
Guidelines for Committee Hand over

Phillida Strachan: March 2009

**PRODUCED WITH THE KIND HELP AND SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE SOCIETIES SYNDICATE**

thehumanitariancentre

Cambridge initiatives for international relief and development

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Introduction

This resource has been developed by the Humanitarian Centre as a guide for student societies handing over committee positions and leadership from one year to the next. The information contained within it has been drawn from a number of sources:

- National Union of Students: 'Students in their union: clubs and societies handbook' 2002/3 (link in appendix).
- University of Cambridge: Notes for the Guidance of University Clubs and Societies issued by the Junior Proctor, October 2008 (link in appendix).
- Meetings with individuals from student societies preparing to hand over committee positions, and attendance at society AGMs (e.g. Cambridge University International Development, Engineers Without Borders-Cambridge).
- My own and other students' experiences of being on the committee of a student society and handing over at the end of the year.

Who is this resource for?

This resource has been developed for committee members of student societies preparing to hand over committee positions to next year's officers. Although this guide is not aimed at new committee members, it does contain information which may be relevant to newly-elected officers.

Aims of this resource and how to use it

This guide encourages student societies handing over from one committee to the next to think critically about how they do this. It is structured to guide the user through all stages of the handover process from evaluating committee positions and holding elections to the transfer of knowledge and information about the running of the society. I hope that whilst this resource provides a framework for considering some important issues, it also stimulates questions. It is not designed to be a checklist which can simply be followed to produce good committees. It is designed as a stepping stone to engage in further thinking, rather than a definitive guide in itself.

This resource is intended to be developed and added to over time. If you have any comments or feedback to improve this guide, or any personal experience which you would like included, please contact:

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Key terms

Junior Proctor: The Proctors are the formal representatives of Regent House and oversee the implementation of University regulations. The Junior Proctor is the officer with special responsibility for university societies, and is first port of call for enquiries relating to these.

Committee: For ease, the word committee in this document refers to the outgoing committee preparing to hand over. Committees which are due to take over are referred to as 'new' or 'incoming' committees. In both cases 'committee' refers to elected members of the society occupying (or soon to be occupying) formal positions in management of the society. Where it is used to distinguish from a sub-committee, it is called the main committee.

Sub-committee: This is a committee formed to provide assistance to a particular position on the main committee. For example, the Events Officer may need extra helpers who form a committee specifically to support this position (the Events sub-committee).

Officer: This refers to anyone elected to a position on the society's committee (or a sub-committee). It is used in conjunction with their specific role on the committee, e.g. Publicity Officer, Events Officer. Some committees may refer to an officer as a coordinator, or a representative (rep).

Committee member: This refers to anyone elected to a position on the society's committee (or a sub-committee).

Treasurer: The position of Treasurer on the committee is referred to in official University regulations as the Junior Treasurer to distinguish the role from the Senior Treasurer. In this document, any mention of the word Treasurer refers to the Junior Treasurer. Where the Senior Treasurer is mentioned, the position is referred to by its full title.

Senior Treasurer: A senior member of the University responsible for auditing the accounts of the society. S/he must be a person of at least MA standing in the University, for example a College Fellow or University officer, and someone who supports the aims and goals of the society in question.

Annual General Meeting (AGM): A meeting held every year, open to all members of a society or organisation, to inform members of previous and future activities. It is the time when members are given the Annual Report of the society's activities and the Annual Financial Report, compiled by the Treasurer. The AGM is also generally the forum for the election of next year's officers.

Constitution: A formal document that sets out the aims and working practices of an organisation or society.

Minutes: The written records of a meeting.

Risk Assessment: A legal requirement that is the process of recognising hazards of (for example) a society activity, analyzing the risk they pose to others and identifying steps that can be taken to reduce these risks.

Section 1: University Requirements

Ongoing requirements

If the society is registered, there are certain ongoing requirements. When a new committee takes over, they must:

- Notify the Junior Proctor of any changes in the constitution over the past year.
- Notify the Junior Proctor of the names of the new committee and all positions.
- Give the Junior Proctor a copy of annual accounts (before 31 December each year). These must be signed by the society's Senior Treasurer).

“All registered clubs or societies **must notify the Junior Proctor of any changes in their constitutions**, and of any **change in officers** and every registered club or society **must deposit with the Junior Proctor by 31 December each year a copy of its annual accounts produced in the previous academic year**. The accounts should have been audited and signed either by the Senior Treasurer or by a person otherwise approved for this purpose by the Junior Proctor.”

Notes for the Guidance of University Clubs and Societies: Issued by the Junior Proctor October 2008.

At the time of committee handovers, the following areas must be considered and, if necessary, revised:

Insurance

- Adequate insurance must be in place to cover all activities of the society.
- University insurance will only apply when an activity is held in departmental buildings with the permission of the Head of Department.
- In the event of a claim, policy excesses are payable by the society.

Equality policy

- Societies are subject to the provisions of the Sex Discrimination Act 1975, the Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Membership should be open to all members of the University, e.g. people of different gender, race, ethnic and cultural background, religion and disability.

Criminal Record Bureau checks

- Societies are subject to the provisions of the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Protection of Vulnerable Adults Act 2002. CRB checks must be carried out where necessary.

Data Protection

- As of 1 March 2000, the Data Protection Act applies to all electronically and paper-held personal information. Further information on Data Protection policy can be found at www.ico.gov.uk

Health and Safety

- **Risk assessments** are a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 and must be completed for all appropriate activities. The Health and Safety Commission stipulates that “those who create risks are required to identify and eliminate or control them”. **Electrical equipment** owned by the society must be checked every year.

Section 2: Committee positions

Reviewing society activities

Societies change from year to year. Outgoing committees should review the role of the society with incoming officers and consider the following questions:

- Is the society still achieving the purpose set out in its constitution?
- What gap is the society filling?
- Who else is involved in similar activities? Is there room for collaboration? (Think beyond other societies to community groups, Cambridge offices and departments and local organisations for example).
- Are there new activities the society could develop?

Reviewing committee positions

As society activities change over time, committees may not necessarily need the same skills. Committee members should list all skills which are needed in the following year's committee for each position. This will help to give candidates a clear idea of what their role would involve and the responsibilities which go with it.

EXAMPLE: Cambridge University International Development (CUiD)

In December 2008, CUiD led a grant application to the Societies Syndicate on behalf of ten societies for audio recording equipment to enable talks to be published online. The skills of knowing how to record events and edit recordings were then needed in order for this resource to be effective. The outgoing committee thus proposed a new position of 'Recording Officer' in the Publicity and Public Relations sub-committee to serve in the next year's committee 2009-2010.

In all committees there are some **core positions** which are likely to be needed from year to year.

- **President(s)**
- **Publicity Officer**
- **Events Officer**
- **Treasurer**
- **Secretary**
- **IT and communications (webmaster)**
- **Health and Safety Officer** (depending on activities of the society).

Sources of training for committee officers:

- **The Humanitarian Centre:** Training Programme on basic charity management. Free evening taster sessions October-March on topics including: Health and Safety, Writing Fundraising Materials, Negotiation and Influence, Volunteer Recruitment and Basic Financial Management.
- **Cambridge University Students Union:** Societies Training Scheme January-June on four themes: Finances, Society Management, Publicity and Event Organisation, and Health and Safety.

Section 3: Elections

Societies should consider the following:

Applications

- Many committees struggle to fill all positions for the following year, so an easy application process is important. Usually this will take the form of a short written paragraph about what the candidate feels s/he can bring to the position and a brief speech at hustings (see below).
- All members are eligible to stand for election. Presidents or committee members can approach people who they have identified as possible successors. Personally encouraging someone to stand for a position is often more effective than a general appeal for applications.
- Summaries of each candidate and their application 'pitch' should be e-mailed to all society members to read in advance of the elections.

Timing

- Committees have encountered problems with too few people standing for positions, or dropping out after they have been elected due to the bad timing of elections. Committees should consider the best time in the society's year to hand over positions. A sample annual timetable for elections could run as follows:

Lent term	Easter term	Michaelmas term
Elections at end of term	New committee starts	Freshers' Fair and recruitment
Handover process starts after elections	Outgoing committee provides ongoing support	

Hustings

- Hustings take place before elections and is the time when prospective candidates give a brief speech highlighting their suitability for the position they have applied for, and their strengths relative to other candidates.
- Voting can either take place immediately after hustings (especially for small societies, and positions with few candidates) or a while after (usually one to two weeks).
- Hustings are a good opportunity to encourage people who are running for positions to stay involved in the society even if they aren't elected for the position they want. This is a good question to ask at hustings, and may help to ensure a larger and more active committee for the following year.

Annual General Meeting

- The Annual General Meeting is a yearly review of the society's activities and finances. It is open to all members of the society. The AGM is also the time when any proposed changes to the society's constitution can be discussed and voted on.
- The AGM is usually the time when hustings and elections take place. Anybody present at a society's AGM is eligible to vote.

Method

- There are currently no society syndicate regulations on the conduct of elections. However, committees should abide by what is written in the society's constitution.

Section 4: Society Records

Throughout the course of a year, committees can build up large amounts of useful information about the operation of a society; handy tips, personal contacts, financial information, publicity material, the list goes on.

Committees should consider:

- How to preserve this information.
- The most effective format to make it available for the next committee.
- Handover meetings: face-to-face handover meetings are usually most successful, often in subdivisions of the main committee, e.g. a publicity hand-over meeting, a financial information hand-over meeting.

Ways of storing information:

- *Written*
 - Notebook
 - File
- *Electronic*
 - CD
 - Memory stick
 - External hard drive
 - Spreadsheets, word documents etc. which can be added as attachments
- *Internet*
 - Google Docs
 - Email accounts

Hand over material

For each committee position the following material should be handed over:

President

- All information held centrally, from personal data on members to official correspondence with University departments, the student union and the committee.
- A list of all passwords (except in exceptional circumstances such as for sensitive or personal data where one committee member may be appointed to manage this).

Publicity

- See also 'Communication, publicity and website' section.
- A hard copy and an electronic copy of all publicity material used throughout the year, including templates of posters, term cards, flyers etc.
- Information on copyright for all images, words and logos used if they do not belong to the society.
- Information on printing companies used, including prices and contact details.
- Information on the distribution of publicity material (colleges, departments, who to contact).
- Information on any external contacts, e.g. with the local media, other societies etc.

Events

- See also Events section.
- A record of all events held in the past year (including risk assessments where appropriate).
- Contact details of all previous speakers/trainers etc.
- Information on rooms booked, facilities and equipment available, food ordered etc.

Website/IT

- Logins and passwords for website, e-mail accounts etc.
- How to edit the website.

Treasurer

- See also 'Finance' section.
- Signing over authority to the new Treasurer to access the society's bank account and money.
- Information on day-to-day management of finance records. Treasurers should consider writing a basic document for the incoming Treasurer on the management of the society's money.
- How to compile the Annual Financial Report.
- University regulations the society must comply with.
- All relevant bank information.
- How to prepare the accounts for auditing by the Senior Treasurer at the end of the year.

General

- Database of all members and mailing lists.
- Information on how to book a stand at Freshers' Fair, Careers Fairs and other events.
- Record of all minutes of committee meetings.
- A log of any equipment belonging to the society (see appendix)
- Any other issues pertaining to the effective running of the society.

Hand over meetings

EXAMPLE: CUSU Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Executive Committee

CUSU LGBT set a point on the agenda of a committee meeting detailing the need for handover documents to be completed by a certain date, and for individual meetings to be arranged between committee members and their new counterparts.

Hand over meetings are an ideal opportunity for current committee members and new officers to discuss issues faced over the previous year and share recommendations and ideas about how the society could be run in the future. Meetings should ideally be conducted in small groups relevant to each position (for example, the outgoing President(s) meet the incoming President(s), the outgoing Publicity team meets incoming Publicity Officers etc).

After hand over meetings, outgoing officers should continue to help incoming officers where possible. Some societies recommend that new committee members shadow their outgoing counterparts between the election and formal hand over of roles. This helps incoming officers to find out more about what the role involves and to ask questions. Consider asking outgoing committee members to write a document for incoming officers explaining the responsibilities of their role and any useful tips.

Section 5: Finance

Finance is one of the most important parts of the committee handover to get right. Simple measures taken in advance make things a lot easier for the next committee. Treasurers preparing to hand over should organise and collate all relevant information on the following topics:

Keeping basic finance records

- When records are handed over, Treasurers should have a clear record of all outstanding invoices from the previous year which have not yet been paid, and of all payments due to the society which have not yet been received.
- Treasurers *must* sign over authorisation to access the society's bank account and money to the new Treasurer. This includes information on any necessary password and security checks, and authorisation to write/sign cheques, manage petty cash and withdraw money if necessary.
- Where applicable, the Treasurer should hand over all relevant information concerning society subscription fees and payment.
- A record of any assets owned should be handed over including purchase cost of all equipment and (estimated) cost of replacement (see appendix for sample equipment log).
- Treasurers should instruct new Treasurers on the preparation of accounts for audit at the end of the year. The Senior Treasurer should ideally be present at this hand over to meet the new Treasurer.

Budgeting

- New treasurers are responsible for drawing up a budget for the society's predicted income and expenditure over the coming year. Outgoing treasurers should keep previous budget templates as a model for the New Treasurer.

Senior Treasurer

- Outgoing Treasurers should arrange a meeting for the incoming Treasurer to meet the Senior Treasurer, especially in relation to auditing the accounts at the end of the year.

Banks

- Banks will usually require a written transferal of authorisation from one Treasurer to the next.
- Check with the individual bank a month or two before handover to give sufficient time to collect and fill in any appropriate forms.
- New Treasurer's need passwords and answers to security questions to access the account. When a new Treasurer takes office, previous passwords should be changed for security.

Funding and Sponsorship

- Outgoing Treasurers should hand over a record of all grants the society applied to in the previous year, outcomes of applications, and details of any sponsorship the society has secured.
- New Treasurers should be informed about how much money the society has received/is expecting, and for how long the sponsor has pledged support.
- New Treasurers should be given information on all previous fundraising events (where applicable), including how much money was raised, and the total profit (after deductions of expenses).

Section 6: Events

Many societies choose to run events as part of the society's founding aims, and to promote the values and objectives of the society.

Handing over event information

Examples of the main types of event are:

Speaker events (e.g. speaker talks, panel discussions and film screenings)

Hands-on/interactive practical events (e.g. outdoor expeditions and training courses)

Fundraisers (e.g. fundraisers and sponsored events)

Social events (e.g. committee formal, society squash)

Keeping records

It is important to keep a full record of all events. This information can be stored in a number of ways (see chapter on Society Records) and it is important that new committee members have access to all this information to help in planning the following year's events.

Events Officers should hand over:

- A **database of all speaker contacts** who have either presented at events in the past, or who have been suggested or approached, including trainers for courses, expeditions etc. (these may be useful when considering who to approach for future talks).
- A **record of all events run in the past year**, and useful information for planning events (e.g. location of events, who provided the food/refreshments, risk assessment forms etc.)
- **Useful contacts** for booking rooms, borrowing equipment etc.

Events budget

The Events Officer should liaise with the Treasurer so that the incoming Events Officer and Treasurer have a copy of the events budget for the previous year, and details of regular events (e.g. an annual fundraiser). New committees should be clear which events will be subsidized by the society, which are expected to make a profit and which are expected to break even.

Societies should plan a budget which contains:

- All known and predicted **expenses**
- All known and predicted **income** (where applicable – some events may not have any income if the society chooses not to charge and fully funds the event instead, e.g. a panel discussion)
- Total **profit** expected, and minimum profit needed to make the event viable

Links for further information on budgets and budget templates are included in the appendix.

Recording events

If events have been recorded in the previous year, the incoming Events Officer should be given copies of the speaker release forms which demonstrate that the society has permission to publish the talks online.

The Humanitarian Centre houses a set of high-quality recording equipment and blank release forms available for use by member societies, and for events relating to international relief or development.

Section 7: Communications, publicity and website

Communication

Societies should be aware of all the ways in which they communicate and report to new committee members on successful and unsuccessful methods used. Examples of ways of communicating:

- In person
- Word-of-mouth
- E-mail
- Mailing list, bulletins
- Letter
- Newsletter
- Telephone
- Posters, leaflets, flyers
- Facebook
- Website
- Local media
- Student newspapers/radio
- Freshers' Fair, societies and careers fairs

When new committees discuss events and publicity for the coming year, they should consider:

- What information needs to be communicated?
- Who is the audience? Who will receive the communication?
- What is the purpose of this communication?
- What is the best method of communication to reach them?
- Who is the most appropriate person to take responsibility for this? (e.g. the Events Officer may personally contact speakers, a sub-committee member may advertise an event on Facebook, and the President may represent the society to a grant-making body or trust).

Committees should keep a record of how they communicate and with whom (e.g. for publicity material, who prints posters/flyers etc., how much does it cost, who distributes them and where). This can be used to help next years committee develop their communication strategy. A record should be kept of correspondence on all major decisions made.

Website

Webmaster can often be a difficult role to fill on a committee because people may think they need a lot of specific skills to stand for the position. Website design and editing should be kept as simple as possible to make it an accessible role for a wide range of candidates.

The outgoing Webmaster should hand over all passwords to the new Webmaster and train them in how to edit the website as part of the handover process. Webmasters could write a basic document explaining how to edit and manage the website for the incoming webmaster.

Section 8: Useful information

General information

Key sources of advice, training and information for societies are listed below.

The Humanitarian Centre

www.humanitariancentre.org

- Training programme on management of small organisations
- Networking events (e.g. 7-way Networking meetings): student societies have a chance to meet local organisations and other societies. Societies can take this opportunity to find out about initiatives in the wider Cambridge community and ways to collaborate.
- Support and advice from Humanitarian Centre staff
- Meeting room space
- Hotdesking space
- Printing and photocopying, laminating, faxing and telephones
- Funder Finder - grant finding software
- Storage and pigeon holes for society mail
- Equipment use - data projector, laptop, A3 display board use etc.
- Audio recording equipment use (conditional on training of recordist)

Societies Syndicate

www.cam.ac.uk/about/socinfo/ Provides information on:

- Registering a student society
- Guidelines for student societies (see Section 3)
- Grants from the Societies Syndicate
- Computing facilities for societies and how to apply for them (including society e-mail addresses)
- University society web pages and society file space (online)

National Union of Students (NUS)

www.nus.org.uk : Information on National Union of Students policy and useful links.

www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/societies/information/nushandbook.pdf : NUS Students in their union: Clubs and societies handbook 2002/3.

Cambridge University Students' Union (CUSU)

www.cusu.cam.ac.uk/services

- Training Scheme on: Finances, Society Management, Publicity and Event Organisation, and Health and Safety
- Student union rooms for meetings, and conference room hire, see website for full costings
- Vehicle hire and equipment hire - data projector , audio recording etc
- Admin support and advice from staff
- Printing and photocopying, laminating, faxing, telephones, storage, A3 display board hire
- Mailing lists and hosting a society's website

Careers Service

- Publicity services - Careers Diary online, CLICK mail service
- Opportunity for societies to attend publicity events – e.g. Works Alternative Careers Fair

Section 1: University Requirements

General

www.cam.ac.uk/about/socinfo/jpo/notes.pdf: Notes for the Guidance on the formation and running of University Clubs and Societies: Issued by the Junior Proctor October 2008.

Insurance

www.admin.cam.ac.uk/offices/insurance/: Information on University of Cambridge Insurance cover

Equality policy

www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/Pages/default.aspx: Information on equality legislation

Criminal Record Bureau

www.crb.gov.uk/: Criminal Records Bureau

Data Protection

www.ico.gov.uk: Information on Data Protection policy

Health and Safety

www.hse.gov.uk: Information on Health and Safety Law, risk assessment requirements and first aid.

- Risk assessments are a legal requirement under the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999: www.hse.gov.uk/risk/index.htm - Government risk assessment information
- There are five basic steps:
 - Initial Identify all different activities
 - 1. Identify possible hazards
 - 2. Identify who might be harmed by the activities and how
 - 3. Identify current precautions and risk control systems, the level of risk still present with these precautions in place, and how risks can be reduced.
 - 4. Record all findings and implement them
 - 5. Review the assessment and update as necessary
- All committees should have an emergency first aider and at least one committee member trained in health and safety procedure.
- All accidents must be recorded in an accident report form.

Sample risk assessment (blank template risk assessment form)

www.hse.gov.uk/risk/template.pdf

Section 3: Committee positions

Checklist: Have the new committee got all the following skills...

- Leadership
- Decision-making
- Negotiation and compromise
- Organisation
- Time management
- Communication (written and oral)
- Basic financial skills (book-keeping/budgeting)

- Problem solving
- Technical (IT, website, audio recording etc)

Section 5: Society Records

Checklist: Has the new committee been given...

- Annual Report
- Minutes of all meetings
- Financial information (especially daily finance records, auditing, access to bank account, contact details of Senior Treasurer etc)
- All publicity material (posters, flyers, leaflets, printing companies used etc.)
- A list of names and contact details for all members of the society
- A list of names and e-mail addresses of people on the society's mailing list
- Speaker contacts
- Past event details
- Access to the website and how to edit it
- Sources of training, help and advice
- Information on booking a stand at Freshers' Fair etc.

Sample equipment log

Club/society The Humanitarian Centre Date: 30/03/2009

No.	Description of equipment, and where purchased	Serial no.	Date purchased	Original cost	Date replacement due	Estimated cost of replacement	Where it is stored
1	Fostex audio recorder	464745	26.01.09	£424.50	26.01.12	£488.56	Humanitarian Centre

Section 6: Finance

- For more information on not-for-profit financial management, see Management Accountancy for Non-Governmental Organisations (MANGO) website: www.mango.org.uk
- Resources include a full training manual, how to set up a basic financial system, and samples of financial forms which can be downloaded and adapted for free: www.mango.org.uk/guide/resources.aspx

Applying for grants

www.cam.ac.uk/about/socinfo/jpo/grants.html : Information on grants from the Societies Syndicate

Section 7: Events

For further information on budgets and budget templates, please see links above for section 'Finance'.