**Introduction**

**What is an Annual General Meeting (AGM)**

An AGM is open to all your society to elect the committee for the year ahead, make any changes to the society constitution, and celebrate the society’s successes and outline future plans. If you are affiliated or wish to be affiliated to an external company you should also re-vote/ vote on this affiliation continuing for the following academic year.

**AGM should be held towards the end of Semester B or the start of Semester C.**

**(Check with the Societies Team for the deadlines for your elections and AGM’s).**

**Why do we have to hold an AGM?**

All Union affiliated societies organise a general meeting are required to hold an AGM.

* **Member-Led Societies/Clubs**

AGMs give members the opportunity to set the direction of their society.

* **Transparent Elections**

All members are given the chance to vote and decide who to be on the Society Committee.

* **Celebrating Success**

This is an opportunity to report back to your members what you have achieved.

* **Informing Members**

It is important that members are kept up-to-date with any new developments and changes to the society.

**Organising the AGM**

**Set a Time and Date**

Agree with your committee which of the three AGM rounds set by the Union work for you or other possible dates for the AGM. If you are holding your AGM outside the three rounds set by the Union you will still need to submit your elections form by the deadline to inform the Union of your AGM date. Online elections won’t be available to your society if falling outside the three AGM rounds.

Check your elections and AGM page on the resource hub to view the dates of the three rounds.

You will need at least two weeks to prepare.

Think about when your members will be available. There will not be a date and time that will suit every member. However, an evening is likely to suit your members better.

Once you have a list of possible times and dates you can book a room the SU reception.

**Incentives**

Think about what might encourage members to attend the AGM. Some societies/clubs provide food and drink, hold their AGM at the start or end of an event, or integrate it with their own society/club awards.

**Send Notice**

Once you have a time, date and place for the AGM email a notice to your members. The notice should be sent at least a week in advance of your AGM and should include:

* **Time, Date and Place**

Clearly state the time, date and place of the AGM. You may want to include instructions for how to find the venue.

* **Election Nominations**

At the AGM you must elect the committee for the year ahead. Outline the positions available (see below) and send a nomination form. You can use the nomination form on the Union’s societies/clubs website.

Specify a deadline and give an email address to that they should email to submit their nomination form. You should give a deadline at least two days before the AGM the longer the better. If completing your elections online the Union has specified these deadlines.

You may also want to ask candidates to submit a manifesto. A manifesto is no more than an A4 page for candidates to outline a bit about themselves, why they want the position and what their aims and plans will be if they get elected and will help members make their decision.

* **Incentives**

Tell your members why attending the AGM is important and what’s in it for them.

**Committee Report**

Before the AGM, your committee should reflect on the past year and the society activities and achievements. This discussion should then be used as the basis of a presentation for the AGM.

**Constitution Review**

Also before the AGM, your committee will need to review your society constitution. The constitution is your aims and objectives and your list of committee positions.

Societies change from year to year. Outgoing committees should review the role of the society with incoming officers and consider the following questions:

• Is the society still achieving the purpose set out in its constitution?

• What gap is the society filling?

• Who else is involved in similar activities? Is there room for collaboration? (Think beyond other societies to community groups, QM offices and departments and local organisations for example).

• Are there new activities the society could develop?

The aims and objectives should accurately describe your society activity.

If your committee decides to make any changes to the constitution, you will need to give a presentation outlining the changes you want to make and why at the AGM. Members should be given the opportunity to vote for or against your proposed changes at the AGM.

**External Affiliations**

If you society plans to be affiliated to an external organisation next academic year (including if you have been affiliated this year and wish to continue the affiliation), you will need to vote on this affiliation in your AGM.

Present to your members the pros and cons for affiliating with the external organisation before holding the vote.

You need a 2/3rd majority vote to pass the vote of affiliation.

Remember to include this vote and vote counts in your AGM minutes.

**AGM Agenda**

You will need to write an agenda for the AGM. The Agenda should include:

* **Committee Report**
* **Constitution Review** (If you are proposing changes to the society constitution)
* **External Affiliations Review** (if you are proposing to be affiliated or re-affiliated to an external organisation)
* **Candidate Speeches**
* **Elections**
* **Time, Date and Place**

The agenda should be emailed to students with a reminder at least two days before the AGM.

**Elections**

**The Positions**

At the AGM you must elect your Principle offers i.e. President and Treasurer for the next academic year. You may also need to elect other committee positions that are written in your society constitution.

* **President**

The President’s responsibilities include:

1. Being the figurehead of the Society
2. Ensuring that the Society operates in accordance with its Constitution and the Articles of Association, bye-laws and policies of the Union.
3. Attending Union training sessions as appropriate.
4. Calling General Meetings of the Society.
5. Organising fair and transparent elections for the following year’s committee.
6. For being the point of contact between The Union and the Society members. The President is mandated to keep in regular contact with Alvin (Societies Co-ordinator)
7. Authorising the withdrawal of expenditure from the society account
* **Treasurer**

The Treasurer’s responsibilities include:

1. Keeping current accurate financial information of the society activities.
2. Ensuring financial transactions made through the Union are conducted in accordance with guidance provided.
3. Authorising the withdrawal of expenditure from the society account.
4. Attending Union training sessions as appropriate.
5. Ensuring that all relevant financial documents are retrieved from the previous Treasurer and passed on to the next Treasurer.

The committee elected will hold office between 1 August and 31 July the following year.

**Nominations and Manifestos**

Members should have the chance to read copies of candidate’s nomination forms and manifestos. Electronic copies can be emailed to members before the AGM and paper copies made available at the meeting.

**Candidate Speeches**

At the AGM, you should give candidates the opportunity to outline a bit about themselves, why they want the position and what their aims and plans will be if they get elected. You can also allow members to ask the candidates questions. This is called candidate hustings.

Hustings

• Hustings take place before elections and is the time when prospective candidates give a brief speech highlighting their suitability for the position they have applied for, and their strengths relative to other candidates.

• Voting can either take place immediately after hustings (especially for small societies, and positions with few candidates) or a while after (usually one to two weeks – remember to check election dates if you are holding your elections online).

• Hustings are a good opportunity to encourage people who are running for positions to stay involved in the society even if they aren’t elected for the position they want. This is a good question to ask at hustings, and may help to ensure a larger and more active committee for the

following year.

Candidates must be given equal opportunity to present their speech. Set an allocated amount of time for each candidate prior to the AGM and give this information to candidates so they can prepare. During the candidates speeches it is good to give a warning (e.g. 30 seconds left, 10 seconds left).

**Voting**

Voting should be conducted by secret ballot.

This involves anonymously filling in a ballot paper and placing it in a ballot box before being counted. Once the voting is finished someone that does not have an interest in the outcome of the election should count the votes and announce the winner.

Both first-past-the-post (where voters mark an ‘X’ next to their most preferred candidate) or the Alternative Vote (AV) or the Single Transferable Vote (STV) (where voters mark candidates in order of preference) are acceptable.

You can print off and use ballot papers on the Union’s society’s website to help conduct your election. If you need support running an election contact the Union.

**Chairing the AGM**

The AGM is chaired or led by the President or a member elected at the start of the AGM. The Chair should:

* **Be Impartial**

Not support a perspective and candidate. Allows everyone to speak who wishes to.

* **Be an effective communicator**

Speak clearly and concisely and not using jargon and phrases members might not understand.

* **Be a good listener**

Listens to member’s contributions and is able to summarise what has been said for the audience.

* **Exert authority and leadership**

Can keep order and keep the meeting flowing.

* **Achieve the meeting’s aims**

Has a clear understanding what the meeting intends to achieve and ensures the meeting achieves it.

**Minutesuorum**

Minutes are official notes of what is discussed in a meeting. You will need to make sure minutes are taken for the AGM that summarise the key discussions and decisions.

Minutes should include:

* Committee Members in attendance
* Committee Members who sent their apologies (not present at the meeting)
* Total number of members present
* Elections results and vote counts
* Notes of member’s feedback from this year’s activity and what your society will focus on next year.
* Changes to your constitution (if applicable)
* External Affiliations and vote count (if applicable)

**Quorum**

Quorum (the number of member you need to attend the AGM for the meeting to take place) is 50 per cent of all your members unless otherwise stated in your society/club constitution.

The meeting can still take place if you don’t reach quorum but you must notify the Societies/Club Sport Co-ordinator who will need to approve your minutes.

**Handover**

Throughout the course of a year, committees can build up large amounts of useful information about the operation of a society;

handy tips,

personal contacts,

financial information,

publicity material,

society email accounts and social media pages etc.….

**Committees should consider:**

* How to preserve this information.
* The most effective format to make it available for the next committee.
* Handover meetings: face-to-face handover meetings are usually most successful, often in subdivisions of the main committee, e.g. a Events officer hand-over meeting, a financial information hand-over meeting) along with hard drive of financial information and publicity materials etc.

**Communications**

Societies should be aware of all the ways in which they communicate and report to new committee members on successful and unsuccessful methods used.

**Handing over event information**

Examples of the main types of event are:

Speaker events (e.g. speaker talks, panel discussions and film screenings)

Hands-on/interactive practical events (e.g. outdoor expeditions and training courses)

Fundraisers (e.g. fundraisers and sponsored events)

Social events (e.g. committee formal, society squash)

**Keeping Records**

It is important to keep a full record of all events. This information can be stored in a number of ways and it is important that new committee members have access to all this information to help in planning the following year’s events.

Events Officers should hand over:

• A record of all events run in the past year, and useful information for planning events (e.g. location of events, who provided the food/refreshments, risk assessment forms etc.)

• A database of all speakers i.e. contacts who have either presented at events in the past, or who have been suggested or approached, including trainers for courses, expeditions etc. (these may be useful when considering who to approach for future talks)

**Key Contacts**

If you have any questions please contact us via su-societies@qmul.ac.uk