



# Guidelines For Convenors

SOUTH BUCKS



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE

# South Bucks

## Guidelines For Convenors

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## 1. Introduction

First of all, thank you for leading a Group. The Groups are the life blood of our U3A. Do not take all the responsibility upon yourself. Arrange for a member to be your Deputy for when you have to miss a meeting. Request all of your members to input ideas for the programme and lead the occasional meeting.

Not all the information will be applicable to your Group, particularly if your activities take place outdoors. However, it is essential that the financial, recording and booking information guidelines are followed, to ensure that your activities are covered by the U3A Insurance.

## 2. Groups Liaison Role

Our U3A appoints a committee member for Groups' Liaison who is responsible for giving guidance and advice to individual Groups and is also your point of contact with the main Committee and your voice at Committee meetings.

The Committee meets on the second Tuesday of each month so if you have an issue to be raised please make contact in good time. Contact details may be found on our website and in our quarterly newsletters. .

## 3. Your Group



Your Group is autonomous but if problems arise Groups Liaison and the Committee can provide support and advice.

Depending on the size of your Group, you may meet in a member's home or in a hired hall. If you hire a hall and meet more than once a month, the additional hiring charges must be self-financing unless agreed to by the Committee.

## 4. The Role of the Convenor



You may be an expert in your activity, but you do not have to be. Your job is to organise the meetings. Involve your members in deciding how the Group functions by encouraging them to contribute ideas for topics for meetings and to lead the occasional meeting. Sometimes it is beneficial to have two convenors sharing the work involved and this is helpful when you are unable to attend a meeting and also eases the transition when you decide to stand down. Alternatively, one or more Convenors could take on the role for a set period (yearly or a period of 3 years for example).

## 4. The Role of the Convenor (cont)

Another approach is to invite members to form a small committee to help you produce a programme of topics for several months and to find volunteers from the Group to research and do the presentations. This should be timetabled to coincide with the publication of the quarterly newsletters so that you can publish your programme.

**The main responsibilities of a Convenor are summarised here and some of these are expanded later in these Guidelines:**

Agree a suitable place, day and time to meet and the period of hire for the hall if it is a public venue. A list of halls used is available on the SBU3A website but you are not restricted to places on this list.

Make a list of group members contact details in line with the Data Privacy and Protection Policies outlined on the SBU3A website. Keep it updated as members join or leave.

Keep a register to record attendance at each meeting. See Appendix 1 for a sample register.

Planning of group visits and excursions. See Appendix 4 for a sample booking form.

Ensure copies of the Accident Report Form are available at all meetings and outings; please see Section 9 for guidance.

Non-member guest attendance at study group meetings. See Appendix 5 with reference to the waiver for members of other U3As, the attendance of a responsible carer and U3A non member restrictions.

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Send an email to your members about a week before the meeting to remind them of the details. Some Convenors ask for a reply so that they know how many will be at the meeting. If there is a handout for the meeting, you can attach it to the email so that members can print it out and bring it with them to the meeting. Walking Groups should send out details of the next walk and definitely need to know who wants to walk as places may be limited.

If you engage a speaker, need materials or organise outings your members must cover the costs. A kitty can be collected at each meeting and the amount will depend on the size and needs of the Group. These funds also need to cover refreshments on the day. A tea rota is a good way of involving your members; ask someone else to organise this for you. Some venues may provide crockery.

## 4. The Role of the Convenor (cont)

Manage the finances of your Group (see 'Finance' later).

As a Convenor, you will receive communications on events, trips and study days that are being offered by The Third Age Trust and various U3A Networks; please send this information to your members.

A Convenor or deputy should try to attend the U3A Monthly Meetings at The Beacon Centre as these enable you to keep in touch with other Convenors and the Committee. It also provides you with the opportunity to promote your Group to new and existing members and to post notices on the noticeboards. Your attendance is much appreciated by the Committee.

Attend the Group Convenors' meetings, or ask someone to attend on your behalf, to discuss any problems; your opinion counts and so do the views of your members. This is the time for networking and communicating with others; you may pick up some good ideas and others may learn from you.

Quarterly, you are sent a request for an update to your entry in the Newsletter. This is your chance to sell your Group to the SBU3A members. You can say something about what you have done since the last newsletter, what your plans are for the next three months and, if you have one, a programme of topics for the next three months with dates of the meetings. The Newsletter Coordinator will send you an email with clear instructions on submitting your copy.

Our U3A arranges occasional 'meet and greet' events for new members. Convenors are invited to these events as it a great opportunity to promote your group.



SBU3A has its own website and it is your responsibility to inform the Committee of the information that you want on the website. A convenient time is when you write an update for the newsletter. Out-of-date information in your entry on the website does not encourage members to join your Group.

Always inform Groups Liaison and the Newsletter Coordinator of any changes to meeting times and leadership.

If numbers are limited, and your Group becomes full, you should compile a waiting list with a view to beginning a second Group. When there are sufficient numbers to start a new Group, please inform Groups Liaison.

If you take photographs at any of your activities, we would welcome copies for publishing in the newsletter.

Remember to ask your members permission before photographing.



## 5. Finance

The Committee controls the finances for SBU3A and its groups.

How you finance your Group will depend on the numbers involved and where you meet. Ordinary expenses incurred in running the Group, e.g. postage, stationery, etc can be claimed, where possible please provide a receipt. Additionally, up to £10 per annum can be claimed for general out of pocket expenses without the need for a receipt. The Treasurer will advise when claims should be submitted usually in March of each year.

Any special equipment required by a Group may also be paid for by SBU3A subject to Committee approval, particularly if there are other Groups with a need to share it. Proposals should be sent to the Treasurer comprising brief statement of requirements, costs including quotes and an indication if other Groups might find the equipment useful.

If a convenor considers that a particular activity deserves to be treated as an exception and should receive financial support, reasons and estimated costs should be submitted to the Treasurer for approval by the Committee.

If you hire a venue for your meetings, pass the invoice to the Treasurer for payments made per meeting, or per term. It may be more convenient to arrange for the invoice to be sent straight to the Treasurer.

If you have a continual hiring agreement with a venue, do not forget to cancel the booking when not required, e.g. holidays, outings etc. Please remember to advise the Treasurer and Groups Liaison at the same time.

Keep clear records showing how much money you collect at each meeting, money paid to the Treasurer from time to time and the balance held by you. By doing this you will be able to monitor your Group and ensure that it is solvent.

Money for refreshments collected from members at meetings may be retained up to a maximum of £50 without the need to maintain records of the account. If this amount is exceeded, a proper financial record must be kept, e.g. where a Group has agreed other items of expenditure. An annual statement at the end of March must be sent to the Treasurer for incorporation in SBU3A accounts, substantial surpluses in excess of a Group's needs should be passed to the Treasurer for incorporation in the SBU3A accounts.

Do not hold large amounts of cash in your home. The cash should be held for a short time only and the amount should not exceed £50.

All payments should be made by cheque, payable to South Bucks U3A.

**All finance related information should be emailed to : [sbu3a.accounts@hotmail.com](mailto:sbu3a.accounts@hotmail.com)**

## 6. Insurance/Legal Requirements

The U3A carries insurance covering:

Public and Products Liability

Money Cover

All Risks Equipment Insurance

Home Contents Cover

Charity Indemnity Insurance

Tour Operators' Liability



More information on this cover can be provided by emailing the SBU3A Secretary:

**[secretary@sbu3a.org.uk](mailto:secretary@sbu3a.org.uk)**

## 7. Risk Assessment

The Venue Risk Assessment Checklist is included, see Appendix 2.

Before your first meeting at any venue, you should do a Risk Assessment using this form.

When hiring a hall, be aware of where the First Aid kit is kept and where the Emergency Exits are.

You need to ensure that your Group members are periodically made aware of these facts.



## 8. Licences

### Photocopying

Under UK Copyright Law you are only allowed to copy an insubstantial amount for personal use, for the purposes of private study or non-commercial research, but the law does not define insubstantial. There is no magic figure or percentage applied, as each case would be viewed on the basis of the perceived importance of the extract rather than simply the quantity.

Licences for copying maps and newspapers can be purchased from the following organisations if you feel you need them:

Maps - Ordnance Survey - 08456 050505 [www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)

Newspaper Licensing Agency - 01892 525273 [www.nla.co.uk](http://www.nla.co.uk)



There is no blanket licence available for multiple copying of sheet music; this is always illegal unless it is no longer in copyright. If you would like help and advice on obtaining copyright clearance you can look at Frequently Asked Questions on The Music Publishers' Association website [www.mpaonline.org.uk](http://www.mpaonline.org.uk) or contact them on 0207 580 0126. There is also some free sheet music available on the internet at [www.cpdI.org.uk](http://www.cpdI.org.uk) and this will give you links to other useful sites.

### Digital Images

There is a common misconception that anything on the internet is in the public domain and therefore free to use. A work only falls into the public domain once copyright expires. It may be publicly accessible but it is not necessarily freely available.

### Recorded Music

The PPL licence supplied by The Third Age Trust gives U3As permission to play recorded music in public.



## 8. Licences (cont)

### DVDS/VIDEOS

The Third Age Trust has no blanket licence arrangement with film copyright holders or organisations. Interest Groups are usually covered by an exemption in the Copyright Law which allows the use of videos or DVDs for educational purposes. You can find details in Fact Sheet P-01: UK Copyright Law dated 27th November 2009, which you can download from the website of the UK Copyright Service [www.copyrightservice.co.uk](http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk). It lists acts that are allowed (under the Fair Dealing Exemption) i.e. performance, copies or lending for educational purposes. This exemption does not allow the viewing of films for entertainment. Two commercial companies offer licences for showings for entertainment:

MPLC - 01323 649647 [www.themplc.co.uk](http://www.themplc.co.uk)

PVSL - 0207 9845957 [www.filmbank.co.uk](http://www.filmbank.co.uk)

Each company licenses films from different Hollywood studios and independents so some U3As purchase both. Most U3As will probably not need a commercial licence but some decide to take it as it will allow them to show films if they want to and some have regular showings of recent cinema releases.

### Performance - PRS Licence

this covers the use of the actual lyrics and composed music in any public performance of music. It is the sole responsibility of the proprietor/manager of the premises you are using to have a licence arranged.

Further information can be obtained from the UK Copyright Service – [www.copyrightservice.co.uk](http://www.copyrightservice.co.uk)



## **9. Accident Reporting**

If a member has an accident or becomes ill at a Group activity, The Third Age Trust advises that the Emergency Services should always be called. Make sure that you know the postcode of your venue when you ring the Emergency Services. Only treat any minor injuries. A small compact First Aid kit is available for groups, if you require a kit please contact a member of the committee.

Fill in an Accident Report Form, a copy of which can be found in Appendix 3 and return it to the Secretary and Groups Liaison.

***An Accident Report Form MUST BE COMPLETED at all times.***

## **10. Technical Equipment**

SB U3A owns a range of equipment which is available for use by the various Groups. This equipment is held by SBU3A member groups and the remainder is in store. A full list is available from the Committee.

If you need to borrow equipment, please give plenty of notice and please check before your meeting that your material is compatible with SBU3A equipment.

SB U3A has all their equipment tested regularly. This is known as PAT testing (portable appliance testing) and the certificate is held by the SBU3A Secretary.

Convenors should be aware that for some venues a condition of hire is that the equipment used is PAT tested.

## **11. Speakers For Your Group**

If you hire a speaker for a meeting, the cost must be met by the Group. You should offer to pay expenses for speakers, again covered by the Group.

Regular paid tutors are contrary to the aims of the U3A Trust, as are speakers who are promoting commercial activities.

No money should ever be paid to a U3A member for giving a talk, except to cover legitimate expenditure. Cheques for speakers must be made payable to the individual or another charity.

## **12. U3A Resource Centre**

The Third Age Trust has a large library of educational material. The service now forms part of the Education and Resources department within the Trust. DVDs will continue to be offered but the resource service is being expanded to include items such as educational downloads, TED talks and MOOCS as well as U3A generated material, courses, research and shared learning programmes. This material can be borrowed for a limited length of time. To make use of the Resource Centre you will need to register with their website at: [www.u3a.org.uk](http://www.u3a.org.uk)

From time to time The Third Age Trust issues updated information about its Resource Library. This information will be passed on to you via Groups' Liaison.

## **13. Visits**

To avoid a clash of events, always check with Groups Liaison that the date you have chosen has not already been booked by another Group. This will also enable members to have the opportunity to attend all events.

When you have made a definite booking, tell the Treasurer and Groups Liaison, who will reserve the date for you and make arrangements for collection of monies, payment of invoices. If you require parking at The Beacon Centre for your members, please contact the Secretary. The Treasurer has information on coach companies used by Groups.

Payments for trips must be by cheque, made payable to the South Bucks U3A, with the name and date of the trip on the back. Organisers should not pay for transport or venues using their own personal credit or debit cards, or by personal cheque, but should request payment via the Treasurer. This ensures that the outing is covered by the relevant insurances. (see Item 6 - Insurance/Legal Requirements).

### **Free Places**

Often, tour operators offer a free trip for, say, every 20 members booked. If so, this should be applied as a discount to all members of the party.

### **Cancellations**

Usually, if a potential attendee cancels with sufficient notice, the organiser can recover some or all of the cost from the venue but not the share of the transport. In this situation, only the venue charge should be refunded to the person cancelling. If the venue charge cannot be recovered, the person cancelling remains liable for the full charge. In case of any dispute the Groups convenor is authorized to make the final decision .

## Group Contact Details and Attendance Record

Group Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

## Appendix 2

Venue Risk Assessment Checklist					
U3A Name					
Location/Postcode					
Date					
SBU3A Interest Group					
Description of Activity					
HAZARD		Yes	No	N/A	Comments
1	Is the access suitable for the Group attending the activity?				
2	Is wheelchair access adequate?				
3	Is the area free from obstructions and trip hazards?				
4	Is adequate means of escape in an emergency provided?				
5	Are there appropriate direction signs to aid escape?				
6	Is there a Fire Alarm?				
7	Is there emergency lighting?				
8	Is there a designated assembly point? Where is it?				
9	Is there an Emergency Procedure for the building? Do you have a copy?				
10	Is seating always laid out?				
11	Is food being provided/prepared?				
	Is the kitchen adequate/hygienic?				
	Are food safe cleaning materials available?				
	Visual safety check on Kettles, etc.				
12	Are toilet facilities adequate/accessible?				
13	Is equipment being brought to the location?				
	Has it been safety checked?				
14	Is there a First Aid Box or is SBU3A to provide?				
15	Other (define)				
16	Other (define)				
Additional Information					
Signed:		Position:		Date:	

**SBU3A Accident Report Form**

Name of Injured party/address/telephone number:	
Name/address/telephone number of others involved:	
Date/Time of Accident:	Location:
Nature of Accident/Circumstances:	
Injury Details/Property Damage:	
Name/address/telephone number of person causing injury/damage:	
Name/address/telephone number of witness(es):	
Action Taken:	
Was any specialised assistance required at the scene? If so, give details:	
Was medical advice sought afterwards? If so, give details:	
Group Leader Name and Contact Details:	
Signed by Injured Party:	Date:
Signed by Group Leader:	Date:

### Group Excursion / Visit - Booking Form

[illegible]



## Non-Member Guest Attendance at Study Group Meetings.

Our constitution states that attendees must be members of South Bucks U3A.

Guests are allowed three visits. If they wish to attend on a regular basis after that, we ask that they become a member of South Bucks U3A. (Special permission from the Committee is required where the number of attendances may be exceeded.)

These rules apply to all guests whether they are members of other U3As or not members of any U3A.

## Waiver for members of other U3As.

However, in order to foster good relations with other local U3As and to bring outside ideas and contributions to our study groups, members of other U3As may join a single SBU3A study group on a regular basis without becoming a member of SBU3A, subject to there being sufficient space in that study group. If that person wishes to join more than one study group, they must become full members of SBU3A.

Exceptions: If the study group normally convenes in a member's home but due to increased guest attendance it is forced to move to an outside venue, the waiver then becomes null and void as, in fairness, we cannot incur additional venue costs to accommodate non-paying visitors.

N.B. All waiver requests must be presented to the committee and will be considered on an individual basis. The committee reserves the right to rescind this waiver for one or all groups at any time.

## U3A Non-member - Restrictions

It is acceptable if a non-member wishes to try a couple of SBU3A activities prior to deciding whether to join, this should be monitored by the group leaders to ensure any attendance does not continue indefinitely.

It is permissible for a non-member e.g. spouse or friend of a member to attend an interest group or general meeting on an occasional basis in a hall, it is not, however, acceptable for the same non-member to regularly attend U3A events. It is also not possible for non-members to go on organised outings and visits by coach for the reasons of our insurance cover and the Data Protection legislation.

*[The insurance cover provided for you is for U3A members and therefore should a non-member be allowed to attend this category of activity and be involved in an incident, the U3A might find itself without liability cover. Additionally, members have to agree and sign our Data Protection and Privacy policy when joining the U3A.]*

A member may bring a responsible carer, paid or unpaid, when attending U3A activities and events. This is permissible under our insurance cover providing the carer does not attend any U3A activities as an individual. In fact, should a member not be able to participate independently in U3A activities a carer would be essential. The advice of the carer should be taken in all circumstances.

[Please note that in the case of a 'professional carer' the cover we provide does not apply]

Other non-member issues or requests not covered above must be submitted to the SBU3A Committee for discussion and approval.

SOUTH BUCKS



THE UNIVERSITY OF THE THIRD AGE