



GUIDELINES FOR CONVENORS

OVERVIEW

The main task of Convenors is to help members obtain as much satisfaction as possible from their group, in terms of their mental and physical stimulation, along with social interaction. To assist Convenors, there are important routine matters that you must undertake to meet the U3A conventions and the Policy Guidelines. Additional suggestions in this document are to help you make your group a success.

All guidelines are based on U3A's best practice, with the intent that each individual group can operate autonomously, and as they see fit, applying the Guidelines using both logic and common sense.

Remember your Group Coordinator is here to assist and advise you.

1. ROUTINE ADMINISTRATION FOR GROUPS

1.1 Before the first session

- a. Check if you have the official attendance/record sheets so the roll can be taken. (Your Coordinator always has more attendance sheets if required)

1.2 During each session

- a. Mark the attendance sheet.
- b. Maintain an up-to-date record sheet of names, phone numbers, and email addresses of members in your group. Any changes should be sent to your Coordinator in your monthly report.
- c. If your venue is not fixed, decide where the next meeting is to be held.

For compliance with the Privacy Act, you must obtain permission to circulate personal details within your group. Please emphasize this information is confidential and not be divulged outside your group membership. A copy of this policy is available on the U3A website under 'About U3A.'

1.3 For February and March sessions

- a. Remind your members that U3A subscriptions must be paid no later than 31st March.
- b. Explain that only financial members may attend group sessions or go on a waiting list if full
- c. Explain that all financial group members will receive an email from the Membership and Groups Data Administrator, with their ID and receipt number.

1.4 On April 30th and October 31st

- a. Send a copy of your current group attendance sheet to your group coordinator who will forward this to the Membership and Groups Data Administrator for U3A membership checking and status.

2. U3A TAURANGA PROCEDURES FOR GROUPS

2.1 Depending on the size of the group, choose a convener, and possibly a co-convener to share in administrative tasks.

2.2 Refreshments

- a. Your group decides its own arrangements, but members should contribute a *koha* towards the cost of simple refreshments. In the case where your group meets in a public venue, each group member pays for their own refreshments.
- b. Ensure your host knows in advance the approximate number attending each session for catering purposes.

2.3 Deciding group details.

- a. Your group makes its own decision about when, where, and how often it meets.
- b. If your group meets twice a month, meetings should be on a particular day in either the first and third, or the second and fourth week of the month.

2.4 Members commitment to groups

- a. Your members need to recognise the benefit of being part of a group by committing themselves to attend the sessions as often as possible.
- b. If a member misses three consecutive sessions without an apology, you can ask that member to leave the group. However, it is advisable to talk with the members concerned first. If you need support, contact your Group Coordinator.
- c. Members must advise you if they decide to withdraw from a group.
- d. It is the responsibility of each individual member to inform you if they are unable to attend a group session. Absences can affect your tutor fees and/or venue hire.

2.5 Welcoming new members

- a. Introduce your new members to the group.
- b. Explain how your group operates.
- c. Point out the need to contact yourself or host when unable to attend a session.

2.6 Welcoming visitors

- a. A U3A financial member may visit your group for two sessions, before deciding to join the group. (The financial status of this member can be checked for you by your group coordinator).
- b. A non-financial visiting person may attend your group for two sessions before applying to join as a financial member of U3A Tauranga.
- c. Do not accept new members over those U3A members you already have on your waiting list, add them to your waiting list.

2.7 Requiring more members.

- a. Talk to your Group Coordinator, who will include your request in the monthly coordinator report. This can then be promoted in the Newsletter, on the Website and at the Monthly Meetings.
- b. You can also publicise your group by writing an article for the newsletter and U3A Tauranga website. Include photographs to make it more interesting. Send this to: newsletter@u3atauranga.org.nz

2.8 Venue Hiring

- a. You must obtain a new hire contract for the subsequent year from the hiring organisation and check carefully the Terms and Conditions. Note any changes that have been updated in the contract and make your Coordinator aware of these.
- b. Sign the new hiring contract, along with the U3A Convenor's Hire Premises Acknowledgement' document.
- c. Return the original signed contract to the hiring company.
- d. Keep a copy of the new contract for your records.

- e. Forward a copy of both documents to your Coordinator, who will pass them on to the President for final signing. These contracts are kept on record by the Secretary.

2.9 Convenors' meetings

- a. Twice a year a forum for all Convenors is held to discuss matters of common interest, including the sharing of ideas and concerns. Here, you can collaborate with other convenors. It is anticipated that all convenors will attend these meetings.

Convenors cannot close their group. If your group is no longer viable or there is another reason why you feel your group may need to close, you must immediately contact your Group Coordinator. (New convenors often emerge from general membership.)

3. U3A POLICY AND GUIDELINES

3.1 Health & Safety Guidelines

- a. You must comply with the U3A Health & Safety Guidelines
- b. Make sure your group members are aware of the Health & Safety Guidelines that pertain to certain activities, e.g.
 - that electrical equipment being used is safe, and away from walkways.
 - that mats and rugs do not create a trip hazard.

3.2 Groups undertaking outdoor activities should ensure their members:

- a. Sign the U3A 'Individual Responsibility Document' at the beginning of each year, or on joining during the year.
- b. Carry their contact details in case an accident occurs.
- c. Carry their personal medication for any critical health problems and ensure you or your co-convenor are aware of when and how this should be administered, if necessary.
- d. Bring their mobile phones and, if cell phone coverage is not going to be available, an emergency beacon, if possible. For hiking groups, a locator device is provided by the U3A. This must be taken on all outdoor activities.
- e. Are included on a participants list and that participating members are accounted for at the end of the activity.

You must communicate to your members not to attend your meeting if unwell with an infection such as a cough, cold, sore throat, flu, vomiting, diarrhea or drug-resistant wound, shingles etc.

4. GROUP FINANCES

4.1 Support Grants

- a. For some groups to function effectively, U3A financial assistance may be available for external costs incurred. However, members of your group must contribute towards some of the costs.
- a. Application for financial assistance is based on demonstrated needs such as:
 - Assistance with rent of premises
 - Assistance with the cost of tutors
 - Assistance with cost of field trips
 - Assistance with invited speaker fees.
- b. Send your grant application to your Coordinator at the beginning of a month, to be presented at the next Executive meeting. You will be advised of the Executive's decision by your coordinator.
- c. As a precaution, it is suggested that members pay the rental and tutor costs up front, every half year, to help with fluctuating attendance, especially in winter.
- a. All successful grants will require you to report on how these funds have been used by the end of the

year. A form for this purpose is available from your Coordinator. Any remaining balance will be held in trust in your U3A suspense account.

4.2 Bank accounts

- a. Money collected from your group for venue and/or tutor hire must be held in a U3A suspense account. This is to provide accountability and personal liability protection for yourself, your group members and the U3A. The U3A treasurer will set this account up for your group once requested.
- b. A *koha* can be asked to pay for refreshments, field trips and invited speaker costs. This does not require an account.

5. OTHER USEFUL SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP

5.1 Delegating Your Tasks.

- a. If you have a large group you can share your responsibility and role with a co-convenor.
- b. You can delegate other tasks to members of your group, e.g. chairing discussions, setting up audio/visual equipment, putting out tables and chairs, writing items for the newsletter or website etc.

5.2 Promoting and involving your members.

- a. Ensure your group members have reasonable opportunities to participate, evaluate, and explore new ideas. Be respectful of others with differing opinions and value their contributions.
- b. If your group is based on presentations, discussion or analysis, try to schedule topics ahead of time so members can be prepared.

5.3 Fostering stimulation and enjoyment

- a. Encourage your group members to contribute presentations that go beyond their comfort zone.
- b. Share your discussion, a presentation or activity with a similar group.
- c. Invite an outside expert to speak on a specialized topic or arrange a trip to enhance your group's learning and/or experiences.

6 PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS

6.1 Contact your Group Coordinator for help as they may be able to provide you with support, expertise on 'what to do next,' mediation or venue/tutor hire etc.

U3A Tauranga would like to thank all convenors for their dedication, time and commitment that they tirelessly provide their groups throughout the year.

Signed: President *Gail Moore*

Date of Adoption November 2025

An addition to the guidelines as at June 12th, 2026

As we no longer have an Almoner role, we ask that in the event of serious illness, the death of a group member or close member's family we would like a sympathy or condolence card to be sent out on behalf of U3A Tauranga. To do this **Convenors** need to inform their **Coordinator** for this process to happen. In some cases, individual groups may choose, which is fine, to do something special in addition to a message going out from our wider membership.

President: *Bev Edlin*

Date: 12/06/2026