

4 Developing and Managing a Group

4.1 Initial Steps

The table below summaries the recommended steps for starting a new Group. The Groups Coordinator will provide further information and advice.

The role of the Groups Coordinator is very important when establishing a Group. The role description for the Groups Coordinator is provided as an appendix to this Handbook and should be read by all new Convenors.

The steps below assume that a potential Convenor has been identified. If there is general interest for a Group, but no Convenor at this stage, the Groups Coordinator will temporarily take on this role.

Thing to consider when starting a new Group
Agree the development of a Group with the Groups Coordinator.
Consider what interest there might be in the subject perhaps by speaking to other members at a monthly meeting or asking for feedback in a newsletter.
Start developing the Group's Profile – See previous section for more information on a Group's Profile .
Consider what the aims of the Group are – what are you hoping to learn/achieve/share by offering the Group?
Establish if there is an existing u3a Trust Subject Adviser who can support with ideas for the development of the Group. There is a list of all Subject Advisers on the u3a website. An alternative could be to contact neighbouring u3as to see if they have a similar subject Group and talking to their Group Convenor/Leader. It may also be possible for you to sit in on a Group meeting.
Generate interest by promoting your Group using as many different methods as possible. This could include developing publicity in the form of a flyer, poster, promotion via existing Groups, via the RV u3a newsletter, sharing at a monthly meeting and talking to members in Groups that you attend. The more methods you use, the more successful you are likely to be.
With the help of the Groups Coordinator, create a "sign-up" sheet to go on the Groups table at the monthly meeting.
Consider whether there are any risks that might occur because of the Group's activities. More information is provided in the section on Health and Safety .
Identify what you want to achieve from your first meeting.
Liaise with the Groups Coordinator/Treasurer regarding any initial financing that may be required and how this needs to be managed. More information is provided in the section on Financial Matters .
Organise an initial meeting and invite those who have expressed an interest to attend.

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4.2 The Initial Group Meeting

Recommended steps to take at the initial meeting are provided in the table below. Again, further assistance will be provided by the Groups Coordinator.

Initial Steps
Introduce yourself and the purpose of the Group as you see it.
Ask about the skills and experience within the Group.
Agree the tasks that need doing to run the Group and who is willing to support these – for example, who is willing to help with developing the programme or keep the register.
Agree, if relevant, the level that the Group will be aimed at – beginners, improvers, advanced.
Agree how the Group will work – discussion, instruction, presentation etc..
Agree when and where the Group will run.
Identify any accessibility needs that Group members may have. Refer to the Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion information on the national u3a website for advice and guidance.
Agree the costs for running the Group and what members will pay. All Groups must be self-financing, but the Committee may agree a small budget to help the Group become established.
Discuss how Group members will communicate with each other bearing in mind data protection guidance (e.g. always using the BCC function on emails to avoid sharing addresses between all members) and always seek permission and agreement.
Agree some ground rules e.g. Be punctual - Listen to each other - Allow others to speak - Let someone know if you are unable to come - Have patience with and encourage those who are slower to learn
Update the Groups Profile

After the first meeting it is a good idea to feedback what was agreed to the Groups Coordinator to finalise arrangements.

4.3 After the Initial Group Meeting

Recommended steps to take after the initial meeting are provided in the table below. Again, further assistance will be provided by the Groups Coordinator.

Next Steps
Communicate with all the potential group members, explaining what was agreed at the initial meeting.
Confirm the Profile of the Group and ask them to confirm that they wish to be a member of the Group.
Send out a formal invitation to the first meeting
Communicate with the Website Manager and Newsletter Editor, providing details of the new Group. See the section on Communication and Interaction for more details.

4.4 Lack of Members

If a Group cannot attract or maintain sufficient members, the Convenor should discuss this with the Groups Coordinator who will try to raise the membership via publicity or making it a Shared Group. (See following sections.)

A Convenor should not close a Group without having first discussed this with the Groups Coordinator.

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4.5 Closing a Group

If, after having worked with the Groups Coordinator, it is agreed to close the Group, the Convenor (with support from the Groups Coordinator if required), should communicate with all the Groups members by the normal methods and explain the position.

The communication should explain that if the members have any concerns, questions, or suggestions for maintaining the Group, they should contact the Groups Coordinator.

Further details are provided in the section **Standing Down as a Convenor**.

Other Considerations

4.6 Booking A Venue

All venues must be booked via the Hall and Venue Booking Coordinator. They can be contacted via the link on the Contacts Page of the RV u3a website.

4.7 Breach of Copyright

Copyright Infringement is where someone uses the whole or a substantial part of a person's work without their permission and none of the exceptions to copyright apply. The Government website provides expert guidance on copyright legislation: [Enforcing your copyright - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/enforcing-your-copyright)

Generally, there is no infringement of copyright if members are copying material including music, maps, newspapers, magazines for **private study and research**. But this is a complex area.

If a Group is unsure if their activities could potentially generate a breach of copyright, then they should look to the u3a trust guidance on copyright. This can be found on the RV u3a website at:

<https://u3asites.org.uk/rodingvalley/page/97675> or [Roding Valley u3a: Governance \(u3asites.org.uk\)](http://u3asites.org.uk/rodingvalley/page/97675)

4.8 Photographs of Groups

The Website Manager or a member of the Committee may occasionally ask for photographs of a Group for publicity purposes. The Convenor must ensure all members of the Group have agreed to having their photographs used for publicity.

Before supplying a photograph for publicity, the Convenor should send an email to all the people in the photo, (with a copy of the photo attached) informing them of how it will be used and ask for them to reply if they are not happy with their image being shared as described.

4.9 Naming Members in Newsletters

Convenors are encouraged to write articles about their Group in the monthly newsletter. They should only name members of their Group in full, if they had had their permission in advance.