

ATU Students' Union Donegal

Societies Handbook

September 2024

Note from the Societies Office

Welcome to the ATU Students' Union Donegal Guide to Societies. This guidebook is designed to provide you with the tools to run your society. It is to be used in conjunction with our online societies platform "www.atusulife.ie", which will be the main communication platform between society executives and society members.

I hope you find this guidebook useful. Remember that the SU is available to help in any way we can throughout the year. Please do not hesitate to contact us.

Have a fantastic year ahead!

Beginning of the Year Checklist for Committee Executives

- Book a table for Clubs & Societies Day.
- Familiarise yourself with this guide.
- Ensure you familiarise yourself with the application form, paying particular attention to what can and cannot be funded.
- Sign up/register and familiarise yourself with atusulife as this will be the main communication tool between you and your society members.
- Plan your general society activities for the year ahead.
- Ensure that your table is represented on Clubs & Societies Day and provide as much information as possible to students who may be interested in joining your society on the day.
- Direct students to your society on the atusulife platform so that they can sign up to join your society.
- Finalise your proposed society plans/activities and costings for the year ahead, complete your application form and submit within the specified closing date/time.
- Attend the online training workshop for atusulife.
- Book your room/hall/pitch well in advance for your regular meetings/activities (details for room bookings are outlined below).
- Ensure your society emails are checked regularly.
- Ensure to keep your pages up to date on www.atusulife.ie.
- If you need support or assistance with anything, email josephine.wilson@atu.ie who will be happy to advise.

Clubs & Societies Day

Society committee members are expected to host a table on Clubs & Societies Day in order to sign up new members and answer any questions students may have regarding the society. Societies must direct students to the atusulife online platform to sign up and join your society. Not having a table on Clubs & Societies Day greatly reduces the chance of your society being successfully formed.

The rules...

1. You must book a table in advance - do so via the details in the email you receive.
2. You must set yourself up on the committee dashboard of atusulife before Clubs & Societies Day. Details will be provided to you in your application pack.
3. You can bring a laptop with a wifi connection to Clubs & Societies Day if you wish so that you can guide students through the sign-up process.
4. Paper signups are of **NO USE** on Clubs & Societies Day. If, however, you experience temporary difficulties, there are signup sheets available which request all the information you need in order to be able to contact students to remind them to sign up online.
5. Using paper signups creates additional work for **you** and everybody else, delays your members signups and usually results in you losing members.

After Clubs & Societies Day, e-mail all your new members to welcome them to your society. Your members list is available for you to view as soon as students sign up online.

Problems or Questions?

If you have any problems or questions throughout the day, please ask us! We are here to help. If you encounter any problem with the software, please inform Josephine Wilson as soon as possible so it can be rectified.

Other Important Tasks at the Start of the Year

Make an effort with your first meeting. First impressions count if you hope to keep your members. Introduce new members to existing members and try to organise a social aspect to this first meeting which will allow people to get to know each other in an informal setting.

Before completing and submitting your application form (CS1), read it thoroughly together with these guidelines. Your application form clearly states the areas of expenditure permitted under the programme and this guide is a useful informational resource.

If interested in a bonding/social session for your society, familiarise yourself with the special deal which has been negotiated on behalf of societies with Arena 7 and make sure you include in your application form:

- Bowling, Laser Quest and Fast Food Meal - €14 per society member (you can request 50% of this in your funding form so that each student only pays €7 and the society funding covers the remaining €7 per person).

If you/your society members are interested in purchasing clothing such as a hoodie/tee-shirt/sweater/polo shirt/half zip/body warmer, familiarise yourself with the local businesses which we have accounts with and recommend:

C & M Embroidery, Logo2Go, Brian McCormick Sports, Michael Murphy Sports, O Reilly Sports

- In your application form, you can request 50% of the value of your chosen item up to a maximum value of €30 e.g. a hoodie that costs €30 - each student only pays €15 and the society funding covers the remaining €15 per person).
- The ATUSU Donegal logo must be displayed on any clothing purchased under the C & S Programme.
- It is strongly advised that samples of sizes are tried on by each member before confirming your order with your chosen retailer as no returns or exchanges are possible with personalised clothing.

Definitions of a Society and a Club

The primary aim of the societies and sports clubs at ATU Donegal is to promote the social and community life of the campus. In that respect, they have a common purpose. However, some very clear features distinguish a sports club from a society and they are classified separately. Some of the main features which distinguish them from one another are as follows:

A **society** will normally accommodate the main activities connected with social interaction, cultural, special interest, lifestyle, wellbeing, environmental and religious interests/activities, commonly with some charitable purpose. Some societies may host sports events as part of a social programme for their members, but such events will be subsidiary to the main focus of the society. A society can also provide a facility that enables those who cannot gain a place on a competitive team/sport or who cannot be competitively involved for a variety of reasons to be actively involved in a sport.

A **club** will always accommodate competitive sports competition and seek to support, appreciate and promote athletic endeavour.

The main distinguishing feature between a club and a society is that the activities of a club are competitive and in the main, directly affiliated to the national student sporting bodies; whereas in the case of a society, the activities are purely recreational, non-competitive (in terms of a sports society) and focused on social interaction.

About the Clubs & Societies Programme at ATU Donegal

ATU Students' Union Donegal (ATUSUD) delivers the Clubs and Societies Programme for students at Atlantic Technological University Donegal (ATUD). Clubs and Societies at ATUD are registered and financed by two committees which consist of ATUSUD sabbatical officers/student reps, ATUSUD staff, ATUD staff and an external member. Registration is carried out by the Clubs & Societies Registration Committee (CSRC) and funding is allocated by the Clubs & Societies Finance Committee (CSFC) (society funding). The Clubs & Societies Programme at ATUD commences each academic year at the end of September. Both committees meet to assess all submitted clubs/societies applications. Funded activities generally commence from around mid-October of each academic year. Activities can then continue until the start of May of each academic year.

The SU is committed to funding societies who are focussed on social and recreational activities which are aimed at encouraging the personal development of students outside of the academic setting.

Advocacy/Lobbying groups do not come under the remit of the societies programme at ATUSUD.

Additionally, academic module/programme related activities are the remit of the relevant faculty or department and are not that of the societies programme at ATUSUD.

The Registration of Clubs & Societies

Upon registration, a club/society is permitted the following entitlements:

1. To use the name of the university in its' title and documentation.
2. To use the facilities of the university as appropriate and as authorised, if requested in advance.
3. To be eligible for funding from ATUD Student Capitation funds.
4. To promote its' activities within the university community.
5. To represent the university in inter-college events and other public events.
6. To organise events in the university and to invite visitors and guests to participate or observe.

Important points to note for registration:

- A minimum of 10 full-time registered student members shall be considered as the least amount of membership required to establish a club or society at ATUD.
- An Executive must be created (President, Secretary, Treasurer). **Only 'full-time' registered students at ATUD** can be Executive Members of an ATUD Club/Society. **While full-time registered students are free to join as many clubs/societies as they wish, you cannot be an Executive Member of more than one club/society.**
- **ATUD staff members** (either part-time/temporary or full-time/permanent **cannot** be a member of any ATUD Club or Society).
- External parties or individuals cannot be members of a club/society at ATUD.

Provision of Funding

Each society shall be required to submit a funding proposal for the year (CS1); the proposal shall include:

- Executive contact information and student registration numbers.
- Details of the club's proposed activities.
- A total figure of the proposed expenditure for the upcoming academic year (**Please refer to the application form for details of what can and cannot be funded**).

Please note: Funding allocated by the CSFC can only be used on activities approved in the proposal.

Budgets

- Clubs/societies that overspend on their budget will have to meet costs from their own resources.
- **All expenditure** must be approved in advance by the SU General Manager.
- The Clubs & Societies Programme does NOT fund the running of social outings/meals or the purchase of alcohol. Details of funding provided for one single bonding session during the academic year are included in the application form.
- New societies registering for the first time receive a maximum start-up budget of €600 for the full academic year.
- Budgets for subsequent years are generally based on the activities and spend of a society in the previous year. At the discretion of the committee, a budget can be increased accordingly each year based on previous activities and expenditure.
- The minimum number of students to be taken on a bus trip can be no less than 10 in order to make the trip financially feasible.

Important points to note for Provision of Funding:

- **All expenditure** must be approved in advance by the SU General Manager.
- **Tuesday morning from 9.00am – 12.45pm of each week will be allocated to the provision of funding, bookings and enquiries from executive members.** To ensure an efficient service, please email the SU General Manager **to book** an appointment prior to visiting the office. Outside of this time, the SU General Manager can be contacted via email at any time during office hours.
- It is the responsibility of the Executive within each club/society to plan and cost for upcoming activities. Prior to payment allocation, planned activities with accompanying invoice/receipt must be submitted to the SU General Manager. Failure to do so will result in payments not being allocated.
- The Treasurer of a club/society must give the Student Union General Manager **one weeks' advance notice** prior to the allocation of a payment.
- **Payments to individuals cannot be made unless agreed in advance.** All payments will be allocated based on a valid invoice/receipt from each company/organisation. Keeping a paper trail is the most important duty of the treasurer.
- For smaller items of expenditure purchased from local shops/online retailers; on production of the receipt to the SU General Manager, the President of the club/society will be refunded for these items directly into their bank account within 48 hours.

Fundraising and Cash Related Activities

All Clubs & Societies must discuss with the SU General Manager before engaging in cash related activities. This includes sale of hoodies, sponsorship and fundraising activities.

Booking Transport

If you require a price for a planned trip, please contact the SU General Manager for a quotation. Students must use the tendered bus operators at ATUSUD. **All buses must be booked with the SU General Manager at least two weeks in advance of the trip.** Failure to give the correct notice for booking buses may result in the club/society not securing transport for their proposed outing. **All members participating in clubs and societies activities must note that the use of personal transportation is not permitted under any circumstances.**

Clubs & Societies Room & Other Meeting Rooms

If a club/society wishes to book the Clubs & Societies Room, please email the SU General Manager directly. **Please note that the Clubs & Societies Room must be booked at least one week in advance and has a maximum capacity of 10 people.** The SU General Manager will endeavour to facilitate any requests for bookings made in advance. **At all times, the Clubs & Societies Room must be left neat and tidy after any meetings. Failure to adhere to this will result in the club/society not being permitted access in the future.**

Other rooms in the main building with a larger capacity are also available for booking. If you wish to book a room in the main building, you must do so by emailing the Estates Office at marnie.grier@atu.ie. **Please note that rooms in the main building must be booked well in advance as during term time, these rooms book up fast.** The Estates Office will endeavour to facilitate any requests for bookings made in advance. **At all times, any rooms used must be left neat and tidy after usage. Failure to adhere to this will result in the club/society not being permitted access in the future.**

If you wish to book the sports hall, pitches or canteen area in the An Danlann building, you must do so by emailing the Sports Centre with your requirements at RoseAnn.McGinley@atu.ie. Please note that these areas must be booked well in advance, as during term time, space books up fast. The Sports Centre will endeavour to facilitate any requests for bookings made in advance.

General Housekeeping

All clubs/societies **must**, at all times, keep noise levels to a minimum and have respect for other students, staff and property; **both on and off campus.** Failure to comply with this, will result in the immediate freezing of club/society funds. Furthermore, repeated incidents will result in the immediate de-registration of the relevant club/society.

Safeguarding of Goods

In the case of purchased goods, it is important that all items be safeguarded, both for audit purposes and for the benefit of the club/society. Lockers can be provided by the SU General Manager to clubs/societies for safe storage purposes. For all items over the value of €50, a photograph and the serial number of the item/s

must be emailed to the SU General Manager immediately after purchase. The item must also be given to the SU General Manager at the end of the academic year as it is the property of the C & S Programme and will be passed on to the new society president at the start of the next academic year.

Staff Involvement

With effect from 1st September 2016, ATUD staff or individuals, other than full-time registered students, will not be permitted to be a member of clubs or societies establishing for the first time. Clubs & Societies that have been in existence prior to the date specified above, and have remained as a registered club/society, may retain the support of the existing ATUD staff involved in their respective club or society.

Publications

Clubs & Societies are not permitted to make publications on any forum, online or print, without prior approval from the CSFC.

Club/Society Promotion

In setting up a Club or Society, the SU at ATUD will promote club/societies via **atusulife**, email, website and social media platforms. This includes the publication of contact details for each Club/Society President. In addition, if any club/society executive would like to promote an event/activity, any of the SU officers can be contacted in advance and the event/activity can be publicised on SU social media and via student email with a direct link to **atusulife**. **One weeks' notice must be given in all circumstances.** It is important that clubs/societies regularly engage with their members and promote their activities via the **atusulife** platform.

Civic Engagement

The SU at ATUD encourages civic engagement through the Clubs & Societies Programme. Clubs and societies are encouraged to outline, through the application process, plans for civic engagement in the year ahead. If you require further information on the area of civic engagement please contact the SU General Manager.

Breach of Guidelines

In the event that any club/society breaches the 'Guidelines for Clubs & Societies at Atlantic Technological University Donegal', the Clubs & Societies Finance Committee will freeze funds, with immediate effect.

The role of the Club/Society President

The club/society President will take a lead role in the planning of activities and be responsible for communication between the club/society and the SU office. The President will also observe procedures as set out by the SU and the relevant committees associated with the Clubs & Societies Programme. He/she/they will also act as the main contact and be responsible for the activities of the Club/Society. The club/society

President will be assigned as an admin on the **atusulife** website and is responsible for ensuring that their society activity/membership is kept up to date on that platform. The President may also assign other executive members on their behalf to access and update their society activity on the **atusulife** platform.

The role of Club/Society Secretary

The club/society Secretary will be responsible for the preparation of minutes of all meetings. The Secretary must observe procedures with regard to meetings; i.e.

- Notice to all members of proposed meeting dates.
- Observance of rules regarding quorum of members, recording of minutes, balloting of members on issues that are deemed important to the business of the club/society.
- Follow up on proposals and requests to the SU as a result of actions agreed at meetings.
- It is important that the Secretary retains a record of each committee (executive) meeting.

The role of Club/Society Treasurer

The Treasurer will be responsible for the club/society funding. Executive members must ensure that funding is used properly and shall consult the SU General Manager in advance, regarding the allocation and expenditure of funds. Clubs/societies must also supply an invoice prior to approved payment being made.

Insurance and Trips/Excursions

It is important to ensure that all proposed trips are adequately covered by insurance. The executive must therefore inform the SU General Manager, when requesting the booking of the bus, of the planned activities within the trip, to ensure adequate insurance cover exists. Failure to do so will result in the refusal of the requested activities. The SU General Manager will refer any relevant trips for review to the VP for Finance and Corporate Services of the University.

Garda Vetting

If the club or society plans to undertake activities that will involve members of the group working with, or supervising children and/or vulnerable adults, then Garda Vetting must be sought through the Garda Vetting service within the university. The Garda Vetting facility at ATUD is only available at the university to clubs and societies at the point of registration.

Society Awards

The ATU Donegal Student Achievement Awards are held in March/April in semester two each year. A number of Clubs & Societies Scholarships are awarded on the night to student leaders who have demonstrated outstanding leadership skills and made a difference to others throughout the year. A number of awards are also presented on the night to dedicated students and societies who have shone in their endeavours with their societies throughout the year - an example of the award categories are as follows:

- Best Society
- Most Outstanding Individual
- Leadership
- Civic, Charity & Community Engagement
- Best Video
- Best Photograph
- Best Poster
- Most Improved Society

Full details of the nomination and application process, requirements and deadlines are emailed to all society executives in late February each year. TIP: If you are planning on applying for awards or a scholarship, it would be helpful to you as you go along to collect any press cuttings, posters, publications and video recordings as you will need them for your portfolio!

BICS Awards



Regularly, a couple of the winners from our domestic awards go on to represent the University at the BICS National Awards which are normally held in April (location changes each year). We use the same application format (including portfolio) so there is no need to worry about an extra application submission!