

## ROLE AND OPERATING PROCEDURES FOR THE GROUPS COORDINATOR

### 1 Role Summary

The role of the Groups Coordinator (Coordinator) is to promote and facilitate the startup of new interest groups and to support the Interest Group Convenors (Convenors) of existing groups.

The responsibilities of the Coordinator in relation to Convenors are noted below and reflected in the Group Convenors Handbook (Handbook).

### 2 Main Responsibilities

Some of the responsibilities listed here may be shared with other u3a members, for example by having a deputy/assistant. Where the Coordinator role is a member of the u3a Committee (trustee) there are also additional statutory requirements and responsibilities of trustees.

#### 2.1 Identification Of Topics for New Groups

The Coordinator is normally pivotal in the identification of topics for new groups. Their responsibilities in this respect are to liaise with members to understand what new topics people are interested in. This may be via:

- ❖ The Monthly Meeting
- ❖ Other Interest Groups
- ❖ Emails
- ❖ The Committee
- ❖ New Members Meetings
- ❖ Group Convenors Meetings
- ❖ Ideas from other u3as and the Third Age Trust

#### 2.2 Setting Up New Groups – Initial Steps<sup>1</sup>

Once a topic has been identified, the Coordinator should:

- publicise potential new groups via the RV u3a website, newsletter, and monthly meetings. This should include as much information as available at the time.
- organise a “table” at the monthly meeting where members can:
  - ❖ Sign up to new groups
  - ❖ Make suggestions about new groups
- be available by email and phone for people to express an interest / sign up for a group.

---

<sup>1</sup> More details on Initial Steps can be found in the Handbook

- liaise with members who have expressed an interest / signed up for new groups to confirm how the group profile<sup>2</sup> is developing, i.e.
  - ❖ Group Name
  - ❖ Aim and objectives
  - ❖ Convenor/s Names/s Contact Details
  - ❖ Venue
  - ❖ Day & Time
  - ❖ Maximum Numbers in The Group
  - ❖ Accessibility Restrictions

## 2.3 Setting Up New Groups – Next Steps<sup>3</sup>

The Coordinator should encourage one of the members to become the Convenor but if that is impossible, to take on the organisation of the group for the first few months.

*The following responsibilities can be undertaken by a Convenor, if one has been identified at this stage:*

When 4-5 members have signed up, the Coordinator should:

- arrange a time when most will be able to meet to discuss further the group's profile.
- if appropriate, encourage members to offer their home as a venue. The member who hosts the group does not need to be the Convenor.
- if this isn't possible, find out if it's possible to meet in the Theydon Bois village hall through the Halls and Booking Secretary – at least 10 members in a group are required before TBVH can be considered.
- ensure all the costs of running a new group have been considered (initial and ongoing) and the financial arrangements have been agreed with the Treasurer.
- ensure updates relating to the new group are provided to the Website Manager, Beacon Administrator, Prospectus Coordinator, and the Newsletter editors.

## 2.4 Recruiting Convenors

The Coordinator is responsible for recruiting, training, and providing ongoing support for new Convenors. This applies to Convenors of new or existing groups.

## 2.5 Supporting Convenors

The Handbook explains how the Coordinator will provide support. In summary they should:

- provide a copy of the Handbook to all Convenors.
- inform the Convenors about the resources available nationally including Third Age Matters Magazine, national newsletter, Sources, the u3a website, and Subject Advisors.
- act as the first point of contact and provide support for any queries, problems or issues that might arise in the running of a group, referring more serious matters to the Committee.

---

<sup>2</sup> More detail on Group Profiles can be found in the Handbook.

<sup>3</sup> Additional information on establishing a group can be found in the Handbook

- liaise with the Committee and the convenor, when a group wishes financial support or when it is not self-funding.
- hold periodic Group Convenor Meetings (with the support of the Committee) so knowledge, challenges and new ideas can be shared and discussed.
- encourage shadowing and manage the handover for Convenors who have decided to move on.
- encourage the Convenors to follow the Health and Safety Guideline, provided in the Handbook.

## 2.6 Supporting Failing Groups

If a Coordinator is made aware that a group may close or needs more members to operate effectively, they should:

- ensure that it is advertised so new members may join, using the same approach as for new groups.
- discuss possible ways forward with the Convenor e.g.: merging with another RVu3a group or becoming a shared interest group. (see below)
- maintain communication with all group members on the status of the group.

were applicable

- manage the orderly closure of a group that can no longer continue.

## 2.7 Managing Shared Groups

Establishing a Shared Group needs prior approval of the Committee.

Subject to the Committee's approval, the Coordinator should liaise with Group Coordinators of other u3as, to see if they are interested in having a shared group relationship with a RV u3a group. If this is agreed, manage the relationship and appropriate advertising.<sup>4</sup>

The Coordinator should also be available to other u3a Coordinators to discuss RV u3a being a shared member of their groups, presenting this to the Committee for approval and managing the relationship.

## 2.8 Communication

Communication is an important part of the Coordinator's role.

The Coordinator (or the Convenor, as agreed between the parties) should provide the Newsletter Editor, Beacon Manager, Prospectus Coordinator and Website Manager with details of new or changed Convenors, changes in the profile of a group, and closed groups so they may publicise this via the appropriate medium.

The Coordinator should also:

- have a "table" at the monthly meeting where members can:
  - ❖ sign up to existing groups
  - ❖ raise issues about groups (e.g. venue, timing, size etc...)

---

<sup>4</sup> Rules for Shared Groups are In the Handbook

- liaise with Convenors and provide the Committee with updates on the progress/development of interest groups and any changes in its profile.
- communicate any relevant information to Convenors from the Committee, local networks, the region and or the u3a Office.
- encourage and assist Convenors to share the activities of their groups via their u3a website, in local press and national communications.

## 2.9 Administration

As with all roles, there is an element of administration and the Coordinator should:

- maintain accurate details of the u3a's interest groups on Beacon and other media as appropriate.
- monitor information about group numbers and where there are waiting lists encouraging members to start new groups, using the approach noted above
- retain all paperwork and electronic data relating to groups for three years after its creation and then destroy in a secure manner.
- manage requests from convenors for paid tutors<sup>5</sup>

All activities relating to members data must be compliant with the RV u3a policies on Data protection and Privacy.

## 2.10 Management Of Group Data on Beacon

The Coordinator must ensure that either:

- convenors maintain their group's data on Beacon
- periodically, collect a list of a group's members from the Convenor and update Beacon

## 2.11 Oversight of Membership

On an annual basis, the Coordinator must ensure all RV u3a group members have renewed their RV u3a subscription. Where this has not occurred, they must liaise with the Convenor and explain that they either renew their subscription or leave the Group. A similar check must be made with the Coordinators of other u3a, where a member of a shared group is not a RV u3a member.

### Document History

Prepared / Updated	Date of Update	Signature	Circulated

---

<sup>5</sup> The rules for paying tutors are detailed in the Handbook