



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

Unit code: H2XA 34

Superclass: AJ

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Unit purpose

This Unit is designed for trade union workplace representatives, learning representatives, equality representatives and/or health and safety representatives who are new to their role or may not have undertaken this level of training in the subject. In this Unit candidates will develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to enable them to better organise trade union activity and represent members in the workplace.

This Unit is mandatory in the framework for the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and can also be taken as a standalone Unit, perhaps for purposes of continued professional development.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Explain how to organise trade union activity at work using the trade union approach.
- 2 Evaluate the importance of organising in realising trade union values and principles.
- 3 Develop a plan to represent members in the workplace.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Although entry is at the discretion of the centre, it is recommended that candidates possess good communication and interpersonal skills. In addition, candidates should be able to demonstrate the support of their nominating union.

General information (cont)

Credit points and level

1.5 Higher National Unit credit(s) at SCQF level 7: (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

Organising and representing members are central aspects of the role of the trade union representative. This Unit is intended to provide a generic introduction to the underlying principles and operational context.

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

This is a mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and can also be delivered as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development.

The Unit is also common to four specialist PDAs which have been designed for trade union representatives:

- ◆ PDA in Trade Union Organising for Health and Safety at SCQF level 7
- ◆ PDA in Trade Union Organising for Equality at SCQF level 7
- ◆ PDA in Trade Union Organising in the Workplace at SCQF level 7
- ◆ PDA in Trade Union Organising for Lifelong Learning at SCQF level 7

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

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The section of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills and Evidence Requirements are Mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Explain how to organise trade union activity at work using the trade union approach.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Trade union recognition, facilities and related agreements.
- ◆ Trade union roles, structures, rules and policies.
- ◆ Role, rights and responsibilities of a trade union representative.
- ◆ Benefits of trade union membership and organisation.
- ◆ Challenges affecting working people.
- ◆ Trade union approach to organising.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain the role, rights and responsibilities of a trade union representative in relation to trade union structures
- ◆ explain how trade union structures can be used to influence policy
- ◆ explain the benefits of trade union membership and organisation
- ◆ outline the trade union approach to organising in the workplace
- ◆ explain the nature and importance of organising in relation to challenges currently faced by working people
- ◆ develop a plan for organising trade union activity at work using the trade union approach

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

Outcome 2

Evaluate the importance of organising in realising trade union values and principles.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Trade union values and principles.
- ◆ How trade union values are realised through organising.
- ◆ History of significant social, economic and political gains for working people.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ explain trade union values and principles
- ◆ describe at least one example from the workplace which illustrates how trade union values are realised through organising
- ◆ provide at least two examples from history where organising has achieved significant social, economic or political gains for working people

Outcome 3

Develop a plan to represent members in the workplace.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Workplace issues.
- ◆ Relevant legislation and codes of practice.
- ◆ Employer policies and procedures.
- ◆ Workplace bargaining structure.
- ◆ Trade union and employer agreements

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ outline two issues that commonly occur at work
- ◆ explain the bargaining structure relevant to their members/ employment sector
- ◆ devise a plan for representing members on two identified workplace issues, taking into account legislation, codes of practice and relevant trade union/ employer policies, procedures and agreements
- ◆ reflect on good practice in representing members

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The Support Notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 60 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

This is a mandatory Unit of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation and is also common to four specialist PDAs which have been designed for trade union representatives. It can also be delivered as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development. It is intended for Trade Union Workplace Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives, Learning Representatives and/or Equality Representatives.

Organising and representing members are central aspects of the role of the trade union representative. This Unit is intended to provide a generic introduction to the underlying principles and operational context. It seeks to combine skills development and knowledge acquisition relating to representatives' organising and regulatory functions with exploration of explanatory frameworks designed to create understanding of the position of workers and workers' organisations within national and global political contexts. On completion of this Unit candidates should have a clearer understanding of their role and functions in the workplace and their wider role within the trade union and beyond.

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

It is envisaged that initial delivery will be as part of the relevant specialist PDA and that candidates will progress to further Units of the HNC in Trade Union Organising and Representation.

Candidates will be practising trade union representatives active in the workplace — eg Equality Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives, Learning Representatives or Workplace Representatives. Course participants are likely to attend in specialist groups drawn either from a single workplace or sector or from a variety of workplaces and sectors. Courses incorporating this Unit are therefore best delivered in short blocks or via day release, attended by cohorts of between ten and twenty participants. The tutor should be an experienced trade union representative with knowledge and understanding of trade union structures, policy and practice.

Participant-centred, co-operative group work is highly recommended. Candidates will bring a range of valuable existing knowledge and experience, whether from trade union involvement, work, previous study or life in general and it is important to promote exchange of knowledge, experience and views in a mutually respectful, mutually supportive environment

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

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Guidelines for working together should be agreed from the outset. This discussion of how to work together would provide a useful introduction to principles involved in trade union organising.

Outcome 1

By the end of Outcome 1, candidates should be able to explain how to organise trade union activity at work using the trade union approach. They should have developed understanding of their role, rights and responsibilities as trade union representatives and be aware of trade union organisational structures, rules and policies. Trade union rule books and organisational diagrammes would be a useful resource here.

A good start would be to invite participants to work in small groups to discuss what they themselves see as the most important jobs involved in their role, how they exercise their rights in practice, what skills they require and the composition and operation of the trade union team at their work. Small groups could then report back to the whole class for identification of key aspects of the role and further discussion of how trade union structures are used to influence policy.

Course participants should be encouraged to source and review recognition, trade union facility and other relevant workplace agreements. The tutor might wish to provide a list of examples of the sorts of misunderstandings that can arise over paid time off and facilities and ask candidates to work in small groups to prepare responses with clear reference to relevant legislation and agreements.

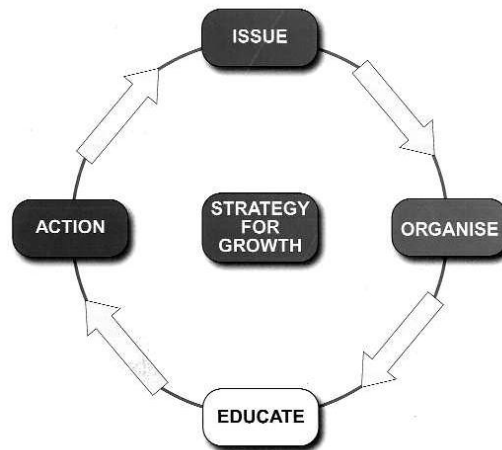
An opportunity to share reasons people give for taking part or not taking part in the trade union, participants' ideas for responses and their union success stories might help candidates consider how best to explain the benefits of trade union membership. This could be followed by role play activities where participants practice their own and observe each others' explanations and techniques.

Trade union representatives should be encouraged to develop understanding of their leadership role and confidence as leaders. Tutors might wish to refer back to earlier discussions on guidelines for working together as an introduction to group activity on the practicalities of effective leadership and teamwork in this context.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

In order to be able to outline the trade union approach to organising in the workplace, it is important that trade union representatives understand the nature and purpose of organising and the move from the servicing to the organising approach, where gains are made through active, engaged membership. Trade union organising theory might be explained as:



Participants could discuss their perceptions of their members' main concerns at work and exchange views on what comprises an effectively organised workplace. This might also be a good point to invite comparison of the current operation of their own workplace representative committees to any recommendations contained in trade union materials.

The trade union approach to organising includes how organising and recruitment is achieved by members, lay representatives and full-time officials working with their trade union's organising department. It might be useful to follow consideration of trade union materials on this with group discussions on participants' own ideas for building trade union organisation in the workplace as part of the trade union's organising strategy.

Exploration of historical context would help participants to understand and explain the nature and importance of organising in meeting the challenges currently faced by working people. It might be useful to approach this by discussing what participants themselves see as the most significant social, economic and political developments affecting working people throughout history and then jointly consider how these achievements were gained.

Understanding of the key location of organising in securing gains might be further developed by inviting groups to consider and report back their opinions on a selection of the sorts of questions that are commonly posed about the role of modern trade unions (eg 'Is the role of the trade union representative simply to make sure that employers stick to their legal obligations?', 'To what extent should trade union representatives be involved in politics?' and so on).

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

Candidates need to know to prioritise widely, deeply felt, winnable issues as a first step to developing a plan for organising trade union activity at work using the trade union approach. Representatives could discuss in groups the main issues facing people at work, bearing in mind to consider whether individual grievance or disciplinary cases might be the tip of an iceberg.

The trade union approach to organising also entails ongoing analysis of trade union membership and organisation at work. Delivery of Outcome 1 should therefore help equip candidates to identify areas of union strength and weakness in the workplace. It might be useful to provide participants an opportunity to discuss and consider appropriate workplace mapping/ auditing formats.

Outcome 2

By the end of Outcome 2, candidates should be in a position to evaluate the importance of organising in realising trade union values and principles. A good introduction would be for participants to share views on trade union values, principles and policies and discuss examples from their own experience of members' efforts to secure trade union values such as fairness, justice and equality.

Participants would benefit from being reminded of the important information on trade union values and principles contained in trade union rule books and policy documents. They could share views on what these values mean in practice, why they are important and the extent to which they are apparent in the workplace and in society beyond and then be well placed to describe at least one example from the workplace which illustrates how trade union values are realised through organising and at least two examples from history where organising has achieved significant social, political or economic gains for working people.

Outcome 3

By the end of Outcome 3, candidates should be able to develop a plan to represent members in the workplace. The following headings might help participants to identify issues that commonly occur:

- ◆ Workplace Operations — eg how work is allocated and organised
- ◆ Workplace Procedures — eg discipline, grievance, equality
- ◆ Terms and Conditions — eg pay, hours
- ◆ Working Environment — eg health, safety and welfare
- ◆ Social — eg family friendly policies, work-life balance, social activities

The focus here will depend largely upon each particular group's specialism, ie whether participants are Workplace Representatives, Equality Representatives, Health and Safety Representatives or Learning Representatives.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

The tutor should ensure that participants are able to explain the bargaining structure relevant to their members/ employment sector. This might involve group activities designed to encourage exchange of information on the sorts of issues on which participants currently negotiate with the employer; the levels of management involved and the extent to which they take part in or influence bargaining at higher levels.

It might be useful to include group/class activities designed to ensure that participants know what is meant by collective bargaining; are clear about the difference between an employer policy and an agreement; know why negotiated agreements are essential in employment relations and have considered which policies and workplace agreements need to be reviewed and whether new policies and agreements should be introduced.

Case studies covering a range of scenarios relevant to the representatives concerned are a useful way of helping to equip participants to devise plans for representing members. Workplace representatives could be asked to tackle case study examples of grievances on leave entitlement, rates of pay, location, hours of work, flexible working and so on; equality representatives might research and plan strategies for representing members facing discrimination; health and safety representatives a range of occupational health, safety and welfare issues and learning representatives might wish to focus on widening access to opportunities for learning. Participants will require access to relevant legislation, codes of practice and trade union/employer policies, procedures and agreements in order to research and take these into account.

Reflection on good practice in handling members' cases could be encouraged by inviting participants to devise a checklist for best practice following group discussion of a list of questions on topics such as confidentiality, involving and reporting back to members and so on and/ or role play activities with peer observation and mutual feedback.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit could be assessed holistically with evidence to cover all three Outcomes stored in a portfolio.

Assessment could comprise several separate tasks and it would be possible for a candidate to combine and submit these as one complete assignment. Evidence for assessment can be in any appropriate format as long as the Evidence Requirements are met. For example, assessment may include case studies, group discussion, presentations, written or oral reports and/ or diagrammes.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 assessment could comprise a series of short answers to questions and/or presentations in an appropriate format, supplemented by a diagramme of trade union organisational structures indicating how these can be used to influence policy.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

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Outcome 2

Outcome 2 might be assessed by a series of short answers to questions and/or short reports in any appropriate format, for example written, oral or signed.

Outcome 3

Outcome 3 assessment could comprise a series of short reports in any appropriate format supported by a plan for representing members in response to case studies.

Online and Distance Learning

This Unit could be delivered by open learning; however it would require careful planning by the centre to ensure the sufficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

The Core Skill of *Communication at SCQF level 6* will be developed by candidates through a range of activities (both written and oral) as well as class and group discussions.

The Core Skill of *Problem Solving at SCQF level 6* will be developed as the candidate will be dealing with various complex workplace issues and will also learn about the trade union approach to problem solving.

The Core Skill of *Working with Others at SCQF level 6* will be developed as the candidate will be involved in group discussions and group tasks, participate in union team building activities, theory and practice.

The Core Skill of *Information and Communication Technology at SCQF level 5* will be developed as the candidate will likely utilise computer search engines when carrying out research.

The Core Skill of *Numeracy* may be developed in this Unit, particularly Outcome 3 as the candidate may be developing a plan to deal with a member issue on rates of pay, leave entitlement, pro-rata calculations etc.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Trade Union Organising and Representation: Organising and Representing Members

This Unit will be of interest to you if you are a trade union workplace representative, learning representative, equality representative and/ or health and safety representative. You may be new to your role or may have not undertaken this level of training in the subject.

Organising and representing members are central aspects of the role of the trade union representative. This Unit is intended to provide a generic introduction to the underlying principles and operational context. In this Unit you will develop your knowledge, understanding and skills to enable you to better organise trade union activity and represent members in the workplace.

You must be able to demonstrate the support of your nominating union to undertake the Unit. This is a mandatory Unit of the Higher National Certificate in Trade Union Organising and Representation but can also be taken as a standalone Unit, perhaps for the purposes of continued professional development.

To achieve this Unit you will complete three Outcomes:

- ◆ Explain the role and rights of a trade union representative.
- ◆ Organise trade union activity at work using the trade union approach.
- ◆ Represent members in the workplace.

Assessment for the Unit may include evidence generated from role play, case studies, group discussion, presentations, observation, written or oral reports and/ or diagrammes.

There may also be opportunities for you to develop your Core Skills in *Communication, Problem Solving, Working with Others, Information and Communication Technology* and *Numeracy* although this is dependent on the modes of delivery and assessment used.