



Guidelines for Coordinators

Revised August 2010

Introduction

The following guidelines have been designed to help you in the management of your groups, and in your role as part of the larger SU3A.

When reading them, however, please note the following important principle...

All U3As, and all groups within a U3A, are autonomous, and in general are free to organise themselves in whatever way best suits their purpose. However, all U3As are charities and as such, are bound by the rules of the Charities Commission, which are legally enforceable. In order to comply with Charity Commission rules, all officers in a charity (including Coordinators) are obliged to carry out certain functions in a prescribed way.

Those few functions demanded by the Charities Commission are indicated in the GROUP FINANCE section by bold italics.

Group Management

As Coordinator, you are not expected to do everything for your group. Your key job is to act as a contact point between your group and the SU3A Executive Committee, and your key tasks are shown below. Other tasks may be performed by willing Group Members.

- If practicable, appoint a Deputy Coordinator.

- Attend Coordinator's Meetings (or send a representative) and disseminate any information obtained there to your members.
- When requested, send an annual return (the Green Form) for your group to the General Coordinator. All general information will be shown on the SU3A website.
- When requested, send an annual record of group members (the Orange Form), with their postal address, email address, telephone number, and current membership number.
- Contact members after three unexplained absences, to check if they are ill, or to free their place for a new member.
- Explain fully to group members the requirements for membership and for adequate participation in your group's activities, and the financial contributions which will be necessary.
- Inform the General Coordinator...
 - when vacancies exist so s/he can advertise the fact in *Links* and on the SU3A website;
 - when you have a waiting list so s/he can advise on the formation of an additional group;
 - when one of your members dies so that no insensitive contact is made with their family;
 - of any changes in your group's name or format.

General Coordinator

The General Coordinator is appointed by the Executive Committee to oversee the operation of all groups, and is available at all times to support and advise Group Coordinators.

Group Finance

The philosophy of SU3A is that groups be self-financing. The Executive Committee is, however, prepared to help with a group's reasonable start up costs and with certain exceptional expenses. To avoid any subsequent misunderstandings, you should seek the approval of the Executive Committee at the planning stage, before any expenditure is incurred.

In order to comply with the Charity Commission's regulations, and to avoid the personal and collective liability of SU3A officials (including Group Coordinators), ***the financial procedures indicated in bold italics, below, must be observed.*** If further advice or guidance is needed on any financial matter, please contact the Executive Treasurer.

- You ***must*** ensure an account is kept of money received and paid out by the group, and any receipts and payment vouchers ***must*** be retained.
- You ***must*** ensure that an annual statement is published to inform your group about its financial affairs.
- ***No more than £100 in cash*** belonging to your group may be kept in anyone's home at any given time. If your group has an annual turnover greater than £100, you may think it preferable to open a Group bank account.

- Groups with an annual turnover greater than £1000 **must** submit a copy of their accounts to the Executive Treasurer **as soon as possible after their year-end**.
- If your group opens a bank account, it **must be in the name of the Group**, with a **minimum of two cheque signatories**, and **with two to sign**. The two signatories **must not** be related.
- Your group **must not** make any long-term financial agreements with any third party. **You must confer with the Executive Treasurer prior to making any commitment**.

The Executive Committee will not, as a rule, wish to see group financial records, but does reserve the right to call for these if thought necessary.

Insurance

The *Third Age Trust* has arranged a central insurance policy for all paid up members of affiliated U3As in the UK. The policy insures members against *Public Liability* and *Product Liability* claims made against them. The policy does not provide cover against *Personal Accident*.

An explanatory document explaining the terms of cover, and the duties of Coordinators and Day Leaders...

- ...was given to every member of SU3A in 2009;
- ...will be given to every new member as they join SU3A;
- ...is available on the SU3A website;
- ...is available from the General Coordinator.

It is important that you, as Coordinator – and also any Day Leaders – make yourselves familiar with the requirements of the policy, as explained in the explanatory document.

Please note, especially, that the insurance cover for your entire group will be compromised if people who are not members of Sheffield U3A join your group on more than two occasions.

You can obtain Accident/Incident Report Forms from the Secretary, or download them from the Group Coordinator's Page on the SU3A website. You must complete and return one in respect of any accident or incident that occurs during a group's activities.

Equipment belonging to the SU3A is also insured. The Executive Treasurer can advise you on the terms of the insurance.

Running Social Trips

Some groups arrange Social Trips for their members. Where these trips are run on a private basis, the SU3A insurance will not apply, and it is the responsibility of the organiser to make all necessary arrangements, including Group Trip Insurance, if this is required.

Where trips are run under the umbrella of SU3A, either at home or abroad, they must follow the same guidelines as are used by the SU3A Travel Group, especially that only SU3A members can participate. Examination of the Explanatory Insurance Document referred to earlier will show that if this rule is not followed, it will compromise the SU3A insurance cover for the entire group.

Other precautions for Social Trips may be necessary, depending on the nature of the trip, and the SU3A Travel Group has extensive experience in these matters. Organisers should, at the planning stage of any trip, contact the Travel Group Coordinator, who will advise them.

Problem Resolution

Problems requiring intervention from outside a group are very rare in SU3A. In the unlikely event that a serious problem does arise, you should refer to the Problem Resolution Procedure, obtainable from the General Coordinator, or from the SU3A website. If the problem cannot be resolved within the group, it may be referred to the General Coordinator, and then to the Executive Committee, whose decision shall be final.

First Aid

There is no requirement on any group to include a First Aid qualified member, or to hold, or carry, a First Aid kit. There are no recommendations as to what a First Aid kit, if held, might include.

If a member needs medical attention, your group should contact *Emergency Services*, who will advise the caller on any immediate action thought necessary, and who will manage emergency recovery.

SU3A occasionally sponsors training sessions on *Incident Management*. These sessions are available to all SU3A members, who should see *Links* for forthcoming courses.

Sheffield U3A Equipment

SU3A owns some technical equipment that can be loaned to groups. Details can be found on the website. The Equipment Officers are named inside the front cover of *Links*, and you should consult them about what items are available, and the procedure for booking them. Early booking is advised. If you plan to start a group that wants to use SU3A equipment, you are advised to speak to the Equipment Officers before you set the day / time for your group.

Links & SU3A Website

All groups are encouraged to submit articles, reports and photographs of group activity, for publication in *Links*, and on the website.

Need More Help?

In addition to this guide, there are many sources of advice and assistance available to you, including...

- *Third Age News*
- *Sources*
- *Links*
- U3A (UK) website: www.u3a.org.uk
- Sheffield U3A website: sheffieldu3a.org.uk