



Captains and Chair Training Guide

Congratulations on being elected - this is a role of great responsibility and trust! As Captain & Chairs you will lead your committee to deliver safe, inclusive, affordable, financially sustainable & well-organised events and activities.

This guidance outlines the duties and responsibilities of the Captain or Chair and offers some useful advice on how to get the best from your committee!

Your role & responsibilities

As Captain /Chair you are the figurehead and leader of your student group and are responsible for managing your committee so that you can deliver for your members!

The role of the Captain /Chair includes:

- Ensuring that your student group operates in accordance with its constitution, the Students' Union's bye laws and policies & procedures.
- Representing your student group in relations with the Students' Union, the University and external stakeholders, organisations & businesses.
- Organising fair and transparent elections for the following year's committee in accordance with the SU's bye law and election guidance.
- Taking the lead on health and safety in all aspects of your group's activities. Ensuring adherence to our Health & Safety procedures and maintaining a strong safety culture within your student group is mandatory.
- Calling & chairing regular, democratic committee meetings so that all relevant matters are discussed and effective decisions taken, communicated and enacted.
- Attending role-related SU training sessions and ensuring that all core committee members attend the mandatory training for their roles.
- Managing your committee, ensuring that members undertake their role in an efficient, effective and responsible manner.
- Being the point of contact between the SU, your student group and your members. As the key contact point for your group it's your responsibility to

ensure that any communications from the Opportunities Team, Officer team or University are responded to and addressed promptly.

- Ensuring a thorough committee handover is given to the succeeding committee before the end of the academic year.
- Managing your committee to deliver safe, affordable, accessible and inclusive events & activities for your members.

Skills for effective leadership

Effective leadership is crucial to having a successful year! Being a student leader will offer you a wealth of experience and the opportunity to develop and hone skills that are both essential to strong leadership and that will enhance your own employability.

These include:

- Listening to the views of your members and committees to set the direction of your student group.
- Communicating effectively with your members, the SU, University and wider community - both verbally and in writing.
- Managing your time effectively to ensure that you have the time and energy to achieve your goals and deliver on your objectives.
- Planning for the year ahead; creating a timeline for events and managing projects.
- Delegating responsibility to those with role responsibility and/or to those who are best suited to different tasks.
- Supporting your committee members - encouraging them to make the most of their roles.
- Creating an environment where everyone in your student group feels valued, can raise concerns, and suggest alternative ideas.
- Motivating your committee members so they remain focused and dedicated throughout the committee year.
- Problem-solving when challenges arise whilst encouraging a culture of creativity and innovation within the committee.
- Negotiating with your committee and members showing tact and diplomacy to resolve conflicts within the committee or student group.
- Regularly reviewing the effectiveness of your leadership and being mindful of what's working and where improvements can be made.

Your health & safety responsibilities

Everyone running a student group has a 'duty of care' in law to ensure the safety of its members and any other people who may be affected by its activities and events. As Captain Chair you must ensure that a strong safety culture runs through everything you do!

Your Student Group is insured (with third party Public Liability Insurance) for your 'approved' activities - i.e. those outlined in your Constitution. If you wish to run activities that have not been approved, you will need to contact the Opportunities Team at least 4 weeks before you hope to run your event, complete a risk assessment and, for trips and events, submit the mandatory health & safety paperwork.

Calling and chairing meetings

Chairing committee meetings is one of the main responsibilities as Captain or Chair, though your Secretary will create the agendas for your meetings and write and send out the minutes afterwards.

Meetings are the perfect opportunity to keep motivation levels high (by reporting on achievements), discuss upcoming events and have discussions on previous events that you've run. It is important to reflect on what went well and where you could improve and to give everyone the opportunity to have their say in an open and safe atmosphere. Here are some tips for successful meetings:

- Use a timed agenda to keep your discussions relevant, to keep the meeting on track and to ensure that necessary decisions are made.
- Ensure all points on the agenda are covered, and that if they are not, arrange a time to reconvene - and note this in the minutes.
- Ensure the committee has the opportunity to voice their opinions, whilst avoiding irrelevant small talk.
- Ensure that no one dominates. The Chair of the meeting should enforce democracy and ensure that quieter committee members have a say.
- Ensure all identified tasks are clearly delegated to individuals (or a small team) - and then oversee those undertaking the activities. You must manage the committee members in a way that ensures they all pull their weight, and have a chance to get involved and demonstrate their skills.
- Make sure that everyone notes down what they are supposed to do and by what date. This keeps them focussed on their tasks and allows you to know things have been noted down by both the Secretary in the minutes and also by the individuals involved.
- Keep in regular contact with your team to make sure tasks are being completed - remember; the buck stops with you. However, by encouraging a vibrant committee spirit and making sure all members are properly trained your committee can take some of the pressure off your shoulders!
- Remember - not all committee members will read the minutes (even though they should!) therefore the Secretary should insert committee member tasks and the associated deadlines in the body of the email, ensuring everyone will have easy access to the most important information.

- Committee members must be aware that if they can't complete a delegated task, due to other commitments, they must inform you, so that it can be re-delegated.
- The Captain /Chair should advise and support all members with their tasks. The opportunities k team are valuable resources; they are there to help you budget for events, pass on financial statements and even provide ideas for future events and activities.
- Post-meeting socials are usually well received. They will help your committee to bond and work better as a team. Communicate with your social secretary to arrange such events and ensure they are as inclusive as possible.