



UNITE EDUCATION

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UNITE Reps and the Environment Days 1 - 3 ACTIVITIES





Unite learning contract – code of practice

On most education programmes we negotiate ground rules with participants. We would like to take this concept a stage further and adopt a Code of Practice which fits in with our values and has a person-centred approach to education in unions.

Respecting the unique worth of every person

We believe that regardless of status each and every individual should be equally valued.

We welcome the contributions and respect the wealth of experience that all participants attending our education courses will bring with them. We acknowledge that some organisational procedures are not open to debate, but that on occasions it is helpful to critically examine issues to assist in our learning.

We consider that valuable methods of learning involve discussion, listening and constructive challenge.

Encouraging people to fulfil their potential

We support this value unreservedly and aim to make relevant training available to all members within the regions and sectors.

We fully endorse the General Secretary's statement on "preventing discrimination on the grounds of Sex/Gender, Marital Status, Race, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Disability".

All education courses should reflect an anti-oppressive approach to practice. We aim to assist in developing an understanding of how and why oppression occurs and how it impacts on certain groups. In the learning environment we believe it to be important to discourage adversary positions or competition. We aim to work cooperatively and to promote an atmosphere of mutual trust and support, sharing, listening and affirmative behaviour.

Working with change

We acknowledge that learning involves change and that change is not easy but possible. We owe it to our members to constantly review and improve our practice. It is our hope and expectation that people attend courses with an open mind and a positive attitude to the education being offered.

Exercising responsible stewardship

Education is a resource in which Unite invests. We wish to provide an efficient and effective service which meets organisational targets and matches training needs identified and prioritised through negotiation with the relevant partners.

Working Together

We need the cooperation of all to use the training resources with responsible stewardship, to make full use of courses in a planned and effective way and to assist in the process of evaluation by completing application and evaluation forms.

Behaviour, language etc

We acknowledge that both participants and tutors share the responsibility to challenge any negative stereotyping language, or disparaging comments which are oppressive towards any group.

We aim to promote safe learning environments for all and recognise the need to be able to explore often difficult and sensitive areas. We also aim to create an atmosphere conducive to exchanging ideas, exploring concepts, constructively criticising practice and identifying good practice.



Confidentiality

At the beginning of courses tutors often negotiate the issue of confidentiality as a ground rule. This is a complicated issue and we feel it is only right for us to be clear on this point.

Our stance is:

1. Course participants have a right and a responsibility to choose what information they wish to share with both the tutor and colleagues.
2. It is to be expected that participants and tutors will perhaps want to share their experience of training with other people e.g. friends, family, other colleagues but it is incumbent upon participants not to share personal information about other individuals which has obviously been given in confidence and where individuals can be identified.
3. Sometimes issues come to the attention of the tutor which cause serious concern for the safety and well-being of other participants. In such a case the tutor may wish to discuss the matter further with the individual concerned and decide if the issue needs to be pursued further.

We will strive for an inclusive and courteous service which should be reflected throughout all our education activity.

The preceding pages are intended to offer a clear statement of the expectations we have of both ourselves and course participants and any tutor who contributes to Unite education.

We also welcome any feedback on the way in which the work of the Education Department in Unite lives up to its own Code of Practice.

In solidarity

JIM MOWATT
Director of Education, UNITE the Union

Signature



We are running out of time

The Clock is ticking



UNITE REPS AND THE ENVIRONMENT ACTIVITIES

THE NEW CHALLENGE

ACTIVITY 1	INTRODUCTIONS AND AIMS
ACTIVITY 2	THE ENVIRONMENT CRISIS – CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY
ACTIVITY 3	ENVIRONMENTAL AUDITS
ACTIVITY 4	GETTING THE MESSAGE ACROSS
ACTIVITY 5	MAPPING OUR SUPPLY CHAINS
ACTIVITY 6	UNDERSTANDING THE WORK PROCESS
ACTIVITY 7	IF WE TOLERATE THIS
ACTIVITY 8	THE SHOVEL READY MAGNIFICENT SEVEN
ACTIVITY 9	WASTE NOT WANT NOT
ACTIVITY 10	GETTING STUCK IN
ACTIVITY 11	FOR I DIPPED IN TO THE FUTURE...
ACTIVITY 12	A CALL TO ACTION (TO BE COMPLETED AS A PART OF 3 DAY BLOC RELEASE)

The background of the page is a light green color with several thick, wavy, darker green lines that sweep across the page from the bottom left towards the top right, creating a sense of movement and growth.

ACTIVITIES

THE NEW CHALLENGE



ACTIVITY 1: Introductions and aims

AIMS: To help us –

- Get to know about each other.
- Work out our aims for the course.

TASK:

1. Your tutor will ask you to introduce yourself, make notes on the following headings:
 - a) Name.
 - b) Workplace and job.
 - c) How many members represented.
 - d) Any other positions in the union e.g. Workplace Rep, Safety Rep, Learning Rep, Equalities Rep.
 - e) What they want to get out of the course.
2. What are the key areas of concern about the environment that you have an individual and as a rep?
3. Your tutor will introduce the video 'The Story of Stuff' (found in the resources), what are the key lessons for ourselves as workers and members of our communities?



ACTIVITY 2: The environment crisis: Challenge and opportunity

AIMS: To help us –

- Understand the changing role of Unite Reps due to the challenges of the climate crisis.
- Identify our employers’ actions and responsibilities when addressing the climate crisis.
- Use our rights to information, consultation and bargaining in the workplace.

TASK:

In your groups answer the following questions:

1. What environmental issues are there in the workplaces of group members?
2. What are your employers currently doing about environmental concerns?
3. Does your employer consult with you as a rep when implementing any changes in the workplace?
4. What are your rights as a rep to information, consultation and bargaining in both law and in your collective agreements? Use the table below to list these.
5. How do your rights as a Unite Rep enable you to deal with these issues?

Legal Rights	Collective Agreements



ACTIVITY 3: Environmental Audits

AIMS: To help us –

- Understand what is presently being done in the workplace to tackle the climate crisis.
- Identify current strengths and weaknesses of your employer’s strategy.
- Target areas for action using an environment audit.

In the same way as we audit our safety or organisational structures, we also need to audit our impact on the environment.

TASK:

In your groups complete (or complete as much as you can) the below workplace environmental audit. Although we are undertaking the audit as an activity, we recommend you use the below as a template back in your workplace.

1 = Never 2 = Occasionally 3 = Mostly 4 = Always 5 = Not applicable

Audit Questions	1	2	3	4	5
Does your employer fully map its supply chains?					
Does your employer map the environmental impact from its supply chains?					
Does the organisation understand, and explain, its carbon footprint?					
Does your employer have written environmental policies and/or an accredited Environmental Management System (e.g. EMAS, ISO14001, Carbon Trust Carbon Management Scheme)?					
Does the organisation have a carbon or environmental management plan and is it committed to work with workers and their unions?					
Does the organisation publish key environmental indicators?					
Does the employer use power saving features at work (motion sensor lights, IT power downs)?					
Does the employer use low energy appliances (bulbs, monitors etc)?					
Does your employer provide training on practical steps to reduce your carbon footprint?					
Does your employer consult with the union on its training offer?					
Does the employer have a commitment to seek ways to minimise the use of resources, including energy, paper, raw materials, packaging and disposable items?					
Is heating or cooling on in areas, or at times of year/day, when it doesn't need to be?					
Is the workplace properly insulated and draught-proofed?					
Is any equipment left on when not in use?					
Is everything recycled that can be?					
Does the employer have water saving measures in place?					
Does the organisation have an up-to-date travel plan that promotes low-carbon transport and reduces unnecessary travel, negotiated with the union?					
Are catering arrangements satisfactory or is food over-processed or packaged?					
Does the organisation offer any carbon reducing schemes outside of the workplace (carpooling, bike to work etc)?					
Does the employer consider and act upon environmental impacts in procurement of goods and services?					
Does the organisation undertake environmental audits and implement recommendations in full?					

Discuss your findings with the wider group to establish best practice and areas for improvement.



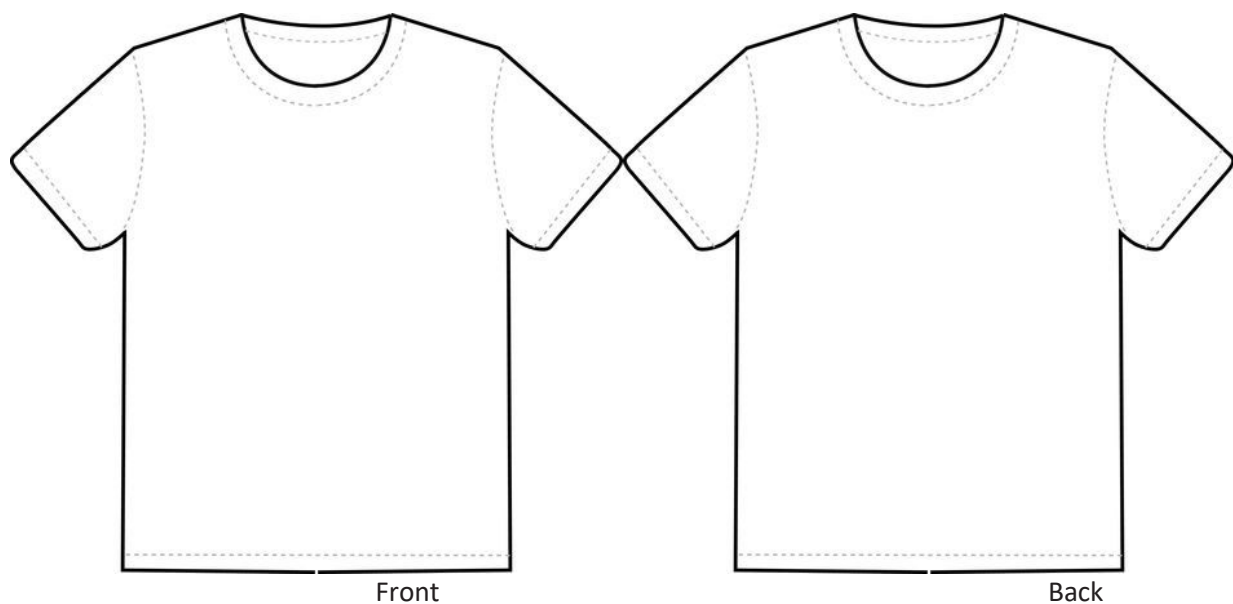
ACTIVITY 4: Getting the message across

AIMS: To help us –

- Engage with members on environmental issues.
- To understand any barriers to change and how to overcome them.
- Argue that this is an issue that impacts upon all of our members.

TASK A:

Think about your own workplace and members. What stereotypes or biases do your members have about those campaigning on the environment? Draw up a list of these stereotypes and then use your list to design a t-shirt, using the templates below, to sum up how others conceive environmental issues.



TASK B:

1. How do we begin to argue the severity of the climate crisis to our members in the workplace, overcoming the negative stereotypes identified in Task A?
2. What barriers do we face in communicating our arguments with:
 - Our members
 - Our employer
 - The wider union movement
 - How do we overcome these?
3. What are our positive messages on the Environment?

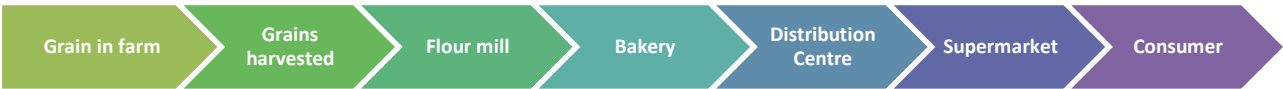


ACTIVITY 5: Mapping our supply chains

AIMS: To help us –

- Map supply chains in the workplace.
- Identify key environmental impacts in supply chains.
- How our role as a rep can influence these issues.

In its simplest form a supply chain refers to the activities required by an organisation to deliver goods or services to a consumer. Our workplaces have many supply chains, each of them with their own impact on the environment. Your employer has a duty to map its supply chains for other reasons anyway under the Modern Slavery Act 2015. Below is an example of a simple supply chain.



TASK A:

Use the blank boxes below to map the supply chains connected to your own workplace activities.

Please note that some of your supply chains may need additional or fewer boxes than provided above.

TASK B:

Consider the environmental aspects of the three supply chains that you have produced above. In your groups discuss:

1. How far are goods or services transported?
2. Where do you think the major environmental impacts are within the supply chain?
3. Does your employer engage with each supplier in the chain to reduce their environmental impact?
4. Do you think you as a rep could bargain or influence your employer to around this issue?



ACTIVITY 6: Understanding the work process

AIMS: To help us –

- Identify a range of employer processes.
- To understand how these processes affect our environmental footprint.

Unite represents workers across all sectors of the economy. Whether you work for public, private or voluntary sectors, one area that unites us is that wherever we work, our employers have a series of processes within the workplace. We will be looking more closely at these processes and their environmental impact in the activity below.

TASK A:

Look at the example below, think about your own organisation and the processes that they undertake. Complete the table below with regards to your own organisation, department and your own role.

Organisational Processes	Departmental Processes	My own processes
<i>Example – Logistics organisation - Distribution, transport and storage</i>	<i>Example – Distribution centre - Distribution from main hub to RDC (Regional Distribution Centre)</i>	<i>Example – Logistics driver - Driving a diesel vehicle.</i>

TASK B:

Now that you have identified some of your employers' processes, complete the table below to assess the negative environmental impacts of the processes that you have examined.

	Organisational	Departmental	Individual
Major adverse impact			
Some impact			
Minimal adverse impact			



ACTIVITY 7: If we tolerate this

AIMS: To help us –

- Examine our workplace processes and look for areas for realistic change.
- To identify how we will apply these changes and any barriers that we may encounter.
- Overcome these barriers.

TASK A:

1. When looking at arguing for realistic change, how do we best consult with:
 - Our membership
 - The employer
2. Thinking back to Activity 2, what structures, agreements or policies do we currently have in the workplace that enable us to bargain with the employer? You may wish to consider ICE regulations, SRSC etc.

TASK B:

In the previous activity you identified a series of environmental impacts from the processes that your employer undertakes. Each group should select 3 impacts which they feel that they could approach their employer to implement change.

You are tasked to put forward an environmental business plan to your employer. In your plan you should consider:

- What changes would we like to see implemented?
- Would members be committed to arguing for any proposed change?
- Where your employer might make efficiency savings or economic gains, how would we agree on sharing the proceeds.
- How would we ensure that jobs are safeguarded?
- Which arguments would your employer be more likely to consider?
- What barriers might the employer put up? How will we overcome these?

TASK C:

How will you secure an Environmental Agreement with your employer?

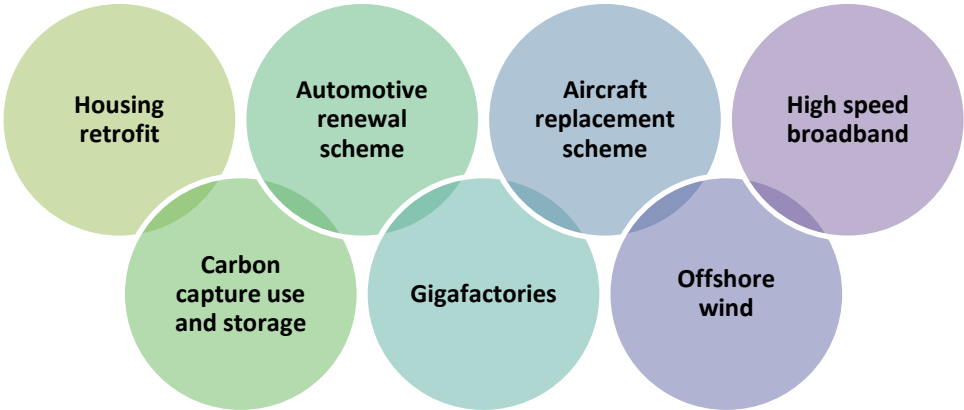


ACTIVITY 8: The shovel ready magnificent seven

AIMS: To help us –

- Understand the ‘shovel ready’ strategy.
- To begin to argue now with employers and all levels of government to implement this strategy.
- Build links with all sectors of our union.

Unite has recently launched a series of seven ‘shovel ready’ manufacturing schemes that government and employers could start now to help recover our economy and provide enormous benefits in terms of how we live and work in the light of the climate crisis. These projects are ‘ready-to-go’, but they need strategic investment in technology, production and skills by the UK government to be realised. The seven are:



TASK:

In your groups, produce a short presentation to the larger course group that explains what ‘shovel ready’ is. You should pitch your presentation as if you are in front of **either**:

- Your own branch.
- Your RISC/NISC.
- Your workplace safety committee.
- A local community meeting.

Use the boxes below to identify a number of contacts within Unite and other organisations that could be key players in developing the ‘shovel ready’ campaign.

Other Unions at work	:
Your own workplace	:
Unite contacts in your sector (RISCs etc)	:
Unite contacts in other sectors	:
Political contacts	:
Other organisations	:



ACTIVITY 9: Waste not want not

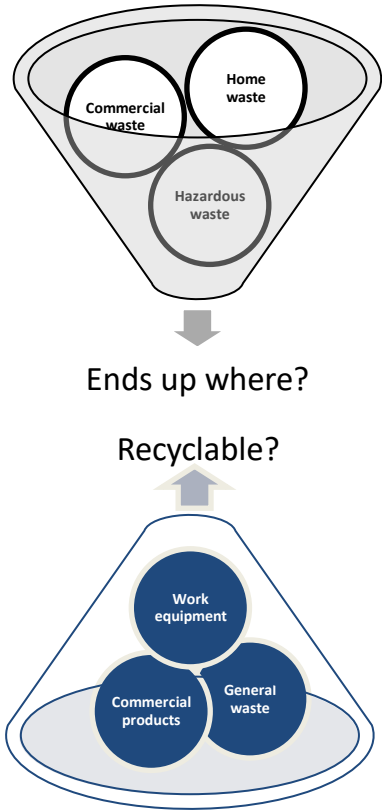
AIMS: To help us –

- Understand the importance of waste management in protecting our environment.
- Appreciate the role that the individual and the collective have in achieving good waste management.

TASK A:

In your groups, complete the table below:

	At home	At work
What items do you throw away?		
What items do you recycle?		
How is recycling segregated? (what colour bins take what?)		
Where does it end up?		



TASK B:

In your groups discuss what the following images mean to you? How do you and your workplace contribute to the images? What can we do to make a difference and change our behaviours?





ACTIVITY 10: Getting stuck in

AIMS: To help us –

- Identify what your organisation does with its waste.
- Identify if your organisation has an environmental waste programme.
- Argue for any improvements to waste disposal.

TASK A:

In groups think about how your organisation deals with waste. Discuss the following points:

- What are the environmental measures currently in place in your workplace?
- Are there any examples of good practice within your organisation?
- Are there any examples of bad practice within your organisation?
- What improvements could be made?

TASK B:

Dealing with environmental waste is a duty for all reps in the workplace. Specifically, however, the role of a Health and Safety rep in the workplace has never been more central to this crisis.

Access to the internet or any other resources to identify the key legal arguments that can support arguments for the reduction of waste in the workplace.

	Labelling	Commercial waste	Hazardous waste	Workers Health	The broader environment	Product creation
COSHH						
Environment Protection Act						
Waste Regulations 2011						
COP26						



ACTIVITY 11: For I dipped into the future...

AIMS: To help us –

- Engage with members on environmental issues.
- To understand any barriers to change and how to overcome them.
- Argue that this is an issue that impacts upon all of our members.

“For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see, Saw the Vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be.” – Alfred, Lord Tennyson

TASK A:

Workers should be at the heart of a transition to a green economy. We need to consider the impacts on the changing world of work and environment on our terms and conditions, employment, rates of pay and working hours.

1. What do we mean by ‘green economy’?
2. What skills do workers have that we can harness in the transition to a green economy?
3. What are the new skills that might be required in a green economy?
4. Can we ever achieve a zero-waste workplace?
5. What has the impact been of COVID and various lockdowns on the environment?
6. How has free market capitalism contributed to the environmental crisis?

TASK B:

What does a future green economy look like to your group? In your discussion, consider:

- How would the economy differ? Would it be more localised?
- How will we better look after each other, other animals and fellow workers in other countries that we share our world with?
- What would your job look like in the future?
- How will we secure sustainable and decent pay, terms, conditions and better collective bargaining?



ACTIVITY 12: A call to action

AIMS: To help us –

- Decide on the issues that you will deal with in the coming period.
- Plan how you will deal with these issues.
- Consider how you will involve membership, branch, FTOs etc.

NOTE:

If you are attending the course on a five-day release, you should undertake this activity towards the end of your final day.

TASK A:

In groups, look at the graphic below and considering the discussions that we have had throughout the course, identify which actions that you will realistically take upon your return to the workplace. Then identify the short (within 12 weeks), medium (within 6 months) and longer-term actions.

TASK B:

Consider how you can develop a project for your workplace or organisation that tackles environmental change and the impact on supply chains. You should think about building alliances with Unite community and retired members branches, other workplaces and the broader movement.

