



Buckingham and District

Guidance for Group Co-ordinators (GCs)

The U3A is dependent on its members for setting up and running groups. These notes have been written with the aim of supporting any member wishing to lead a new group as well as an aide memoire for existing GCs.

Setting up a group

The purpose of the U3A is to share knowledge, skills and experience and to meet the social needs of its members. The U3A relies on the enthusiasm of its members and on their willingness to involve themselves in groups. A group can be established on any topic that interests those who wish to join. A group can be any size, though 6 and upwards is recommended and most grow, once established. If you would like to start a group first talk to the Group Liaison Officer (GLO).

Needs of a group

- A leader (GC) to co-ordinate/organise and encourage members to participate.
- An agreed programme.
- A regular time and place for meeting – a member's house or public venue.

Types of group

- A study group with a defined educational aim and a specific subject to learn about in a set number of meetings.
- A social study group with a definite educational aim but with no limit to the number of meetings.
- A social or activity group with no defined educational aim.

Gathering members

- The GLO will put a notice on the notice board at the monthly meeting and publicise in the newsletter.
- The GLO will announce your group at the Open Meeting.
- The GLO will give advice on available venues.

Group co-ordinators

- The main function of the Group Co-ordinator (GC) is to make all the necessary arrangements for the group meetings and to manage the group finances.
- A GC may be an expert and choose to take on a tutorial role in addition to an administrative one but this is entirely optional. The GC may also support and co-ordinate the learning and teaching which is shared between members of the group and/or arrange speakers or visits.
- If a GC is also the group tutor it may be helpful to delegate some of the administrative chores to another member.
- U3A members are covered by TAT third party insurance on trips in the UK and in mainland Europe; the cover is for U3A member to U3A member and for U3A member to a member of the public. U3A public liability insurance **is not** personal

accident insurance. It would have to be shown that the U3A, its agents, or members had in some way been negligent in causing injury to the victim.

Running a group

- The Newsletter and our website: www.buckinghamu3a.org.uk will provide a list for members to obtain details of groups and contact details of the GCs. The time of the meeting as agreed is published in the Newsletter. Prospective members are asked to contact the GC for further information.
- GCs also have the opportunity to publicise their groups by, placing information on the GC's notice board, speaking at the monthly meeting, sending copy to the Newsletter Editor and sending copy to the Webmaster for the website.
- GCs should advise any changes of the time/venue of their meetings to the Group Liaison Officer, the Newsletter Editor and the Webmaster. **Any cancellations of regular meetings to be advised to the Treasurer.**
- Buckingham U3A has various items that are available for the use of groups (see the Newsletter or web page for details).
- A register should be kept and attendance at each meeting recorded. GCs should request details of addresses, emails and telephone numbers together with **emergency contact details in the event of any planned outings.**
- In the event of a member of your group suffering an accident/Incident the GC must complete an Accident/Incident Report Form a copy of which can be found on our website. Completed forms must be returned to the Secretary a.s.a.p.
- GC's should ensure when possible a deputy/shadow to cover or assist as and when necessary in times of absence.
- Ensure that all group members are fully paid-up members of this or a neighbouring U3A by checking membership cards **on a regular basis.**
- Making and distributing multiple copies of a copyrighted document is allowed for educational purposes within the remit of the CLA licence. GCs that need to make copies should ask the committee for further information. **The licence does not cover maps, newspapers or sheet music.**

Guidance for group members on attendance of non-members at groups

As a general rule, non-members of the U3A cannot attend groups, group walks, outings and holidays etc. If in doubt, ask to see their membership card. However, in certain circumstances, **occasional or casual attendance** can be allowed:

- For Walking Groups and Social outings, it is possible for a non-group member, e.g. partner/friend to attend **on an occasional basis**, but this should not be a regular occurrence.
- On walks, grandchildren would not be covered by U3A insurance and should not be able to attend (duty of care).
- A carer for a disabled/elderly person can attend in their capacity as carer.
- A prospective new member may attend a group or outing as a one-off visitor.

NB. In these circumstances, non-members enjoy the same Public Liability insurance as U3A members. The policy is an insurance against the legal liability of the U3A and is not a personal Accident Insurance.

Public & Product Liability Insurance can be seen on the National website:
www.u3a.org.uk

Group finances

- **General:** The charitable status of the Buckingham & District U3A means that each GC must keep cash handling to a minimum and keep financial records. Members of the group should have access to these records at any reasonable time and the GC must provide the members and the Treasurer with a copy of the Group's accounts made up to 30th September each year. Charitable status also means that the Committee has total responsibility for ensuring safe custody of members' money and the Trustees are the only people with legal accountability.
Groups should be self-financing apart from, if necessary, the cost of hiring a venue. The GC should arrange the hiring of a venue and inform the Treasurer of the charge.
- **Income:**
Except where meetings are held in members' homes or in a free venue, GCs should collect a contribution of **£1.00** from each member at each meeting and pay the accumulated amount to the Treasurer either in cash or a personal cheque made out to Buckingham & District U3A **at the end of each calendar month** (except when a different frequency has been agreed with the Treasurer). The provider of the venue will be paid at the end of each month by the Treasurer on behalf of the U3A.
The GC must keep a register of all those attending, monies received and dates. For clarity, where meetings take place in a member's home, the Buckingham & District U3A has no interest in any arrangement to cover the cost of any refreshments.
If money is collected for purposes other than the hire of a venue, any amount in excess of £50 should be paid to the Treasurer, who will hold it on behalf of the group for planned future expenses. **Under no circumstances should group money be put into a bank account opened in the name of a group.**
If a GC collects money for a group social event, it should be collected **from participating members only.**
- **Outgoings:**
In addition to the hire of a venue, other costs should be kept to a minimum. These other costs may include fees for speakers, postage, photocopying, etc.
For an item of equipment deemed necessary to run the group, an application for funds may be made to the Committee. If approved and purchased, the item would then be put on the Buckingham and District U3A asset register, and can be seen on the Buckingham U3A web page.
- **GCs Expenses**
GCs should not be out of pocket in relation to the running of the group but expenses must be covered by additional contributions from each group's members. Car sharing is in order. The car owner can charge a share of the cost at up to 40p per mile. Insurance policies are not invalidated.
If any trip or holiday organised by a GC includes the offer of a free place then the GC may, if they wish, claim one free place per year and half the value of a free place for any subsequent trip or holiday. Where the cost is shared between participants, for example a coach trip, the GC must pay their full share.

Support for GCs.

The role of the Committee through the GLO is to ensure, as far as possible, the smooth running of the groups and to offer support and advice to GCs.

- Once a year the Committee will ask each GC for a report of between 150 and 250 words about their group. This should be submitted to the webmaster for inclusion on the website **by the end of January each year.**
- A meeting of GCs is held once a year normally in February. This is a good opportunity to meet with others and share any successes or problems. There is a Network of Subject Co-ordinators, available on the National website: www.u3a.org.uk
- TAT has a legal advice line 24hrs a day for any problems, Tel: 01455 251500 and quote scheme 70494. GCs must report all accidents to the Committee and complete an accident form downloaded from our website.