

## 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).
- If a club does not align with UNSA and University values, UNSA may choose whether to affiliate a club or not at its own discretion. As UNSA is a private company limited by guarantee, UNSA may choose to affiliate clubs that align with our aims and objectives.

#### 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 students to start your club with you. 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. Your Constitution is a set of regulations and procedures that outline the way your club will operate, agreed upon by your members. Rules and regulations that aren't specific to your club – such as those around grievances or

funding requests – do not need to be included, as these are determined by UNSA and contained within these guidelines.

To help you get started, we have an **UNSA Club Constitution Template** that you can download from our website.

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. Clubs 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).

## **c. 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!

#### **d. 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.

#### **e. 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.

## **f. 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.

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.

## **g. Faith-based and Political Clubs**

UNSA is an apolitical, secular organisation, and we love supporting clubs from all walks of life. As political and faith-based clubs are built upon a belief system rather than a shared activity, we have to have some specific guidelines relating to these societies. This ensures that we remain fair, unbiased,

and reasonable, and can best support inclusivity not only for our clubs, but for our wider student membership.

Clubs must demonstrate that they are student governed and student led.

UNSA will not affiliate a club that acts as a branch for an external organisation. External pastoral support is permitted, and this must be disclosed to UNSA. All Club Executive members must be current University of Newcastle students. Clubs with links to external bodies will be monitored to ensure that there is no undue influence from these bodies, and that the club is truly led by students and for students.

Any faith-based student club that affiliates with UNSA will also need to register itself with the University of Newcastle Chaplaincy. The Chaplaincy hosts an advisory committee that liaises with faith-based clubs and societies, offering guidance on how they can best serve their members while maintaining transparency and avoiding discrimination on campus. The Chaplaincy can also help connect students with faith-based clubs they may have an interest in joining.

Under SSAF rules, UNSA is not permitted to fund any club activities that support a particular political party or candidate. For that reason, UNSA-affiliated political clubs cannot apply for SSAF funding. However, we will still support you in all the other ways listed above, and can help you to come up with other ideas to raise funds!

When affiliating, political clubs must disclose affiliations to particular political parties or political candidates.

Proselytisation of any kind is not permitted, and UNSA will not affiliate any club whose aims and objectives amount to proselytisation.

UNSA reserves the right to assess potential political or faith-based club applications on a case-by-case basis, and approve them at its own discretion.

## **h. Re-Affiliation**

Affiliation with UNSA expires on December 31 each year; beyond this point, your activities will not be covered by insurance until your club re-affiliates with UNSA for the following year. The cut-off date for re-affiliation is February 1. This is to ensure that your club will have a stall and promotional opportunities during O-Week.

You should have all receipts and financial reporting to UNSA by November 30. If you wish you re-affiliate with UNSA, please let us know at this time.

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. The contact details of your new executive
2. Your Annual Financial Statement
3. Your completed Clubs & Societies Annual Plan template
4. Your updated Constitution (if any changes have been made)
5. A copy of your Annual General Meeting minutes
6. Two completed Generation Governance certificates (for members of your executive)

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

### **i. 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 will be significant changes to your governance, procedural and reporting requirement.