DEVELOPING E-LEARNING TOOLS
FOR TRADE UNION EDUCATION (DeLTTUE)

Education and Training

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Manual 4

Guide to accrediting online programmes

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Introduction to DeLTTUE

This manual is one of a series that form a toolkit that has been produced as part of the European Commission's Lifelong Learning Programme funded project – Developing e-Learning Tools for Trade Union Education (DeLTTUE).

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The DeLTTUE project aims to produce innovative tools, strategies and good practice guidance to support the development of online learning within European trade union education and will enhance the online learning experience for union learners in all participating countries and throughout Europe.

The project involved nine partners from five countries. The consortium included five trade union confederations and the education and training agency of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) as well as other partners in the UK.

Background and structure

The manual on accrediting online education provides trade union confederations with structured guidance to enable them to embed high-quality online programmes within their curriculums. It discusses the verification of competence-based systems and makes reference to accreditation systems so that these can be recognised within the European Qualifications Framework.

It is structured in such a way as to give any trade union organisation an insight into the various elements and aspects to be considered when developing and delivering a successful accredited trade union education programme.

It was written by Stow College Trade Union Education Department, Glasgow, which hosts, designs and delivers all TUC online courses within Scotland.

The manual is divided into three key parts:

Part One: Standard guidance on accreditation

This aims to outline a framework for accreditation covering the structure, process and delivery of accredited trade union courses. This provides the initial framework on which online accreditation policies and procedures are built. It is included in this paper as one example of an accreditation model. Any accreditation model will contain more or less the same elements. It is modelled on classroom delivery.

Part Two: TUC guidelines for working online

This part builds on the model outlined in part one and applies it to online delivery. The model outlined in this part is the current UK TUC Guidelines for Working Online. The model itself suggests the possibility of alternative evidencing student work.

Part Three: Alternative guidelines for working online

This part, building on parts one and two, provides a framework for discussion of alternatives. Within the UK the models used in England and Scotland are slightly different. Part three outlines the

model used in Scotland, and as such aims to open up a discussion on models that could be used throughout Europe.

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1. Standard guidance on accreditation

What is accreditation?

For the purposes of this document, accreditation is formal recognition of the learning that has taken place on an educational programme by an external awarding body. However, more informal procedures for accreditation may be in use but would not link to the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). In any case these informal procedures would need to have many of the same elements as formal procedures.

Why is it a trade union issue?

For a number of reasons, financial and educational, many trade union bodies are now looking for more formal, academic recognition of the training that has taken place. This generally necessitates the involvement of external educational awarding bodies.

Depending on the arrangements in your country you may be looking for a more formal recognition of the learning taking place within trade union courses. This could be due to the need for transferable qualifications.

In some countries, like the UK, there is a plethora of awarding bodies to choose from. This is not the case in all countries. The choice of an appropriate awarding body can be important in ensuring that the ethos of trade union education is not compromised.

This document is based on the UK TUC Accreditation system because it has proven to be a successful model and has been in operation since 1996. To see full details of the system see Appendix One - UK TUC Accreditation System. Regardless of what accreditation system is being used, each will have essentially the same elements. This section aims to identify the key elements of any accreditation system and to explain their function.

The structure for accreditation

Any accreditation system should be designed to enable learners to accumulate recognition of achievement for relatively small chunks (units) of learning. These can be organised in such a way that learners gain a qualification. See Appendix 3 - The QCF Handbook for TUC Tutors for further

information about TUC qualifications. There are a number of elements that are common to any accreditation system. These are: units, learning outcomes, assessment criteria, credits and levels.

Units

The skills and knowledge that reps need to function effectively in the union and the workplace are extensive. To facilitate the award of credit for the training that reps undertake, the skills and knowledge are specified in manageable chunks called units. Units describe what it is that is expected of learners for them to achieve credit for that piece of learning. Each credit equates to notional hours of learning – the number of hours in total and on average that learners may take to achieve it. (i.e. including pre-course activity, workplace activity, private study and contact hours).

Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes set out what learners should be able to do to complete the unit or chunk of learning. If the unit is called Representing Members, then the learning outcomes detail the general tasks or knowledge the rep will be able to demonstrate as a measure of their achievement. An example of a learning outcome from an introductory reps course could be:

“Recognise and work on trade union priorities”.

Learning outcomes are not a course or lesson plan, and do not have to be achieved in the order they appear. They do not exclude other learning or activities on courses, and detail only what needs to be assessed for credit to be awarded.

Assessment criteria

So that both learners and tutors can judge that the learning outcomes have been met, assessment criteria specify more precisely what it is the learner can do to demonstrate that.

Assessment criteria enable learners to recognise, judge and value the work they do. They are also a useful focus for tutors to identify and give feedback on where and how reps are developing their skills and knowledge. An example of the two assessment criteria linked to the above learning outcome could be:

- “Describe union priorities: e.g. in the workplace, in the wider union.”
- “Identify ways of progressing union priorities.”

Credits

Each unit of learning has a value attached to it called a credit. One credit is generally linked to a number of notional hours of learning. This is notional – i.e. a guide only – it being acknowledged that the learning detailed in the unit might be achieved in X hours by one person, and Y hours by another. The 'notional' hours represent an average of the total that might be involved to achieve the unit - and could be a combination of class or tutor/learner contact, self-directed study and workplace or other learning. 'Study' in the context of the union rep's role may encompass activities/work carried out in the workplace or union that enhances their learning.

Levels

Units are accredited at different levels. See the European Qualifications Framework link http://ec.europa.eu/eqf/compare_en.htm which allows comparisons of levels across countries to be made.

These refer to the different stages and progress that people attain in their learning. They may range from a level where Basic Skills are being developed to advanced qualification levels.

Quality standards

The smooth running of any accreditation process depends partly on our understanding of it, and partly on its procedures being triggered and responded to at the right moment. For some trade union reps their certificates will be their first since leaving school (and maybe ever), and it is important that they receive their record of credits promptly. For any well developed system there is a need for a well developed, standardised policy for monitoring and reviewing how it is delivered.

Tutor training and development

Developing the skills and experience of trade union tutors is central to maintaining and building on the high standards for which trade union education is known. This may involve the training and development of tutors on specially designed and accredited courses.

To ensure quality, trade union tutors delivering a programme should be approved by their union or national confederation. In the UK, tutors are required to undergo the process as outlined by the TUC nationally. Tutor updates and training courses are provided at regional and national level, and may be for between 1 and 5 days. Briefings are provided as new and revised materials are brought on stream. This helps keep tutors up to date with the accreditation process and with changes in the curriculum as well as within the world of work. An annual directory of TUC tutor development

briefings is provided. This could be seen as a model of good practice for any accredited programme.

TUC tutor site

It will be important for any union body delivering an education programme to enable tutors to exchange information, ideas, and resources and discuss issues related to the delivery of their programme. In the UK the TUC has ensured that copies of course materials, tutor notes and resources are available to all TUC tutors via the TUC Tutor site www.tuctutors.org.uk. All new TUC tutors receive forms to register for the site at their initial tutor training.

Resources

Union bodies will need to consider the central importance of resources in ensuring quality. Things to consider will include:

- comfortable, accessible teaching rooms with resources for group activity
- flipcharts/overhead projectors/interactive boards
- appropriate IT equipment
- sufficient, appropriate and current information and materials
- appropriate administrative support.

Learning support on courses

Union bodies will need to consider having processes in place for learning support. Things to consider will include:

- identification of individual learning needs, formally or informally
- availability of learning support (e.g. signer, brailled documentation, language support) through the providing institution
- learner support (e.g. use of accessible rooms and resources, flexible delivery in terms of mode, or time of delivery, where appropriate).

A key element of quality is to ensure the promotion of equal opportunities. Things to consider will include:

- ensuring that recruitment and course materials reflect commitment to equal opportunities
- procedures for monitoring equality of access and achievement

- the use of assessment methods that do not disadvantage learners (e.g. written materials should not be used where writing is not necessary for the achievement of credit).

The process for accreditation

Any accreditation system will have its own detailed processes involving everything from learner registration through to the awarding of certificates. See Appendix 1 - UK TUC Accreditation System for details of the UK processes.

Online courses

As the demand for trade union courses online is growing, new guidelines for running online courses will need to be drawn up. An example of online guidelines can be found in Appendix 5 – TUC Education Guidelines for Working Online. The guidelines for working online could contain specific requirements with reference to recruitment, initial assessment, evidencing of learning, and portfolio.

Record keeping

One of the key purposes and strengths of a trade union education programme is the development and enhancement of collective capacity through the use of participatory educational methods. The award of credits for individual achievement assists in that process by recognising the progress reps make in developing the skills and knowledge needed to work to a collective agenda (the role of the rep).

The evidence of achievement that learners gather is important as a source of pride and future workplace reference, and is vital for the award of credits and qualifications. For these reasons (and the fact that record-keeping skills are a must for their union role) all participants should be encouraged to keep a well¬ organised record of the work they carry out in completing activities.

There are two elements to record keeping. Records kept by learners and records kept by tutors. See Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms for examples of record keeping pro-formas. These are taken from the UK TUC model.

Quality assurance process

Appendix 4 provides detail of the UK TUC quality assurance process. Any quality assurance process will contain essentially the same elements. This section explores the key elements of any system and some of the terminology used. The aim of any quality assurance process is to ensure that:

- learners have achieved the learning outcomes – verification/moderation?

- the award of credit is consistent between learners, tutors and centres – standardisation.

Processes can work at a number of levels, and any structure has to make sure that learners are treated consistently at local, regional and national level.

The key aim of any process should ensure:

- verification of achievement of units, which ensures learners have achieved the learning outcomes at the standard set by the assessment criteria through sampling of records of assessment – the evidence of achievement held in learner files and tutor records
- standardisation of assessment decisions and consequent award of credit between centres delivering the programme through comparing assessment decisions. Standardisation meetings should allow tutors to discuss areas of concern and to agree action for the future with other individuals involved in the process: for example, external moderators appointed by the awarding body.

TUC Education has developed records for internal quality assurance which have been recognised as good practice in inspections. See Appendix 4 - UK TUC Quality Assurance Process.

As any quality assurance process involves an external awarding body and that body has responsibility for ensuring quality, systems need to be put in place to allow external checks. These are normally called external moderation. Similarly, any centre delivering an accredited programme has the same obligation to ensure internal quality checks. This is called internal moderation. Local procedures will differ, but will usually involve internal and external moderation. This coming together of internal and external processes is a key component of the ongoing improvement process and is standardised throughout the country, usually through an annual event.

The types of things discussed at annual standardisation meetings may include:

- looking for evidence of consistency in the interpretation and maintenance of standards across levels
- looking for evidence of differentiation in the interpretation and maintenance of standards across different sample units at the same level
- identifying any exemplars and action that may be required to enhance assessment practice and improve consistency
- identifying examples of innovative and good assessment practice.

European Qualifications Framework

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is an overarching framework designed to serve as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across different countries in Europe. As an instrument to promote lifelong learning, EQF is intended to help the recognition of the wide range of learning that takes place across European countries. It is a framework of eight reference levels, described in terms of learning outcomes, and covers the levels of most qualifications acquired in general, vocational and academic education and training.

The EQF was formally adopted by the European Parliament and Council on 23 April 2008. Member States agreed to reference their national qualifications systems to the EQF and make reference to the EQF levels on certificates. EQF is being put into practice across Europe. It encourages countries to relate their national qualifications systems to the EQF so that all new qualifications issued from 2012 carry a reference to an appropriate EQF level. An EQF national coordination point has been designated for this purpose in each country.

EQF and trade union education in the UK

Trade union education courses delivered online in the UK are accredited by the National Open College Network (NOCN). Most trade union learning in the UK is awarded at four different levels by NOCN. The NOCN awards are mapped to each of the national frameworks which in turn are mapped to the European Qualifications Framework. This means that any trade union course accredited by NOCN can also be recognised nationally and, by using the mapping to EQF, can be understood at a European level.

The following table maps the awarding body's levels to UK national frameworks and EQF.

Accredited trade union learning in the UK and qualifications framework levels

NOCN	SCQF	QCF	EQF
	9	6	6
	8	5	5
	7	4	
3	6	3	4
2	5	2	3
1	4	1	2

E	**3**	**E3**	**1**

This table does not cover all the levels for each framework. But it covers the levels used in the majority of trade union education in the UK.

Awarding bodies and EQF

The development of the EQF and the ongoing work to align national frameworks to it means that existing courses and qualifications accredited by different awarding bodies can have currency across the EU without the need for change. As indicated above, the hope is that all new qualifications will be explicitly levelled to EQF and these levels indicated on all future certification.

Moving to a European trade union framework through national awarding bodies

As online learning for trade union education develops across Europe, all courses and qualifications should be accredited by a national awarding body. If each awarding body's courses and qualifications are levelled to a local national framework, then recognition and validity across Europe should be possible using the European Qualifications Framework.

One major advantage of this approach for trade unions and confederations will be that transnational co-operation through ETUI should immediately offer wider access to recognised trade union education to workers across Europe. If particular courses and qualifications are not readily available in a country, using the EQF, an existing course could be delivered online and accredited by another country. Provided the frameworks are aligned to EQF the learning can be recognised and have currency and validity for both the learner and the employer.

Case study based on Scotland

The EQF is a framework of eight levels described in learning outcomes. TUC Education, through its awarding body the National Open College Network (NOCN), has adopted the use of units (at three levels) containing learning outcomes as the building blocks of its hugely successful UK-wide training and education programme.

Through TUC Education, union learners have been awarded over a million learning credits since 1996. The use of educational units and learning outcomes for accreditation provides a useful focus for learning as well as progression.

The referencing of UK qualification frameworks against the EQF in 2009 means that learning accredited by the award of TUC Education NOCN units will have validity in other member states that are similarly referenced to the QCF. This presents great opportunities for union learners across Europe.

Against this background, colleagues from TUC Education and the European Trade Union Institute (ETUI) then agreed to undertake a pilot course to test if accreditation and the methodology used by

TUC Education to generate evidence of learner achievement could be successfully applied to existing ETUI courses. The ETUI course, Project Management, was identified and agreed as the pilot course.

The prime objective of the pilot was to:

- test the ability to gather sufficient evidence of learning and achievement that would lead to an award of educational achievement on a short ETUI transnational training course.

Underpinning the prime objective was the intention to:

- test the suitability of the TUC units against the course aims
- test the suitability of existing course activities against the NOCN requirements
- consider the production and gathering of evidence of achievement
- consider the production and gathering of evidence for non-English speaking participants.

Conclusion

This pilot proved to be successful against the aims set and raised interesting issues for future courses. For full details see Appendix 6 - Report on the Accreditation of the ETUI Project Management Course, Edinburgh, September 2010.

2. Guidelines for working online

The following is the TUC's current guide for working online.

Background

Since the introduction of its online programme, TUC Education has given due attention to the development of appropriate quality control systems. The overriding aim is to ensure that delivery, assessment, learning and moderation systems for online work should equal the high standards existing across the rest of the programme. It is expected that online quality assurance should be consistent with the moderation systems for other forms of delivery.

Therefore, after consultation with tutors and moderators, it has been decided online learning should be treated no differently from face to face (F2F) or any other mode of delivery. An acceptable difference is that online learners may produce different evidence of achievement as a result of the teaching medium: e.g. discussions may be virtual, reports may be electronic and a portfolio of evidence may be a working file.

Where learners are studying units which are delivered F2F and online, they are awarded the same certificate and the same minimum standard of learners' achievement must be maintained if credibility for the award is to be safeguarded.

Learners should not be advantaged or disadvantaged by studying online. In particular:

- The standard of learner assessment or procedures for moderation (internal and external) should not burden online learners any more than other modes of delivery.
- The standard of learner assessment or procedures for moderation (internal and external) should not bring into question the credibility of the achievement of online learners any more than other modes of delivery.

Practical details include:

- access to electronic evidence/portfolios for moderation purposes
- recording feedback from tutors to learners
- identifying an online audit trail for moderation purposes.

Assessment

The assessment strategy for the programme has been developed to be appropriate for the aims of the programme, the target group, and possible progression routes.

The assessment methodology is informal, integrated with learning and linked wherever possible to workplace activity. Assessment activities could include:

- group discussion of case studies, assessed by tutor/self assessment (including online forums)
- production of projects based on workplace issues, assessed by tutor and peer discussion
- workplace activity, assessed through discussion.

Evidence could include:

- learner informal notes
- annotated activities checklists
- tutor records
- workplace reports
- minutes of course meetings
- diverse evidence from the workplace: e.g. letters, newsletters, reports
- electronic portfolio, for online courses: e.g. discussions may be virtual, reports may be electronic and a portfolio of evidence may be a working file
- digital media.

Electronic portfolios for online learning

Based on experience with TUC Education online learning courses to date, the preferred approach is a simple electronic portfolio or electronic achievement file. The important aspect of the electronic portfolio is that it provides a means to link evidence of achievement clearly to the assessment criteria that the evidence relates to.

The electronic portfolio may be implemented as a Word file or other format depending on the virtual learning environment in use. Email discussions between tutors and students should be cross-referenced to the electronic portfolios.

It is also worth noting that as technology advances, different forms of media, including digital media, may be used to produce evidence of achievement and included as part of a learner's electronic portfolio.

Alternatively, tutors may prefer to accept evidence of achievement that is not transferred to an electronic portfolio, but is recorded within the virtual learning environment and within the context of the activity that has taken place. If this is the tutor's preferred option, agreement to follow this method must be sought from the internal and external moderator.

In Scotland, this alternative is now firmly embedded. The next section looks at this in more detail.

3. Alternative guidelines for working online

The marriage of design and evidence.

The suggested alternative set out in this part is based on the existing model in use and agreed in Scotland. It sits within the TUC's assessment and moderation framework, but adopts some important alternative mechanisms for achieving the goals of the TUC framework. It is based on the application of the following approach taken from the TUC guidance:

> "Alternatively, tutors may prefer to accept evidence of achievement that is not transferred to an electronic portfolio, but is recorded within the virtual learning environment and within the context of the activity that has taken place. If this is the tutor's preferred option, agreement to follow this method must be sought from the internal and external moderator"

This model has been successfully delivered and used in Scotland for the last five years. It is based on one simple principle, that of minimising the burden of evidencing on the student. As you can see, the aim of any online programme must be to give students the appropriate opportunities to enable them to generate and gather evidence of achievement.

> "If learners are to achieve the credits for which they have been registered, they will need appropriate opportunities to enable them to generate and gather evidence of achievement. The importance of recording and collating work carried out may need to be emphasised and clear guidance given as to how to do this, particularly where learners have no previous experience of value being attached to learning not tested under exam conditions." (TUC Education Guidelines for Working Online 2005)

In the online environment it will still be necessary to keep well-organised and up-to-date records which help to present a visual summary of specific aspects of courses – for busy tutors, moderators, funding inspectors and learners. In the previous sections of this guide we have outlined the process for demonstrating that courses and their accreditation are being run according to clear quality standards.

However, there is an alternative approach to learner evidencing that is based on what we call "the marriage of design and evidence".

Evidencing student work

The pro formas in Appendix 2 – Sample Record-Keeping Forms are provided as examples of how the information required for online accreditation might be recorded by tutors for internal or external moderator visits.

Moderators may also wish to see learners' work and talk to them about their course. This model recognises that the course itself should be treated as the "electronic portfolio". Experience has shown that the creation of electronic portfolios is an unnecessary burden on learners as it demands duplication of effort, time etc. The design of the course incorporating activities and distinct discussion forums has one key aim or purpose: that is to avoid this unnecessary burden on learners.

This raises the question as to the purpose of a portfolio. Traditionally, its major function was as a map or a guide for a moderator (internal and external) to view/check students' evidence. It was also seen as beneficial to a rep as a repository of information to take back to the workplace to support them in their role as a union rep. This model retains the opportunity for a learner to create their own portfolio of evidence but does not make this a prerequisite for moderation purposes. The map or guide for the moderator/tutor/learner is created by the tutor in the course design and supported by the record keeping process. See Appendix 2 – Sample Record-Keeping Forms.

Course design

Linking each activity to specific outcomes (learning outcomes and assessment criteria) and providing a distinct reporting area (evidencing area) offers moderators and tutors a ready- made map of where to find student evidence.

Each activity is made up of three standard elements in its design (overview, tasks and resources). This design enables learners, tutors and moderators to locate and access the evidence (see Appendix 2 – Sample Record-Keeping Forms, sections1-3). By the use of a range of online tools and functions including forums, blogs etc. there is sufficient evidence contained within the course for both internal and external moderation. There are several practical benefits for the learner and practical implications for tutors and moderators. These are:

For learners

The practical benefits for the learner are the elimination of duplication of evidencing. Our experience has shown that this is an overwhelming burden. However learners still retain the option

for creating a resource pack for use back in the workplace. This means that a representative is not restricted in the creation of a resource pack/portfolio by the demands of moderation.

For tutors

The practical implication for tutors is that fundamentally they need to be at the heart of course design. This as an integral part of the teaching and learning process and cannot be left to technologists alone. Following on from this there are clear implications for the design of tutor training programmes, available resources, etc. The course needs to be transparent so that course moderators (internal/external) can easily identify sources of learners' evidence. See Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms , number 10

For moderators

The practical implication for moderators is the simplification of the moderation process. This involves online access for moderators, and requires an understanding of the mapping of assessment criteria to sources of evidence, as outlined in Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number 10.

Record-keeping process

In order for implementation of the above model to be effective, tutors need to maintain clear and accessible records. See for example:

- Appendix 2 – Sample Record-Keeping Forms , number 1 - Record of Units Achieved/Tracking Document. This records the tutors' recommendation of award against units within a course, for each course participant.)
- Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number 2 - Course Tracker and Number 3 - Learner Progress. These records track individual learner progression on a course, and record both completion of course activities and also record any additional work required. The records also detail where student evidence can be found.

Evaluations

As trade union courses are learner-centred courses, it is important to check that learners' needs are being met. If learners find courses too fast or slow or can't relate what they are doing to their needs as representatives, their learning may be affected.

Course evaluations are important at an early stage in the course, as well as at the end, and will help both tutor and learners to:

- identify software and hardware issues
- identify navigational and technical issues
- be clear about what has been learned
- identify issues or skills that may need to be revisited
- identify and resolve any problems
- identify issues for working on in the rest of the course
- recognise the good work achieved.

Learners may raise a wide range of issues, and it is important that these are considered and dealt with appropriately. It may be that early evaluations of online courses identify navigational issues, a lack of clarity in structure etc. and as a result tutors should be able to respond quickly to meet student need. For a sample end of course evaluation conducted through Survey Monkey.

The structure of accreditation

As set out in Part One of this document, which identified the structure of accreditation, it is worth noting that in relation to online accreditation there is no change in the following:

- background
- units
- learning outcomes
- assessment criteria
- levels
- credits.

The process for accreditation

The approval process for online accreditation does not change, neither does initial registration of learners.

Delivering a trade union education programme (online)

Tutor training and development

As previously stated in part one, all staff delivering a trade union programme would need to be tutors approved by the trade union body, and be required to undergo the tutor development process as outlined previously. For example, in the UK, tutor updates and training courses are provided at regional and national level, and may be for between one and five days.

In addition, all tutors who are delivering online programmes will require specific training for effective online delivery.

This will include:

- skills related to e-learning techniques - for example:
  - collaborative work online
  - effective communications
  - synchronous and asynchronous activity
- knowledge of the virtual learning environment (VLE) platform
  - navigation
  - course design and structure
  - add-on applications (video, audio, Articulate, Captivate, Illuminate).

Resources (online)

In addition to the facilities necessary for classroom delivery, consideration will need to be given to additional resources if the course is a blended learning course: i.e. face to face with an element of online attached, or a standalone online course. The following three areas will need to be considered:

- centre resources
- tutor resources
- learner resources.

Centre resources will need to have dedicated learner and tutor IT facilities, including stable internet access with suitable technical support. The VLE will need to have remote access for learners and tutors and direct access to the appropriate technical support on offer.

Tutor resources will include access to training (see tutor training and development above), appropriate time allocation for design, delivery and service. Throughout the design, delivery and servicing of online courses the support of a technician in assisting with add-on applications will be essential.

Learner resources should be made clear at the outset of the course to help ensure that learners have the opportunity to participate fully and without hindrance. Minimum IT system specification requirements should be communicated to the learner prior to course participation: i.e. web access, word processing software, media player software, flash player, Adobe etc. This will be dependent on the actual course content and interactive software used in its design.

Learning support on courses

Institutions will have their own processes for online provision. The minimum required could include:

- identification of individual learning needs, formally or informally (for online, Individual Learning Plans and assessment tools can be used)
- availability of learning support (e.g. signer, brailled documentation, language support) through the providing institution. Joint Information Systems Committee (JISC) in the UK provides guidance and resources to support learners online: (www.jisctechdis.ac.uk/techdis/aboutus) (other European countries may have similar guidance)
- learner support (e.g. use of accessible rooms and resources, flexible delivery in terms of mode, or time of delivery, where appropriate).

As trade unions have policies for promoting equal opportunities, providers should:

- ensure that recruitment and course materials reflect commitment to equal opportunities
- follow procedures for monitoring equality of access and achievement
- make use of assessment methods that do not disadvantage learners (e.g. written materials should not be used where writing is not necessary for the achievement of credit).

Delivery and assessment

Identifying learning needs

The ethos of trade union courses is that they are learner-centred and that they are responsive to the needs of reps in the union and the workplace. Identification of learning needs may take place in a variety of ways depending on local practices. These include:

- a formal question about learning needs on enrolment forms

- online introduction activities that identify past learning and expectations of the course
- formal initial assessment activities, as for on-line courses
- ongoing course evaluations or reviews that check out progress and new course aims (for online there are a number of options depending on the platform used. These could include: survey options, quizzes, live conferencing. Additional software may be used: e.g. Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com)

Getting Ready for E-learning (GREL)

The concept of a course called GREL was developed from an identified student need. In the early days of TUC online courses it was recognised that failure to address the new learning, technical and organisational needs associated with online delivery was having a negative impact on the success of online delivery. These new needs are:

Learning needs

- the need to develop navigational skills within a VLE
- the need to develop new skills in the use of communication tools: e.g. discussion forums, live conferences, blogs
- the need to develop collaborative skills in working online
- the need to develop basic IT skills: e.g. download, upload, internet use

Technical needs

- test system compatibility at home, work, union office
- identify security issues e.g. firewalls
- software compatibility

Organisational needs

- facility agreements – access to computers and internet at work
- sufficient time off
- time management in a virtual environment.

GREL in practice

In practice the GREL course focuses on the needs identified above. This separates out the substantive part of a trade union course (e.g. employment law or health and safety) from the skills needed to participate in any trade union course delivered online. Experience has shown that

participation in GREL has a positive impact on the success of learner participation, attainment and progression, which were traditionally areas of difficulty associated with online learning.

Learner and tutor evidence of assessment online

The evidence of achievement that learners gather is important as a source of pride and future workplace reference, and is vital for the award of credit. For these reasons (and the fact that record-keeping skills are a must for their union role) all participants should be encouraged to keep a well-organised record of the work they carry out in completing activities.

In addition, for any classroom course or online course, tutors need to keep a record of assessment decisions to provide:

- evidence that a decision has been made: Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number one
- a visual summary of where learners are up to on the course: Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number two
- a guide to the work that still needs to be done on the course: Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number three
- a record that might be returned to in the future if necessary: Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number one.

In addition to the records and guides outlined above, the online environment offers the opportunity for a range of evidence gathering for moderation purposes. These can include:

- discussion forums with posted reports: Appendix 2 – Sample Record Keeping Forms, number four
- collaborative discussion forums with posted reports
- live conferences.

Appendices

Appendix 1 UK TUC accreditation system - Passport to Progress

See separate document.

Appendix 2 Sample record-keeping forms

1 - Record of units achieved / tracking document

2 - Course tracker

3 - Learner progress

4 - Sample record of units achieved.

1. Record of units achieved / tracking document

TUC Student Tracker **TUC/EIS ULR - Online**

TUCNCOMAB2010

D20335

First Name	Surname	Role of the ULR				ULR Skills 2					Getting Organised to Promote Learning			
		1	2	3	Level	1	2	3	4	Level	1	2	3	Level
Mark	Allen	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Christine	Bruce	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Stephen	Nolan	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Wilma	Pirie	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Susan	Porter	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Stuart Alan	Probart	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
James	Sweeney	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Fiona Mary	Webb	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Sheila	Meikle	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	X	2	X	X	X	2
Caroline	Shields	O	O	O	2	O	O	O	O	2	O	O	O	2

Signed: M.Pollitt/G.Grubb

date: 24/6/11

2. Course tracker

EIS Course Tracker **TUC/EIS ULR - Online**

TUCNCOMAB2010

D20335

Name		Activity One	Activity Two	Activity Three	Activity Four	Activity Five	Activity Six	Activity Seven
Mark	Allen	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Christine	Bruce	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Stephen	Nolan	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Wilma	Pirie	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Susan	Porter	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Stuart Alan	Probart	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
James	Sweeney	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Fiona Mary	Webb	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Sheila	Meikle	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES
Caroline	Shields	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	NO	NO

Signed: Gus Grubb / Mark Pollitt

3. Learner progress

TUC ONLINE SCOTLAND - TUTOR COURSE RECORD – Activities 1 - 3

Course Title: H& S Stage 1 Oct 2010 Course Code:

Where to find Tutor Responses **DG** e.g. DG 1	Logged On **LO** (Y or N)	Attempted Activity **AA** (Y or N)	Tutor Response Collective Response **TR/CR** (Y or N)	More Student Work Required **MS** (Y or N)	Level Agreed **LA** e.g. L3

Student Name	**Activity One**			**Activity Two**			**Activity Three**											
	LO	AA	TR	MS	LA	DG	LO	AA	TR	MS	LA	DG	LO	AA	TR	MS	LA	DG
Lyn Warmald	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	Y	L2	DG 3
Liz Carson	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
James Haggart	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Alexander Welsh	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Shauna McCourt	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Gerry McLeod	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG

						1						2						3
Andrew Kelly	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
James Conn	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Margaret Bell	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
DeeAnFitzpatrick	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Vanessa Evans	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Susan Wilkie	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Anne Leitch	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Pauline Sharma	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Dave Smith	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
William Donohoe	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2						
Ian Gaffney	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG

						1						2						3
Les Sinclair	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Robert Barr	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3
Robert Gillies	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 1	Y	Y	N	N	L2	DG 2	Y	Y	Y	N	L2	DG 3

Note: Red is Withdrawn:

Green – Indicates that learner has completed all tasks to date and is able to progress

Yellow – Indicates more learner work

Last updated 09/05/2011 – GG

4. Sample record of units achieved

TUC Union Representatives Stage 1 Start Date: _____

RECORD OF UNITS ACHIEVED

NAME	LEARNING OUTCOMES																				
	Representing Members				Understanding Organisations					Skills 1 (6 cr)											Comments
	1	2	3	Level	1	2	3	4	Level	1	2	3	4	5	Level	1	2	3	4	Level	

Signed _____ Tutor Date _____

Appendix 3 Report on the accreditation of the ETUI Project Management Course, Edinburgh, September 2010

Background

The emergence of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF), an overarching qualification framework which serves as a translation device to make qualifications more readable and understandable across Europe, presents fundamental opportunities for greater citizen mobility between member States as well as further facilitating livelong learning throughout Europe.

With the adoption of the EQF, a process was started in 2008 across Europe which through a recommendation by the European Parliament and Council involves all members States:

- relating their national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010, and
- adopting appropriate measures by 2012 so that all new qualifications, certificates and diplomas issued by competent authorities, contains a clear reference to the EQF.

The EQF is a framework of eight levels described in learning outcomes. TUC Education through its awarding body the National Open College Network (NOCN) has adopted the use of units (at three levels) containing learning outcomes as the building blocks of its hugely successful UK wide training and education programme.

Through TUC Education, union learners have been awarded over a million learning credits since 1996. The use of educational units and learning outcomes for accreditation provides a useful focus for learning as well as progression.

The recent referencing of UK qualification frameworks against the EQF in 2009 means that learning accredited by the award of TUC Education NOCN units will have validity in other member States that are similarly referenced to the QCF. This presents great opportunities for union learners across Europe.

With this background, discussions between colleagues from TUC Education and the ETUI then agreed to undertake a pilot to test if accreditation and the methodology used by TUC Education to generate evidence of learner achievement could be successfully applied to existing ETUI courses. The ETUI course, Project Management was identified and agreed as the pilot course.

Objectives

The prime objective of the pilot was to:

- test the ability to gather sufficient evidence of learning and achievement that would lead to an award of educational achievement on a short ETUI transnational training course.

Underpinning the prime object, we wished to:

- test the suitability of the TUC units against the course aims
- test the suitability of existing course activities against the NOCN requirements
- consider the production and gathering of evidence of achievement
- consider the production and gathering of evidence for non-English speaking participants.

Methodology

Accreditation is common on all TUC Education courses and is made possible because of the partnership between an awarding body, the National Open College Network (NOCN) and the TUC.

The TUC has a comprehensive suite of educational units that can be studied individually by union reps or when combined, form a dedicated programme of learning that can lead to reps achieving and being presented with an award, a certificate or a diploma. All the units used by the TUC are contained in Passport to Progress, the detailed portfolio of accredited units used by TUC Education throughout the UK.

For the purposes on this course in Project Management, two existing NOCN units were identified. These units are:

- Project Management for Trade Union Representatives (3 credits at QCF Level 3/EQF Level4)
- Handling Trade Union Members Problems (3 credits at QCF Level 3/EQF Level4)

The combination of these two units will provide participants with the potential of achieving an ‘award’ in the Qualification and Credit Framework that applies to England and Wales. In this case, the award would be six credits equivalent to sixty hours of learning at QCF level 3. QCF Level 3 relates to Level 4 in the EQF.

Prior to the course starting, all the participants were sent a letter informing them that an element of the ETUI course would involve the piloting of accreditation and asking for their support and participation.

To ensure that the test was carried through in a professional and robust manner, the TUC offered the services of an experienced TUC tutor, Colin Arthur from Stevenson College in Edinburgh, Scotland.

The TUC tutor had sight of all the course activities and materials as well as personally experiencing the course delivery prior to the course in Edinburgh.

The TUC tutor devised a number of proformas to enable the recording of participation and the evidencing of achievement during the course. This is normal practice on TUC Education courses. The resultant forms are key to demonstrating to others involved in the award of credits, internal and external moderators, that the participants met the criteria for the award.

Conclusion

The prime objective of this pilot was to test **the ability to gather sufficient evidence of learning and achievement that would lead to an award of educational achievement on a short ETUI transnational training course**.

In the opinion of the TUC tutor this was achieved during the period of the training. At the start and mid way through the training, course participants were reminded of the need to participate in all aspects of the training. Great care was taken to observe all the participants and to make sure they contributed throughout the course in terms of the collective group elements of the training. This was especially so with group presentations. As normal in TUC Education courses, all the evidence of participant's achievement was firstly assessed by the TUC tutor and then retained for further college and awarding body moderation and accreditation purposes.

It was the personal opinion of the tutor that the issue of accreditation acted as a further stimulus for participation and present an additional focus on learning. Participation involving accreditation 'firmed up' the learning. This chimes with experience gained on 'normal' TUC Education courses where accreditation acts and brings an extra and positive dimension into the classroom.

Test the suitability of the TUC units against the course aims.

The units chosen and the learning outcomes reflect the activities that course participants would be expected to undertake. For example, to identify and draft a project outline, to identify potential problems and solutions, to identify problems which affect workers and; to identify and apply communication skills, were all essential elements of the course programme.

Test the suitability of existing course activities against the NOCN requirements

The original ETUI course activities were not changed.

Although each activity was not changed or modified, to help the course participants to understand how each course activity relates to the appropriate learning outcome or assessment criteria, a

summary of the respective outcome was included at the foot of each activity. This enabled the learner to see that by successfully completing each activity they will be able to generate evidence for each respective learning outcome.

An extra activity was generated by the course team, a post course reflective analysis intended to ask participants a series of questions about their motivation for joining the course and what elements of the course they intend to use in their professional lives. This activity was not required for accreditation purposes but the evidence it generates will be useful as further proof of learning.

Consider the production and gathering of evidence of achievement

Using normal TUC Education techniques the tutor was able to gather sufficient evidence of achievement for each course participant. For those unfamiliar with TUC Education techniques, this involves, tutor and peer observation as well as direct evidence generated by individuals and/or the group each participant contributed to.

Consider the production and gathering of evidence for non-English speaking participants

Gathering evidence from English speaking participants was relatively straightforward and normal for TUC Education tutors.

There were four non English speaking participants on this course and great care was taken to ensure that they were given every opportunity to participate and generate evidence of achievement. Given the service supplied by the ETUI translators and the support and professionalism of ETUI tutors, this process again worked well. All the non English speaking participants were able to generate the desired quantity and level of appropriate evidence. As stated above, this was largely due to the support of ETUI tutors who worked closely with the non English speaking group and to ensure that all members contributed to the work generated in their respective group.

What happens next?

All the evidence of achievement generated by the course participants is currently undergoing the internal moderation process of the college provider. Once this process is completed, the evidence will be further evaluated by the independent external moderator who represents the awarding body, The National Open College Network.

Once the above process is finalised and if everything goes well, formal certificates of the award of achievement will be generated for each course participant.

Further consideration

A number of matters surfaced during the course that is out with the remit given to the TUC tutor, perhaps worthy of further consideration without direct comment by the authors of this report. These are:

- If accreditation is desirable on the ETUI programme, which courses are most suitable?
- If offered, what level of participants is best suited to accreditation? For example, new or experienced officers, officers experienced with the pedagogy of transnational study.
- Although not present during the pilot, if language does provide a potential barrier to generating evidence of achievement, how can this be best resolved?
- Is there a need to support and train existing ETUI tutors who may have little or no experience of accreditation and methods for generating evidence?

This report was compiled by Colin Arthur TUC Education Tutor, Stevenson College Edinburgh and Harry Cunningham, TUC Education and Training Officer in Scotland.