

A Guide to Learning Opportunities

and Available Finance

Encouraging life-long learning is at the heart of all that Union Learning Representatives do. Many people in the workplace are put off from entering into learning because of the expense involved.

This guide hopes to provide some information and advice on different types of learning and the funding that may be available to help Union Learning Reps encourage workers to take the steps they need to open them up a whole new world.

Learning For Free

Essential Skills

If workers want to improve their reading, writing or number skills, Essential Skills courses in literacy, numeracy and ICT are available. Union Learning Reps can encourage their employers to hold Essential Skills classes in the workplace. Tutors are provided free of charge. Essential Skills are also available in most colleges.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/find-essential-skills-course

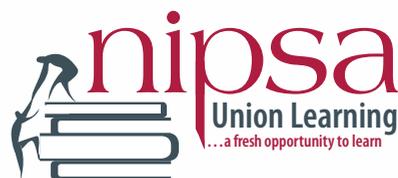
Libraries NI

Libraries NI offer an exciting selection of learning opportunities. There is something to suit all age groups and offers a relaxed and welcoming learning environment.

www.librariesni.org.uk/members/Pages/default.aspx

Workplace Learning

Many employers offer learning through the workplace. This is often free. Union Learning reps



should engage with their workplace learning department and work collaboratively to advise fellow workers on the different learning opportunities that the workplace has to offer.

Online Learning

Anyone can learn on the internet for free. The BBC website offers free courses in literacy, numeracy, computers, languages and many other subjects.

www.bbc.co.uk/learning/onlinecourses/

Financial Assistance to Study

Part-Time Courses

Student Finance NI offers advice to students on the different funding available for part-time learning. You can apply for grants to help with the costs of your study.

There is also financial help available for people with disabilities.

www.studentfinancenl.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=54,1268443&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL

Funding for Benefit Claimants

If you are in receipt of a prescribed benefit such as Housing Benefit or Working Tax Credit, you may get free tuition or financial support for a range of courses.

Each college lists these on their respective websites

www.belfastmet.ac.uk | www.nwrc.ac.uk | www.swc.ac.uk | www.serc.ac.uk
www.nrc.ac.uk | www.stran.ac.uk | www.ocnni.org.uk

Many community centres also run courses and offer reduced rates for some benefit recipients.

www.conwayeducation.org

www.belfastactivitycentre.com

Bursaries

Bursaries are extra sources of financial help available from colleges and universities. They're paid on top of any Student Loans or grants you may get. Bursaries don't have to be repaid.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/university-and-college-bursaries

Grants and Awards from Charitable Trusts

There are a number of trusts and charities which provide higher education students with financial help. You may be able to get an award from one of these organisations on top of the student finance package provided by the government.

All Ireland Scholarships (JP McManus)

The All Ireland Scholarship Scheme, which is funded by JP McManus, provides significant financial support to high achieving students from challenging economic backgrounds.

www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/all-ireland-scholarships