

## **Leading an Academic Society – A Guide**

### **So you'd like to start a society?**

This is a step by step guide to leading an academic society with Sunderland Students' Union (Your SU).

Please note, this guide is for new academic societies started in Autumn 2020. Any academic societies started before then count as established societies.

The mission of Your SU (Sunderland Student' Union) is to make your university experience valuable for life. One of our objectives: Your Voice, sets out our aim to be fully student led, with students directing their own activities within the Union and engaging in opportunities such as Your Societies.

### **What is an academic society?**

A society is student led, student run group, registered with Your SU. Academic societies succeed by providing opportunities that enhance the content of your course. Our current academic societies have connected members with industry contacts, they've travelled to international conferences and they've taken part in competitions with other Universities.

Academic societies are a little different to our other societies. In Autumn 2020 we created an academic society for every course, and we have automatically enrolled every student into a society.

All societies must have at least a President or Treasurer. For the 2020-21 academic year we are asking you to put yourself forward for one of these positions. There's no elections for the 2020-21 academic year whilst academic societies are being established.

All societies must adhere to Your SU [Code of Conduct](#). Please read this and consider it when planning and carrying out your activities, events and meetings.

### **How will Your SU help?**

Your SU's Activities and Opportunities Team are here to support all societies; helping them to develop in line with their objectives and aspirations. This might be about increasing membership numbers, or it might be about achieving other goals and highlights. Last year we supported our societies to travel, to learn, to socialise and to have brand new experiences.

We have [resources available](#) on the SU website that explain how to carry out your society activities.



Contact the team by emailing them at [yoursocieties@sunderland.ac.uk](mailto:yoursocieties@sunderland.ac.uk)

### **So what do I need to do?**

1. If you'd like to get more involved in leading events and activities for your academic society, your first step is to **complete this form**. If you have already completed this then you've done step 1!

2. Your SU team will connect you with the other students who want to be involved. You should arrange a meeting together and discuss your ideas for things your academic society can do. A member of Your Societies Team and/or the President of Activities can attend this meeting if you let us know when it is. We will support you and advise on how to make your ideas a reality!

In this meeting we will ask you to decide who is the President and Treasurer. If there are more than two students involved, other roles can be chosen (EG. Secretary, Marketing/Communications, Events).

3. All academic societies have a basic webpage that we've set up. You can use this to promote your society. Your committee will be invited to attend Your Societies training which covers everything you need to know about running a society. It is compulsory for at least the President and Treasurer so that they have all the right information. The training will give you access to your society area on the SU website – from here you can monitor membership, communicate with the society and organise events and activities.

It's a good idea at this stage to design a logo and setup social media profiles for your society.

4. Carry out the steps agreed in your initial meeting to organise your first event!

### **What happens next?**

So you've had your initial meeting, chosen your committee and set up your communication channels. What's next...?

Throughout the year Your SU's Activities and Opportunities Team will continue to offer support to all Your Societies and will develop opportunities for societies to collaborate and share. We'll help you to raise funds, to access grant funding and to promote your society across the University.

The Your Societies team run drop-ins regularly over each term. You can see when the next one is [here](#).

You are encouraged to join our society leaders Facebook & WhatsApp groups. You can connect with other society leaders in Sunderland and share ideas.