



Orientation Week Handbook

ssdp
Students for Sensible
Drug Policy Australia

How to: Start a Society

Got the members, the passion and the drive? Get official!

Becoming an official club will afford great benefits, such as being able to hold events and recruitment tables, access to financial assistance, insurance, access to an exclusive online community, free equipment and venue hire on-campus as well as assistance and advice on club administration and event management.

Most clubs are affiliated through your university's student union, however each union will have different rules and regulations around club affiliation and club management. For some clubs at larger universities, the affiliation process can take a whole semester and involves many steps, and much liaising with the Clubs Officer or Coordinator. At the University of Melbourne for example, it took gaining 50 sign ups, an Inaugural General Meeting with 20 attendees before the club was affiliated and eligible for assistance. For others, affiliation can be a simpler process that involves liaising with the student union and supplying relevant documentation.

Each union will have its own approach, but will also have the necessary support networks available to make the affiliation process rewarding and useful for your new club. **It's essential to first speak to your student union's Clubs Officer/Coordinator to find out what's required on your campus - they are there to help!**



General Requirements:

1. Minimum number of Members

The minimum requirement of members will differ depending on the university but often lay around 15-20 students.

2. Committee/Executive Member Positions

Determine which Committee/Executive Member roles you would like to instate, e.g. President, Treasurer, Publicity Coordinator, etc.

3. A Draft Constitution

A draft constitution for the club will need to be prepared. This will need to establish the objectives and aims of the club, as well as its specific rules and regulations (e.g. in regards to the voting in of members, the specific roles of the Executive/Committee Members). Ensure that your objectives do not overlap with that of another group! For tips writing your constitution, speak to your Student Societies office

for advice and make use of the many sample constitutions you can find through a simple Google search. Alternatively, you can contact SSDP Australia for a constitution template (and many other resources!).

4. Inaugural General Meeting

You will need to hold an Inaugural General Meeting before your club can become official. This meeting generally ensures that the fundamental aspects of the club such as executive member positions, the club constitution, members, and aims and objectives of the club are determined through democratic vote by club members. Before you hold the meeting, ensure that you have spoken to your Student Societies Office about the requirements of the meeting (some which will need to be prepared weeks before the actual meeting occurs).

Preparations will/may include:

- A Draft Constitution
- Providing the Student Societies Office with adequate knowledge of the meeting (i.e. time/date, location, etc.)
- Preparing membership forms for new members
- Adequate publication of the event as set by the rules of the Student Societies Office (i.e. a time-frame for publication or specific forms of publicity to ensure that all students have equal opportunity to attend the event)
- Assigning a student to take the minutes of the meeting
- Planning a follow-up meeting or event after the Inaugural General Meeting

5. Submission of New Club Application

Once you have fulfilled these requirements you can now submit your application! Once again, the requirements of this process will differ according to universities but will generally expect the submission of:

- Membership List
- Receipts/proof of membership fees (if fees are a requirement for your university)
- Club contact list
- Minutes of inaugural general meeting
- Club constitution
- A written statement about the aims / purpose / mission statement of the club and/or;
- A written statement about the activities to be conducted by the club

**Congratulations, you are now an official
student society!**

This is where the fun begins.

How to: Recruit Members

Whilst a large group does not necessarily make an effective one, having a good number of members can be important for your club. Most universities require a minimum number of members for a group to run (often ranging from 15-20) which means that recruitment must begin even before your club is established. Having larger numbers of members can also mean more funding from the university and greater exposure for your events and activities.



Here are some ways to recruit members:

Orientation Week

The most important time for recruitment is during the university Orientation Week which occurs twice a year at the beginning of semester. O-week is a great time to introduce your group to both old and new students and collect new members. It's handy to have materials prepared for students to take away with them such as flyers, stickers, badges and leaflets (SSDP Australia has lots of printable resources already prepared so get in touch with us!). Free food never hurts, either! If you have campaign material, bring it along and get some signatures or simply use it to start some conversations. The most important thing is to get people talking and thinking- getting signatures isn't everything. If you have a really good conversation with someone, remember them and send over an email or Facebook message later. A personal touch can go a long way. Lastly, remember to invite new members to your next event or meeting! Always have a follow-up event so that new members can become involved as soon as possible.

Note: Tabling doesn't only have to happen during O-week. Keep a look out for club fairs or other events on-campus when you can promote your club or simply find a good time/place to table and strengthen your presence on campus.

Things you will need when tabling:

- New member sign-up sheets (these should include name, contact details and student ID)
- Information material (e.g. flyers, leaflets, campaign material)
- Club Banner
- Publicity (e.g. badges, business/contact cards, stickers)

Events

This might seem obvious but attracting new members (and keeping existing ones!) requires an active and engaging group. Having regular events or meet-ups is vital for keeping your club dynamic and interesting and for developing committed members with good relationships.

Remember, get-togethers don't have to be serious- have some social events to keep things lively! Clubs made up of friends have a much higher chance of success than clubs made up of acquaintances.

Publicity

Publicity is vital for maintaining a strong presence on campus. This can be achieved during O-week or through events but should also be maintained on its own. Regular publicity can be achieved through posters, advertisements on university publications, posts on social media sites like Facebook or Twitter or your club website. Make sure your club is noticeable and easily accessible! Include clear and current contact information everywhere and ensure that any queries or expressions of interest are answered as soon as possible.

Lecture Bashing

A great way to publicise and get new members is by lecture bashing i.e. getting up before (or after) lectures and giving out information about your club and its upcoming event or meeting. This might sound a little daunting but it's a great way to build up those public speaking skills and get prepared for speaking to your members at meetings or events. Have everything prepared so you know what you are saying once you get out there and are prepared for any questions students might have! It's also a good idea to have material to hand out for those students who are interested. If you are speaking at the end of the lecture, stay behind for a little in case there are students who would be interested in finding out more.

Remember to get a lecturer's permission before you start- email them early on so they know to leave you some time to speak. It is impossible to make it to every lecture so it is a good idea to keep your lecture bashing targeted. For example, choose faculties or subjects which are related in some way to drug law reform you have a higher chance of getting students who are interested in these issues. For example, law or criminology students might be interested in the legal side of the issue whilst medical students or social sciences students might be interested in health and harm reduction. Targeting professors who have an interest or background dealing with these issues could also be a good idea as they may be more likely to let you speak at their lectures and may even encourage their students to take part.

Reaching out

A great way of gathering active and committed members can be through other university societies with similar or related goals. Social justice groups, youth-orientated groups, political groups, health-related groups or faculty societies are all possible groups you could reach out to. Reaching out could mean inviting the members of other student societies to your events/meetings or asking permission to publicise your events on their social media pages. Another idea is to create joint events on campaigns or issues which could be of particular relevance to both societies. For example, an event involving the impact of drug criminalisation on persons with mental health issues could be held alongside the

medical society. This could generate greater interest in your club and allow you to access new talent and pool together funds in order to generate a larger, more effective event.

How to: Organise Events

There's no single perfect formula to creating a successful event. Planning and organising will often work differently depending on the type of group you work with (i.e. how many members, types of skills, etc.). However, it is vitally important that planning starts EARLY. It is easy to underestimate how long it will take to organise an event, especially considering the roadblocks you will likely encounter along the way. It is a good idea to split up tasks amongst members so that responsibility is balanced between a range of members and no one person is left with all the work. One person (usually the president) will be in charge of ensuring that everything comes together properly). Here are the essential components for event organisation:

Ideas	Timeline	Division of tasks	Preparation
<p>Inspiration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are your members interested/passionate about specifically? • What is particularly relevant now (e.g. new government legislation or SSDP campaigns)? • What is an issue that could interest other active groups on campus? • What issue is particularly relevant to university students? • How can you use particular skills held by the executive members of your group? • What kinds of events have your members (or general uni students) responded enthusiastically to in the past? (e.g. social events, informative events, interactive events, public events) <p>Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How practical/realistic is your idea? Will it work within a campus setting? • What kinds of contacts do you have who could bring a new perspective or insight into the issue/campaign? • What local facilities/areas can you take advantage of? • What other groups might be interested in becoming involved? • When would be a convenient time for students to participate in the event? • How many students/participants are you expecting/aiming for? • How many members are willing to be involved in the planning process- how ambitious can you be? 	<p>Timelines do not have to be totally rigid and changes will also occur. However, they are a good way of keeping track of what needs to be done and by when. They help executive members ensure that all of the preparation for an event is ready and can be used to set goals leading up to the event (e.g. get 10 people to agree to participate in the event by the end of the week). It is important that all members are aware of this timeline so that everyone involved understands how their tasks fit in to the plan.</p>	<p>Along with a realistic timeline, a good division of tasks should ensure that no one member is loaded with excessive responsibilities. Spreading out the responsibilities amongst members is extremely important, especially for new and upcoming groups. Giving new members tasks as part of the planning process not only increases involvement in the group, it allows members to feel a certain ownership of the event itself. Dividing tasks also means that your group is able to take advantage of the range of skills that members can bring. For example, Communications or Creative Arts students can be particularly helpful in creating materials for publicity. Students who are very active amongst the student community may know of other groups who are interested in being involved or helping.</p> <p>Often, executive members will already have their specific responsibilities as dictated by their positions. However, there will always be ways other members can help out and certain tasks might need a group rather than individual attention. It is a good idea to involve as many as possible (only if they are willing!).</p> <p>Possible areas of division:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration (e.g. booking venues, organising materials and/or catering, attaining permission for activities, etc.) • Communication and Organisation • Publicity • Networking (attaining main participants in the event such as speakers for a forum, gaining support or interest from other on-campus groups) 	<p>Administration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All venues booked? • All materials prepared? • All catering booked? <p>Communication and Organisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All main participants booked in and ready? • All support members ready for venue preparation? • All members informed about the details? <p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters • Social Media • Lecture bashing • University Publications • Professor Support • Stalls/Tabling

How to: Keep Sustainable

Keeping your group sustainable between years is vital for maintaining SSDP's impact on-campus!



Here are a few tips for making sure your group keeps up its momentum into the following year:

- It sounds obvious but one of the main ways to maintain a strong group is to make sure your members are included and interested in staying involved. This means dividing up tasks to as many members as possible. As mentioned, this helps create a sense of responsibility for the events and can be a way of building stronger relationships between members. Remember, it doesn't all have to be serious. Have social events and keep things fun.
- At the end of the year, it is essential that the executive members for next year are chosen before the end of Semester 2. This means holding your AGM (Annual General Meeting) to ensure that the new executives are properly voted in and ready to prepare for a new year!
- Another obvious one- make sure that there is a regular meet up for members! Face-to-face is always better than online conversations.