Inclusion Officer

Before We Begin…

Being an Inclusion Officer isn’t simply filling a token role on any society or working committee’s committee. Inclusion officers have a challenging job to do which is of great importance to your members. This guide can help you on your way and give you good tips and advice about approaching your role.

What is an Inclusion Officer?
Every society and committee has an Inclusion Officer. This is a core role that is a direct contact for students who might find it more difficult to sign up and get stuck in. The role can be covered by another mandatory member of the committee – president, secretary or treasurer. The Inclusion Officer has the important role of ensuring that anyone who wants to get involved can do so!

Basic Things An Inclusion Officer Should Do…

1) Publicise the position to existing and new members during Intro Week and at the Activities Fair and at society events and meetings. Promote that you are here to support members throughout the year and ensure everyone gets involved.

2) Work with other committee members to ensure that their area of work has taken inclusion issues into consideration e.g. balls, evening meals, walks, AGMs, awareness weeks and socials – and that a range of events are organised.

3) Work in confidentiality when discussing students who have specific requirements or needs – use ‘the student’ rather than their name. If necessary, bring any questions on specific issues to the Activities & Sports Zone for advice.

4) Upload a statement of accessibility on your webpage, and include your contact details e.g. “We are committed to ensuring that any student who wishes to get involved can do so.” ‘Get involved’ implies that you will make every effort to include everyone – but in reality not all students will be able to do all activities.

5) Be aware that the SU has specific Representative Committees to represent marginalised groups (e.g. Black Minority Ethnic Committee).
Why is that relevant to my society, working or representative committee?

- Your society needs to be accessible and welcoming to all students – so you may have to take a more proactive approach.
- The Students’ Union is here to represent and provide services for all students. It is crucial therefore that our societies and committees reflect the diversity of our membership and are inclusive and accessible to all.
- All societies and working committees should be motivated to ensure that all students can get involved in their activities and events, as far as it is reasonably possible.
- The Inclusion Officer role is credited at the Activities Awards.

Considerations to keep in mind (more details below):

1. Students with low confidence
2. International Students
3. Students with Disabilities
4. Supporting LGBT students
5. Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment
6. Dietary requirements
7. Students of Faith with Specific Requirements
8. Students’ Union Code of Conduct (excessive alcohol use)
9. Local/Commuter Students (time constraints)
10. Students with Families and caring responsibilities (time constraints)
11. Money constraints – make your events as affordable as possible!

1. Students with Low Confidence
Open and friendly committee members are always a helpful start – make sure your committee actively says ‘hello’ to members on socials and at events. Discourage cliques from forming, as they are very off putting to less confident members or potential members, who might feel they can’t break into the circle. If your first social of each semester could be focused around an activity which calls for lots of talking between society members – for example, bowling (non-alcoholic and fun!), that would be a great way to make all members feel included. Icebreaker games (plenty of ideas on the internet) can be a good way to facilitate the start of conversations between members.

By trying to actively show that your society or committee does not expect their potential members or members to conform to a certain stereotype, it will enable everyone to feel able to get involved.
2. International Students
The University of Sheffield and the Student Union membership is diverse; the student body represents almost 200 different nationalities - we are a global community. International students bring rich perspectives and ideas to our organisation, your student group can take positive steps to ensure International students feel welcome and able to engage in your activities; both Home and International students have a role to play in the integration of these groups throughout your society or committee.

Here are some tips and tricks for you to put into practice in order to engage and integrate Home or International Students into your society/committee:

- Introduce an International Rep on your committee, to ensure International students have a named contact and someone who can feedback their ideas.

- If you are a member of a National society, you might like to specifically advertise that you welcome home students with an interest too! National societies provide an excellent opportunity to integrate and perform cultural/language exchanges.

- Welcome meetings or meals for International students can be a good way to identify members you might need to specially cater for, and gives the opportunity for them to be made aware of who their Inclusion Officer is for the year.

- If you are an academic or departmental society then consider liaising with your academic department. International students can be more likely to attend an event that is promoted by their department.

- Look into providing discounted membership fees for Erasmus or 2nd semester students, to ensure that students only studying here for one semester can join your society (without money being a problem) e.g. £5 for yearly membership, £3 for one semester.

- Remember for many international students, English will be their second or third language. Use Plain English and try to avoid jokes and jargon: www.plainenglish.co.uk/about-us.html

- Ask questions! Politely and sensitively find out from your international student members how they would do things in their countries of origin - compare this with your own experiences.

- Avoid stereotypes; International students don’t share qualities or traits based on their (inter)nationality, try not to make assumptions based on someone’s country or culture of origin.

- Encourage respectful cultural exchange! A good icebreaker for all
students would be to introduce themselves and to explain the meaning/significance of one of their names. This activity will show not only the importance of correct pronunciation of names but also can show how many cultures share similar naming traditions.

Top Tip!

The University Careers Service has a great Guide for Developing Global Awareness:
www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/globalawareness.pdf

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www.careers.dept.shef.ac.uk/pdf/globalawareness.pdf

3. Disabled Students

“This Union believes that all students, regardless of disability, are entitled to equal opportunities to participate in all aspects of University life. Furthermore, this Union is committed to ensuring that all of its facilities and services are as accessible to disabled students as they are to the rest of the student population. This Union will not tolerate any discrimination on the grounds of disability.”

Students’ Union constitution, passed by Students’ Union Council in May 2008.

Try to meet the reasonable access needs of disabled students in your group by considering appropriate venue locations, equipment hire, accessible transport, alternative formats for publicity/handouts and alternative methods of presentation such as PowerPoint slides, recording equipment and magnifiers. Make sure that any support around access or inclusion is offered as soon as possible to students but allow them to choose what support they need, if any, rather than presuming they need a type of support that might not be right.

Aim to hold meetings and society events in places with wheelchair access and a hearing loop. See http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/ssid/disability/what-support-is-available for information on the services they provide to support students with disabilities.

If the words we use to describe people who have a disability are negative, they both reflect and reinforce negative attitudes. Those attitudes are often the most difficult barriers that people who have a disability face. The term ‘the disabled' implies a homogeneous group separate from the rest of society. Refer to 'people without disabilities' rather than 'normal' or 'able-bodied' people.

People with an 'intellectual impairment' prefer to be described as people with 'learning difficulties' not ‘mental handicap' or 'backward’. It is important not to confuse learning difficulties with mental health conditions.
4. Supporting LGBT Students

LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender.

There are some words that can be considered derogatory to some LGBT students. It would be a good starting point to ensure that your committee avoids the use of these terms and words, to make sure that the society or committee is, at its organisational core, inclusive. The following terminology advice may be useful for your committee to be aware of:

- **Gay** has two accepted meanings: 'happy' and homosexual. This term can be misused to describe situations that are frustrating or annoying e.g. “This computer’s so gay,” if it doesn’t work. Hearing ‘gay’ be used in this way is incredibly off-putting to students who may have just joined a society and it may deter their future involvement.

- **Transgender** is the state of one’s gender identity (self-identification as woman, man, neither or both) not matching one’s assigned sex (identification by others as male or female based on genetic sex). Transgender does not imply any specific form of sexual orientation.

- **Non-Binary** Binary refers to the western binary gender system of man/woman. People who are non-binary identify as neither a man nor a woman.

When interacting with transgendered people, it’s helpful not to assume someone’s gender based on their appearance. Don't stop someone from going into the 'wrong' bathroom; don't correct a male-appearing student who wants to be addressed as 'she'; or stop a female-appearing student from being on the male team in a game. Again, if in doubt, don’t guess – ASK!

5. Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment

Sheffield Students’ Union has a ‘Zero Tolerance to Sexual Harassment’ policy. This means that sexual harassment is not tolerated at in our Students’ Union, at our events or by members of societies or committees. Sexual harassment is defined as unwanted sexual comments or sexual invitations, groping, pinching or smacking, having your clothes lifted without your consent or someone exposing themselves to you without consent. It can happen to any gender. If students are found to be behaving this way they will be removed from the Students’ Union immediately and may be banned for a certain period of time.

As an inclusion officer you should make sure that society or committee events and socials don’t encourage this kind of behaviour. For example, having ‘pimps and hoes’ nights may create an atmosphere where sexual harassment is normalised. If you have any questions on the policy please
contact the Women’s Officer: 
womens.officer@shef.ac.uk

6. Dietary Requirements
When going for a committee meal, or putting together the menu for your society ball, check menus in advance and whether there are options for a more diverse range of dietary requirements. You might have vegan or vegetarian members, or students whose faith requires them not to eat certain meats or only meats cooked in a certain way. You may not realistically be able to cater for everyone but it is good practice to research your options.

7. Faith Considerations
Faith on campus is an important issue, and being respectful of students, who have faith or no faith, is crucial. It might be helpful to rotate the days of the week that some of your events are held on – for example 10am on Sundays might mean some Christian students are unable to attend, but having an event every month at a different time of day, during another part of the week might help.

- Some students of faith do not wish to be present in an alcoholic environment, so Coffee Revolution is the perfect venue for a social or planning meeting, rather than a bar or pub.
- Why not search for a calendar of religious events and holidays? Sending out a message to your mailing list wishing those members of that faith a greeting to mark the event shows you are really looking after everyone, and caring for your members.
- Why not run a social to the Inter-Faith Café and explore different faiths? If you weren't aware of the Cafés, it is a great opportunity for members of your society to meet people with and without faith, and talk about how religion contributes to student life. The Cafés are held in Coffee Revolution once a month during term time. Not everyone talks about faith, so it is an opportunity to meet people of different faiths but also somewhere you can ask questions freely.
- If in doubt, ask! We have over 15 faith societies at the Students’ Union. You can pick up their contact details from the Activities Zone Desk (activities@shef.ac.uk) Take any questions to the Activities Officer to raise at a Faiths Forum meeting (where representatives of the Faith Societies come together).

8. Code of Conduct and Initiations
The Society Code of Conduct, part of the Societies & Committees Alcohol Code of Practice is a statement advising that your society or committee will not hold initiations, or force alcoholic drinking upon any member. Every new committee member will sign to say they have read this on their Committee Details Part B form from April 2016. Please see appendix 2 for a copy.
9. Time Constraints

- Students with families or caring responsibilities; local or commuter students.

- Try and plan activities, events and socials at the weekend rather than during the week and give plenty of notice. Ensure there is access for push-chairs and toilets with baby changing facilities close by!

- Run some events at different times of the day e.g. a morning coffee meeting Vs an evening meal out. This means that students who need to travel can choose which events best suit their timetable. Ask your members what they would prefer.

- By running ‘Give It A Go’ (GIAG) events, this enables students to try your activities on a one-off nature, if they can’t commit to regular attendance.
  Email: giag@shef.ac.uk or read the GIAG guide on the Zone Online.

If you are organising any event where children will be present then you must follow the Student Union’s Child Safeguarding Protocol which can be found on the SU website here.

10. Money Constraints

- Try and subsidise your tickets as much as possible by setting up a two-tier ticket system, so the tickets are, for example, £1 less for members.

- Also look at running events where there is no expectation that students will need to spend a lot of money during it or where there is no entry fee.

- Make it as clear as possible what the FULL cost of an activity will be.

- Options for students to bring their own food and drink can be helpful.

- If your society is short of money, refer to the ‘Money’ section on the Zone Online.

11. Easy Inclusive Events! (see Appendix 4 for loads of ideas!)

- Non-alcoholic, inclusive, flexible timings, parents or carers may bring their children.

- Themed or topical Tea Parties! Book Coffee Revolution (coffeerevbookings@shef.ac.uk) or why not link up with the Tea Society?

- Chat about global issues in the news over a non-alcoholic drink, a really easy way to include all your society members.

- Visit Film Unit or go ice-skating?

- You could always have a non-alcoholic first half to an event, and then introduce an alcoholic element later.

- Don’t forget making sure everyone gets home safely – advertise the Women’s Minibus and City Taxi’s ‘Safe Taxi Scheme’.

- Why not take a trip to Sheffield’s famous Alpaca Farm?

- You could organise a Food Crawl around Sheffield taking in many of the wonderful international restaurants.
Appendix 1 - Clear Print Guidelines.
The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) has produced clear print guidelines. These guidelines offer some great tips and advice to ensure that all your printed work can be understood by all:

Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) Clear Print Guidelines

Appendix 2 – Supporting Our Students.
The University has produced a comprehensive guide to the Support Services available to students – lots of useful contact numbers, web-links and more: Supporting Our Students

This is read by all Committee Members from April 2017. (extract from the Societies & Committees Alcohol Code of Practice 2016-17):

2. Social Events
Social events are not regulated by the Students’ Union (see 1. Health and Safety) and therefore the society/committee organisers are expected to take full responsibility for the safety of these activities. However, due to the Activities Department not wishing to encourage social events where the main aim is excessive drinking, a Code of Conduct and guidelines around responsible and inclusive socials are accessible for all students to read and follow in the Rules and Safety Handbook.

2.1 Societies/committees must adhere to the following Code of Conduct, as found in the Rules and Safety Handbook. They must not:

a) hold initiation ceremonies¹
b) apply peer pressure upon society/committee members in social situations or otherwise.
c) consume alcohol in minibuses, coaches, cars etc.
d) undertake any activity which brings the Union into disrepute OR damages the Union’s reputation.

2.2 Societies/committees are advised to display the Code of Conduct on their websites.

2.3 Sanctions may be imposed on any society found to be in breach of the Code of Conduct.

2.4 Society’s/committee’s social activities must be organised in

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¹ Initiation ceremonies – events in which society/committee members are expected to perform any activity as a means of gaining entry, credibility and status within a society/committee. Examples are excessive consumption of alcohol and/or food concoctions, and any other form of bullying and behaviour that can cause intimidation, humiliation, danger and/or harm to society/committee members and non-members.
such a way that no member feels harassed, intimidated or bullied.

2.5 Such activities must be inclusive and make allowances for all cultural and personal beliefs.

2.6 Members should be able to opt out without fear of undue pressure, reprisal, non-selection for teams, embarrassment or any form of discrimination.

2.7 Social activities should not be organised which encourage the excessive consumption of alcohol.

Appendix 4– Real Society examples which have increased Inclusion and Internationalisation

*NB: any events which involve working with under-18s where parents will not be present must first be approved by Sheffield Volunteering, due to child safeguarding issues.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Society/Committee</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>InComplete Collaboration Society</td>
<td>Developed ways in which to break language barriers to help international students get more involved (using visual aids, sending emails to clarify/explain details before meetings take place, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychology Society</td>
<td>Organised more inclusive events - cinema trips with the Film Unit, ice-skating at Christmas time and a trip to a Christmas market in Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mature Students Committee</td>
<td>Recruited members onto the committee who represent International Students, Students with parenting responsibilities, Students from the LGBT+ community and Students with a SpLD. Wide range of events – all free to improve inclusivity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pole Fitness Society</td>
<td>Introducing men-only pole fitness classes to try encourage more men to try out the society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar Society</td>
<td>Organised non-alcoholic pizza socials and Christmas market trips.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Society</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book Society</td>
<td>Discussed more international books than in previous years - including more translated foreign novels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mine Society</td>
<td>Reduced their server load - meaning that people who can’t afford a good PC can still play on it. Planning to buy some Society Minecraft accounts, so that people who have not got an account can come and try the game at socials!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationery Appreciation Society</td>
<td>Offer reduced price single-semester memberships to encourage Erasmus students to join. Have non-paid/non-member socials to encourage people to come and try out the Society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Materials Society</td>
<td>Introduced a very strict pairing procedure, whereby every alcoholic event planned must have a corresponding non-alcoholic event hosted within a week of the other. Hosted an international coffee morning in conjunction with our department, inviting along all students and staff to integrate and chat over several themed stations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sheffield University Wind Orchestra</td>
<td>Made budget allowances for tour to allow members more time to gather money, having more non-alcoholic socials to include non-drinkers and having more Give It A Go sessions to allow more students to get involved with the orchestra.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUTCo</td>
<td>Use ‘shadowing’ in different roles, especially in technical roles so that if people aren’t as confident taking on a role they have the option to ‘shadow’ someone else doing it, and learn through practice.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUDSS (Dental Society)</td>
<td>Offer the chance for all new members to join their Dental Families (made up of individuals from all years and dental-related courses). They also produce a Fresher’s Handbook to welcome new students to University whilst organising talks &amp; tours for International students to help them settle in and make new friends.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBT Committee</td>
<td>Have appointed some new Representatives to widen their engagement. Sports Rep, BME Rep, Asexuality Rep. They also run a weekly web-chat service run by our men’s, women’s and trans welfare officers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philosophy Society</td>
<td>Setting up a ‘PhilSoc family scheme’ to help get first year students more involved and get the years integrating more with one another.</td>
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</tbody>
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