

Committee handover and training

Creating excellent committee handovers and training

Every year most student groups will have new committees leading their work. This proves to be a huge logistical challenge for many students' union in managing the handover from one committee to another, ensuring officers are adequately trained and maintaining consistently high standards in service delivery.

Introduction

The ever changing nature of the student movement is what many of us thrive on. However the constant change brings with it many challenges in managing the delivery of services each year.

Ensuring that student groups deliver high quality student opportunities often stems from how engaged they are, whether they've attended training and received a good handover from the previous committee.

This guide highlights some key examples of how students' union have tackled the process of committee handovers and training.

Key things for you to consider in developing your programme of activity include:

- Timing – do you deliver your training before the end of the summer term or at the start of the autumn term?
- Content – how much is mandatory to attend and how much could be optional
- Delivery – do you run everything on one day, string it out over a series of weeks or put it online
- Reward – how do you entice people to attend? Think about the

motivations and rewards rather than punishments for not attending

- Audience – is the training only available for the president, chair or project leader or a wider selection of committee members?

We hope that the inspiration sheets below give you some ideas about how you could develop your committee training and handover process.

This article contains ideas and information from:

- University of Edinburgh Students' Association
- Teesside University Students' Union

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest any amends please contact fiona.ellison@nus.org.uk

University of Edinburgh Students' Association

About

Super Society Sunday aims to provide training for student society committee members. We ask every society to send at least one representative. This year we had two hundred and thirty eight participants from one hundred and thirty three societies which well surpassed our target!

The idea

We wanted to run a training programme for society members that brought them altogether for a fun day of development rather than what had been seen as a boring series of mandatory training sessions.

We combined some of the more formal elements such as risk assessments and club development plans alongside personal and club development sessions for students. Some sessions were mandatory – e.g. finance for treasurers but others were open to everyone.

The agenda is detailed below:

Title	Description
11.00 – 12.00	
Help! How do I be in charge?	Think managing a large committee or group sounds terrifying? Unsure how to go about dealing with tricky situations or difficult individuals? Then this workshop is perfect for you!
Organising Socials and	So you want to plan an amazing event for your

Events	members but you're confused where to start? This session will help you learn how to organise fun socials, plan great events and organise Society Balls!
Ask ESCA: How to Organise A Big Event	Equip you to plan a big fundraising event for your society from the fundraising experts at ESCA
Peer Support: what's it all about?	Familiarise students with what is happening in Peer Support across the university, a chance to experience a real Session and info on how to get involved further
12.00 – 13.00	
Organising a Committee	Advice on reviewing your society's situation and how you can make it better, assigning roles within a group, working through conflicts between committee members, prioritising tasks and planning for difficult situations.
Publicity on Campus	This all-encompassing workshop will give you all you need to know on online, social media, flyers, posters and other forms of advertising you can use, including all of the FREE publicity you can get!
We are family...	Often societies are the closest to families that we have during our time at university. Come along to

	learn techniques for supporting students, picking up warning signs and what to do when it all goes wrong!
Ask ESCA: Fundraising Through the Year	An hour long session on how to plan your society fundraising over the year delivered by the fundraising experts of ESCA.
Campaigning Basics	Whether it's more funding for your course or fixed fees for international students, the process of campaigning remains essentially the same. We'll cover the basic tools many people involved in campaigning use, and what you might want to be thinking about when planning your own campaign.
13.00 – 14.00	
Societies Council Elections	Put your name forward and in this session you'll have the opportunity to say a few words (no more than 90 seconds) on why you'd like to be involved in the Societies Council. And then we'll take the vote!
14.00 – 15.00	
The F Word... Finance	How to navigate EUSA banking, responsibilities of the treasurer and how to apply for global/development fund. There will also be some general cash handling advice and a chance for you to ask any questions

	you may have.
Room Booking Workshops	A surprisingly fun workshop on how to use EUSA rooms effectively and get to know other options for space your society may have. You'll have the chance to speak to those in-the-know and bring any questions, queries or comments!
You're a Committee Member, So What? Selling the Skills You Develop in Your New Role	This interactive workshop, facilitated by the Careers Service, will explore how your work on society committees could help you to develop the kind of skills future employers are looking for.
Sticks and stones may break my bones but names aren't very nice either	We'll look at creating and maintaining a supportive community in a society - mediating and tackling conflict on an individual case-by-case basis as well as how to organise welfare and conflict prevention for the long term.
Back to School	We will examine the practical difficulties in reaching out to schools and how to solve them. What simple steps can be taken to make the day successful in the eyes of the teachers
15.00 – 16.00	
Supporting Cultural Activities on Campus	This workshop will look at how to attract and engage with international students on campus. Come and learn how EUSA Global can help you with funding,

	support and resources for multi-society engagement and cultural events.
Solving Problems, Securing Successes	This workshop aims to show you ways in which you can innovate and restructure to ensure that problems can be solved before they occur and successes can be embedded into your society for the long term.
Making Videos to Promote Your Society	A great way to promote your society and events is to use video. This workshop will cover the benefits of using video, how and what to film and the basics of editing to help you show off your society and encourage new members in a fun and easy way!
The Agency	We offer marketing and advertising advice & consultancy for your society, as well as free graphic design to enhance your image!
A Fair Society	How to make sure that your society welcoming to all interested students, from ensuring the accessibility of your events to thinking about installing a welfare officer to encourage participation.

Development stage

In the first year we didn't properly monitor attendance so this year we ensured that we had proper sign-up sheets that allowed us to track which societies people were from and their role. By allowing people to book in advance we had a

good idea of numbers for different sessions in advance as well.

Advice

Feedback we had from the training day was great and gave us some really constructive things to consider for the future. Key points students highlighted included:

- There was a desire for more opportunities for networking with other societies.
- Some talks got over-subscribed quite quickly (on the first day that sign-ups opened) and so there were suggestion that the most popular workshops could be repeated throughout the day.
- People said they liked the training toys and hoped they would be included in future events
- People really liked having information packs on the day, and suggested that these could include maps and other helpful information to take away.
- Communication about the event through email/facebook/twitter - as many ways as possible is really important so we reach those not hugely engaged as well.

Impact

There has been a noticeable difference in those people who engaged with the training and who engage with us in the students' association.

We specifically have trouble over room bookings given our limited room numbers and the sessions on these went down really well and as a result we've been able to manage expectations around this much more easily.

Contact

For more information please contact Nadia Mehdi, VP Societies and Activities
ypsa@eusa.ed.ac.uk or 0131 650 9193

Teesside University Students' Union

About

At Teesside we had concerns about the impact of running sports clubs and societies had on student retention and completion. Anecdotally, evidence was showing that club/society committee members were "dropping out" of courses due to a number of factors including poor (or no) peer to peer handover from the previous committee and support from the staff team was not meeting the needs or expectations of the students involved.

The evidence in this case study details that actions we took to rectify this, creating more focused training and helping develop plans to help both the committee and club/society succeed.

The idea

Handover from club/society committees was poor if not none existent. This had a detrimental impact on both the new committee and the students participating in that club/society. The impact on committees was that they were often not getting up to speed on what their roles involved and related policies and procedures until October/November.

Committee training was offered in various forms ranging from large groups of all committee members to specific Chair, Secretary and Treasurer training. All were poorly attended.

A club and society handbook existed that committees were required to read. However, practices from committees demonstrated this document was not being read at all. We found that due to there being no handover from clubs/societies, or if there had been it was

incorrect and actually detrimental to the new committee, they were using bad practices which created the Activities Centre problems.

We were caught in a spiral of being completely reactionary to problems the committees created. This needed to change into us being proactive in dealing with problems before they happened.

We were also conscious that the increase in tuition fees would create a consumer culture amongst students. Students expect a quality of service from their Institution and this would translate into expecting the same standard of quality for their clubs and societies. We needed to "Quality Assure" our clubs and societies to ensure they met a high standard that we wanted for our members at Teesside.

We developed an induction agenda that all club and society committee members **have** to undertake. The induction details the policies, procedures and contacts for committees to utilise. Once a club/society AGM is complete, the committee books an induction session with a member of staff.

Once the induction has been completed we activate the club/society on our online system. This ensures that students do not join a club or society where the committee does not understand how to run that group.

Club/Society Development plans are also discussed at this induction. Inductions can take up to 90 minutes. However we feel the process is important enough to invest the staff time needed to undergo this.

The agenda for the training is:

- **Activities Centre** –
 - Opening hours
 - Introduction to team
 - Website resources

- **How your club/society works –**
 - Committee Roles
 - Training, AGM procedure
 - AU Dates
 - Membership - Online membership and accessing membership list
 - Finance - Accounts, accessing accounts, pay at reception, grant allocation, expenses, buying equipment
 - Transport - Own car, hire car, taxis, coaches, minibuses and Midas training
 - Trip application form for overnight stays
 - Health and Safety
 - Risk assessment and incident report.
 - Promotional Methods - Posters, flyers, TV adverts, Facebook and Twitter
 - Room bookings
 - Events - Costs, function booking form, risk assessment
 - Kit - Booking kit, kit allocation, personal kit, security
 - BUCs
 - Emails
 - Other - Taster sessions. Focus Sport specific. Tour. Awards Dinner.
- **Set club/society membership price**
- **Club/Society aims –**
 - Overall mission statement
 - Aims across key areas
 - Specific actions that need to take place to reach aims.

staff team spending time with them. We undertake the inductions following AGM's that mostly take place after the Easter break to ensure that clubs and societies could be trained in good time for the start of the academic year.

This hasn't solved the perennial problem of clubs and societies not having AGM's in time for the start of the academic year, but we are confident that they aren't operating signing up students and undertaking activities under the auspices of the Students' Union.

Impact

Through a data sharing agreement with Teesside University we are able to cross reference the retention and progression of committee members compared to the overall University population.

Through historical data collection we were able to send Academic Registry the individual student ID numbers to map retention and completion rates prior to the committee induction programme's introduction in September 2011. We then ran the committee ID numbers who had undertaken inductions during 2011/12 and found the inductions had made a significant difference to the retention and completion of those students. (We are still awaiting data for 2012/13).

Contact

For more information on the information within this case study please contact Chris Walton, Activities Centre Manager at Teesside University Students' Union – c.walton@tees-su.rg.uk or 01642 384460

Advice

We generally found that clubs and societies welcomed the new process and appreciated the

Macadam House
275 Gray's Inn Road
London WC1X 8QB
t 0845 5210 262
f 020 7380 0794
e nusuk@nus.org.uk
www.nus.org.uk

nus
national union of **students**