

# Guidance Online courses/webinars and events



- UNISON Southwest Working Together Guidelines
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## Our commitment

UNISON is committed to the fullest possible participation of all its members in the activities of the trade union. On trade union education courses and events, delegates should not be put off from taking part because of the actions, attitudes, or language of other attendees. The following guidelines have been drawn up to help delegates meet UNISON's commitment to the full participation of all its members in a practical and constructive way. You will see that underlying this guide is a commitment to the principle that everyone has equal rights to benefit from, to contribute to and enjoy the course.

We assume that course members will agree with these principles and hope the guidelines will assist in putting them into practice.

## Working Together

A key feature of trade union education is the value it places upon the knowledge, experience, and skills that each attendee brings with them - both in terms of their trade union work and everyday lives. It is important that everyone feels equal and able to contribute if they so wish. So:

- Listen to what others have to say and avoid being dismissive
- Wait until a speaker has finished and do not interrupt
- Aim to have reasoned discussion, not arguments
- Any criticism should be constructive and help delegates to develop confidence, skills, and knowledge
- Make your own contribution as clear and brief as possible and do not dominate the discussion
- Ensure that everyone who wishes to speak is given encouragement and the opportunity to do so
- It is equally important that members on the course can speak openly about problems they or their members have experienced in the full knowledge that personal or sensitive information is restricted to the classroom
- **Confidentiality must be respected**

## Language

UNISON aims to be inclusive of all its members, enabling them to take part in all our activities. This brings with it a responsibility for all of us to make sure that we do not use language that others might find offensive. This means thinking about, for example, how you talk about individuals or groups. It means avoiding making statements, comments, or jokes that are based on your own or others' prejudice about individuals or groups of people.

Body language is also an important part of communication and should not be used to interrupt or disconcert speakers.

## **Jargon**

Jargon is a barrier to good communication. The more we become involved in trade union work the more likely we are to use jargon. Take care to explain any jargon or initials you use that others may not be familiar with, so that everyone understands what you are talking about.

## **Harassment**

To ensure the full participation of all attendees, there must be no harassment of any kind. In general terms, harassment is unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of violating the dignity of the person, or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that person, if it could be considered to have that effect. What is important is not necessarily the action, but how the recipient feels about what has been done.

It may be related to age, disability, gender reassignment, race, maternity, pregnancy, marital or civil partnership status, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, or any personal characteristic of the individual, and may be persistent or an isolated incident.

Harassment creates an unpleasant or intimidating atmosphere and should be challenged.

## **Time Keeping**

Please ensure that you log in to the event in plenty of time, especially if you are using the platform the course is being held on for the first time, so that the session can start on time and unnecessary interruptions can be avoided.

If you arrive late, or early please try not to disturb the session and if possible, advise the course administrator, tutor, facilitator, or person running the course/event.

## **Use of social media / mobile phones / tablets and other electronic devices**

Although this is an online event, please try not to use any of the above during the session (unless being used to enable you to join the event) as this can distract you from fully taking part in the session and miss aspects of the course.

If you need your phone on during the meeting, please notify the tutor/facilitator/person running the event, otherwise **Please switch them off**

## **Your 'venue' and confidentiality**

As this is an online event, please be aware of the space around you and ensure that you do not attend the course in a public space where others are able to listen in and also see other attendees. Our courses can cover sensitive subjects and interruptions are disruptive to you and other delegates and could breach any confidentiality.

## **Recording of events**

At times UNISON may want to record a session; if this is happening on the workshop/event that you are attending, you will have advance notice and permission from the South West Regional Management Team would have been agreed prior to the session. You will be notified in pre-course information and at the start of the session that the event is being recorded.

## Smoking and e-cigarettes

Smoking or use of e-cigarettes is not permitted in UNISON events and we would appreciate it if you do not smoke or use e-cigarettes during online events.

## Conclusion

These guidelines are intended for you to use during the course or event to counter problems as they arise, and to ensure that no-one feels excluded from the course because of language, actions, or attitudes of other course members. They also look to promote UNISON's policies on discrimination and equal opportunities in a positive way as far as the conduct of trade union education courses are concerned.

If you have any concerns about anything regarding these guidelines, please speak to the tutor/facilitator, event organiser or contact the [Education and Equalities Team](#)

## GDPR

Please take a look at our website regarding [GDPR for UNISON Branches](#), where you will also find links to other documents regarding GDPR.

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## Using online platforms

During this time most of our learning offers are online. For more support and information and how to use the different platforms please click on the necessary link below.



Guidance on using ZOOM - CLICK [HERE](#)



Guidance on using TEAMS – CLICK [HERE](#)

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## FAQs

### Am I entitled to time off to attend a course?

Yes, you should approach your line manager to arrange time off in the same way you would for annual leave. We hope that Line Managers and employers see the benefit for you attending our UNISON Learning offer. If you are a member attending one of our member learning offers, we hope that your employer sees the benefit of our courses and is happy to support you to time off from your role the same as if you were attending in house training with your employer. The right to time off in workplaces where UNISON is a recognised union supports trade union workplace representatives to have a right to paid time off for the purpose of carrying out their trade union duties or to take part in

union training. Where there is not a recognition agreement or facility time agreement, reps should seek advice from their branch in the first instance in regard to time off for training. By registering to this course using the booking button please ensure you have the time off to attend. Support for requesting time off can be offered via your local branch ( <https://branches.unison.org.uk/> ) or via the regional office ( [Regional Office Directory](#) )

### **What are our courses like?**

Our courses are friendly and informal. Our training is aimed at making learning a fun rather than a daunting experience. Everyone's views and experiences are listened to. You will not be lectured at and given every opportunity to participate and there is no exam at the end unlike school or college. We have guidance on this under our "Working together guidelines" (see above)

### **Points to consider**

Where are you going to be doing the online course? In a busy or loud environment which may be distracting? Somewhere where you are likely to be interrupted? If possible, find a quiet space to complete the course either at work or at home. What equipment are you going to use? To access all our E-learning courses, you will need a tablet or computer. If you are using your employer's IT equipment, then make sure you have permission to use it for a trade union course. Most facility agreements allow you to use employer equipment but check with your branch if you are unsure. Ensure that you have access to use ZOOM or TEAMS.

### **Is the learning FREE?**

UNISON pays for the activist training courses and materials for courses. Where there is a charge, it is to branches, not to you. Our member learning is also free to learners.

### **What happens if I need to cancel my place on an e-learning course?**

Even though our current offer is online, time and effort is put in to ensure that the learning offer meets the aims and is FREE to members using the unions funding. Due to our members learning courses being in high demand, with waiting lists if we exceed numbers, we ask that you notify us as a matter of urgency to enable us to be able to offer the place to others who may be on the waiting list. Please reply to the email sent to confirm update us if you can no longer attend a course you have applied for.

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**If you have any queries around our learning offers or need more support to access one of the platforms, please do not hesitate to contact us.**

**Email:** [unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk](mailto:unisonsweducation@unison.co.uk)

**Course Enquiries:** 01823 285 302

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Check out our latest learning offers <https://southwest.unison.org.uk/events/>