



# How to Start a Society

A Sheffield Students' Union society is a group of students who share an interest, approved and supported by the Union. The Students' Union has around 350 registered Societies and Committees already!

## Can't Find What You're Looking For?

First, check out the A-Z list on the Students' Union website to see if your interest is already being represented: [sheffieldsu.com/groups](http://sheffieldsu.com/groups). If your interest or culture isn't represented at the Students' Union, you may wish to apply to set up a new society. You need at least three registered University of Sheffield students to create a society!

All new society applications will be considered in semester-time by the Activities Officer and Societies Committee. You need to give as much specific information as possible about the aims of your society and what activities you're proposing to do.

## Sub-societies

Societies Committee only accept sub-society applications to form under Medical Society. Such applications will only be considered once broad approval/support for the application has been received from Medical Society.

## So what's the process?

If you want to apply to become a Students' Union society, here is what you need to do:

1. Read through the application criteria and process on page 2 of this guide. The flowchart will explain what types of activities cannot be approved, and what the process is.

2. If your proposed society meets the criteria outlined in the flowchart, then simply submit the online application form at [www.sheffieldsu.com/startasociety](http://www.sheffieldsu.com/startasociety).

3. Your new society application will be presented to Societies Committee to make the decision about whether or not to approve your idea. The Committee meet every week during term time. They will need to feel confident that the idea is well thought out and may wish to ask your further questions. If your idea is not approved then Societies Committee will explain their reasons for this to you.

4. If your idea is approved then then the Student Groups Administrator will contact you to confirm your approval. You will be required to submit 3 online forms (these must be submitted within one month of approval):

1. A Society Constitution
2. Committee Details Part A (one form per society)
3. Committee Details Part B (one form per committee member)

Don't panic... you'll receive plenty of support and guidance from Societies Committee and the staff in the Activities & Sports Zone to get you started including an email account, a bank account with £50 start-up, room booking entitlements and lots more!





## New society application process

**Stage 1:** Your society application is received by Societies Committee, the Activities Officer and relevant Students' Union staff (including the Student Groups Coordinator).

**Stage 2:** The Student Groups Coordinator (SGC) will provide advice to Societies Committee on the new society application. This usually takes 3-5 days but can take longer in more complex cases when further consultation is needed. The SGC may seek advice from other specialist staff from across the Students' Union. This advice will be based on health and safety risks, public liability insurance, constitutional requirements and staffing resources (Criteria 1 – 11 below). Any new society applications which are deemed to fall under at least one of the following criteria, will be rejected by Societies Committee:-

1. If the application is not made by a Full Member of the Students' Union (i.e. a University of Sheffield student).
2. If the activity cannot be covered under the Students' Union's public liability insurance (e.g. volunteering overseas, counselling, advice, guidance relating to exams, peer support, water-based activities, an activity involving motorised vehicle parts).
3. The nature of the activity is deemed to be of such a high risk that it would require a disproportionate amount of funding and/or staff time to monitor to ensure compliance with minimum safety standards.
4. A sport (this includes a sport recognised by BUCS, a martial art, and/or a sport recognised by Sport England, with possible exceptions for a limited range of such sports for which there are no safety or funding issues e.g. croquet).
5. Has the primary purpose of volunteering with under-18s or vulnerable adults (these projects should be referred to Sheffield Volunteering).
6. Has a primary aim of charitable fundraising (these projects should be referred to Sheffield RAG).
7. Is proposing activities which have the potential to bring the Students' Union/University into disrepute or will not further SSU's charitable objectives.
8. Is in conflict with the Students' Union's aims, objectives and values;
9. Should the group receive public liability insurance from an external body and/or
10. If the group is constituted or governed by an external body.
11. If a faith group proposes to represent a particularly narrow view of a faith and/or is not supported by regional faith supporting organisations, on advice from the Chaplaincy.

**Stage 3:** After receiving advice from the SGC or other staff member on Criteria 1 – 11, Societies Committee will discuss the application at their next available meeting (Mondays, term-time only) where a final decision will be made. Societies Committee will also make further policy considerations, without the advice of staff, such as:-

1. Whether the group duplicates the role of an existing society.
2. How inclusive the group is whether it has the potential to benefit all students.
3. Whether the group has a purely social purpose.
4. Whether the group has the minimum number of Full Members required by Societies Committee.
5. Whether the group will be sustainable as a society.

**Stage 4:** Societies Committee will e-mail soon after their meeting to let you know whether your society has been approved, rejected or pended. If it is approved then you will also receive an email to let you know the next steps in making your society active.

