Secretary

CONGRATULATIONS on being elected to the role of Secretary for your Society! The Secretary is the backbone of any student group and ensures that everything runs smoothly, both in terms of **administration** and **communication**.

**This guide covers your main duties:**

1. Creating an agenda and taking minutes

2. Booking rooms

3. Your email account and keeping membership/mailing lists

4. Taking care of administration

5. Marketing & Publicity

6. Organising your Society/Committee Election

**1. Creating an Agenda and Taking Minutes**

Creating an agenda involves drawing together what needs discussing. You’ll need to ask

committee members if they have anything to add as well as emailing the agenda round

before the committee meeting, to make sure all members can prepare for the meeting

ahead.

**Simple format:**

1. Name of society/committee

2. Type of meeting

3. Date/time/place

4. Chair/recorder of minutes

5. Apologies

6. Minutes of last meeting (update on actions taken)

7. Exact wording of each agenda item; vote scores (if applicable); whether motions

are passed or failed; actions agreed – preferably with name and date attributed.

8. Any other business (AOB)

Taking minutes involves typing up a short summary of what was discussed in the meeting and 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 a week of the committee meeting.

***Top Tip!*** In the email with the minutes attached, write the list of actions for committee members into the email itself. People are more likely to read these, as unfortunately not everyone reads the minutes.

**2. Booking Rooms (for meetings, socials, events, rehearsals…)**

**Step-by-step:**

1. As Secretary, it is primarily your responsibility to book the rooms on behalf of

your society or committee.

2. You can view university lecture rooms using this the following link:

<http://www.wlv.ac.uk/about-us/internal-departments/central-timetabling/university-rooms/>

You can view the availability of rooms using this link:

<http://www3.wlv.ac.uk/timetable/room_1.asp?previous=0>

You can book a room by simply sending an email to The Societies Support Co-ordinator along with the room you would like to book, as well as the time and the date you need it for. Send your email to the following address:

societies.wolvesunion@wlv.ac.uk

OR

If you want to book a room in the Students’ Union you must complete a room booking form which can be found in the Societies area of the Wolves Union website, in the ‘resources’ section. Please send the completed form to societies.wolvesunion@wlv.ac.uk

**3. Your Email Account and Membership/Mailing Lists**

**Your Email Account**

As the Secretary, you are in charge of your societies email account. If you would like an email address created for you, please inform the Societies Support Co-ordinator. The society email address will forward messages on to your individual university email address; therefore it does not require a password. (When you are no longer the Secretary the Societies Support Co-ordinator will forward the messages to the new Secretary). You are in charge of managing the societies emails, ensuring that everyone who has emailed you is replied to.

***Top Tips!***

* It can be useful to ‘block out’ time (e.g. 2-3 times per week) for you to reply to emails.
* You may need to pass some email enquiries from students to other committee members or to the Societies Support Co-ordinator, but always make sure that these are followed up. If you are unable to answer a question send the student a reply stating that you will get back to them after liaising with other committee members, and that someone will get back to them soon.
* If the Students’ Union or the Societies Support Co-ordinator has emailed you make sure you read the email thoroughly, passing on information to relevant committee members.

**Membership/Mailing Lists**

If you’re a society, it’s vital to keep track of your membership. To check this log into your webpage on the Wolves Union Website, from there you need to click onto the top right of the page which says; Page Admin > Admin Tools > Messages. You are then able to look through your list of members and send an email to all of your current members.

All members must sign up through the society webpage so that you are able to see who has paid membership (if you charge a fee)

***Top Tips!***

* If you’re using the SU website, you will be able to send out group emails to your whole mailing list. But if you’re sending out a group email directly from your email account, remember to put the email addresses in the ‘bcc’ box – this means that people won’t be able to see each other’s email addresses.
* Don’t pass email addresses onto anyone else without people’s permission.

**4. Taking care of Administration**

**A) When a new committee is elected:**

Provide the details of the new committee members so we can register them and contact them with essential information. This is essential. (New committee members should be voted in with at least 20% of the society members in attendance)

**B) Society/Committee Constitution:**

This lays out the specific aims and objectives of your society, and details all the rules relating to committee structure, election, membership etc. It can be useful in sorting out internal disputes, clearing up confusion, and ensuring you are functioning in accordance with Students’ Union regulations (When the society was formed this was completed by the committee members, your Societies Support Co-ordinator keeps copies of these)

**C) Risk Assessments:**

Those running a society 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. Therefore, if you organise an activity for people, you need to take the necessary precautions to keep the activity safe. As Secretary, it is important that you file any important paperwork, particularly if it relates to safety.

If your society’s usual activities are considered to be high risk you will need to complete an annual risk assessment. Any society or committee which is organising an activity or event which is not part or your usual activities or which carries an enhanced risk must complete a risk assessment (e.g. trips, large events).

You can find a blank Risk Assessment form in the ‘resources’ section in the Societies area of the Wolves Union website.

**5. Marketing & Publicity**

If your society does not have a Publicity/ Social Media Officer, as Secretary you may need to take charge of the publicity.

***Top Tips!***

* Make sure your webpage on the SU website is up-to-date as many prospective members will visit this page to find out information about your group. You’re automatically a group administrator for your page (as well as other members of the committee), so just login to the website (using your E-Vision login) to edit. Please refer to ‘How to edit your society webpage’ in the ‘resources’ section of the Societies area for further information.

**6. Society/Committee Election (AGM)**

It is usually the responsibility of the Secretary to organise your society or committee’s election which must be done at your AGM (Annual General Meeting).

**You should:**

* Read the ‘Elections Guidance’ found in the ‘resources’ section of the Societies area on Wolves Union.
* Inform the Societies Support Co-ordinator of your ‘Election Date’
* Review your Constitution and assess committee roles.

**What skills can you gain?**

What skills do you expect to gain as a Secretary? Below is a list to get you reflecting on the work you will have done.

**General Organisational Skills:**

Working independently, taking initiative, managing your time, balancing academic and social commitments.

**Specific Secretarial Skills:**

*Researching* – keep up to date with information, developments or issues which could impact on your role, society or committee.

*Prioritising* – identify critical tasks, arrange tasks in a logical order, be adaptable and adjust plans if necessary.

*Record keeping* – make sure you keep accurate records so you know what needs doing, when and (if applicable) by whom; make sure you also record what has already been achieved or agreed.

*Time management* – you need to be able to estimate the time and effort required to complete a task, and be able to manage your own time effectively so you can meet all your commitments.

*The ability to multi-task* – you have to be able to deal with more than one thing at a time, and be comfortable with challenge and variety.

*Interpersonal skills* – to organise anything effectively requires the ability to work well with other people. You need to have good communication skills and be confident and assertive, without being confrontational or aggressive.

**Any questions?**

Contact the Societies Support Co-ordinator:

societies.wolvesunion@wlv.ac.uk

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