

Group Leader's Pack

Thank you for taking on the role of Group Leader for Moseley, Kings Heath & District – U3A

We hope the following guidelines will be useful to you:

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1. A Brief description of the U3A philosophy:

“Those who teach shall learn and those who learn shall also teach” was penned by Peter Laslett, 1989. It is the fundamental statement which underpins the philosophy of all U3As across the country.

- ◆ U3A is aimed at retired or semi-retired people who want to extend their existing skills, knowledge, interests and experiences by participating in groups and sharing with others.
- ◆ It hopes to demonstrate the benefits and enjoyment to be gained and the new horizons to be discovered in learning throughout life
- ◆ Members of U3As are considered to be equals, and each shares the responsibility for the group, taking an active part in the development of the group.
- ◆ Ideally no one person should dominate the group all the time.
- ◆ There are no entry requirements and no qualifications.
- ◆ All members are volunteers. U3As are therefore low cost with no tutor fees, course fees, or exam fees to be paid. No member of the U3A is allowed to benefit financially from the group activities.

2. Role of the Group Leader

In every group there will be one person who takes the lead role.

The Leader and all participants in the group must be members of Moseley, Kings Heath & District U3A. (MKH&D - U3A)

The Leader will guide the group through a course of study, but may or may not lead the learning. Most people prefer a democratic style of leadership where responsibility is shared by the group. The Leader may need to negotiate the timing and content of sessions.

There are additional tasks which can be shared. (See below)

The Leader is responsible for liaising with the Interest Group Co-ordinator to update and contribute to the website, monthly updates and newsletters.

2 a) Starting up a new group

Anyone wishing to start an interest group should contact an Interest Group Co-ordinator. Information can then be circulated to members via the website, newsletters and at the monthly meetings.

The leader will negotiate with members about: - What does the group want to do? How often will it meet? Who will lead a session? What do people want to learn? How can we achieve this? What common knowledge exists in the group already? Are there resources we could use – books, DVDs, websites, external visits. Involve as many people as possible in the planning. Identify venues for meetings.

2 b) Types of Study/Styles of leadership

As a leader it is a good idea to aim for a good mixture of methods. e.g. individual members take responsibility to find out about a topic, and bring back knowledge to feed into discussion; a small team prepares a session and delivers it; one member of the group acts as “tutor”; a member organises visits to exhibitions;

You may need to split the group to keep it manageable, either because of size or existing skills of people in the group.

2c) Running a meeting

Set some ground rules for discussions. For example: Everyone must have a

chance to speak. One person speaks at a time. Everyone should listen. Everyone's opinion is valued and respected even if people differ in views. These will vary from group to group.

2d) Where will your meetings be held? Funding Implications.

Homes. Many groups are held in homes on a rota basis, where refreshments are supplied by the host, funded by small donations from members of the group.

Rented venues. However some groups need to meet in rented venues, either because of the nature of the activity or because of the number of people participating. External venues will have funding implications. In this case the Group Leader can request support in funding an appropriate venue by approaching the Finance team of MKH&D U3A. **(See Executive Committee members)**; and additional voluntary contributions by members of the group can help to support the cost. Paperwork will need to be completed for the Treasurer. **(See voluntary contributions sheet)**

Support is given to identify appropriate venues by a member of the Committee. **(See costed venues list).**

Out and about. Your activity may take you out and about, or you may wish to make visits to other venues. You can arrange your own transport or hire. **(See transport hire sheet)**

2e) Tasks which are overseen by Leader, but can be delegated

Negotiating content of the interest activity/programme with group members.
Confirming content of sessions.
Agree who is leading the session
Negotiating day/time/frequency of meetings
Completing Paperwork. Members' contact form with membership number; registers; waiting list.
Collecting voluntary contributions where a venue is hired..
Booking /arranging venues/arranging visits

2f) U3A Insurance.

All members are covered by the National U3A Public Liability Insurance. Exceptions are activities which “involve any craft with an engine”, or “if you are contemplating using machine/power tools or participating in potentially hazardous activities like absailing...consult National Office in advance”. It does not provide personal accident insurance.

2g) Winding up a group.

Groups are not expected to go on for ever! Members may complete a programme of learning and wish to move on. The activity can wind up because it has achieved its aims.

3. Support for Group Leaders

You are assigned an Interest Group co-ordinator who will offer support. **(See attached sheet of Executive Committee members)**

Resource materials on loan and support are available from National U3A subject support – contact 020 8315 0199. Opening hours Tuesday to Thursday 9.30am to 4.00pm.

And for all members:

You can log on to the Trust's website at www.u3a.org.uk where you can find numerous links to U3A Groups and their activities across the United Kingdom and further afield. The site also has a wide range of activities in their Members' section, where as a paid up member of a U3A Group, you are invited to create an account for yourself by registering a User Name and Password, also listing your U3A Group affiliation (Moseley Kings Heath and District). Registration offers a range of additional services such as regional links, U3A events, shared learning projects, a message board and members' forums, the online shop, offering U3A branded goods, publicity materials and handbooks

Useful websites: www.selfdirectedlearning.com; Our own website <http://mkhdu3a> has now been set up and there is useful information about our U3A.

4. Promoting your group activity.

You can use the web pages, monthly meetings and newsletter to raise interest in your group's activities.

5. Updating Co-ordinators

Ensure that you keep your Co-ordinators up-to-date; when do you meet, how often, is your group full? They will update the activities list. Do you have a useful item for the newsletter or web-page?