

# CSU Societies Handbook 2023-2024



## **Welcome to the Chester community!**

You have the potential to develop an established group and leave a legacy by getting involved in community initiatives, fundraising for local charities, running events and competitions at the University, the list is endless.

Being a leading role in a club or society is a fantastic way to develop your own personal skills and enhance your CV, ready for when you leave University.

This handbook will answer all the questions you have about CSU affiliated societies.

## Contents

	<b>Page</b>
1. How do I create my own Society?	2
2. Adopt a Society	3
3. Your Year on Committee	4
4. Membership.	5
5. Annual General Meeting (AGM's)	6
6. Extraordinary General Meeting	6
7. Funding and Money	7
• Fundraising	7
• CSU Societies Development Grant	7
• Social Account	7
• End of financial year	8
8. Communication	8
9. Equipment	8
10. Health and Safety	9
• First Aid	9
• Off Campus Trips	9
• Accident and Emergency	9
11. External Speakers	10
12. Food Safety	10
13. Postering and Flyering	10
14. Social Events and Initiation Ceremonies	10
15. Sponsorship	11
16. Disciplinary	12
17. Complaints	13

## How do I create my own society?

If none of our Societies appeal to you, we encourage you to set up your own!

Once affiliated with Chester Students' Union your benefits include:

- Your own page on the SU website
- Access to rooms and spaces in the SU and around campus
- Help and guidance on how to promote your group.
- Managed bank accounts within the Students' Union
- Insurance
- Access to personal development and group development training
- Opportunities for financial support for your group through the SU's funding streams for Societies.

You can **submit an application** to start a society during the following periods:

**Period One:** 25<sup>th</sup> September – 10<sup>th</sup> November 2023.

**Period Two:** 8<sup>th</sup> January- 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024.

All new societies must be student led and unique from those we already have.

Follow the steps below to get your society started.

<p><b>Step 1:</b></p> <p><b>Find some members.</b></p>	<p>You need 5 interested students to start a society.</p>
<p><b>Step 2:</b></p> <p><b>Recruit your committee</b></p>	<p>Decide which two individuals will run the committee by taking on the roles of President and Treasurer. You may wish to appoint other committee members such as Secretary, Equality and Diversity Officer and Wellbeing Officer.</p>
<p><b>Step 3:</b></p> <p><b>Complete a New Society Affiliation Form</b></p>	<p>To complete this form, you will need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The student numbers of your 5 interested students.</li> <li>• The contact details of your committee</li> <li>• An explanation of the purpose of your group, how it's unique to existing societies, activities you imagine planning and your proposed membership fee.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Step 4:</b></p> <p><b>Await a decision</b></p>	<p>Your application will be reviewed by our elected officers, and the Student Opportunities Coordinator. You will receive a response within 10 working days.</p>
<p><b>Step 5:</b></p> <p><b>Complete the affiliation process.</b></p>	<p>If your application is approved, you will need to complete the following to become a fully affiliated society:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attend committee training.</li> <li>• Complete your society risk assessment and constitution.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Step 6:</b></p> <p><b>Officially join your society.</b></p>	<p>Once affiliated, your society webpage will be created by the SU team. By signing up to your society via this webpage, you will complete the affiliation process and become an official member.</p>

## Adopt a Society

Societies may become dormant if the core committee steps down from their roles.

These societies can be reactivated through an adoption process (which follows the same steps as listed above), with the added benefit that the group has leftover funds which you can inherit.

## Your Year on Committee

Your time on committee will start from 1<sup>st</sup> August and will run until the 31<sup>st</sup> of July the following year. While society activities will vary from group to group there are a few important milestones throughout the year that all committees should be aware of.

Summer	
Handover	Shortly after being elected, the previous committee should hold a meeting where society specific details for keeping the group running are passed on.
Committee Training	Attend CSU's Society Committee Training so you are ready to run your society in the next academic year.
Development Plan	Book an appointment with the Student Groups Coordinator. This is a chance to use their expertise to turn your aims for your society into achievable actions.  If you'd like help outlining a new plan at any other time of year don't hesitate to contact CSU. It's never too late to put a plan together
Semester One	
Sports & Societies Fair	The Sports & Societies Fair is your big chance to recruit new members. This involves running a conference-style stall, where new students can approach you. It's very tiring but also a lot of fun!
Welcome Events	In addition to your first socials, the university also runs lots of welcome events that societies can often take part in to attract new members.
Semester Two	
Annual General Meeting (AGM)	This meeting is held by the committee but is open to all society members so they can collect feedback. This feedback makes up a large chunk of the information to pass on to the next year's committee during their handover.
Elections	Elections are run through The Union's website to elect your successors. They will run in March. It's recommended that you start advertising the positions a little before nominations open to convince likely candidates to run.
Awards	A chance to celebrate all your achievements! Nominations are open to all members that want to cheer on all their favourite societies and committee members during a fun night of end-of-year festivities.

## Membership

Any current student at University of Chester who is a member of CSU, life member of CSU, Elected officer, CSU staff member or University staff member may join societies. Each member must pay the relevant annual membership fee set by the Society Committee.

Only current students at University of Chester are permitted to hold committee positions.

Students under 18 years of age, are not permitted to hold office as a Society Committee member but are welcome to join a society as a member. Students under the age of 18 must abide by the University of Chester Support for Students Aged Under 18: Code of Practice.

<https://portal1.chester.ac.uk/studentfutures/Documents/Under%2018s%20procedure.pdf>

Students from the Warrington/Shrewsbury campus may only join Chester campus societies if that particular activity is not represented on their campus and vice versa.

The combined number of life members, University and Union staff should not exceed one third of the total membership of any society, unless express permission is given by the Vice President Student Life. Such permission may be granted if CSU funds are not seen to be spent disproportionately on past students rather than current students. Any decision to continue a society with disproportionate number of non-current student members shall be removed annually. The decision may be subject to certain restrictions dictated by the Vice President Student Life. The Vice Student Life has the right to remove a society if they feel it is no longer being led by current Chester students. All societies will be reviewed annually.

Each society that costs the Union money may only take place if at least 5 university of Chester student members of the society actively participate. CSU reserve the right to cancel the facilities if this is not the case.

**Membership shall run from 1<sup>st</sup> August to 31st July each year.**

## **Annual General Meetings (AGMs)**

The AGM will be held in semester two each year to which all members of the society should be invited with a minimum of 7 days' notice.

The Chair shall be the Society President, unless deemed inappropriate by CSU. In the case the chair will be taken by a CSU representative.

Quorum is 20% +1 member of the current student membership. The society membership will be frozen when the AGM notice is communicated.

The AGM should include the following:

- The minutes of the previous AGM.
- A summary of the society's year.
- A review of the current committee roles

CSU has the right to call an Emergency General Meeting if deemed processes of policies were not adhered to.

CSU provide an AGM Guidelines document that should be referred to as guidance.

## **Election of the new committee for the following academic year**

All elections will be held online unless already agreed with the SU, but you can use the AGM as an opportunity to allow all candidates for committee roles to give a short speech explaining why they think they are suitable for the position. The Chair should then explain to members how to vote online.

Only members (i.e. students who have registered their membership through CSU's website) may stand for election and only members may vote.

## **Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs)**

An Extraordinary General Meeting can be called by CSU and also by the society committee, if a serious problem arises and all members need to attend and be made aware of the situation. A member of the CSU staff team will attend all EGMs.

Quorum is 20% +1 of the current student membership. The society membership is frozen when EGM notice is communicated.

## Funding and Money

### Fundraising

Fundraising is at the core of many of our societies and we are committed to supporting you to achieve your fundraising goals.

There are two main ways in which a society might choose to raise money:

1. Raise money for your society – this could be to help fund an event or raise money for new supplies.
2. Raise money for a charity – some groups might decide they want to nominate a core charity which they will raise money.

### CSU Societies Development Grant

To help societies continue to grow and to reward those groups who are proactively getting involved at Chester, we offer a grant opportunity for societies whereby:

- Societies have the opportunity to apply for additional money for resources or activities using the CSU Societies Development Grant.
- To request funds the society must have **at least 10 members** who are registered through the SU website and ensure that the **President and Treasurer have attended Committee Training**.
- To request funds from the CSU Development Grant the committee must complete a Development Grant Application which can be found on the Committee Hub.

All money allocated to a society must be claimed within 3 months of the grant being approved. We will only extend this deadline in exceptional circumstances. If you have not claimed the money by the set deadline, it will be reclaimed by CSU and redistributed.

### Social Account

The Social Account is where any membership monies are held; alongside fundraising and sponsorship for the society. This account is also used to bank any money that members raise or pay into to contribute towards meals or social events.

The following rules apply to social accounts:

Members who spend money on behalf of their society without pre- authorisation are personally responsible for that cost.

- The expenditure must benefit the majority of the society
- The purchase of drugs/tobacco is prohibited.



## **End of Financial Year**

The CSU financial year runs from 1st August to 31st July.

A society which has been inactive for a period of 2 years will have any outstanding social account balance will be transferred back to the Student Opportunities budget.

## **Communication**

Upon affiliation the Society will be provided with a society email account. All announcements and society related information from CSU will be communicated to the society email account, therefore it is imperative that the society regularly check the account.

Each society will be allocated a page on the CSU website. It is the responsibility of each society to update their page using the CSU procedures.

Societies are not permitted to have an external website unless express permission has been granted by the Vice President Student Life. Societies may have a social community networking site e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube or an external blog. A society will be asked to take down any pages not pre-approved by the Vice President Student Life.

CSU must be formally notified of any social sites that are set up.

CSU will make every effort to check the social community networking as often as possible.

Any request for communications not covered in this section will be considered on an individual basis.

Any issues found or complaints receives regarding content on any society communication will be treated in a serious manner and investigated as soon as possible by CSU to determine if there is a need for the disciplinary process.

Any posts on social media or print which brings CSU or the University into disrepute will result in disciplinary action against the individuals/societies.

## **Equipment**

All equipment purchased by CSU for a society using the Society Development Grant is defined as CSU owned equipment.

All equipment is logged by CSU on a Society Inventory.

If CSU equipment becomes damaged, broken, lost or stolen, it must be reported to CSU as soon as possible.

## Health and Safety

Upon affiliation all societies must submit their annual risk assessment for their regular meetings/activities.

For any activities outside of normal meetings and activities such as events and trips, an additional risk assessment must be completed **BEFORE** the event takes place.

Completion of risk assessments is compulsory, failure to do this may void your insurance coverage.

## First Aid

Every society must have at least 1 qualified first aider if there are to be off campus events and activities.

CSU organises and funds a First Aid Course, which is run in the 1st semester of each year. One member from any society planning off campus activity must attend. Wherever feasible this should be a 1st or 2nd year student.

## Off Campus Trips

For activities not taking place on University of Chester premises the Society must submit a CSU Offsite Trip Register. This form will be submitted to the University Porters by CSU prior to your trip for your safety.

## Accident and Emergency

Any on or off campus accidents and incidents, must be reported to CSU and the University of Chester as soon as practically possible. The accident or incident must be recorded by completing the Adverse Event Report Form which can be found on the Portal Health and

Safety page. Once completed this should be sent to [safety@chester.ac.uk](mailto:safety@chester.ac.uk) and [studentopps@chester.ac.uk](mailto:studentopps@chester.ac.uk)

## **External Speakers**

An external speaker refers to a person or organisation that is not part of the Union or the University who is invited to speak at a society event on or off campus.

Societies must notify the Union of any events on or off campus that involve external speakers.

All external speakers need approval, and no event shall be published or advertised until that approval has been given.

CSU reserves the right to cancel or prohibit any event if the procedures provided are not followed or if health, safety and security measures cannot be met. This may be decided by the University as legally they are subject to scrutiny on this matter.

## **Food Safety**

Due to increased litigation and concern regarding food hygiene and safety, societies must seek advice and permission from CSU prior to the distribution of food or drink.

## **Postering & Flyering**

It is University policy that only designated boards are to be used for postering and flyers and permission must be sought from the Union, University department. Exterior walls, pillars, windows or doors are not to be used.

The following must be adhered to:

- All posters must be approved by the CSU team
- All posts must be removed following the event they are advertising
- Members must clearly display student ID when giving out flyers
- All posters in a foreign language must be accompanied by the English translation.

## **Social Events & Initiation Ceremonies**

It is an individual's choice whether or not they attend any social event. Non-attendance must not act as a barrier to participation within the society.

No 'peer' pressure (intended or not) is to be placed on any member to do anything what they may not enjoy (i.e. drinking games). CSU considers such action to be bullying, and as such will take appropriate disciplinary action.

All members of SU activities must show respect towards their peers, other members of the University and towards members of the public at all times.

Activity groups are not permitted to carry out initiation ceremonies either on or off University premises.

An initiation ceremony is an event in which members (often new members) of the society are expected to perform a task or tasks as a means of gaining credibility, status, or entry within the society. This may involve peer pressure (though not explicitly) exerted on students and may compromise a person's inherent dignity as a person by forcing or requiring an individual to drink alcohol, eat mixtures of food stuffs, nudity and behaviour that may be deemed humiliating.

Individuals who organise events in breach of this code of conduct will be subject to disciplinary action in line with the Students' Unions disciplinary procedures. Students may also be referred to the University disciplinary process if deemed necessary by the elected officers.

If any initiation is found to have happened the society will be closed for the rest of the academic year.

Any social event that puts CSU in disrepute will be subject to Union disciplinary action. This includes inappropriate clothing, conduct, reports from the general public, and any further deemed inappropriate by the elected officers.

## **Sponsorship**

CSU societies can seek external financial sponsorship from ethical and environmentally friendly organisations that do not contravene the Unions vision, mission and values.

Any potential agreement must benefit the society without making unreasonable requests upon its members.

All potential agreements must be agreed by the CSU's Chief Executive to ensure equality across sponsorship deals and appropriateness of the sponsors.

All potential agreements must be confirmed in the form of a simple contract which nearly states the precise details of the agreement and is signed by CSU's Vice President Student Life and Head of Business Support.

There is no limit to the number of sponsors a society may have.

Societies may not poach sponsors from other societies.

## Disciplinary

All societies, activity groups and their members must adhere to this handbook and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

The consequences detailed here are severe to act as a deterrent, and CSU are trying to enable student activities to make place in as safe an environment as possible.

Offence	Result	Result if an additional offence happens in the same academic year
No representation at Committee Training	No Sports and Societies Fair stall.	
Individual participating in a society activity who is not a member and therefore not insured.	Individual suspended until they formally join. Society receive an official written warning.	Society suspended for a month.
Failure to submit a risk assessment prior to an activity taking place.	Society receives an official warning.	Society suspended for the rest of the academic year.
Failure to abide by trip registration procedures.	Society receives a one-month suspension.	Society suspended for the rest of the academic year.
Failure to hand in all society equipment by the advertised deadline.	Individual charged for replacement cost.	Individual taken to the small claims court and suspended from CSU membership.
Behaviour/Communication	Each situation will be investigated individually.	
Society holds an initiation.	Society will be closed.	

The above is not an exhaustive list and can be added to at CSU's discretion. If the disciplinary offence is not stated above CSU Vice President Student Life will consult with CSU's Head of Membership Services on the appropriate punishment for the offence.

Any society that receives a one-month suspension during an academic year and commits another offence will be suspended for the rest of the year.

Suspensions are implemented as soon as CSU are aware of the situation.

A suspension means that the society may not organise or participate in any student activity.

Societies have the right to appeal by stating their reasoning in a letter addressed to the CSU President.

## **Complaints**

Where possible complaints should be dealt with informally. The complainant would inform the Society President of the nature of their complaint and ask for the issue to be investigated and resolved. This may be done verbally or in writing. The Society President should keep a record of the complaint and how it was resolved and notify CSU of the complaint.

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the response they receive from the Society President, or if the complaint directly concerns the Society President, or if the complaint is about a very serious matter such as intolerable or substantial risk of harm, they should make their complaint in writing directly to the Vice President Student Life.

The Vice President Student Life, or nominee, will acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing within 3 working days. CSU will investigate the complaint and make a response to the complainant within 10 working days.

If the complaint is in relation to CSU staff the complainant should be directed to the Chester Students' Unions Complaints Procedure.

The Chief Executive or their nominee shall acknowledge receipt of the complaint in writing and will then follow the CSU complaints procedure.