Intro to being a Secretary

Congratulations! You have successfully been elected as secretary of your society/Volunteering Group. The Secretary is the backbone of any student group and ensures that everything runs smoothly, both in terms of administration and communication. This guide aims to provide you with a few pieces of key information to help you along the way.

The secretary is responsible for the society’s/Volunteering Group’s non-financial administration, covering important procedures such as Risk Assessment, as well as room bookings and making sure minutes are taken during Meetings. They are also responsible for administering any elections.

The secretary should make sure that the membership lists are complete, accurate and up to date. This includes names, contact details, whether the member has paid their membership fees (if a society).
Meetings

Agenda

An agenda is a summary of the points to be discussed at an upcoming meeting. Every meeting should have one drawn up and disseminated in advance, usually via email or newsletter. This allows all members to prepare, and is particularly important if there are any controversial issues to be discussed. If you have an issue that strongly divides opinion, you’re much likely to reach a consensus by the end of the meeting if no-one feels ambushed and ill-prepared. Here’s an Example Agenda.

Timescales

The number of days’ notice you need to give for a meeting and the corresponding agenda should (depending on the type of meeting) be specified in your constitution. They will likely be 14 days’ notice for the meeting, and 7 days’ notice for the agenda. If your constitution doesn’t specify, you might want to think about adding this for the same reasons of transparency and conflict-avoidance.

Minutes

You should write up a brief ‘minutes’ document at every meeting your society/Volunteering Group holds. This is essential for the end-of-year reporting and will help you keep a record of any decisions or action points made during meetings. Minutes are a useful way of allowing your committee members to keep up to date with what their responsibilities are and should also be at hand should any of your society/Volunteering Group members wish to view them. This is to ensure accountability and transparency in the running of all EUSA societies/Volunteering Groups.

Taking minutes involves typing up a short but precise and accurate summary of what was discussed in the meeting and including (most importantly!) the action points which were decided, and who needs to carry them out. Minutes shouldn’t be a transcript of what everyone said.

You’ll also need to email the minutes out to other committee members, preferably within three days of the committee meeting. Here’s some Example Minutes.

Elections / AGMs

It is usually the responsibility of the Secretary to organise your Volunteering Group’s AGM. Have a look at our guidance on running Elections and AGMs for more info.

Admin

Emails

It is important as secretary of the society/Volunteering Group to keep up with the correspondence and regularly check the email address which you have chosen to provide on the website. It is likely that people visiting the site will email in to find out more about your society/Volunteering Group, approach you about potential projects and ask for various pieces of general information about your society/Volunteering Group and its activities.

Bear in mind that any correspondence from EUSA will likely come to the matric-number email addresses of the office-bearers which were given at the time of re-registration in March.
Correspondence is crucial to keep a track of as it can be essential in tracking important discussions and information.

**Creating Mailing Lists and Sending Group Emails (societies only)**

This is one of the most useful features of your society profile on the EUSA website.

We’d recommend that you ask your members to sign up through the website as they can pay for membership online (with money going straight to your society account) and get added to your mailing list. Any members that join in person at a meeting can be added via bulk upload. Doing this allows you to email your members in whatever groups you choose. In any case, it’s vital to keep track of your membership and who has (and hasn’t paid). This is meant to be the easiest way to do that.

Find out more about all of these in our Society Profile Guidance, or you can skip straight to the pages just mentioned:

[Messages] | [Adding Members] | [Memberships and Groups]

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**Collecting Post from the Connect Office**

There are pigeon holes with space for societies/Volunteering Groups in the Connect Office. As this is much safer long-term than personal flat addresses, many societies/Volunteering Groups choose to get mail sent here. You may be surprised how much post you have, so check it regularly! Boxes/packages will also be left for you here. The address is:

**Pleaseance**

Some societies have long-term space in Pleasance, in which case your mail will most likely go there, but again that’s up to you. During the Fringe, Pleasance becomes a venue. We try to separate out society mail before it gets mixed up with mail for the venue, but you would be advised to specify the above address for the summer.

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**Risk Assessment / Insurance**

Those running a society/Volunteering Group or committee have a ‘duty of care’ in law to ensure the safety of its members and any other people who may be affected by its activities and events. Anyone who creates ‘hazards’ needs to be responsible for managing them. So, it is crucial for societies/Volunteering Groups to be in control of their activities, particularly in relation to insurance. Find out more in our Events guidance.

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**Other areas**

You may well have committee members specifically elected to take care of the following areas, but we’ll mention them here, as they would most likely default to the Secretary if that is not the case.

**Website / Society Profile (societies only)**

Check out our Society Profile Guidance to find out how to make the most of your online presence.

**Marketing & Publicity**

To find out more about how to publicise your society/Volunteering Group, events and campaigns then see our Marketing guide.
**Room Booking / Events**
For reasons of traceability, only the President/Group Leader, Secretary and Treasurer will have room booking privileges as default. If you have an Events Manager, or similar committee position, you can request room booking privileges for that person as part of the Re-registration form. Otherwise, Secretaries are usually expected to be responsible for booking rooms.

Find out more in our [Events guidance](#).

**Constitution**
This lays out the specific aims and objectives of your group, and details all the rules relating to committee structure, election, membership etc. As with all important documents, the Secretary should take responsibility to make sure this is up-to-date and available publicly. Have a look at our [Governance guidance](#) for more info.