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**SOC004**

**STARTING A NEW SOCIETY- POLICY AND PROCESS**

**Document Owner: Societies Development Coordinator**

**Introduction**

1. This document is designed for students to inform them of the processes and expectations involved around setting up a new society.

# Purpose of Policy

1. The purpose of this policy is to:
	1. Provide clarity on the new group set-up process and expectations
	2. Outline how new societies are ratified.

# Overview

1. A society can be set up at any time in the academic year as per the Society Set-up and Ratification Process detailed below
2. A proposed society that wishes to set up outside of the academic year will be subject to the same process, however it must be noted that the society will remain unaffiliated to the University of Northampton Students’ Union until ratification at Societies Committee
3. Unaffiliated societies – those in the process of setting up without formal ratification – will receive limited access to Students’ Union facilities
4. Core requirements to be a society are:
	1. Unique aims and objectives, see point 7.1.1
	2. Aims and Objectives adhere to Union Vales and Policies. These can be found on the Union Website 6.3. Have met with the Societies Coordinator, see point 7.3
	3. Have 3 core committee members (President, Secretary & Treasurer) and 2 general members, see point 7.2
	4. If a group restarting, can demonstrate they will have a sustainable society on restarting **Process**
5. General process:
	1. Student completes the Proposal Form and Constitution and sends it to the Societies’ Development Coordinator
		1. The Constitution is a core governing document of the society dictating its main aims and objectives. Once filled in and ratified it cannot be changed by you unless changes are approved at Societies Committee. It includes the following information:
			1. Name of society
			2. Aims and objectives
			3. Committee
			4. Membership and Subscription
			5. Removal of committee members
			6. Records
			7. Finance
			8. Complaints Procedure
			9. Meetings
			10. Electronic signature of the current committee
	2. Member of staff contacts all proposed committee and general members to confirm whether or not they are interested in being part of the proposed society; a minimum of 3 core committee members (President, Secretary & Treasurer) and 2 general members need to confirm their involvement/interest to proceed
	3. The Society’s committee will need to contact and arrange a meeting with the Societies’ Development Coordinator to discuss their application. Any issues with starting up may be highlighted here and the uniqueness of the society will be checked. If their uniqueness is in question or any issues arise these will be related to the VPUD and Societies PTO.
	4. Staff member to invite proposed society committee members to Societies Committee meeting to be put up for ratification (approval). Ratification is a voting process by which societies are officially voted in by other student groups at Societies Committee.
		1. The VPUD or Societies Officer will mention if any issues have arisen previously, either from the meeting, research conducted by the Societies Development Coordinator or from previous history of a society that is restarting.
		2. It is recommended that least one representative from the proposed committee should attend to present a one-minute speech detailing the aims and objectives of the society, and why they feel they should become affiliated with the Students’ Union. Questions will be taken from the floor.
		3. It will then be put to a vote.
		4. Societies Committee delegates will vote by secret ballot to:
			1. Accept the proposal without amendment
			2. Accept the proposal with amendments
			3. Decline the proposal on the basis that it does not fill the criteria, see point 6 and point 7.4.5
		5. Reasons to not be ratified:
			1. The groups aims and objectives are deemed to be inappropriate, offensive or go against Union Values and Policies. The society does not agree to operate under The University of Northampton Students’ Union’s Equal Opportunities policy.
			2. The groups affiliation is deemed to be inappropriate, offensive or go against Union Values and Policies.
			3. The group is a Church, Mosque or any other religious formal structure. Please note: The Chaplaincy can be the only Church/Mosque/religious structure on campus. You may be a student-led faith group but you cannot be a Church/Mosque/Gurdwara etc. on campus.
			4. The group is not unique, and is too similar to another group that is already affiliated to the Students’ Union.
			5. The group does not have the required minimum members on committee and general members to start up. See section 3.2.
			6. All committee members are not current students and registered on the Union Website.
			7. They are a society that is restarting but have not demonstrated they will be sustainable upon restarting and will not fold soon for the same reason as before
	5. Staff to communicate the outcome to the society within 72 hours of the meeting along with the next steps for the new committee.
	6. If the society is **not** approved, then the following applies:
		1. Staff member is to communicate the outcome along with details of the appeals process (see below)
		2. **If an existing society wishes to appeal the decision**, then a process is to be followed as outlined in the Folding and De-ratifying Societies Procedure.

1.1.1. **If a new Society wishes to appeal the decision** then it should do so in writing to the Chair of Student Council (su.democracy@northampton.ac.uk ) within 7 days of receiving the decision.

 1.1.1.1. An Appeal against the decision made by the Societies Committee should include:

* + - * 1. A statement identifying one or more of the following grounds for appeal:

 1.1.1.1.1.1.1. Process stated above not being followed

 1.1.1.1.1.1.2. Misinterpretation of a specific part of the proposal form

1.1.1.1.1.1.3. Evidence of prejudice, bias or a conflict of interest from delegates of the Societies Committee

* + - * 1. Supporting evidence

1.1.1.2. In the event of an appeal being sent to the Student Council, they can either rule to: 1.1.1.2.1. Uphold the appeal and arrange for the proposal to be sent to the next Societies’ Committee for ratification.

1.1.1.2.2. Decline the appeal, which will be the final decision. Any proposal for a similar society will not be considered within that academic period.

* 1. If the decision is ‘Accept the proposal with amendments’ then a discussion is to be had of the recommended amendments the society is to take
		1. The societies Development Coordinator is to relay these back to the group in writing within 7 days of the meeting

1.2. For all approved societies with or without amendments, then the following applies:

1.2.1. The new **committee** must do the following within 2 weeks of ratification:

* + - 1. Join the society group on the Students’ Union website
			2. Join the Society Committee Facebook page (‘Northampton Students' Union

 Society Committee ‘.yr.’)

1.2.2. The new **committee** must do the following within 4 weeks of ratification:

* + - 1. Do compulsory committee training
			2. Submit a Risk Assessment to the Societies’ Development Coordinator if not covered by the SU Risk Assessment

1.2.3. The **staff** **member** is to do the following within 3 weeks of ratification:

* + - 1. Update the committee spreadsheet with committee member details
			2. Create society’s page on the SU website. This includes:
				1. Membership types (member, non-student member)
				2. Committee
				3. Nominal code 1.2.3.2.4. Description
				4. Email address
				5. Pin
			3. Give all committee members administration rights on the Students’ Union

 Website

* + - 1. Request an account to be set up, including username and password, with the Finance Department
			2. Request a button to be set up on the till (Front reception, Engine Shed)
1. The society committee positions will expire on 31st March, with new roles taking over on 1st April through online elections.

2.1.1. the Societies Development Coordinator must be informed before any changes in committee or resignations take place by emailing su.societies@northampton.ac.uk

1. Committees are:
	1. Required to abide by the Constitution and Bye-laws of UNSU, and the Mission, Values, Policies, Regulations and Procedures adopted by Student Council and the Board of Trustees.
	2. Expected to read the Code of Practice and to adhere to the expectations stated in it
2. Once ratified new societies can apply for the New Society Grant.

# REVIEW

5. This policy will be reviewed annually by the Societies Development Coordinator and approved at the Membership Services Managers Meeting.

**Date of this revision**: 16/09/18 **Date of next revision**: 16/09/19