



Background Pack for Probationary Co-op Membership



Included in this pack:

- Working at Unicorn
- Job Specification
- Person Specification
- Unicorn's Statement of Purpose

How to apply:

Complete the **application form** and **personal details form** by hand or electronically.

Send **both** forms to recruitment@unicorn-grocery.coop or post to Personnel Dept, Unicorn Grocery, 89 Albany Road, Chorlton, M21 0BN. There is no need to include a CV as the relevant information will be gathered from your application.

Working at Unicorn

Unicorn is based on a strong set of principles (our Principles of Purpose), which underpin the way we run our business. We have created a place we would like to shop in ourselves, selling affordable, wholesome, regional, organic and fair-trade products. Through the way we do business, we strive to make trade less exploitative of people, animals and the environment.

As a worker co-operative, Unicorn is owned and managed by its members - the workforce. There is no 'boss' or management team - we work with a flat management structure and all members (currently numbering around 70) are 'managers' of the business, taking on equal responsibility for equal pay. Co-op membership involves working at all levels of the business, and includes significant amounts of shop floor work (serving, cleaning, re-stocking) as well as joining one or more specialist teams with responsibility for areas such as warehouse, buying, finance, or human resources.

Worker co-operatives are distinct from conventional businesses in that it is the workers (co-op members) that control and run the business, not only on a day-to-day basis but also in steering its overall strategy and direction. Decisions are made by members collectively and all co-op members are expected to contribute to decisions made both at team level and at members meetings. Members meetings guide the direction of the business as a whole, for example discussing issues such as pay, responsibilities, and long term planning.

Being part of a workers co-operative is like no other job, and variety is very much the norm. A typical day for an experienced member might start with splitting the various veg pallets delivered that morning or opening the deli counter, move on to working on the website or reviewing our commodity prices, it might include a meeting looking at our financial projections and staffing needs for the next quarter, it will almost certainly involve a shift on the tills, and could end with cleaning the customer toilets.

When we recruit for new co-op members, we are looking for grocers; people who love good food, who enjoy working with the public and find satisfaction in providing great customer service. We are also seeking those who can work collectively for the good of the co-operative, make well-informed business decisions within the framework of our values, and care deeply about the Principles we were set up to pursue. An understanding of basic business skills (and/or a willingness to learn) is a must.

Potential members need to be self-managing, keen to take on some management responsibilities within shop floor departments, and willing to work hard as part of a large team.

Co-operative working comes with its own challenges and is not for everyone, but being a member at Unicorn brings huge rewards. Shared ownership, equal participation and pay, and working together democratically towards common goals are things that make our working lives very different from the norm, and there is a lot of fun to be had here too! The membership of our co-op makes our business what it is.



Our Principles of Purpose (see final page of this pack) set out clearly what we stand for - the challenge is to run a business that can turn ideas into reality. Since our opening in 1996 we have achieved much by conventional standards, and seek others who can help us achieve more.

There is a probationary period of seven months from the start of employment. Successful completion of this probationary period leads to full membership of the co-operative.

Job Description

Location: Unicorn Grocery, Chorlton, Manchester

Job Title: Probationary Member

Rate of pay: £12.00 per hour

Special Conditions: Working both days every other weekend. Some early morning starts & late evening finishes. Working every Thursday morning to attend training or forum. Attendance at Members' Meeting which may be outside rota'd hours.

Working Hours: Hours are based on a 2-week rota. Full time is 70 hours a fortnight or hours can be part-time, with a minimum of 40 hours a fortnight.

Job Summary: To participate as a co-op member in the management and development of the business and to have shared responsibility for current business plans and the successful functioning of specialist teams.

Tasks/Requirements of the job:

1. To communicate openly and honestly and be supportive and respectful to colleagues.
2. To make active contributions to collective management functions and processes including; General Meetings, Forums, workshops, working groups, and team meetings.
3. To work co-operatively in at least one specific team and take on responsibility for the success and development of the team and the co-operative as a whole.
4. To share responsibility as a managing director and owner of the business.

5. To multi-task, i.e. switch quickly from one type of task to another, as indicated on your rota or be transferred at short notice to help with the smooth running of the business.
6. To work at a fast pace in the most effective and efficient manner in order to contribute to the success of the business.
7. To demonstrate worker self- management as well as team work.
8. To undertake the core tasks upon which the operation of Unicorn depends; till operation, production (packing of dried foodstuffs), cleaning, and dealing with the public. Please note that some of the core tasks involve heavy and repetitive lifting and handling.
9. To provide excellent customer service.
10. To seek and undertake training and personal development in order to be a more effective member and collective manager.
11. To abide by and promote the co-operative principles and values as well as Unicorn's policies.
12. To develop, promote and adhere to best practice and to agreed systems and procedures.
13. Any other duties that are reasonable



Benefits

Benefits from the start of employment:

- 25% shop discount
- Support with bicycle maintenance costs

Further member benefits (once probationary period completed):

- Health plan subscription
- Quarterly bonus (depending on sales)
- Increase in paid annual leave entitlement after 5 years of membership (on top of statutory allowance)
- £150 personal training budget per year plus generous work-related training
- Paid special leave, enhanced maternity/paternity pay, childcare benefit

Person Specification

At Unicorn Grocery all members are general shop workers but everyone also specialises in at least one area. These areas are fresh fruit and veg sales, deli counter, warehouse, chilled foods sales, commodity packing & labelling, finance, HR, education & marketing, buying, operational planning, secretariat, health & safety, and IT. In all areas of the shop the below criteria need to be fulfilled.



Personal Skills/Abilities

1. The ability to work as part of a team in a cooperative and sensitive manner.
2. The ability to complete tasks to an agreed timescale with an organised and positive attitude to work & the ability to effectively manage and prioritise a workload when working under pressure.
3. The ability to show attention to detail in all aspects of work.
4. The ability to work with numbers to the extent of cash handling, checking deliveries and mixing and bagging up quantities of dry foods correctly. Good computer & email skills and the ability to interpret sales and finance reports.
5. The ability to communicate effectively with a wide range of people both verbally and by creating and following written communication. Need to be able to give clear information in response to customers and telephone enquiries.
6. The ability to show initiative, versatility and flexibility in all aspects of work.
7. Show understanding of, and commitment to, Unicorn's Principles of Purpose.
8. The ability to manage and be managed while sharing responsibilities for all areas of the business.
9. The ability to efficiently carry out core and specialist tasks which can include heavy and repetitive lifting of boxes and sacks of foodstuff in the warehouse and reaching, bending and lifting stock to replenish shelves on the shop floor.

We are committed to five Principles of Purpose

Secure Employment

We aim to provide secure employment for our members. We seek above all to provide a livelihood for ourselves with some control over our working environment. We accept the responsibilities and rewards of this challenge.

Equal Opportunity

We believe that all should have an equal opportunity to undertake paid work. Ignorance and prejudice should not be an obstacle to this. The ability to carry out a minimum of 20 hours useful work per week entitles a worker to apply for membership. The respect and income derived from a job are important to many people in our society which is one which values paid work highly.

Wholesome Healthy Consumption

We aim to trade in wholesome foodstuffs and household goods of non-animal origin. We focus on foods that have undergone minimal processing. Specific product guidelines include the avoidance of animal derivatives and where feasible, refined sugar and high levels of added salt. We strive to sell products of organic standard and maximum nutritional value whenever we can find or generate a market. Provision of educational materials help in this aim.

Fair and Sustainable Trade

We aim to trade in a manner which supports a sustainable world environment and economy. We trade preferentially in products which follow the "Fair Trade" ethos and alert our customers to the problems of cash crop agriculture. We are concerned that much of world trade is to the disadvantage of poorer nations with a consequence for people's health and lives. We operate a fund from which to support projects addressing and challenging this imbalance. 4% of our wage costs are contributed to this fund. We trade in products which produce minimum impact on the environment and we make decisions about our packaging with this also in mind.

Solidarity in Co-operation

We aim to support like-minded ventures, co-operatives or otherwise. We acknowledge both competition and co-operation as fundamental to human nature. We seek to encourage co-operation by operating a fund to support projects which share our vision of community and society in the United Kingdom. 1% of our wage costs are contributed to this fund. We promote co-operative structures and spirit through all our trading, social and educational activities.