

GUIDANCE FOR GROUP LEADERS

Group Leaders are at the heart of the U3A movement, without them there would be no Association. Some questions and answers have been put together to help you understand the role of a Group Leader.

What are the Principles and Aims of U3A Associations?

The Third Age Trust (U3A) prescribes several principles:

Membership Principle

- Membership is defined in the Constitution as requiring a minimum age of 45 and as a period in life in which full time employment has normally ceased.

The Self-help Principle

- Members form interest Groups – *by members for the members*.
- No distinction between learners and teachers – *they are all U3A members*.

The Mutual Aid Principle

- No payments are made to members for services rendered to any U3A.

The Aims for which Our Association exists are:

- To foster the cultural and intellectual interests of its members.
- To enrich the lives of its members.
- To encourage members to develop their intellectual, cultural and social potential. All the above will be accomplished through the organization of Groups in different subjects to be offered by members of the Association to other members.

We have a series of useful forms for Group Leaders.



How do I become a Group Leader?

Contact the Groups Co-ordinator at the monthly General Meeting or by email groupleader@u3avalldelpop.com. You will be asked to submit a brief proposal ([New Group Application Form](#)) for the Group. The Groups Co-ordinator will inform the Committee of the new group; in instances when the new group does not comply with U3A rules and guidelines the Groups Co-ordinator will seek guidance from the Committee.

What does a Group Leader have to do?

Arrange the date, time and place for meetings of their Group.

Help may be given to find a suitable location by the Groups Co-ordinator if necessary.

Keep a register of members attending at each meeting

Maintain a list of Group members and check their membership card for the present year. The list should be made available to the Groups Co-ordinator on request. Co-ordinate the activities of the Group, in collaboration with the members.

Do I need any qualifications or special skills?

The Group Leaders must have email and internet access to enable them to access the U3A Vall del Pop Website and communicate with members.

The Group Leader is not always the individual with the particular skills required by the Group, they should, however, administer and coordinate the skilled members within the Group.

A new member may start a new group and will be supported by a Groups Co-ordinator review after three months to ensure it is operating within these Guidelines.

Does the Group Leader receive any payment?

Definitely not – A Group Leader must be a U3A member and must not run a Group for any financial reward because this would be in direct contravention of the Aims and Principles of the U3A. However, Group Leaders should not be out of pocket by volunteering to run an Interest Group on behalf of U3A Vall del Pop.

Group Leaders should be reimbursed by the members who attend their meetings for the actual costs incurred for running the meeting. These costs may include such items as photocopying, refreshments, craft materials, etc.

Where fixed costs have to be paid regardless of the number of Group members attending, such as bowling-alleys, Group Leaders should divide the cost between those actually attending the meeting BUT the members should be advised of any costs before going ahead with the meeting.



Meetings are sometimes held at a member's home, and it is reasonable to ask for a contribution towards the cost of any refreshments provided. In such circumstances a reasonable amount per person can be requested by the host and if more elaborate refreshments are provided then the Group Leader should agree the costs with the members of the Group in advance.

Group members may "buy in" expertise to meet specific requirements as required and at their own expense. This practice will be kept under review by the Groups Co-ordinator.

What resources are available to a Group?

An objective of the U3A is that all Groups are self-funding in respect of normal costs incurred to run the group's activities. Members annual membership fees are used primarily to meet the administration costs of the Association such as General Meetings, publicity, legal cost etc.

The U3A Vall del Pop Committee will consider applications for funds to support a start-up Group, purchase assets, promotion of Committee-authorized external events, and other costs - [click here for form](#)

Does a Group Leader need to keep accounts for the Group?

Accounts are not required to record the normal financial activities to run the group. Accounts may need to be kept for other activity and exceptional circumstances; for example, members saving to buy an asset, travel excursions, instances of purchased external services and sales made by the Group.

The Group Leader must maintain a list of the Group's assets and confirm their existence and location to the Group Co-ordinator when requested ([click here for form](#)).

How do I keep in touch?

The standard method of communication within U3A Vall del Pop is email. Group members should be encouraged to check the website and email for dates and events.

Details of your Group's activities should be sent to the Groups Co-ordinator. It is important to keep them informed of any changes to contact details, venue, times, etc.

All Groups have access to the U3A Vall del Pop website and this can be used to keep Group members, and Association members generally, up to date with your Group. News about Group activities of special interest, with photographs, if possible, should be sent to the U3A Newsletter Editor for publication in the monthly magazine and/or on the website. news@u3avallpop.com



The Committee has adopted a policy of sending emails using the BCC field rather than a list of email addresses appearing in the TO or CC boxes. Group Leaders are required to do the same because this reduces risk of email addresses being harvested by third parties for illegal purposes.

Do Group Leaders meet regularly?

The President, on behalf of the Committee, will usually invite all Group Leaders to two social/business meetings during the year to acknowledge the contribution Group Leaders make to the Organisation and to encourage discussion on a range of topics such as future events, Committee funding, membership, members and leaders' feedback to the Committee, and potential succession opportunities within Groups and the Committee.

At a Group Leader Meeting, the Group Co-coordinator will canvass the leaders as to whether they wish to hold an Open-Day during the following year to showcase their group activities.

Group Leaders, together with group members, are encouraged to attend General Meetings and present a short talk on their group activities or set-up a group display table.

Throughout the year, The Groups Co-ordinator will liaise with Group Leaders for an exchange of ideas and also to assist in resolving any problems or queries.

Anything else I need to know?

Encourage your members to assist in the running of the Group, so they can continue Group activities if you cannot attend a meeting for any reason. Also, in the event that you move or retire from the Group, it would ideal if you had trained a replacement to run the Group.

Individuals who are not members of the U3A Vall del Pop may attend an interest group for one session; continued attendance requires U3A membership.

It is recommended that Group Leaders have membership forms available at meetings to enable potential members to join. Groups are encouraged to organise excursions to places of interest relevant to their Group activities.

If the Group wishes the excursions to be made available to the wider membership, the Group Leader should contact the Travel & Entertainment Team for advice and assistance. The cost of an excursion is to be met solely by the participants.

You can promote your Group through our website or monthly Newsletter. To avoid the potential for U3A Vall del Pop being brought into disrepute or cause any confusion, Group Leaders must have prior approval from the Committee to advertise non-U3A activities under the umbrella of the U3A or publicise their Group in the local media or on external website.



Items created by a Group may be sold within the U3A Vall del Pop at events such as an Open-Day, however, the profits must be used to purchase assets, materials, etc. for the Group, or given to U3A nominated charities. A Group wishing to promote sales external to U3A Vall del Pop must seek approval from the Committee.

The U3A Vall del Pop has a Code of Conduct and Group Leaders are not expected to tolerate any acts of unreasonable behaviour and should report such acts to the Committee either directly or through the Groups Co-ordinator.

What do I do if a question or problem is not covered here?

In all cases ASK! The Groups Co-ordinator is there to help and if necessary, seek guidance from the Committee if the answer is not immediately available. The Committee meets once per month (apart from July and August) but are always available and in touch with each other via email. Your questions or concerns should be answered quickly.

Group Co-ordinator activitygroups@u3avalldelpop.com

President u3a Vall del Pop president@u3avalldelpop.com

These Guidelines are not intended for Travel & Entertainment which is the subject of separate procedures and accounting requirements and the Cinema Group.

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