



SOCIETIES POLICY

Status	Approved
Consultation with staff	19 th March 2024
Societies Council Approval	25 th March 2024
Student Voice Approval	8 th April 2024
Trustee Board Approval	13 th May 2024
Document Location	S:\Common\Activities\Societies\Council & Policy\Societies Policy

1.0 Societies Membership

Full Membership: GCU students (including articulating college students who have a GCU matriculation card)

Associate Membership: GCU Staff, Alumni (life members as defined in GCU Students' Association constitution)

Associate membership should not constitute more than 40% of any one society.

2.0 Active Societies

Active Societies will be those that have:

- Been approved by the Societies Council through the Society Starter Process, outlined in 5.0 (and ratified by Student Voice via Societies Council minutes).
- All new committee members take part in mandatory volunteer training
- Held annual committee elections to elect a minimum of three committee members (but one specifically tasked with being in charge of finance) by the end of Week 7 in Trimester 2.
- Taken part in the reactivation process, outlined below. Returned Society Packs by the deadline on Trimester 1.
- Active societies can add extra committee members over the summer when filling out the society pack if required. Any committee members added after the pack is submitted must be done with the guidance of the Societies Coordinator.

2.1 Registration Process

- Active societies are those that have been activated by Societies Council and have reregistered by the end of week 7 of trimester 2.
- Registration forms will be sent out to active societies, the deadline will be the end of week 7 Trimester 2 for societies to register for activation for the upcoming academic year.
- A society that does not register by the deadline will have to go through the starter process to become activated

3.0 Refusal of Activation

- If the Societies Council declines a Starter Society for activation, the Starter Society can appeal the decision.
- Reasons for refusal of activation will be either due to either equality and diversity issues or due to there being another active society with similar aims.
- The Societies Council will provide feedback, and the Starter Society will have to resubmit their revised Starter Pack to the Council to make another decision regarding activation.
- If the Societies Council declines the activation after the appeal, the Starter Society can appeal to the Student Voice for activation.
- The Student Voice has the final decision, and this cannot be appealed.

4.0 Withdrawal of Activation/Deactivation

- If an active society fails to abide by the rules laid down by the Students' Association constitution and financial regulations, then its activation can be withdrawn by a vote of the Societies Council.
- A society will be deactivated if they do not register by week 7 Trimester 2
- A society will be deactivated if they do not return a society pack by the deadline in Trimester 1
- A society can request to be deactivated if they do not wish to continue.
- If a society has registered by the deadline in Trimester 2 but has not returned a society pack by the deadline of Trimester 1 they will be deactivated and have to go through the starter process for reactivation.

5.0 Starter Societies

To start a new society and become an Active Society by the Societies Council the Starter Society must:

- Have made initial contact with the Students' Association staff and collected a 'Starter Pack'.
- Have held a meeting to decide objectives and have elected at least 3 committee members.
- Submit at least 10 completed membership forms.
- Submit a 'Starter Pack' with constitution, committee and activity plan to Societies Council. It is strongly advised that they include a finance plan with this.
- Societies Council votes to activate society
- All Committee members take part in the Committee training
- Once the Society has been Ratified by Student Voice they will receive their funding approved by the Societies Council.

A Starter Society will be offered a mentor from Societies Council.

A Starter Society can operate as normal until the Student Voice votes. This status can be granted by a GCU Students' Association staff member with approval by Societies Council

5.1 GCU London Societies

The activation process is the same as that of the Glasgow societies.

GCU London can set up societies that are already affiliated at GCU Glasgow as the distance causes joining issues. The separation between London and Glasgow societies are key to including GCU London and encouraging the students to engage with the Students' Association.

6.0 Joining and Membership Fees

- It is optional as to whether a membership fee is charged by societies.
- If a society chooses to have a membership fee, the minimum fee to be charged per member is £1.
- Societies must make a decision on their membership fee at the beginning of each academic year and should carefully consider their plans and finance when doing so.
- Societies are not permitted to have one-off special reduction in membership fees, for example during Freshers' week.

7.0 Constitution Changes

Any changes to a society's constitution, including a change of the name of the society, must be approved by the Societies Council.

8.0 Society Pack and Committee Support

- All activated societies must submit a Society Pack for the coming year by the end of week 2 of Trimester 1.
- All committee members of a society must complete volunteer training through the Students' Association and every society must have a one to one meeting with a Students' Association staff member

9.0 Committees and Election

- Committee posts run from April to April. The committee will hold an annual election in Trimester 2 and register with the Students' Association for the coming year no later than week 7 of Trimester 2.
- Should a committee member resign or be removed from their position then a by-election shall take place.
- All Affiliated societies are to be Student led so GCU Alumni or Staff cannot be on the committee or vote in the committee elections.
- If a student is Graduating they cannot sit on the incoming committee. This includes the Summer Graduation of the outgoing year and Winter Graduation during Trimester A of the upcoming academic year.

Elections are facilitated by each society and only registered Student members of the group are eligible to stand for committee positions or to vote for the new committee, optional online elections are available on request.

9.1 Committee Handover

- The handover following election of new committee members will be the responsibility of the outgoing committee members.
- There will be a handover and planning meeting at the end of each academic year which both outgoing and new committee members should attend in order to complete the handover, review the year's progress and set new targets for the year ahead.
- Outgoing committee will ensure that all relevant society equipment is labelled and stored appropriately in the society's cupboards for the use of the incoming committee.
- Any equipment that is not required or relevant is the responsibility of the outgoing committee to dispose of before the end of the Handover period.

Any equipment not labelled or stored correctly can be disposed of during the summer by the Societies Coordinator.

9.2 General Meeting

- The committee will organise at least one Annual General Meeting for all volunteers to attend, this will be in Trimester 2 leading up to the committee elections and should include a hustings for nominated candidates if appropriate. Committee elections can take place during the AGM.
- The committee can organise other general meetings on an ad-hoc basis.
- The general meetings shall follow the committee meeting rules outlined below.

10.0 Society Financial Accounts

- No society shall hold funds in a bank account other than that of the Students' Association.
- Statements for individual society accounts are available on request from the Students' Association Finance Office.
- To withdraw from a society account, a withdrawal form must be completed.
- Two committee members are required to sign for amounts over £30, one of these being the committee member in charge of finance, as from the start of the next academic term.
- All account withdrawals should be accompanied by an invoice or receipt. Receipts need to be returned within 7 days.
- No personal items may be purchased and any equipment or resources purchased will remain at all times the property of GCU Students' Association.

- Any excess of funds raised via membership or fundraising remaining in the accounts of a society at the end of the financial year will be automatically carried over to the next year.
- Any debt remaining in the accounts of a society at the end of the financial year will be automatically carried over to the next year.

11.0 Societies Funding

The Students' Association will provide funding to support the activities of Societies; the funding is split into the three areas listed below

- Societies Funding League: 70%
- New Societies Fund: 15%
- Dragon's Den: 10%
- Society of The Month 5%

Societies Funding League

The Societies Funding League is the main source of funding for Societies each year. At the end of Trimester 2, each society is scored in the following categories and in the order of weighting listed below.

Weighting	Category
1 st	Registered for the coming year by the deadline
2 nd	All committee members attended committee training
3 rd	Society Pack submitted by the deadline
5 th	Evidence Of Self-funding e.g. charging a membership fee, fundraising event or selling goods.
7 th	At least 3 events created on the Students' Association Website

Societies are listed in a league table depending on whether they have completed a category and funding is increased the higher up the league a Society is. The league is split into the groups listed below and the individual amount payable to a society in each group is agreed at the first Societies Council of the academic year, payment to each society is made following this meeting.

- No 1-10
- No 11-20
- No 21-40
- No 41+

New Societies Fund

This will be a standard amount that is given to any new society starting during the academic year; the amount payable to each new society is agreed at the first Societies Council of the academic year.

Dragon's Den

The Societies Council will organise and host a Dragon's Den in Week 5 for all Societies to apply for funding from this area. The application and allocation criteria for this funding will be decided at the first Societies Council of the academic year.

Society of The month

There will be a standard amount that is given to one society each month running from September- April. This will be for the society who has had the largest increase in members over the past month.

12.0 Society Awards

- Each nominee must be a fully matriculated student of GCU, must be a Society member and actively participate in Society activities.
- The Awards shall be decided by a nominated Societies Awards Committee chosen and agreed by the Societies Council. This Awards Committee must be of at least 3 representatives and consist of current and former Vice Presidents, former award winners and Higher Education staff employed in a clubs and societies related role.
- Each nomination should normally be submitted through the relevant society and on the appropriate Awards Nomination Form. All nominations must be submitted one week prior to the Awards Event.

Society of the Year: Awarded to the society that has had the most outstanding and extraordinary year. Contributing factors could include the number of activities, visibility and profile, interaction with members, social events, fundraisers and overall development.

Best New Society: Awarded to a new society, affiliated in the last year, that has had the most exceptional year. Contributing factors could include the number of activities, visibility and profile, interaction with members, social events, fundraisers and overall development.

Society Event of the Year: Awarded to a society-run event that was memorable; that was engaging and inclusive; that was well communicated and advertised.

Best Overall Contribution from a Society Committee Member: Awarded to a committee member from any society to recognise a volunteer who has shown outstanding commitment, enthusiasm and reliability.

In any dispute over the interpretation of these awards by laws, the decision of the majority of the Societies Awards Committee will be final.

13.0 Societies Ball Policy

This clause applies to any society who plans to organise a formal, large-scale event.

It is strongly advised that a society should not enter a contractual agreement with a facility that requires minimum numbers in advance of the event and has payment in connection to the agreed numbers. Societies cannot sign-up to minimum numbers without seeking permission of the Students' Association.

All society committees are required to follow the below terms:

- The committee must declare intent to host an end of year event to GCU Students' Association within a reasonable timescale to allow the event to be effectively coordinated.
- The committee must meet with a staff member having completed the required financial spreadsheet and have the event signed off by a staff member. The committee should read and take on board the Society Event Checklist provided by GCU Students' Association.
- All financial transactions should take place via the society bank account. Financial risk should be a key consideration for the committee and a committee member should be named as the financial lead. The society should not put the Students' Association at financial risk. The society is required to have the funds available in their account before all transactions.
- In the instance of unavoidable minimum numbers, the event contract will need to be signed by both GCU Students' Association's Chief Executive and the Student President, resulting in the Students' Association taking financial liability for the event. If the society does not comply with this policy, financial risk could lie with the individual organisers.
- Potential for clashing with dates on the GCU and GCU Students' Association calendars must be taken into account by the society.

14.0 Societies Council

Societies Council Aims and Objectives: The Societies Council is the student led group that oversees all policy, funding distribution, events, administration and development of societies. Their aim is to support society growth and promote the needs of societies within the Students' Association.

14.1 Societies Council Structure

The Council shall comprise of 1 Full-time Officer and 7 elected student volunteers and shall comprise of the following remits:

Chair

- The Chair will be determined by election.
- The Chair remit is outlined in Schedule 2 of the Students' Association Constitution.

Head of New Societies

- Motivating committee volunteers to increase their membership numbers.
- Ensuring relevant processes are communicated and followed, such as forms being handed in.
- Encouraging the start-up of new societies and coaching students through this process.

Head of Communication

- Increasing general awareness of societies across campus.
- Attending event team meetings to represent society events within the GCU Students' Association calendar.
- Ensure an active social media presence is continued and societies are aware of council activities.

Head of Events

- Organising society council events and assisting societies in the running of their own events.
- Organise at least 1 society event per year
- Help with the Societies Awards Event (STAR Awards) assisting with the Staff and FTO's

Societies Liaison

- Having an overview of all societies in their area and their activities. Motivating and supporting society volunteers in their area.
- Ensuring that all societies are monitored and are aware of the support network available
- Organising smaller group meetings with volunteers coordinating these societies.

Societies Liaison

- Overview of all societies and their activities. Motivating and supporting society volunteers .
- Ensuring that all societies are monitored and are aware of the support network available
- Organising smaller group meetings with volunteers coordinating these societies.

Head of Fundraising

- Explore External funding to increase funding available to societies
- Provide support for Societies with their individual fundraising events
- Assist in fundraising for Societies Awards

Vice Chair

- To take the place of Chair if they are unavailable
- Attend Equality and Diversity meetings (4 per year)

The role of Vice Chair is not a separate role. It is a roll assigned to an existing council member. This position is not a mandatory position and is at the discretion of the council.

14.2 Council Meetings

- The committee will have a minuted meeting at least four times each academic year, two in both Trimester 1 and 2.
- The committee can meet out-with this meeting schedule for ad-hoc, non-minuted, planning meetings.
- The agenda and all related papers shall be circulated at least one week before each meeting.
- Any papers which have not been sent to the Clerk in time for circulation will only be distributed at the discretion of the Chair.

14.3 Council Meeting Rules

As per Schedule 2 of the Students' Association Constitution.

15.0 Initiation Ceremonies*

- 15.1 GCU Students' Association does not condone initiation ceremonies whether on or off Campus; and believes the practice of initiations may be a dangerous and degrading exercise that jeopardises the safety of its members and can be a source of negative publicity for the Students' Association. It is also considered that unforeseen circumstances that may result from such ceremonies can cause anguish that may affect students both personally and academically.
- 15.2 If a society is found to have breached the Initiations Policy, the society may be liable to disciplinary action in line with GCU Student' Association Disciplinary Procedure.

**Definition: An initiation ceremony is an event in which members (often new members) of the activity group are expected to perform a task or tasks as a means of gaining credibility, status or entry within that club or 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 various food stuffs, nudity and behaviour that may be deemed humiliating.*