OU Students Association

Club Guidelines

The OU Students Association www.oustudents.com
Guidelines for clubs

These guidelines are here to help provide procedures for the setup of clubs, provide guidance to existing clubs and explain the difference between clubs and affiliated societies.

If you require these guidelines in an alternative format please contact oustudents-clubs@open.ac.uk and we will do our best to help provide these guidelines in an alternative format.
Introduction

In addition to societies, the OU Students Association are introducing a new addition to our community: Clubs!

Clubs have been introduced as a way for OU students with similar interests and hobbies to get together, without having to set up a formal committee structure or bank account.

In order to set up a club all you need is a group of five likeminded students, a purpose or theme as well as a funky name for your club.

In this guide you’ll find more information about clubs, how to set one up and why you should get involved with the OU Students Association.

Why should you become an OU Students Association Club?

The benefits of becoming a club is that it’s an informal and fluid organisational structure with low administration work involved.

Due to this, clubs are simple to set up and maintain, with advertisements on the OU Students Association website, social media involvement in Freshers activities.

Clubs have the freedom to organise as many events or engagement activities as they would like. They are also a great starting point if a club should want to become an OU Students Association Society in the future, as a successful club provides good evidence of student interest.
What is a club?

An OU Students Association Club is a group of students who share a similar interest or hobby. Unlike societies or groups, they are informal in structure and do not need a committee, bank account, minuted meetings or to attend the OU campus. However, they do need a named contact (and second contact) with the Association. This way the OU Student Association can get in contact to check in and confirm the club is still active.

The aims of the club as stated in the application form must not be inconsistent with any of the objectives of the Association and must adequately define the club’s purpose.

Clubs will be supported by the Vice President Community, Area Association Representatives and/or Faculty Assembly Representatives if appropriate. They will also have support from the OU Students Association office if needed, mostly from the Student Community team. Clubs will not receive any financial support from the OU Students Association as standard unless it is ad hoc due to special circumstances (e.g. expenses to attend a meeting).

Official OU Student Association Clubs are listed on the clubs webpage with a small description of your club and contact details of how individuals can get involved. The OU Student Association can also provide a forum for club members to communicate with each other, and encourage the club to set up a social media presence (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.). The office can help with this if needed.

Memberships to clubs should be open to all members of the Association unless specified, however provision may be made in its stated purpose for the exclusion of those who are overtly unsympathetic to its aims.
What is the difference between a society and a club?

In addition to clubs, the OU Students Association also supports a number of special interest affiliated societies that are formed and run by students. Societies differ from clubs in that they have a more formal structure with a committee and a signed constitution, with access to funding from the OU Students Association and attend events at the OU campus such as Conference.

Both clubs and societies are great ways to meet like-minded people who are also studying at the OU, and both come with their benefits. We’ve listed a few key differences between the two below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Societies</th>
<th>Clubs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More formal organisational structure with an elected committee, formal constitution and is autonomous in terms of operation. The more formal structure is likely to promote the longevity of society.</td>
<td>Informal and fluid set up with no constitution or formal organisational structure, but with a purpose to be stated. Simple to set-up and maintain.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A representative of the society attends Society Committee Meetings three times a year at the OU campus.</td>
<td>No formal attendance at the OU campus needed.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can attend OU Students Association events such as Conference and training.</td>
<td>OU Students Association helps with promotion including social media, inclusion in the OU Students magazine and STUDIO radio show, forums and Freshers activities.</td>
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<td>Can apply for funding from the OU Students Association to organise events, create promotional material and plan trips.</td>
<td>Clubs will be listed on OU Students Associations website.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OU Students Association helps with promotion including social media, societies leaflet, regular space in the OU Students Magazine, Freshers activities, STUDIO and student forums.</td>
<td>Membership open to all.</td>
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<td>Societies get their own page on the OU Students Association website.</td>
<td>Can provide a starting point for becoming a Society.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Membership is open to all.</td>
<td>Official use of the OU and OU Students Association name.</td>
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<td>Official use of the OU and OU Students Association name.</td>
<td>Support in linking up with relevant members of OU staff, including faculties.</td>
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Starting a club?

Thinking of starting a club yourself? Check out our quick step by step checklist guide to setting up an OU Students Association Club:

1. Five OU students interested in setting up a club.
2. Go to [www.oustudents.com/clubs](http://www.oustudents.com/clubs) to find out more information about clubs and read the guidelines, including code of conduct.
3. Register an OU Students Association account and complete the online application form.
4. Completed application form is sent over to Head of Student Community and VP Community for final agreement on club. Please note it may take up to 15 working days for a response.
5. If yes, the club is informed that they are officially an OU Students Association Club and a club pack is sent over with information including the official clubs logo and social media guides. If the club indicated that they wanted a forum set up, this will be done at this stage.
6. The club is to let the Students Association know that they are still active yearly, and notify the Association if there is a change to either named contact.
1. Core principles
OU Students Association clubs are separate legal entities, however when associated with the OU Students Association, club members are expected to:

- Act in the interests of the wider community of OU Students Association members.
- Exercise sound, rational judgement.
- Show appropriate respect and consideration when communicating with fellow students.
- Act with moral integrity, honesty and in an ethical and honourable manner. Dishonourable content such as racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and physical disability slurs are not tolerated.
- Act in an open and responsible manner. Be careful discussing things where emotions run high (e.g. politics and religion) and show respect for others’ opinions.
- Be transparent, have fun, and connect with others.

2. Equal opportunities and discrimination
Whilst promoting free and open discussion, the OU Students Association will not tolerate discriminatory behaviour or harassment whether aimed at its members or by them at others.

3. Active participation
A member of the club must let the OU Students Association that the club is still actively running once a year.

4. Social media
Please adhere to the core principles when communicating on any social media platform.

If a mistake is made (e.g. spelling/grammar mistake or incorrect event date) correct it immediately and be clear about what you’ve done to fix it.

Be transparent when using social media, however be aware of your privacy. Do not put up any contact details that you do not wish for anyone to know. Clubs are allowed to discuss Open University and OU Students Association business on social media networks.

Please refer to the Social Media Guidelines 2016-2018 document for more information and guidance.

5. Individual opinion
The OU Students Association values and respects that OU Students Association club members are independent and free to offer their opinions on issues but in doing so are expected to bear the core principles in mind.

Considerable care needs to be taken to ensure that OU Students Association is not brought into disrepute in all publicly accessible media.

6. General application of this code of conduct
This code will apply to OU Students Association club members whilst the club is still associated with the Association. The intention is to ensure that the standard of conduct expected from students is consistent throughout the OU Students Association.

Approved by the Vice President Community.
January 2018.
Ongoing support

If the club encounters any difficult issues, whether this is through social media or in person, it is important to know that the OU Student Association is here to support you. Please do not hesitate to contact us for guidance.

The Association has a zero tolerance to bullying, either online or in person. If you feel uncomfortable at any point with a comment that another person has posted, please feel free to get in contact with the Association.

Once associated, clubs are welcome to use the official club logo in their communications to help students identify associated clubs. We ask that clubs do not alter the proportions of the logo or any of the colouring, and make sure it's placed on a background where it is legible. The OU and OU Students Association logos are subject to copyright and should not be used.

Club promotion

Once your club is associated with the OU Students Association, we will post your club details and contact on our website, and can update these details as your club grows.

The Student Community Team can also provide support in the initial set up of clubs social media pages, if required. A club may benefit from setting up a Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and/or Pintrest account, as this helps to create and strengthen a community for the club. Always be clear and concise in communications and try to respond promptly.

The OU Students Association also has a newsletter and magazine that can be used to promote your club. Email oustudents-media@open.ac.uk to find out more.

Collaborating with other clubs is a great way to reach a new audience with your club and the Association can help to put you in touch with other associated clubs.