


# Time to Train? Time to Talk!

The Learning at Work Day mini-guide  
for the new  
Right to Request Time to Train

**unionlearn**  
with the TUC

*learning at work day*  
  
CAMPAIGN  
FOR **LEARNING**

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## Introduction

Welcome to this Learning at Work Day mini-guide, which has been produced to give you an overview of the important new right for employees to request time to train. The guide looks at a range of opportunities for promoting and supporting the right to further build a positive culture of learning in your workplace, including a range of activities you may wish to run or do for Learning at Work Day and beyond. Throughout the guide and in the last section you will find directions to further resources and information about the right that hopefully you will also find useful.

## Right to request time to train: overview and key facts

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The Right to Request Time to Train allows eligible employees in businesses with 250 or more staff to ask for time to train for accredited and unaccredited training to help them develop skills relevant to their job, workplace or business. From April 2011, this right will be extended to cover employees in all businesses.

The new right is based on the model of the right to request flexible working. It is not meant to replace good training review systems or consultation arrangements already in place in an organisation, though their presence does not prohibit exercise of the right.

### Eligibility:

To be eligible to request time for training, a person must:

- Be an 'employee'
- Have served a minimum of 26 weeks service
- Not have made a previous request in the last 12 months

### Exempt employees:

The right does not cover employees that are:

- an agency worker
- a member of the armed forces
- compulsory school age ('school age' in Scotland)
- a young person who already has a statutory right to paid time off to undertake study or training
- 16-18 years old and already expected to take part in education or training

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## Right to request time to train: overview and key facts

### What can be requested:

The training for which time is requested must be:

- related to the employee's job, workplace or business and
- contribute to personal productivity and business development.

There is no time limit for the length of time that the study or training may take.

An employee can request more than one type of training in a request and an employer has a duty to consider them all.

### Exercising the right

If an employee decides to exercise the right to request time to train, they will need to submit an application including the necessary information to make it valid. Normally, an employer only has to consider one request from an employee in any 12 month period. If an employee makes more requests than this, the employer may not have to consider them.

There are time limits for employers to hold meetings and issue notices of decisions on requests as well as appeals.

A flow diagram showing the process of the application and the requirements on the employer when considering the application can be found on page 5.

See 'Useful Information and Organisations' section where to find more details on the right, including templates for employees and employers.

## Flowchart for considering time to train requests

### Time to train request received

- the employer must respond to a valid request within set timeframes
- the employer must make sure they consider employment protection issues, e.g. discrimination, at all stages



### Employee's eligibility checked

- only employees with 26 weeks continuous employment and who have not made a request in the last 12 months are eligible to make requests



### Has the necessary information been provided in the request?

- if all the required information has not been included the employer is advised to tell the employee it is invalid and they will not consider it



### Request is considered and accepted or rejected

- the employer can agree a request straight away; if this is not possible the employer must arrange to meet the employee within 28 days after receiving their request
- the employee is entitled to be accompanied by a colleague who also works for the employer
- the date and time for the meeting must be convenient to all the parties
- the employer may only turn down a request under specified business reasons



### The decision is communicated

- if the employer agrees to an employee's request straight away they must tell the employee in writing within 28 days
- if the employer arranged a meeting with the employee they must write to that employee with the decision within 28 days after the meeting



### Internal appeals

- if the employee wishes to appeal against the decision, they must write to the employer within 14 days of receiving the employer's decision
- within 14 days of receiving an employee's appeal the employer must either accept the appeal and write to the employee or arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss their appeal

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## Right to request time to train and Learning at Work Day

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The introduction of the new right offers an ideal opportunity to promote and further build a positive culture of learning in your organisation. You may not be formally responsible for implementing the new right in your workplace and updating your existing training policies, however you may still have an important role to play in supporting and engaging people in learning that is related to their job, workplace or business and which contributes to personal productivity and business development.

In this section we look at how you and people with different roles in your workplace may use the new right as a platform to discuss and support the company's approach to learning and training and highlight the opportunities that are available. We also suggest some specific activities that can be run for Learning at Work Day and beyond, with available resources that you can use. Many of these activities could be set up and run in partnership e.g. Human Resource managers and union learning representatives, to ensure the consistency of messages and actions about the new right and how it fits with existing company policies.

The **'Useful Information and Organisations'** section includes all the resources highlighted in this section and where you can access them.

### *Learning at Work Day activities for Human Resources and Learning and Development Managers*

If you're a Human Resources or Learning and Development specialist you are likely to be involved in promoting training opportunities and policies to the whole organisation. You may also be in a position to support line managers and supervisors directly in understanding how training can make a positive difference to their teams' performance.

The introduction of the new right is an ideal opportunity to:

- promote the right to the whole organisation.
- talk to line managers and supervisors about the best way to approach and agree relevant training for their team members.
- discuss the new right with union learning reps and learning champions about the best way to support employees to exercise the right.
- promote to employees the importance of talking to their managers and supervisors about their training needs.

#### **Suggested activities for Learning at Work Day:**

- Raise awareness of the new right to all employees through promotional activities e.g. through newsletters, email, posters and stands. Highlight examples of employees that have gained through training. Work with the chief executive and senior managers to promote messages on the company's commitment to learning and training.

##### *Available resources:*

- Downloadable 'Time to Train' poster
- Template message for unionised and non-unionised workplaces

- Organise a presentation for line managers and supervisors to introduce and explain the new right and how it links to existing company policy and processes for training.

##### *Available resources:*

- Template presentation and guidance notes on new right

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## *Learning at Work Day activities for Union Learning Representatives and Learning Champions*

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As a union learning representative or learning champion you are likely to be involved in building up your colleagues' confidence around learning and supporting them to make the most of training opportunities.

The introduction of the new right is an ideal opportunity to:

- raise awareness of the new right amongst colleagues and talk to them about learning and the training opportunities that are available.
- talk to colleagues about the support you can offer in helping them develop their case for training and taking a request forward.
- discuss the new right with HR and Learning and Development managers about the best way to support employees to exercise the right and make the best case to employers and line managers for investing in training for colleagues.

### **Suggested activities for Learning at Work Day:**

- Promotional activities to raise awareness of the new right and training opportunities to colleagues e.g. through posters, stands and talks

#### *Available resources:*

- Downloadable 'Time to Train' poster
- Unionlearn template presentation and guidance notes
- Right to Request Time to Train: A Guide for Trade Unions and Union Representatives
- Downloadable 'Becoming a Better Learner' booklet

- Organise a workshop for colleagues on making a request for time to train. Take colleagues through the stage where the application is made.

#### *Available resources:*

- Downloadable exercise simulating the application stage
- Organise a meeting with HR and Learning and Development managers to discuss the new right and the best way of working together to support employees' requests

## *Learning at Work Day activities for line managers and supervisors*

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As a line manager or supervisor you are likely to be concerned with your individual team members' performance and development and how this links to the wider business context.

The introduction of the new right is an opportunity to:

- introduce and explain the new right to your team and how it fits with existing training policies.
- talk to your team about the training they may need and how this can support their specific roles, their future development and the needs of the business.
- Talk to other line managers and supervisors about how they approach training needs in their own teams and share good practice.

### **Suggested activities for Learning at Work Day:**

- Organise a session with your team to explain the new right and how it fits with existing training policies. Take team members through the application process and simulate a request.

#### *Available resources:*

- Downloadable exercise simulating the application stage

- Talk to individual team members about their training needs and the opportunities that are available

#### *Available resources:*

- Downloadable Leading on Learning booklet for managers

- Organise a session with other line managers and supervisors and invite Human Resources and Learning and Development managers to discuss the new right and the best way to approach training needs

#### *Available resources:*

- Downloadable Leading on Learning booklet for managers

# Time to Train? Time to Talk!

- Run a workshop for line managers and supervisors to offer guidance on how best to identify training needs linked to individual development, team performance and business objectives. Take workshop attendees through the stage of the application where a request under the new right is considered.

#### Available resources:

- Downloadable exercise for simulating stage where application is considered
  - Downloadable Leading on Learning booklet for managers
- Organise a meeting with union learning representatives and learning champions to discuss the new right and the best way of working together to support employees' requests

## *Learning at Work Day activities for employees*

Training and development can help you as an employee to develop job specific and generic skills that support you to do your role more effectively and benefit the business more widely.

The introduction of the new right is an ideal time to think about your role and your training needs and talk to your line manager and learning representatives about training opportunities. You may not need to exercise the right in order to obtain training, so talking to your line manager and learning representative will help you decide the best way to take training forward. Specifically you may wish to:

- Find out about the new right from your HR department, line manager or learning representative and how this fits with your company's existing training policy.
- Think about your role and how training and development may support your current job, your future development and the business.

- Talk to your line manager and learning representative about the training opportunities and the difference training will make to you.

There may be specific activities happening for Learning at Work Day in your organisation on the new right to request time to train and training opportunities more generally. You can also find out more information about the new right at:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/employees/timeoffandholidays/DG\\_183635](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/employees/timeoffandholidays/DG_183635)

## *Learning at Work Day activities for Chief Executives and senior managers*

Chief executives and senior managers are crucial to building and sustaining an organisation's learning culture.

The introduction of the new right is an ideal opportunity for senior managers to reinforce the organisation's commitment to learning and organisational development, and use it to drive or stress the importance of learning and development for all employees.

#### **Suggested activities for Learning at Work Day:**

- Send out a personal message about the new right and how it fits with the organisation's approach and support for learning
- Set out your expectations with line managers and supervisors in positively supporting learning and actively using learning as a tool for business development

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## Useful information and organisations

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### Learning at Work Day

A dedicated web section on the new right to request time to train can be found on the Learning at Work Day website [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com). It includes downloadable resources and general information on promoting and supporting the new right in your organisation, as well as where to find out more. The website also has a range of planning materials and activity ideas to run Learning at Work Day in your workplace.

### Unionlearn

Unionlearn has a number of resources on its website to support trade union representatives in promoting and supporting other members in exercising the right.

[www.unionlearn.org.uk/righttorequesttraining](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/righttorequesttraining)

### Business Link

The Business Link website [www.businesslink.gov.uk](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk) has a guide that is designed to help employers, human resources managers and others with responsibility for dealing with requests to understand their responsibilities under the new right, and the responsibilities of their employees. It includes templates for applications and letters. The guide can be found at:

[www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1084207995](http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1084207995)

### DirectGov

The DirectGov website [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) has a section for employees on the new right to request time to train. It includes details on how to make a request, responsibilities of employers under the new right and useful templates. The section can be found at:

[www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/employees/timeoffandholidays/DG\\_183635](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/employment/employees/timeoffandholidays/DG_183635)

## Resources

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### Template presentation and guidance notes on new right

Downloadable from [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com) and [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)

### Template message for unionised and non-unionised workplaces

Downloadable from [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com) and [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk) for unionised workplaces

### Exercise simulating the application stage

Downloadable from [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com) and [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)

### Exercise for simulating the stage where an application is considered

Downloadable from [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com) and [www.unionlearn.org.uk](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk)

### Right to Request Time off for Training: A Guide for Trade Unions and Union Representatives

Downloadable from [www.unionlearn.org.uk/initiatives/index.cfm?mins=175](http://www.unionlearn.org.uk/initiatives/index.cfm?mins=175)

### Leading on Learning Booklet for managers

Downloadable from [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com)

### Becoming a Better Learner Booklet

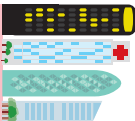
Downloadable from [www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com)



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'The "Time to Train? Time to Talk" mini-guide has been produced for Learning at Work Day by the Campaign for Learning and unionlearn. Learning at Work Day is organised by the Campaign for Learning as part of Adult Learners' Week.

For more information visit:  
[www.learningatworkday.com](http://www.learningatworkday.com)