen as an alternative to paid release from work. The law still applies, whether learning takes place away from work or in work, at a workstation or in a company learning centre. Reps should discuss and agree mutually suitable arrangements with their manager.

Equality reps 
winning in the workplace

TUC 

Further information

For details of courses in your area, contact:

For national TUC information about the course, contact:

- Liz Rees, TUC Education
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e lrees@tuc.org.uk
- Jackie Williams, TUC Education
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- Craig Hawkins, TUC Education Online
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