

HALLAM STUDENTS' UNION

AN ACADEMIC LEAD'S GUIDE:

ACADEMIC SOCIETIES



FIND YOUR PLACE AT HALLAM

For a full list of the academic societies on offer at Sheffield Hallam Students' Union, check out the Students' Union [website](#).



Introduction

The Student's Union takes pride in building a better Hallam community through our societies, and creating an inclusive environment for everyone. The aim of this handbook is to provide relevant information and guidance on how an academic lead can effectively support their society members and work with the Students' Union to ensure the longevity of these groups.

Whether you are new to the role of academic lead for one of our academic societies or whether you have plenty of experience supporting student groups, this guide is designed to provide you with the most up to date information from the Union to support you to support our students.

Objective of this guide:

- What is an Academic Society?
 - Society life cycle and striving for longevity
 - How they run: Roles of student committee members
- What is your role?
- What will committee members need to know?
- Additional Information
 - What does an academic year look like for an academic society?

Contact the Student Groups team

activitiesadmin@shu.ac.uk

WHAT IS AN ACADEMIC SOCIETY

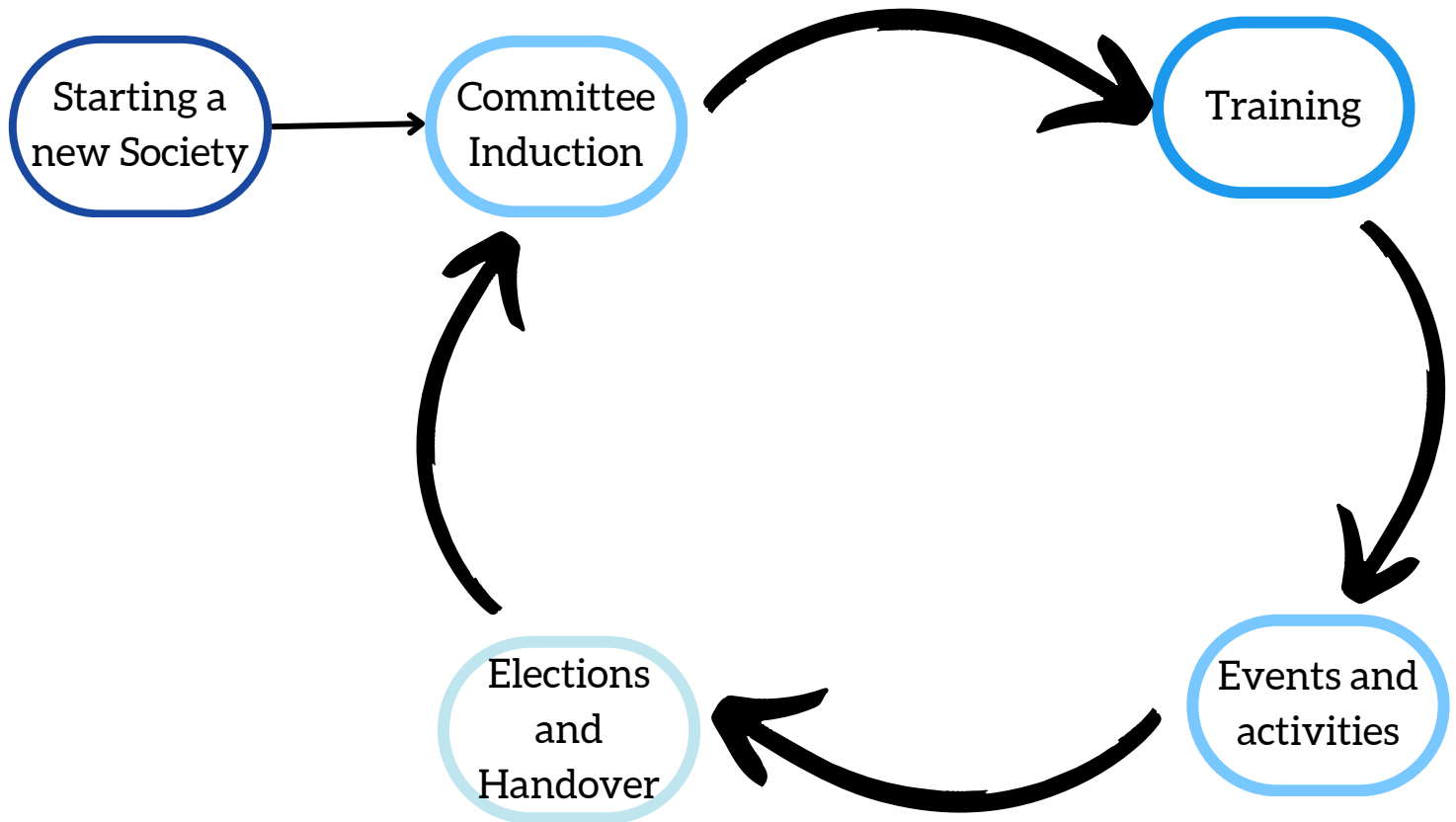


First and foremost, all Sheffield Hallam Students' Union Societies are student-led.

These groups are a space for students to develop some useful organisation, communication, and leadership skills, all while sharing their interests with their peers. Academic societies do differ slightly from Social societies, but the social aspect is still an important part of what they can offer. Academic societies are more likely to have events with guest speakers, collaborations with external organisations, university input, and/or collaborative events.

Academic Societies bring together students based on their academic interest, but this is not limited to the course that they study. If a Physics student has an interest in Languages, our Societies are open to all students to share their passion for different fields of study.

LIFE CYCLE



SHSU societies have an annual 'life cycle' that begins and ends with elections. Throughout the year the society undergoes the steps of the life cycle, with support from academics and the SU. In summary, these steps include the initial set up process of the society and/or the election of a new committee, compulsory annual committee training, the start of society activity, optional additional training workshops, and then an elections and handover process to get a new committee established.

The society life cycle is a useful way to explain to the societies members that we are striving for longevity. We often see many academic societies close down over the summer period to restart in the autumn term. While support is provided to these groups to set up again, the resource required from the Students' Union, the academic department supporting them and the students themselves is significantly higher in comparison to those societies who are established into the continuous cycle.

HOW THEY RUN

Societies are run by committees usually comprising a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Equality and Diversity Officer. These are the core roles, and societies do have the option to run by-elections to establish additional roles, such as a Social Media Officer or Vice President.

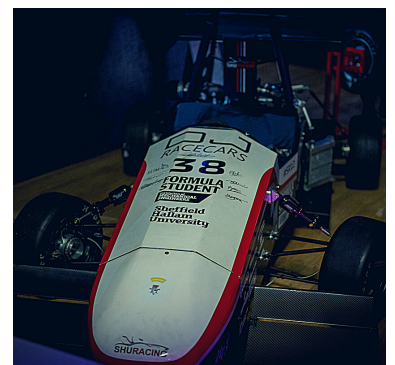
Our societies have been risk-rated, meaning that any society that engages in regular higher risk activities will have been categorised as a High-Risk society. Our High-Risk societies receive additional training, may have to complete additional paperwork (for example equipment maintenance records), and must have another core committee role of Health and Safety Officer. These societies will have been contacted to explain their status. If you are supporting a society that has been categorised as High-Risk you can ask for more information by email activitiesadmin@shu.ac.uk and you can join any relevant training sessions.

Committee members should understand that they hold their post for one academic year - usually from August until the following July. Members who are elected through a by-election will hold their role until the end of that academic year - so if they are elected in January they would still finish that term in post in July.

Society memberships must be renewed every academic year (from 1st August) and students must have a standard membership to be able to stand for committee roles and to vote for candidates. Elections take place through the SU website (we do the admin, the vote counts etc.)

There is lots of additional information about elections available on the Committee Portal and the Elections webpage, and the Student Groups Team will contact all societies before the elections period begins to give them all the necessary information.

In your role supporting societies it is worth noting that some societies struggle with recruitment and elections so this is an area where you can support them by sharing election dates and information to ensure students understand what is required of them and why they should join a committee!



COMMITTEE ROLES

All committee members form part of a team that works to further the development of the society and they share some common responsibilities:

- Signing and following their Society Constitution
- Completing relevant training and paperwork
- Ensuring the society runs smoothly
- Listening to the society's members
- Ensuring the financial sustainability of the society
- Ensuring the future sustainability of the society by making members aware of elections and giving a good handover



Each role also has some more specific responsibilities - it is worth noting that each society will run differently based on their activity, their community, and their aims. Some Societies benefit from rigid role structures while others prefer to take a collaborative approach. The SU supports all approaches but it is important to note we will only accept paperwork, grant admin rights and discuss Society business with those officially elected to the Committee. Unofficial Committee members are not recognised by the SU. For general information, please see the [Committee Roles](#) page.

PRESIDENT

The President role suits a strong leader, or someone looking to develop this skill, who is compassionate and willing to help other Committee members with their responsibilities. A student who takes on the role of President will develop leadership qualities, gain experience in organising individuals and groups, and experience in facilitating formal meetings. [Check out this role's profile here!](#)

COMMITTEE ROLES

SECRETARY

The Secretary role suits an organised individual who is a good communicator, or someone looking to develop this skill. They support the administrative needs of the Society through booking rooms, organising transport, liaising with external suppliers and instructors and the Students' Union. A student who takes on the role of Secretary will gain experience in drafting formal documentation, networking experience with instructors, venues, and suppliers, and facilitating formal processes. [Check out this role's profile here!](#)

TREASURER

The Treasurer role suits an individual who is passionate about removing financial barriers to participation and getting the best deals for their members. A student who takes on the role of Treasurer will gain experience in managing budgets, reporting on income and expenditure and networking with suppliers. [Check out this role's profile here!](#)

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY OFFICER

The Equality and Diversity Officer role suits an individual who is passionate about ensuring the Society is inclusive and has a desire to build an inclusive Hallam community. A student who takes on the role of Equality and Diversity Officer will gain experience of actively considering and challenging barriers to inclusion in an organised group. [Check out this role's profile here!](#)

HEALTH AND SAFETY OFFICER

The Health and Safety Officer role suits an organised individual who has an eye for detail and is passionate about ensuring the societies activity is safe for its members. A student who takes on the role of Health and Safety Officer will gain experience in risk assessments, safety practices, teamworking, facilitating and attending training, and working with their society and the union to ensure that student safety is always prioritised. [Check out this role's profile here!](#)

WHAT IS YOUR ROLE?

As an academic lead you will need to support the student-led and student-run activities, events (and more) of your academic society. You are not expected to run the society - that is the job of the committee!



You can offer some practical support with planning events, suggesting guest speakers, and ensuring that the committee are following the SU processes to make sure their events are safe, well planned, and effectively delivered.

You will work with your academic society(/ies) to find what works for you - some societies will need less input than others, and some may have lots of questions and want more hands-on support at the start of the year.

The following section aims to provide an overview of the main things the Committee need to know, if they require further information they can refer to the [Committee Portal](#) or contact the team.

If you have questions that aren't covered here, please feel free to get in touch at activitiesadmin@shu.ac.uk.



WHAT DO COMMITTEES NEED TO KNOW

Committee members have some responsibilities and processes to follow. These are explained to them in inductions and training delivered by the SU. However, it's useful for you to also be aware of how societies run through the SU so that you can advise students when they are planning activities. The SU has a [Committee Portal](#) on the website that has all the paperwork mentioned below, training and tips, and a monthly newsletter available. The Committee Portal will be your society's best resource as it should cover most, if not all, of their queries. It would be useful for you to familiarise yourself with the themes of the content on there to sign post students if they have queries.

PAPERWORK

Societies are fun, supportive spaces for students to share their interests but there are some important bits of paperwork we ask for from Committees.

Constitution, Annual Risk Assessment and Annual Guest Speaker Form

These three are the compulsory paperwork we ask every society to complete at the start of the year. The constitution is a guiding document that lays out what is expected of the society and the different rules and information they should be aware of; it also has a section that allows committee to set targets for them to work towards that year. The constitution must be signed by all committee members.

The annual risk assessment is necessary for all societies, it's their chance to review their regular activity and identify what needs to be put in place to make it safe. For some societies there will be far less information to put on this risk assessment. Guidance on how to fill in a risk assessment is available at training as well as on the [Committee Portal](#).

The annual Guest Speaker Form may not be relevant to your Society, for regular activity it is typically in relation to additional instructors who are not students or staff at Sheffield Hallam University or Students' Union. If the Society is unsure whether this form is required, get in touch and our team can advise them.



WHAT DO COMMITTEES NEED TO KNOW

Event and Trip Proposals, Risk Assessments and Funding Requests

Most activity that takes place outside of their annual/regular activity must follow the trip and event process. There are a couple of steps to this designed to ensure the committee plan and host enriching activity for their members. For full guidance on these processes and the relevant documentation, please see the [Trips and Events](#) page of the Portal.



It is important to note, not all events need an event proposal – if the society want to run a casual social event, e.g. drinks at a café or pub, they don't need to do paperwork for this. However, paperwork is necessary for something that may need ticketing, and anything that requires funding.

An example would be, if the society wanted to host a study social every week, this would be covered by their annual paperwork. An end of year ball however, would need to follow the full event process.

Trip and Event process - at a glance

1. Proposal Form - submitted at least 4 weeks in advance
2. Risk Assessment - assessing the specific risks of that event or activity
3. Guest speaker form - if the society wants to bring in a speaker specifically for this event, they will need to submit this with at least 4 weeks notice
4. Funding request - society events and trips that use this process are eligible for funding, they must submit a funding request for this to be considered. For more information on our funding, see the Funding page here.
5. Trip Registration - If the society is going on a trip, this form is compulsory and must be submitted before they leave.



ANNUAL CALENDAR

There are a number of events and activities that a Society participates in throughout an academic year, we have included a calendar of the annual events to give you a better idea when a Society may need more support. If you have any questions, get in touch with the team.

AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New Committees officially take post. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee Training • Welcome <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Societies Fair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Society Activity resumes for the new year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional workshops for committee development begin
DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional workshops continue • Christmas Events take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome Back • Additional workshops continue • Society regular activity has resumed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional workshops continue • Committees begin to plan their handovers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Committee Elections begin • Elections events and workshops begin
APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on supporting Committee members to translate their skills into their CVs • Societies Awards Ball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societies carry out their handovers to the incoming committee to ensure the Society can continue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular activity starts to wind down • Society End of Year Balls/Summer events take place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societies typically break for Summer by July

WELLBEING

Whether you are feeling lonely or need some advice, there is support available!

SELF HELP Online resources

The SU website provides access to online self help resources for different kinds of advice and wellbeing support.

Check those out here:
[Help and Support](#)

WELLBEING CONTACT INFORMATION

Need to talk to someone?

THE STUDENT ADVICE CENTRE:

<https://www.hallamstudentsunion.com/support/advice/>

Email: advicecentre@shu.ac.uk
Phone: 0114 225 4148

UNIVERSITY WELLBEING SERVICES:

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/wellbeing>

URGENT HELP:

<https://www.shu.ac.uk/wellbeing/urgent-help>

WELLBEING ACTIVITIES

Check out the [Whats On](#) page for activities to support your wellbeing.

