

News Release

Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Annual Conference • 21 - 24 March 2005 • Torquay



Press Office contacts:

Telephone: 01803 299 910 (Six lines)

Fax: 01803 212 466

Mobile: 07974 423 998

Email: newsdesk@atl.org.uk Website: www.atl.org.uk

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For education correspondents / newsdesks

Teachers can now be learners too, ATL conference will hear

A scheme to help members of the Association of Teacher and Lecturers (ATL) get better access to training – both for professional purposes and for personal development – is to go ‘live’ next month, the ATL conference in Torquay will hear today.

The Association has spent the past year recruiting and training more than 40 branch-based Union Learning Representatives (ULRs) to work with members and employers. The project will identify training opportunities and broker deals with learning providers to gain access for teachers to training that fits in with their aspirations and lifestyles.

The move comes after a survey of ATL members showed that half had not been granted sufficient opportunity for professional development

Looking into the reasons for the lack of access to high-quality Continuing Professional Development (CPD) will be a key element of the project as will ensuring equal opportunities to training for all members. ULRs will work to ensure that the barriers to training and learning are broken down.

ATL is also keen to see its members take advantage of other training that is not purely about school targets.

Chris Taylor, one of ATL’s recently trained ULRs, approached North Lincolnshire LEA to discuss establishing a joint learning committee for teachers in the county. He was surprised to find that not only was the HR manager well informed about ULRs but that they welcomed the proposal of a joint union/LEA discussion group.

Mr Taylor has been awarded facilities time for his role and plans have been made to establish both a learning committee and learning agreement.

"What was so good was to push on a door that was ready to open. We can now jointly find out what training there is available," said Mr Taylor. "Being a ULR is also a good opportunity to push lifelong learning for teachers that isn't just job training."

ULRs have the same trade union rights as both health and safety representatives and workplace representatives, but their role focuses on advising ATL members on their learning, educational and developmental needs.

Because ULRs will work alongside colleagues, they are ideally located to offer information to all ATL members ensuring certain harder to reach groups such as NQTs (newly-qualified teachers), supply and part-time teachers are also supported.

ATL general secretary, Dr Mary Bousted, said: "The union learning project will not just focus on work related training, it will also explore and identify training opportunities in non-work related learning to help teachers enjoy a proper work/life balance."

Ends

Notes to Editors

1. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers' Annual Conference is taking place at the Riviera International Conference Centre, in Torquay, from Monday 21 March to Thursday 24 March 2005.
2. The ATL Annual Conference will be broadcast live on the internet at: www.atl.org.uk
3. The Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) is an independent, registered trade union and professional association, representing approximately 160,000 teachers, lecturers and support staff in maintained and independent schools, sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges in the United Kingdom.
4. ATL exists to protect and improve the status of teachers, lecturers and other professionals involved in delivering education to further their legitimate professional interests.
5. ATL is affiliated to the Trades Union Congress (TUC). It is unaffiliated to any political party and seeks to work constructively with all the main political parties.
6. ATL members receive a regular magazine (*Report*) reflecting ATL policy and other issues affecting the education sector. If you would like to receive a copy of this please call 020 7782 1589.
7. Further information and all press releases are available on ATL's website: www.atl.org.uk