

# Secretary

Congratulations on being elected Secretary of your group!

The Secretary role focusses on communication, and keeping a record of everything that happens within a group. This can sound like a mammoth task, but the duties can be roughly divided into the following categories – communication, membership records, and meeting agendas and minutes.

First it can be helpful to think about what makes a good Secretary and committee member, outside the individual duties. We can do this by looking at the 7 Principles of Public Life, which are the basic ethical standards expected of public office holders –

## Selflessness

- As a committee member you should act solely in terms of the interest of your members; they make up your group, and their experience defines you and sets your direction
- Set the standard of behaviour and try to be a good role model, your members may look up to you

## Openness and Honesty

- You and your committee should never engage in activity or practices that you wouldn't be happy to explain to your members
- Your members should be able to trust you, and trust that you are putting every effort into making sure they have the best membership experience possible from engaging in your group

## Integrity and Accountability

- Steer clear of situations which may challenge your integrity and your commitment to the best interest of your members
- This could include financial benefit or any kind of preferential treatment
- Remember that your members have every right to scrutinise everything you do and hold you accountable for decisions - act accordingly!
- The group will be held to account by documents that you are responsible for maintaining

## Leadership and Objectivity

- Take direction from the President but remember committee work is a team effort
- Keep in mind the importance of everyone sticking to these values
- Celebrate success!
- Recognise your key role in keeping the group accountable and on track with records, minutes, schedules and databases
- Act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

# Secretary Responsibilities

## Deal with incoming communications

It is the Secretary's responsibility to monitor the group's incoming communication. You can then pass on details relevant to other roles (ie Sponsorship queries to the Treasurer) and raise important points at meetings for the whole committee to discuss. It's important to regularly check with the President if anything needs communicating out to members.

## Send out crucial information to members

You will need to regularly communicate with your members, whether this is through a group newsletter or an email with important information regarding fixtures for the term. When sending out these communications, take time to make sure your content is easy to read and understand.

## Maintain an accurate membership list

When people sign up to your group online, they will automatically be added to your database on Unioncloud- Bristol SU's membership software. You are then able to send communication via the website.

## Publicise meetings and keep members up to date with all activities

The President will organise the AGM and other committee meetings, however it is the Secretary's responsibility to publicise these meetings, remind the committee, and communicate meeting outcomes to members

## Provide secretarial support to the committee

This includes providing agendas for meetings and taking minutes. Minutes and actions should then be circulated and followed up at the next meeting.

## Ensure documentation is up to date

Your documentation includes all your risk assessments, room bookings and constitution.

## The key to secretarial success is organisation

- Plan when you're going to do your secretarial duties and set time aside in your diary
- Put half an hour aside for emails rather than reading and replying frantically to each one as it comes in
- Set up a template for newsletters, agendas and minutes so you're not creating them anew every time
- Take a laptop to meetings – it's more time-effective to type minutes than it is to handwrite and type them up later
- Back up your documents to a cloud site so they never get lost, and can be accessed by other committee members if needed
- Familiarise yourself with the Bristol SU website to make full use of all the functions it offers

**For further questions and support, contact [bristolsu-development@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:bristolsu-development@bristol.ac.uk)**