ucu training
skills knowledge activism

Organising for sustainability

participant's workbook

A course for environment reps



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Organising for sustainability course outline

This is a three-day course for UCU reps and members on trade unions and the environment. It is designed for UCU members who wish to develop their understanding of climate change and ways to protect the environment through change at work. It is intended to enable those taking part to develop as environment reps.

We hope that you find the course both enjoyable and informative, and that what you learn here you will apply to your work, union, home and the community.

Course aims

- to understand environment terminology and the current debate
- to identify the main environmental concerns at your workplace
- to review environment management systems
- to assess current trade union policies
- to review and develop workplace strategies
- to review and develop community strategies
- to develop an action plan

Course methods

The course will use a combination of tutor presentations, speakers and individual and group activities. The activities are designed to generate ideas which can be used to produce an action plan at the end of the course. Please make notes to help you with this as we go through the course.

Resources

You will be provided with materials to use during the course. These will include:

- UCU course pack
- *Staff organising for sustainability* – environment rep handbook
- *Go green at work* – TUC handbook

Accreditation

This course is available as a TUC Level 2 Award (6 OCN credits) using:

- Understanding environmental issues in the workplace (3 credits)
- Handling members' problems (3 credits)

An assessmemt booklet is available for each unit. This is linked to the course workbook so you are encouraged to fill in the Notes section after each activity as this will provide most of the evidence to meet the assessment criteria.

Pre-course work

In order for you to get the maximum benefit from this course it would be useful to find out the following information:

Branch

- Has the branch appointed an officer to lead on sustainability issues?

- Is the branch represented on committees or working groups that deal with sustainability issues?

Employer

- Has your employer got an environment/sustainable development policy?

- Do managers have designated environment responsibilities?

Documents

- Please bring along copies of any environmental policies or documents relevant to this course.
- List the documents that you have obtained below.

Day 1 – programme

09:30	Arrival, registration and refreshments
10:00	Course aims
	Activity 1: Introductions
	Activity 2: Reviewing sustainable development issues
11:00	Break
	Activity 3: Sustainability and the education sector
13:00	Lunch
	Activity 4: UCU environment reps
15:00	Break
	Activity 5: Union organisation
16:15	Summary of Day 1
16:30	Day 1 close

Activity 1: Introductions

Aims

To help us:

- find out who is on the course
- identify any experience of training on sustainability issues
- consider what we want to get out of the course.

Task

Use the headings below to introduce yourself:

- name
- job and workplace
- union positions
- any previous sustainability training
- what you hope to gain from the course.

Resources

- Own experience

Notes

Activity 2: Reviewing sustainable development issues

Aims

To help us:

- review environmental terminology
- compare experiences of dealing with these issues

Task

Definition of sustainable development:

'*Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*' (Brundtland Report, 1987)

In groups note down:

- any examples of environmental terms or jargon that you have come across that may require further discussion on the course.

In groups note down any experiences of the following:

- raising sustainability issues with your employer
- raising sustainability with your members
- raising sustainability within your community.

Report back

Elect a spokesperson to report back

Resources

- *SOS* pages 3–5
- *Go green at work* Pages 3–6

Notes

Activity 3: Sustainability and the education sector

Aims

To help us:

- review the importance of sustainability in the education sector

Task

In groups discuss the four statements below. For each question summarise the main points of view.

1 Climage change is the most serious issue facing us in the 21st century.

2 Climage change should be a greater priority in the further and higher education sectors.

3 Climage change should be a greater priority within UCU.

4 I already experience work impacts as a result of climate change.

Resources

SOS Handbook, pages 6–9

Notes

Activity 4: UCU environment reps

Aims

To help us:

- examine the role of a UCU environment rep
- develop a strategy for recognition.

Task

There are currently no legal rights to appoint environment reps.

In groups discuss:

- What could be the main functions of an environment rep?
- What facilities would you need to carry out these functions?
- What are the main arguments you could use to persuade management that these functions are necessary and what counterarguments might be used against you?

Report back

1. Use the information from your discussion to write up your points on the flipcharts marked 'UCU environment rep functions' and 'UCU environment rep facilities'. When all groups have added their ideas compare the responses and comment on any points that require further discussion.
2. Present one of your arguments for environment reps and let another group identify the type of arguments that could be used to oppose their appointment. Once you have gone through the different arguments note down how that will influence your approach for recognition of the environment rep role.

Resources

- *SOS Handbook,* pages 10–13
- *Go green at work,* pages 10–15, 21–25 and 92

Notes

Activity 5: Union organisation

Aims

To help us:

- assess what is currently done to promote staff engagement
- examine ways of improving staff involvement
- review your workplace union organisation.

Task

In groups:

1. Identify the barriers to involving members in your workplace and how it is currently being addressed in your workplace.
2. Draft a report to the UCU branch executive outlining how staff engagement on sustainability issues can be improved.
3. Fill in the union contact list on page 26 of the SOS Handbook.

Resources

- *SOS Handbook,* page 26
- *Go Green at Work,* pages 26–27 and 83

Notes

Day 2 – programme

09:30	Activity 6:	Environment policies
11:00	Break	
	Activity 7:	Environmental management
13:00	Lunch	
	Activity 8:	Energy
15:00	Break	
	Activity 9:	Transport, waste and water
	Activity 10:	Preparing for Day 3 – workplace inspection
16:30	Day 2 close	

Notes

Activity 6: Environment policies

Aims

To help us:

- examine the content of policies
- practice trying to improve policies.

Task

Read the model agreement on Page 74 of *Go Green at Work*. Highlight any important features in the policy.

In pairs:

1. Make a checklist of the key headings/points that should be contained in an environment policy.
2. Look at the example of a policy provided to you or one that you have brought to the course.
3. Evaluate the policy against the checklist highlighting any strengths and weaknesses.
4. Prepare a report on the main improvements needed.

If there is enough time this can then be run as a role play activity. One pair present their improvement plan to another pair playing the role of management. They then try to negotiate a revision to the policy.

Report back

Each pair reports on one key aspect of the policy until all the points on the checklists have been covered.

Resources

- *SOS Handbook*, Section 6
- *Go Green at Work*, pages 19–25 and 74–79

Notes

Activity 7: Environmental management

Aims

To help you:

- examine the current state of play in your organisation.

Task 1

Identify the key contacts in your workplace who have sustainability responsibilities. Include:

- Senior management
- Environmental management
- Facilities
- Students

Fill in the contact list on page 26 of the *SOS Handbook*.

Task 2

Work in small groups, with at least one member from the HE sector.

- Check the People & Planet University League Table
  https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league

  Make a note of how the university in your group performed.

- Open up the link on Section 3 'Environmental Auditing and Management Systems'
  https://peopleandplanet.org/university-league/methodology/auditing

  Make a note of the standards contained in the section.

- Prepare a report back covering the follow-up actions for trades unions on the implementation of these standards.

Notes

Activity 8: Energy

Aims

To help you:

- examine the current state of play in your organisation
- assess the opportunities for union engagement with employers.

Task 1

What role for the union?

a) Why should trade unions be involved in energy management at work?
b) Use any information from your pre-course work to identify examples of energy management measures currently carried out in the workplace.
c) Use the table on the next page to help you assess the state of play in your workplace on a range of measures that could form part of a strategy.

How did you score? Compare your results with other members in your group. Do group members have any additional measures not included in the table above?

Report back

Nominate someone to report on:

- the reasons why this is trade union issue
- the range of scores in your group, including any additional energy measures discussed.

Energy management measure	Yes	No	Don't know	Comments
1. Does your employer have a policy on energy management?				
2. Is there a member of management with responsibility for implementing it?				
3. Is your workplace covered by the requirements of the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme?				
4. Are energy usage figures reported?				
5. Do you have an Energy Performance Certificate on display in the building?				
6. Has the employer committed to any energy targets?				
7. Are energy audits carried out?				
8. Has there been any consultation with the union on energy management?				
Total				

Energy (continued)

Task 2

What are the next steps?

a) What further information do you need to develop your union strategy?

b) Draw up a short report to discuss at a meeting of members or reps outlining ways in which this issue can be taken forward by your branch.

Report back

Provide a brief outline indicating your next steps.

Resources

- *SOS Handbook*, page 18
- UCU Guidance leaflet No. 2: *Energy Management – What role for the UCU?*
- TUC *Go green at work* handbook, pages 31–46 and 80–82

Notes

Activity 9: Transport, waste and water

Aims

To help us:

- review best practice in three key areas of environmental management
- identify UCU guidelines for monitoring employer performance.

Task

Choose whether you want to join a transport or waste, or water group.

Each group will:

1. review how the topic is currently managed. Use any information from your Workplace Inspection report
2. Using the experience of everyone in your group, and the resources available, identify some guidelines that reps can use to assess employer performance

Report back

Select someone to present your guidelines.

Resources

- *SOS Handbook*, page 19

Waste

- *Targeting climate change*, pages 90–96
- *Go Green at Work*, pages 54–59

Water

- *Targeting climate change*, pages 98-104
- *Go Green at Work*, pages 59-62

Transport

- *Targeting climate change*, pages 82–88
- *Go Green at Work*, pages 47–53

Notes

Activity 10: Preparing for Day 3

Task 1 – Training

Sustainable development training provided	Yes	No	Don't know
1. Are sustainable development (SD) topics covered in induction sessions for new staff?			
2. Are SD topics covered in induction sessions for new students?			
3. Are SD topics included in continuous professional development programmes?			
4. Is there SD awareness raising linked to specific events, for example, World Environment Day?			
5. Are environment management courses provided for those with EM responsibilities? eg IEMA, NEBOSH			
6. Is there job specific SD training?			

Task 2 – Other workplace standards

Select one or more of the workplace standards on pages 18-19 of the SOS Handbook. Try to find the information asked for in each bullet point. You will be asked to choose one of these standards for your Improvement Project on Day 3.

Notes

Day 3 – programme

09:30	Activity 11: **Workplace inspection**
11:00	Break
	Activity 12: **Education for sustainable development**
13:00	Lunch
	Activity 13: **Community engagement**
15:00	Break
	Activity 14: **Improvement project**
	Activity 15: **Action plan**
16:20	Evaluation
16:30	Close

Notes

Activity 11: Workplace inspection

Aims

To help you:

- review the progress made on your workplace inspection since Day 2 of the course
- prepare guidelines on best practice.

Task 1 – training

Evaluate the work you have done on workplace inspections.

Review your responses to the workplace activity on Page 29 of the course book. Complete a flip chart to record the current state of play using the template below:

SD Training Question	Yes (list the institution)	No (list the institution)	Don't know (list the institution)
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

Report back

Identify the examples of best practice in your group.

Task 2 – Other Workplace standards

Prepare a short report covering your inspection:

1. Which subject(s) did you choose?
2. Who did you involve?
3. How long did it take?
4. Was it a successful exercise? If the answer is Yes, what are the most useful outcomes? If the answer is No, what are the reasons for this?

In groups compare your experience of completing the workplace activity on environment inspections

Report back

In the light of course members experiences draft a set of guidelines on 'Conducting a workplace environment inspection'

Notes

Activity 12: Education for sustainable development

Aims

To help you:

- examine why education is a vital component of sustainable development
- consider the impact on members of education for sustainable development (ESD) initiatives.

Task

You will be divided into HE and FE sector groups.

1. Identify the drivers in your sector to improve ESD standards
2. Note examples of any good practice on introducing ESD into curriculum programmes
3. What are the potential positive and negative impacts on teaching staff of introducing ESD components into all programmes of study?

Report back

Appoint someone to provide a report back from your sector

Resources

- *SOS Handbook* pages 20-21
- UCU Guidance Leaflet No. 1: ESD

Notes

Activity 13: Community engagement

Aims

To help you:

- review the ways in which your institution engages with community organisations on sustainable development
- identify opportunities for UCU to maximise the potential from community links.

Task

- Watch the video 'Better Choices for a Better Tomorrow' (5 mins). Make a note of any questions or comments about the linking of students with sustainability projects. **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HaTqdB1OB0U**
- Put in web link from UCU Resources site.
- In groups prepare some points covering the strengths and weaknesses of these types of projects. Use any experience from your institution where there has been an attempt to make links of this type.
- Fill in the community contacts list on Page 27 of the *SOS Handbook*

Report back

Using the strengths and weaknesses reported we will compile some guidelines on community engagement

Notes

Activity 14: Improvement project

Aims

To help you:

- draft up a plan of action to improve a sustainability standard at work.

Task

Identify a priority issue that you plan to take up as a UCU environment rep.
Prepare a plan covering:

1. outline of the issue
2. current state of play
3. improvements needed
4. what further information you need
5. who you need to involve
6. what procedure will you use to progress the issue
7. arguments you will use to support your approach
8. potential counter-arguments that may be used against you
9. how you will respond to these.

Report back

Give a short report to the group outlining the points above. Make a note of any feedback.

Notes

Activity 15: Action plan

Aims

To help us:

- review the environment module
- make decisions about future priorities
- report back to your members.

Task

Working individually, review the notes you have been compiling during this module. Prepare a brief report outlining the work you intend to carry out over the next six months.

Use the worksheet on the next page to set out your action plan

Report back

You will be asked to give a short report to the rest of the course with the main points of your action plan.

Resources

- Personal notes
- Course materials

Course review

We hope you have enjoyed the course. To help us make future courses more effective we would like your feedback. Please fill in the evaluation form provided at the end of this pack and return it to the tutor at the end of the course.

Action Plan worksheet

Action point	Plan	Timescale

Action Plan worksheet

Action point	Plan	Timescale

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Environment reps – Evaluation form

We hope that you have enjoyed the course. Please take time to complete the following and hand back to the tutor. Considered and constructive feedback will help us to ensure that the course is relevant to your needs.

1. Were you satisfied with the organisation of the course? (eg info, hotel, food)

2. Were you clear about the main objectives of the course, as outlined by the tutor and discussed at the beginning of the course and were these met?

3. How would you rate the support you have had?

Tutor support	Excellent	1	2	3	4	Weak	n/a
Support from other learners	Excellent	1	2	3	4	Weak	n/a
Resources/materials	Excellent	1	2	3	4	Weak	n/a

4. How did you find the teaching and learning methods used on the course?

Group work	Excellent	1	2	3	4	Weak	n/a
Individual exercises	Excellent	1	2	3	4	Weak	n/a
Written work	Excellent	1	2	3	4	Weak	n/a

5. Is there anything you feel could have been included to improve the course?

6. How do you think this course will help you in your professional and your union work?

7. Any other comments

8. Would you be interested in attending any of these future UCU courses?
Please tick the appropriate boxes

- ☐ Union reps
- ☐ Health & safety reps
- ☐ Equality reps
- ☐ Learning reps
- ☐ Green working
- ☐ Introduction to pensions
- ☐ Tackling bullying & harassment
- ☐ Challenging & handling redundancy
- ☐ Tackling stress
- ☐ Media skills
- ☐ Employment law
- ☐ Negotiating & bargaining skills

Are there any other courses you think UCU should provide?

Your name

UCU Region UCU Number

Email

Course Date Location

Thank you!