



## CHAPTER 4

### STARTING / RUNNING A CLUB

#### Essentials

- A club must have no fewer than 10 student members at any time.
- Before affiliation, a club must hold a meeting to develop/vote on its Constitution – this is your Inaugural General Meeting (for more info see the Meetings chapter). [see UNSA Club Constitution Template]
- To affiliate with UNSA, a club should then submit its Constitution and an UNSA Club Affiliation Form.
- University of Newcastle students must comprise at least 75% of the club's membership at all times.
- A club must have at least a President and Treasurer, and additional roles depending on its size.
- A club's aims, objectives, events and activities must be inclusive of all students who wish to join (in good faith).

#### a. Starting a Club

Before starting a club, you should check the club directory on our website to see if a similar club already exists. If so, problem solved! Click the button to join. Each club needs to have a standalone identity and therefore cannot mimic UNSA or another already established club.

If not, the first thing you'll need is nine other people with whom to start your club. If you have a great idea for a new club but are a few members short, get in touch with us; we can put a call out through our social media platforms and help with recruitment.

Once you have ten people on board, you need to hold an in person or online meeting (this meeting will be your Inaugural General Meeting) and develop a Constitution. A constitution is a legally-binding document for your club that formalises the conditions and rules of your club and your members – a rule book. You should not rush drawing-up your constitution without careful consideration of what is going into it. A well-written constitution can be of great use as it lets everyone know what the aims and objectives of the club are, and how to deal with any situations that may arise.



To help you get started, we have an **UNSA Club Constitution Template** that you can download from our website. Read below for more on your Clubs Constitution.

Once you have a Constitution in place, all you need to do is fill out an **UNSA Club Affiliation Form** and submit both to us at [unsa-clubs@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:unsa-clubs@newcastle.edu.au). Your application will be assessed by our clubs team; once it's approved, you're officially an UNSA club! Yay!

If you have any questions or concerns about this process, don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We're here to help. 😊

## **b. Club's Constitution**

All club's affiliating with UNSA are required to have a constitution.

UNSA provides a template that covers the basics for your club or society, which can be found under Starting/Running a Club Templates on our website.

Get to know the document, have a copy at meetings, and introduce new exec members to the document straight away. Discuss it in wider club meetings, ask questions and clarify what it means and how it should help guide your club. (If you find that the document no longer suits your direction, see the section below). The exec section should outline the responsibilities and roles and should be used to ensure that these are being filled. Similarly it reminds you of meeting and event requirements for the year.

It is up to you how much you use your constitution, but ultimately it is there to guide you.

If you wish to make changes to your constitution you will need to bring changes to the Annual General Meeting (AGM), or if it cannot wait, you will need to have a Special General Meeting (SGM). Ensure that other exec members and general club members have the opportunity to ask open questions. You may then vote in any changes you'd like to make. Once you've done this make sure to submit your constitutional changed to the UNSA Clubs Officer for approval. This is to just check that your changes are in line with the principles of the UNSA and the clubs code of conduct.

\*Please note there are specific legislative requirements to change the constitution of an incorporated association.

## **c. Club's Aims and Objectives**

As part of your constitution your club will need to decide on the clubs aims and objectives. As part of this you need to consider being inclusive; clubs are open to all University of Newcastle students (in good faith). You'll also need to consider how your club benefits students and what the purpose of your club is (aside from bringing students with a collective interest together). Make sure to describe what your club does, will you be having meetings, stalls, events?



Clubs are here to be welcoming to all students. At UNSA we are about building community and being inclusive. What can your club bring to the UON community? How can you make even one student's experience at university safe, fun, and memorable?

#### **d. Affiliation**

In general, UNSA stipulates a minimum standard that clubs must meet, including (but not limited to):

- that your club is run in a democratic fashion
- that all club finances are being used solely for the benefit of all club members – clubs cannot operate for financial gain
- the club must have a set of 'rules' that meet UNSA requirements. This is commonly referred to as the club's Constitution
- there are no other existing clubs, programs or initiatives which have a similar name aims and objectives, activities or purpose currently affiliated with UNSA
- once affiliated, the club must operate within the scope of the aims and objectives stated in its constitution

The affiliation process involves the club demonstrating to UNSA that they meet all the minimum requirements.

From time to time there may be a club that UNSA declines to affiliate. To provide oversight of this UNSA has established an Independent Review Panel.

The Independent Review Panel is comprised of the Associate Director Student Experience and Engagement, the Equity & Diversity Coordinator, and a representative from Campus Care. This Independent Panel will review appeals from clubs that have had their affiliation rejected. Both UNSA and the club would be entitled to make submissions to the panel before they meet. The panel would consider the submissions and make a formal recommendation to the UNSA Board. They would be able to share this recommendation with the club Executive and the University if required. The Independent Panel would only be able to make a recommendation and the final decision will still be made by the UNSA Board.

#### **e. External affiliation, Sponsorship, Supports, Partnerships & Staff**



UNSA appreciates many clubs will have a variety of stakeholders engaging with their club. UNSA requires a clear understanding of your club and its' operations, therefore UNSA needs to be advised of any; External affiliation, Sponsorship, Supports, Partnerships & Staff (either employed by your club or another entity or seconded to your club). We will need information relating to the nature, purpose and scope of these arrangements. Any External affiliation should be voted in by members and ideally be listed in your Constitution.

In the glossary please define External Affiliation as affiliation with any other entity that is not UNSA.

## **f. Benefits to Affiliation**

While most clubs affiliate with UNSA primarily to receive SSAF funding for their activities [See *Chapter 6: Funding and Finances*], there are a range of other benefits to affiliation. For example:

- Our social media platforms and communications. For example the UNSA website, through which you can advertise and promote your events to all UNSA website users, and other student clubs
- Our student publication, [Opus Magazine](#), has a wide readership and regularly profiles student clubs.
- We can print posters, flyers and other paper documents (A4 or A3) for you in our office.
- We have an in-house graphic designer who can produce logos or design elements for your club as needed. (Be sure to give us plenty of notice for these, as her workload may vary.)
- We can offer guidance or logistical advice on planning your events!
- Your events will be covered by the University's public liability insurance (provided they have been approved by UNSA).
- We have spaces available for clubs to book and support for booking university managed spaces.
- Qualify to have a stall at O-Week.
- Host one of the UNSA BBQs and have even more exposure to the wider student body!

## **g. Membership**

75% of membership must be current University of Newcastle students. *It is common practice for alumni, community members and non-students to be involved in clubs, but majority of membership must be students.*

To determine how many active members a club has at any given time (for purposes of re-affiliation, funding approval, etc.), UNSA consults the User list contained within your club's page on our web directory. For this reason, it is critical that you have your members sign up to your club's page, to give an accurate indication of club membership.



Having your members sign up also confers a number of benefits – such as the ability to communicate with them quickly via email and SMS, the ability to share registration and feedback forms, and to receive detailed analytics on their interests and engagement. You are also welcome to continue tracking membership through any other documents and platforms you wish, as long as the list on your club’s page is kept up to date.

It is up to the club whether you choose to charge a membership fee or not. Your membership can be totally free – that’s your choice. If you want to charge – please specify this in your affiliation form. If charging a membership fee, you need to clearly articulate to people why they are being charged this money and what it’s being used for.

If you have any questions about setting up Groups, signing up members or any other element of club page management, please don’t hesitate to contact us.

## **h. Anything else I’ll need?**

Yes! In order to receive SSAF funding, your President and Treasurer will both need to complete an online [Generation Governance](#) course, and you’ll also need to open a bank account in the club’s name where funding can be deposited. See *Chapter 6: Funding and Finances* for more information.

While it isn’t strictly necessary, we’d also encourage you to create a dedicated email address for club communications. This will help you avoid any loss in communication as your Executive members change over time. See *Chapter 7: Comms and Marketing* for more information.

## **i. Your Executive**

A student club consists of its members (of which at least 75% must be University of Newcastle students) and an elected Executive Committee. All club Executive members must be enrolled University of Newcastle students.

Executive members should be elected at your club’s Inaugural General Meeting or Annual General Meeting, to serve for the duration of the following calendar year (January 1 - December 31). If an Executive member resigns from their position at any point, that position may be opened to other



members as a casual vacancy until the next Annual General Meeting. Make sure any outgoing executives clearly explain the role, your clubs constitution and the UNSA's Code of Conduct to any incoming executives.

Your club must have a President and Treasurer regardless of its size, but as your club expands, you can and should create additional roles to maintain good governance (and better share responsibilities among members).

If you're unsure which roles you'll need for a larger club, we would recommend the following:

- A **Vice President** can offer assistance to your President and step into the role whenever they are unavailable.
- A **Secretary** can take minutes at meetings (and help plan them), and may also be in charge of moderating your club's communications or social media.

The Executive Committee is responsible for the management of the club, including its contracts and finances (for which they are personally liable). Executive members are also responsible for liaising with the UNSA Clubs Support Officer and attending all required annual meetings. When new members become part of the Executive, through yearly elections or casual vacancies, make sure you let us know.

## **j. Re-Affiliation**

Applications for re-affiliation should be made before the end of the academic year for the next coming year. Once awarded affiliation status it shall stand until the end of the academic year (one calendar year), unless the affiliation status is revoked or suspended by UNSA.

Affiliation with UNSA expires on December 31 each year; re-affiliation should be completed by February 1. If your Club wishes to participate at O-Week you need to be either in the process of being re-affiliated with UNSA or be re-affiliated by February 1.

You should have all receipts and financial reporting to UNSA by November 30. If you wish to re-affiliate with UNSA, please let us know at this time. We recommend you affiliate with UNSA between November – January 31<sup>st</sup>.

You do not need to download and complete another UNSA Clubs Affiliation Form.

To re-affiliate, simply send the following through to [UNSA-clubs@newcastle.edu.au](mailto:UNSA-clubs@newcastle.edu.au):

1. A copy of your Annual General Meeting minutes – these should clearly show your President's Report, Treasurer's Report and election of your new executive
2. The contact details of your new executive
3. Your Annual Financial Statement – as presented by your treasurer at your AGM



4. Your completed Clubs & Societies Annual Plan template
5. Two completed Generation Governance certificates (for the new members of your executive)
6. A copy of UNSA Clubs Code of Conduct which is signed by the incoming President.
7. Your updated Constitution (if any changes have been made)

We look forward to having you with us for another year! 😊

### **k. Incorporated vs. Unincorporated Clubs**

When an entity (such as UNSA) becomes incorporated, it exists as a legal entity separate to its members. This means that individual members are not legally liable. Student clubs, however, are *unincorporated* associations by default; that is to say, your club does *not* exist as its own legal entity, so it cannot be sued – individual students within it can.

In the unlikely event, then, that something serious occurs at a club meeting or event – such as injury or harassment – then you as an individual may be subject to legal consequences. This is another reason why you need written approval for all events from UNSA and Clubs. Covid: because without it, you have no other protection should anything go terribly wrong.

Becoming an incorporated entity involves submitting an application to ASIC. [Click this link for more information.](#) We do not ordinarily require our clubs to become incorporated as part of their affiliation – but if your club has sufficient size (hundreds of members) or wealth (roughly \$100,000 or more), we would strongly recommend that you consider it to protect yourselves as Executive members.

These UNSA Club Guidelines are written specifically for unincorporated clubs; if you are incorporated, there may be significant changes to your governance, procedural and reporting requirements.

