

Next Steps: Facility time and managing coursework

What is facility time?

Facility time is time off from an individual's job, granted by the employer, to enable a rep to carry out their trade union role. This can include time off to complete trade union related training.

The right to time off

In workplaces where the trade union is recognised, trade union workplace representatives have a right to paid time off for the purpose of carrying out their trade union duties or to take part in union training. Where there isn't a recognition agreement or facility time agreement, reps should seek advice from their branch in the first instance in regards to time off for training.

How do I request facility time?

You will need to request facility time from your manager in order to receive time off to complete the course. As soon as you have the dates of the course you would like to complete, approach your manager and request the facility time you require; try and give them as much notice as possible. Make sure to specify the amount of uninterrupted time needed to complete the course and any tutorial dates/times that you must attend. * If you have a work diary or calendar, block out the time that you are completing the course so colleagues know not to interrupt you. If this first conversation with your manager is a verbal discussion, follow up with an email to confirm the conversation.

For some of our courses there are tutorials **and independent work which can be completed flexibly. You should ask for the amount of hours per week needed to attend tutorials and complete the independent work. For example, for our Organising Stewards course, you should ask for 6 hours per week of facility time to complete the course (5 hours for the coursework/tutorials, 1 hour to discuss queries and questions with your mentor) Be sure that specific time is allocated in your diary to complete the work.*

Time management and managing coursework

We recommend that you dedicate time to complete the course each week. It can be hard to complete the course if you are unsure when you will get an opportunity to complete the coursework. Set aside specific times to complete the work, even if it is one of our courses that can be completed flexibly.

Points to consider

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