

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

1. Purpose and Context

1.1. This Memorandum of Understanding has been devised in recognition of the particular roles of Birkbeck, University of London and unionlearn Southern & Eastern Region TUC (SERTUC) in championing and supporting workbased progression to higher education. Unionlearn SERTUC and Birkbeck, University of London share a common mission to support the career development of working adults, to raise their aspirations to higher education and help realise them through flexible and work-based higher education such as Foundation degrees. Unionlearn SERTUC and Birkbeck, University of London share a commitment to ensuring working adults can access high quality information, advice and guidance about learning opportunities and are supported to progress to higher education. They both share a commitment to inclusion and to opening up opportunities for career progression for disabled adults. Unionlearn SERTUC and Birkbeck, University of London are also particularly well-placed to engage constructively with employers to identify how aspirations of employees can be met in relation to workforce development.

1.2. The context is defined by:

- Government policy directed towards raising the attainment of higher level skills in the UK workforce
- A belief that learning and the development of skills and knowledge is an investment and not a cost and that employers should resist the temptation to reduce spending on workforce development in times of economic downturn
- Working with employers, sector skills councils, sector collaborators to address the skills gaps and develop progression pathways for workforce development by developing and evaluating options for joint programmes of vocational and work-based learning to meet evolving market and sector needs.
- Providing information, advice and guidance to union members through the auspices of unionlearn, union learning representatives (ULRs), and Birkbeck's advisory services.
- Developing joint opportunities for staff development and the sharing of best practice.

- 1.3. Within this overall context the Memorandum of Understanding will focus on the value-added that can be achieved through working in partnership to secure achievement of shared aims and objectives.

2. The Partners

- 2.1. Unionlearn SERTUC is the TUC's education and skills organisation operating within London, the East of England, and the South East; it has the capacity to assist unions to access learning for their members by providing a wide range of services.
- 2.2. Birkbeck, University of London is a world-class research and teaching institution, a vibrant centre of academic excellence and London's only specialist provider of evening higher education. We encourage applications from students without traditional qualifications and we have a wide range of programmes to suit every entry level. Our academic reputation also attracts many traditional full-time postgraduate students.

3. Aims and Objectives

- 3.1. The overarching aim of the Memorandum of Understanding is to enable Birkbeck and unionlearn SERTUC to work together to progress their mutual agenda for supporting and increasing work-based progression to higher education.

- 3.2. The objectives are to:

- encourage and support progression of employees to higher education through:
 - identifying strategies to support development of the skills and confidence to study at higher levels including through workbased learning-to-learn modules
 - supporting processes to accredit existing training and facilitate progression to higher education
 - encouraging development and promotion of higher education opportunities that engage and meet the diverse needs of employees
- raise the knowledge and awareness of ULRs about access routes to HE including Foundation Degrees
- contribute to research on how access to HE provision can become more inclusive and disseminate this through unionlearn SERTUC events such as the annual conference, ULR network meetings, union Project Worker meetings, and Regional Board.

- develop a joint strategy for raising the awareness of employers about the benefits of a diverse workforce and about adult workers aspirations to access higher education and the business case for employers to invest in workforce development

3. Partnership Management

4.1. The parties will meet at least 3 times a year to:

- Identify and prioritise activity and agree timescales and resources
- Enable the parties to up-date each other on related strategy and activity
- Monitor and manage progress to date
- Ensure regular communication between the parties
- Identify resourcing needed as the collaboration develops

4.2. This MoU is a statement of intent between the parties in relation to the subject matter herein and is not intended to create a contract, give rise to legal rights and obligations or create any legal relations whatsoever

4.4. All material/information shared between the Parties will be kept strictly confidential and will not be disclosed without prior consent.

4.5. All contractual terms (including but not limited to those relating to ownership of intellectually property rights, licensing and the right to use materials, use of third party content, branding and cost schedules and responsibilities) shall be agreed prior to the parties undertaking specific projects and activities. This will include any consultancy contracts on either side.