

Chichester U3A: Guidelines for Group Leaders

1. Welcome to being a group leader

We sincerely hope you will enjoy your experience of being a group leader with U3A. We think you will find it very rewarding and enjoyable. The Chichester branch is run by a **General Committee**, which is elected at the AGM in May each year. As a Group Leader, your main contact on the Committee will be the Groups Co-ordinator. You may also have contact from time to time with other members of the committee, as explained in the following notes. You will find all contact details in our local Newsletter or you can use the email enquiries facility on our website www.chichesteru3a.org.uk

2. How to get started

If you haven't already decided, then you will need to plan:

- what subject or topics your group is going to cover; you can plan this on your own or discuss and plan it with the group at your first meeting
- decide when, how often, where, and how you are going to meet, and the maximum numbers you can accommodate.

3. How the Groups Co-ordinator can help you

The **Groups Co-ordinator** will give you a form to fill in with your contact details and the name and arrangements for your group meetings. They can help you think through all aspects of your plan, if you wish. They will also publicise your group for you, in the annual printed Programme, the regular Newsletter, on our website and at the monthly meetings if necessary. They can advise you, if you ask them, about any aspect of running your group, both as you start up and at any stage as your group progresses.

The Co-ordinator also organises occasional meetings for all the Group Leaders, together with committee members, in order to share experiences and ideas about running the groups. These are very useful, lively and social occasions, when we chat over tea or coffee after the more organised discussion. We hope you will find it enjoyable, helpful and fulfilling to be part of a 'team' providing a very wide range of interest groups for the whole membership. You will also be invited to come to a party which the Committee holds each year, usually in the summertime, as a way of celebrating and thanking all those who contribute to running our U3A.

4. Running your group

There are a few practical things to do which a) will help you to run your group smoothly and b) will help us to ensure our U3A as a whole is run in an efficient and proper manner:

- keep a list of those in your group, with their membership number; it is also useful to keep a note of anyone interested in joining but to whom you cannot yet offer a place
- keep a simple record of what your group does - this is very helpful to us in many ways, such as reporting to the wider membership what groups do, guiding new group leaders etc
- groups usually have a tea/coffee break and it is customary to contribute to the costs of the host (currently 50p per session)
- keep a note of your expenses (e.g. photocopying, printing from a PC, hire of DVD/video) and you may ask your membership for their share of this. The committee does not wish or expect any group leader to be out of pocket.

5. Things you need to know

We do not want to burden you with too much information, so we provide a summary of useful information below, to help you in running your group. If you need further details, please contact the appropriate committee member indicated.

a) Planning our Annual Programme and enrolling people into groups

Our programme runs from September each year and we start planning around March/April. Anyone who would like to run a group is asked to complete a form, which is then sent to the Groups Co-ordinator. This information is put into a printed Programme of Interest Group Meetings, with an additional one page Timetable showing the weekly timings of all the groups. This Programme is sent to all members in late July, inviting them to renew their U3A membership and to select and book the groups they wish to join. This is our current enrolment process and therefore, as a group leader, you can expect to be contacted by prospective group members from late July onwards.

If you decide to start up a new group at any other time during the year, you will still be asked to complete the form and the Groups Co-ordinator will publicise your group to the membership by other means.

b) Booking a Hall for your group meetings

If a group is or becomes too large for a home location, you may have to consider using a local hall instead. If you do, could you please follow the guidance below:

- you are responsible for booking a hall for your group; if needed, you can ask the Groups Co-ordinator for advice about suitable halls
- all bookings should be made in the name of Chichester U3a (for insurance purposes)
- each group must cover the cost of the hall itself and hand over the appropriate amount to the Treasurer; it is advisable to do this by obtaining a cheque from each person, payable to Chichester U3A
- all invoices should be given to the Treasurer for payment

c) Insurance

We are covered by Public & Products Liability **insurance**. This covers U3A members for loss due to accidental injury to a person or accidental loss or damage to property not belonging to you, as long as it arising from or in connection with a U3A activity. Anyone giving lifts to fellow U3A members will be covered by their own motor insurance in the usual way. Should you ever experience such a situation as above, please contact the Secretary for advice and an Accident Report Form. Details of the insurance policy and terms, and a copy of the form, can also be seen on the national website **www.u3a.org.uk**

d) Copyright

We have a licence from the Copyright Licensing Agency which allows multiple photo/digital copying by Chichester U3A members for educational purposes. Contact the Secretary if you have any queries

e) Financial Matters

- Each group should be self-funding and group members must cover all the running costs of the group. However, if a group ever feels there are some exceptional circumstances, they may ask the Committee for help (e.g. their group leader may have had some exceptional expense or could have legitimate training needs which may warrant financial help).
- As a charity, we are required to follow sound financial practices. You are advised to keep cash handling to a minimum and keep a simple record of this.

6. Resources that you may find helpful

a) Local

1. Library

You can obtain a special library ticket on behalf of your group. This enables you to order books and audio books, without any charge, for up to a month; currently NOT videos/DVDs or music sheets (although they might be prepared to loan the latter on the same basis, if asked). No 'overdue charges' are applicable for such loans.

2. Equipment

Chichester U3A has some visual and sound equipment that group leaders may borrow. Currently this includes: a laptop computer, a 35mm slide projector, a digital projector, a sound system, a screen, a flip chart and stand. If you wish to borrow any of these, please contact the Equipment Officer

b) Regional

The **SURA Network** (the Sussex U3A Regional Association Network) provides a Study Day Programme available to all members of local U3As. However, in addition, from time to time it runs Seminars specifically for Group Leaders. These are run in conjunction with the Open University and are subject based. You will be advised of these seminars, when relevant to your group's subject, by our SURA Representative. Chichester U3A will usually pay the costs of attending. There is also a Summer School held in Chichester, which is provided by the South East Forum.

c) National

There are a number of resources provided by the Third Age Trust (TAT) which you are encouraged to access. See the national website www.u3a.org.uk or use other contact details given below.

1. Resource Centre: has a collection of material such as slides, videos, audio cassettes, CDs and DVDs (not books) available for you to borrow free of charge except for the cost of return postage. Lists are free and available on request. To borrow items, register by post or online (can also then search the online catalogue)

Contacts: Tel. 0208 315 0199 Email resource.centre@u3a.org.uk Open Tuesday-Thursday 9.30 to 16.00

2. Subject Network Co-ordinators: a subject advisory service, from a volunteer subject specialist who is willing to share their knowledge and experience. They may offer all or some of the following: 'start up' leaflets, phone or email consultation, networks, newsletters, study days.

Contacts: list of names in U3A News or see on website where there is a link to each one

3. U3A News and Sources: every member receives the national newsletter U3A News four times a year. This is full of feedback from U3As across the country, experiences and ideas, essential contact details, and useful advertising. Sources is the educational journal you receive with your U3A News. Each issue has a subject focus and all back issues (1-36 up to January 2009) can be accessed online in PDF format on the national website.

4. Research Collection: this is currently being built up by the Resource Centre, as a reference point. It encompasses a) research about older learners and b) research by older learners, including U3A members, on any subject. If you can offer such publications, please contact the Resource Centre Manager with details of title, author, any public source and date, marked clearly for 'Research Collection'.

5. Online Courses: a list of courses developed by U3A members in both the UK and Australia is available on the website. Their high standard has been recognised by a NIACE award. They are low cost, some untutored, with tutored ones costing slightly more. Although they may be followed individually, the material may also be used for groups. Untutored courses can be downloaded and printed for group study. You are also encouraged to use the Open University's 'Open Learn' courses. U3A has been trying and moderating these for use by U3A members.

6. Summer Schools: in addition to the South East Forum's one held in Chichester, TAT runs two national Summer Schools. These are subject based and many group leaders attend to gather fresh material and ideas to share with their groups.

7. Shared Learning Projects: there are full details on the national website of what these are and how to start one. There are also regular reports of such projects in Sources and on the website. A typical Shared Learning Project involves U3A members working with a local institution, such as a gallery or museum, on a project of mutual benefit. These co-operative ventures offer an exciting opportunity for sharing expertise and learning.

We hope you will enjoy being a group leader.

Chichester U3A Committee 2009