



Guildford U3A

Guidelines for Group Leaders

SUMMARY

Your First Group Meeting

- The caretaker's phone number is usually published on the outside of the buildings if your venue is not open.
- Make a note of the **postcode**, as you will need it if you have any reason to call the emergency services.
- Welcome your group members.
- Record the members' registration numbers, from membership card or confirmatory email.
- After about 3 meetings send this list to the Membership Secretary for entry into Beacon.

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Welcome, and thank you for starting up a new group or taking over an existing group for Guildford U3A. Groups, or Interest Groups, are the life blood of U3As. There are as many ways of approaching the establishment and running of the groups as there are people to run them. You may have been a U3A member for a long time, or you may be very new. This document tries to provide you with some of the information that you may need, on the basis of the experience and practice of many U3As, and is passed on in the hope that it may be useful. It also points you in the right direction for more information that may help you. We wish you every happiness and success with your venture.

Guildford U3A (GU3A)

The U3A was set up to be an educational self-help group for the retired or semi-retired. It draws on the wealth of knowledge and experience of its members, to set up study groups and common interest groups, and organise recreational activities. Originally set up across the country in the 1980s, Guildford is one of the biggest U3As with over 100 groups, covering a wide range of subjects.

There are two main committees:

The **Executive Committee** and the **Programme Planning Committee**. Details of membership of these are on the Guildford U3A website and in the front of your prospectus.

Faculty Heads

You may have some questions about how to proceed as a group leader. We hope this document will answer most of these. For any questions, your first port of call is your Faculty Head and you can find their name and contact details on our website, on the Welcome Page, click link for

Programme Planning Committee. These details are also in the annual Prospectus.

The faculty head plays an essential and invaluable role in advising and helping new groups to be set up. The usual responsibilities will be:

- Co-ordinating support for new groups or groups that may be in difficulties.
- Being the focus for pooling ideas between group leaders on all aspects of group co-ordination.
- Canvassing for new group leaders.
- Liaising with the Committee on all aspects of faculty groups.

Being a Group Leader

Starting up a new group

We always welcome a new group, as long as there is someone volunteering to run it. Anyone wishing to start a new group should talk to the appropriate Faculty Head. New groups will normally start in the autumn term and setting up a new group can be a lengthy process.

- A venue may be required, contact details need to be added to the website and included in the prospectus.
- We start the process in the early spring each year, with group leaders submitting the information for the following year's prospectus.
- Venues need to be booked – all done by just one very busy person!
- By May we have a draft prospectus and then the final document is finished in time to be sent out to all members in July, with their subscription renewal notices.
- It is possible to add new groups at other times, but it is preferable that they appear in the prospectus so information must be made available for this timetable.
- We have two forms that need to be completed:
 - Group leader details
 - Group description, dates, venue, and other details

These forms are available from Faculty Heads and should be returned to them once complete. They will then be forwarded to the Prospectus Secretary, Mary Korndorffer.

Taking over an Existing Group

There are various reasons for changing a group leader mid-year, but it can be done quite easily.

- If you are already a member of the group then you can learn a lot from the outgoing group leader.
- If you are new to the group then it is worth visiting to see how it runs and to talk to both group leader and members.
- The group leader details form, as above, needs to be completed and returned to your Faculty Head, so that details can go on the website and be ready for the next prospectus.

Venues

As a large U3A, with many large groups, hiring venues is an important part of managing the process. However, there is a significant cost to hiring, with rates varying dependent on the venue.

- Please do not hire a hall in your own name.

- If you need a hall for any reason, please contact our Venue Secretary, Jane Robertson (01483 301229, jane.e.robertson@btinternet.com) and your Faculty Head.
- Only halls booked by the U3A for meetings with fully paid up members are covered by our insurance.
- If you have a problem with your venue then please tell your Faculty Head and Jane Robertson, who will endeavour to get any problems resolved.
- It is always worthwhile making friends with the venue caretaker, as this may make it easier to sort out small problems.
- If you have to cancel a meeting, and will not be using the venue that was booked, then please contact Jane Robertson as it may be possible to recoup the cost of hire.

If your group meeting coincides with the Annual Lecture, or the AGM, then it will be cancelled in order to allow your members to attend.

When you go to your venue for the first time:

- Make sure to check the fire and safety regulations.
- Remember to take your mobile phone with you, as it may be necessary to phone the caretaker, or someone else, if there is a problem.
- The caretaker's phone number is usually published on the outside of the buildings.
- Make a note too of the postcode, as you will need it if you have any reason to call the emergency services.
- All our venues' postcodes are on the back outside cover of the prospectus.
- Remember, too, that you can call 112 as well as 999 to contact the emergency services.
- Most of the venues that we use have some parking availability, but this is not always generous.
- If there are numerous activities going on at the venue then parking will often be a challenge.
- In order to avoid problems, please encourage your group members to car share wherever possible.
- There are details about bus routes across Guildford for accessing our venues on the GU3A website (Locations page) or the Surrey County Council website.
- Some of our very small groups meet in private venues, usually someone's house.
- You need to think about access, parking and space indoors when considering if this is a suitable option for your group.

Equipment

- If your group needs to use equipment, such as laptops, projectors, PA systems, CD/DVD players, etc., then we have quite a lot available for group leaders. Alternatively, you can use your own equipment if you have it.
- Most equipment is held by Bernie Cohen (01483 823898, profbernie@gmail.com), Moira MacQuaide Hall (01483 452376, moira.macquaide@gmail.com) or Harry Wickens (01483 531436, harrywickensu3@gmail.com).
- They can advise on booking out pieces of equipment or advise on how to acquire what is needed.
- At present only one venue, St Catherine's, is requiring PAT (portable appliance testing)

tested equipment for U3A meetings.

- For these, all groups must use PAT tested equipment, including extension cables (n.b. laptops that can run off battery for the length of the meeting do not require testing).
- If there are any problems with U3A equipment then please notify one of the above as soon as possible.

Learning Resources

- U3A Headquarters, The Third Age Trust, has a resource centre to help group leaders with materials for their groups, although not all topics are covered. You can contact them at resource.centre@u3a.org.uk or on 020 8315 0199.
- They also have central subject specialists, though again, not for all subjects, and some excellent Advice Sheets, which give tips on managing your group.
- You need to register on the Third Age Trust website (www.u3a.org.uk) and then download the relevant documents.

Finances

- All our members pay an annual subscription and this pays for hiring venues, our contribution to central funds, stationery, printing and postage, and some other costs. Group leaders never need to pay for a venue.
- If you incur any costs for your group, such as photocopying or materials, for example like a craft group, please recoup these from the members of the group.
- £1 per year per group member is usually enough to cover photocopying expenses.
- GU3A charges 20p for coffee/tea and biscuits if your group runs for two hours. You can organise the refreshments yourself, but most groups run a rota, the members taking it in turn. Most groups find that they have a surplus sooner or later; in this case either offer refreshments free of charge for a while or supply more extravagant biscuits – or even cake! Groups that run for less than two hours do not usually stop for refreshments.
- Most venues have cups and saucers or mugs that can be used, washed up and replaced. However, if you wish to use disposable cups instead then contact Roxane Phillips, our “mug monitor” (froxanephillips@yahoo.co.uk, 01483 822181), who can supply these and they are paid for through central funds. Alternatively please encourage people to bring their own.
- Insurance is provided through U3A covering all GU3A members and there should be no need for any further insurance cover for groups.
- All group leaders and group members must be paid up members of Guildford U3A for the relevant year.
- Licensing – for photocopying and copyright (CLA), public recorded music (PPL) & Public Video Screening Licence (PVS) more details from GU3A Secretary, or on TAT website.
- Never open a bank account in your group’s name or apply for grants.
- Never put members’ money into your personal bank account.
- If you need to use your own credit card to pay for group events then contact our Treasurer for advice.
- If you collect cash for activities then keep a record of who has paid what.

Group Members

- Group leaders should produce a register of group members, showing names and meeting dates, so that attendance can be monitored and used in case of fire or other accident.
- This does not need to show contact details, which should be kept separately.
- However, it could include members' postcodes to make it easier for arranging car-sharing.
- The first time you meet them each year, ask to see your members' U3A membership cards, or the email confirming their membership. It is not necessary to ask to see them at every group meeting. You can also ask to see them at Group Enrolment Day if they have brought the cards with them.
- If anyone asks to come to your group meeting for a taster session, or to bring a guest, then that is fine as a one-off, but only the once, please.
- Being a member of a different U3A **does not** entitle anyone to come to Guildford groups, but they can be a member of more than one U3A if they wish.

We have our Group Enrolment Day at the end of August.

- This is an opportunity for Guildford U3A members to talk to group leaders that they might not otherwise meet, and to find out about groups that they might like to join.
- From 2019 this will not be an opportunity to renew subscriptions – existing members must do it online or by post.
- All groups should be represented at Group Enrolment Day, where group leaders can sign up new members where they have spaces.
- It is acceptable for group leaders to ask existing members if they wish to continue, at the last meeting for the academic year.
- Applications to join should be accepted on a first come, first served basis, but many groups have a core of members who remain year after year – but they should all re-apply each year.

After Enrolment Day you might well find that you have a waiting list. If anyone who has signed up has still not come to a meeting after three months, then you can offer their place to someone on the list. If it is only a matter of one or two people, please try to fit them in. We find that it is rare to have a 100% attendance, as members have appointments and commitments to grandchildren, as well as occasional health issues. However, be aware if your venue has a limit on numbers allowed in a room.

If a member stops coming to meetings then it is helpful to find out why. It may be a case of ill-health and, if a lift could be provided, a solution offered.

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)

All group leaders should have contact details for their group members, usually including name, telephone number and email address. There is no need to have home addresses on your records, although postcodes could be included in order to help identifying where car sharing could be offered. It is useful to have an alternative telephone number to call, should a relative or friend need to be contacted in an emergency.

New regulations were introduced in 2018 that affect U3As. Have a look at our Privacy Policy and

Data Protection Policy on our website. If you keep details of your group members on your computer then you should:

- Have a password on the computer;
- Keep the data as encrypted spreadsheets or Word documents;
- Think about what happens to the computer or its software if it needs to be fixed by a professional repair service, which may need to be told the PC password. We should not trust them with members' details;

(If your platform does not support encrypted spreadsheets or Word documents, keep data in a password protected 7-Zip archive (<https://sourceforge.net/projects/sevenzip/>) or on a memory stick with a password protected partition – various freeware apps are available.)

Paper records should be kept in a locked container and shredded when discarded.

Most of our members do use computers and therefore group leaders will usually communicate with their members by email. In order to comply with the GDPR rules you should always send emails as BCC (blind copies) to members. This ensures that their email addresses are not easily accessible if your computer is hacked. In order to do this, send the email to yourself, and BCC all the group members. If you have members who do not use computers then you will have to contact them by phone or post.

GU3A use Beacon, a management database. This stores information about all members, and the groups to which they belong, for legitimate GU3A interest. We ask all group leaders to send to the membership secretary, Sue Watson (membership@guildfordu3a.org.uk) a list of members of their groups – we just need names and membership numbers – as soon as possible after Group Enrolment Day.

We also ask you to sign a new GU3A Data Protection Declaration. This should be completed and sent to The Secretary GU3A, The Black Cottage, Newlands Corner, Guildford GU4 8SE or secretary@guildfordu3a.org.uk, or placed in a dedicated box at Group Enrolment Day. If there is more than one group leader handling information for a group, both should sign a copy of the declaration.

Setting up a new group

U3A is a co-operative and mutually supportive organisation, not a service provider, and most groups will not be taught courses, though there are some. New group leaders should consider the following:

- What would we like to do?
- How can we achieve this?
- What study/learning methods can we use?
- Where and how often shall we meet?

There is a wealth of information about a wide range of subjects available to us.

- We can use books, DVDs, online material, online courses, and PowerPoint presentations.
- A group might invite in external speakers or demonstrators to give talks.
- There might be trips out to places of interest (talk to your Faculty Head if there are likely

- to be costs, such as a coach).
- Use the national subject advisors, where they are available.

There is a useful document called *More Time to Learn*, which can be downloaded from the national U3A website. (<https://u3asites.org.uk/files//london-region/docs/moretimetolearn.pdf>) This has many helpful hints and tips for group leaders. Groups should be friendly and people-centred. Members should be involved as much as possible and their enjoyment of the activity is of prime importance, or they may leave the group. Arrange seating as informally as is practicable and allow opportunities for members to get to know each other.

Inevitably most group members will look to the group leader to be the decision making focus for the group. However, we encourage groups to participate, wherever possible, in research, presenting or running the group. Groups are encouraged to have a deputy group leader – someone who can step into the breach if the group leader is suddenly not available, for example while on holiday or in the case of ill-health. If possible this should be formalised, but often it is a more informal arrangement. These deputies may also be interested in running groups in due course, once they have had some experience of what is entailed. There are various training events, either nationally or locally, which can provide new or prospective group leaders with the knowledge and skills required to run a group.

Some groups have a small committee to spread the load of running a group, and this usually works well.

The group or session leader should keep control of the meeting, in respect of both timing and content. Timing is especially important if members are contributing prepared talks. If time runs out then some members could feel disappointed that they have not been able to give their talk, despite a feeling of relief. It is also important that the session finishes on time, including putting away chairs/tables, as there may be another group coming into the venue straight afterwards.

Problems

- GU3A's website <https://u3asites.org.uk/guildford> has our current policies on Data Protection, Privacy, Safeguarding etc. as well as an Accident Form (under downloads). For further information, please contact the GU3A secretary at: secretary@guildfordu3a.org.uk.
- There is more advice on the national website <https://www.u3a.org.uk> regarding risk assessments and templates.
- If there is an accident, which results in injury or damage to property, then you should notify your Faculty Head, who will notify the Committee. Please complete an Accident Form and send it to the GU3A Secretary.
- If emergency first aid is required then there may be a group member who can help. You can download a free first aid app from the Red Cross. There is also an Advice Sheet on the U3A website (under Document Downloads, Committee Reference File, Supporting your Members). Personal accident insurance cover is **not** provided by U3A.
- If damage is caused to property by a member of the group then take full details, as in future it may be the subject of an insurance claim. Remember that most car parks say that parking is at the owner's risk.

- If you have a difficult member, whose behaviour is regularly disturbing other members of the group, then ask your Faculty Head for help. It may be that the same problem has occurred elsewhere before and advice is available.

Communications

- There is a GU3A newsletter (3 issues per annum), which can be accessed via the website, emailed or members can opt to have a paper copy sent to them. However, all members should bear in mind the cost of postage. Please submit items about your group or activities for the newsletter as this is a good way to inform members of what is going on in Guildford U3A.
- Through the GU3A website there is a system of Alerts. These can be used to let members know about something new, to remind them about a forthcoming event, or to spread the word that a change to the programme is being made (such as cancelling a meeting due to group leader absence). Contact your Faculty Head if you think that an Alert would be appropriate and he/she will contact the Webmaster.
- There is an annual Group Leaders' meeting, usually held in January, where group leaders, Faculty Heads and members of the Committee come together. This is a good opportunity to learn new information, share experiences, as well as to chat to other people who carry out a similar role to you.
- The U3A movement is apolitical and does not endorse any other charitable organisations. Please do not include anything in your communications with other members which might be construed as advocating any political or charitable body.

Accessibility and Inclusion

We all understand that in getting older there can be a wide range of health issues that get in the way of enjoying life. U3A aims to help its members to get the best out of their groups, by being aware of fellow members' problems and endeavouring to organise meetings appropriately. The three main problem areas are hearing, vision and mobility. Group leaders should encourage members to let them know what gets in the way of full participation in a meeting. In the prospectus and on the website there is a list of venues with basic information about hearing loop systems, disabled toilets, etc.

There are different types of hearing problems.

- It might be a little thing like sitting at the front that resolves a difficulty.
- If a member wears a hearing aid, then does the venue have a hearing loop?
- Do you know how to get it switched on? However, only a few of our venues have a loop system.
- The speaker needs to use a microphone and there can be problems with that if he or she isn't used to using one.
- Some halls have microphones and speakers, which could help those members without hearing aids.
- All speakers using a projector and screen, whether group leaders, group members or external visitors, should remember the basic rules of presentation:
 - Speak up, speak clearly, speak slowly
 - Don't cover your mouth (with hands, or notes)

- Face your audience – voices get lost when the speaker faces away from the listener
- Don't turn to look at the screen (a quick glance is okay, then turn back to speak to your audience)
- Use the laptop to show you what's appearing on the screen
- Repeat questions so that everyone hears them.

There are different types of visual problems.

These could include blindness, low vision, colour blindness and dyslexia.

Can you provide handouts in a larger font size?

Can another member read handouts to a blind member?

If using PowerPoint for talks then be aware that coloured backgrounds and fonts can make or break a good presentation. Some colours are very difficult to read.

Use pictures where possible.

Mobility can become a problem as we get older.

- Backs, hips or knees hurt, or surgery results in reduced mobility for a while.
- Sitting still for a long time, on hall chairs, is not comfortable or good for the joints.
- Can you build in a “stand up and stretch” moment every 20 to 30 minutes?
- Many of us take the ability to drive for granted and then, when an accident or ill-health happens, we are lost if unable to drive.
- As group leaders we should be aware if our members are unable to get around, and it may be possible to organise lifts from other members.
- That's where it's useful to know post codes for members.
- If you have a member in a wheelchair then is access appropriate for them to join your meetings?

Other Information

All members, but especially group leaders, should be aware of the GU3A Terms and Conditions. These can be found on the Guildford U3A website, on the membership/joining page.

In particular, group leaders should be aware of the rule that no payments should be made to members for services rendered to any U3A. Thus, if you organise for a U3A member to give a talk to your group, there should not be a speaker fee paid.

We hope these notes have been useful to you. We are sure that your groups will thrive and that members will enjoy their experiences with U3A. Thank you again for volunteering to be a group leader in Guildford U3A.

Best wishes

Julie Beattie

Director of Studies email: juliebeattie2@yahoo.co.uk

and Moira MacQuaide email: moira.macquaide@gmail.com