imperial college union

NEW CLUB/SOCIETY STARTER PACK

THE STUDENT'S UNION

CONTENTS

Table of Contents

Welcome to ICU **4**

2025-26 Mentors *5*

Activities Team *6*

Timeline **7**

2025—26 ..... *7*

First Steps 7

Term 2 7

Term 3 7

2026—27 ..... *8*

Summer Holiday Planning 8

Term 2 8

Sources of Information **8**

Weekly Newsletter *8*

eActivities Training *9*

Freshdesk Knowledgebase *9*

Documentation and Governance **10**

Membership Sales *10*

Constitution *10*

Committee Structure *10*

Finances and Funding **11**

Managing your Finances *11*

Introduction to eActivities 11

Expenditure 12

Income 13

Annual Budgeting 14

Funding Opportunities *15*

Initial Grant 15

Additional Funding Opportunities 15

Running an Event **17**

Summary of Processes *17*

Activity Proposal and Risk Assessments 17

Event Budget 17

A Final Few Things... 18

Room Bookings *18*

Equipment Bookings *18*

Good Luck! *18*

Welcome to ICU

Congratulations on the initial approval of your idea for a new club or society. You're joining a network of over 360 established groups at Imperial College Union, and I'm so excited to see your idea flourish. This guide aims to introduce you to ICU and our processes through a club and society lens, though you'll also be thoroughly supported by an experienced student volunteer (your mentor) as well as the Activities Team. More on these later!

Imperial College Union (ICU) is a registered charity in the UK, which aims to advance the education and welfare of all Imperial students. We are led by a network of democratically elected students, and are supported by a full-time staff team, who I'm sure you'll get to know soon enough.

Each club or society is represented by a Management Group (MG), who will provide peer-to-peer support and represent you in various bodies across the Union. They are also responsible for approving your day-to-day financial transactions and have the experience to guide you through more complex queries. Your mentor will come from a Management Group's committee, so will be very well placed to help you.

As a society operating under Imperial College Union, you are part of our organization and must therefore work through our simple processes. This means:

- All finances must happen through our systems. Your society will be given its own financial account, so **never** open a bank account on behalf of your society.
- Before hosting an event, please ensure it is approved by us.

With this we offer plenty of support, including:

- Access to rooms across campuses, free of charge.
- A dedicated Imperial email account to conduct your society business.
- Official recognition by the Union and the College, and the right to use our logos and names.
- Our help and support, whenever you need it!

I can't wait to see what you get up to, and I wish you all the best with this exciting journey.



Tom Gordon
Deputy President (Activities)

2025-26 Mentors

Nathalie Tedfors Lindell
Chair, Arts & Entertainments Sector

ae.chair@imperial.ac.uk

Stefaniia Medvetskaia
Chair, Sports Sector

sport.chair@imperial.ac.uk

Imogen Young
Vice Chair (Games and Hobbies), Recreation Sector

re.games@imperial.ac.uk

Angie Qiao
Clubs and Societies Chair, ICSMSU

icsm.cs@imperial.ac.uk

Aidan Madge
Clubs and Societies Chair, CGCU

guilds.vpcsc@imperial.ac.uk

Jack Swires
President, RCSU

rcsu.president@imperial.ac.uk

Above are the mentors who will be supporting new societies for the 2025-26 academic year. Each mentor is a senior student volunteer who sits on the Activities Forum — the elected student body responsible for setting policy around the funding and management of clubs and societies.

Please check your welcome email to see who your assigned mentor is. They will be your friend throughout the process. Feel free to use them for guidance, and don't be afraid of asking them silly questions.

Activities Team

The Activities Team are responsible for the day-to-day support for all our clubs and societies, whether that's supporting you in running an event, helping you to book a room, or to help you manage your finances.

The team are here to help! To get in touch, please submit a ticket through our support hub, and your question will automatically be directed to the most relevant member of staff. **This is also the home for most of our training articles, which you can use to find information whenever you need it.**

Link to Support Hub

Lucy Brown Activities Manager (Events)	Robert Fenner Activities Manager (Operations)
Marta Mazzini Cea Activities Coordinator (Events) • CGCU Societies • Recreation Societies • Union Awards	**Robert Thomas** Activities Coordinator (Operations) • Room bookings • Email accounts
Alicia Conte Activities Coordinator (Events) • ICSM Societies • Silwood Societies • Community Societies	**Juliette Guillot** Activities Coordinator (Operations) • Union Reception / Helpdesk • Elections, Co-Opting, Governance • Systems
Santi Siabato Trujillo Activities Coordinator (Events) • RSM Societies • Sports Clubs • Cultural Societies	**Victoria Hood** Activities Coordinator (Finance) • Financial queries and approvals • Sponsorship contracts

Timeline

2025—26

First Steps

You're pretty much free to start running events and building a community when you think you're ready! It'll take us a few more days to get you up and running on eActivities — our financial system — but I'll reach out to you as soon as this happens. As an absolute first step though, please read through this entire guide to get the gist of how our processes work. Then, I would recommend that you reach out to your mentor so you can set up an intro meeting. There are a few things you'll need to decide early on, so it'd be worth talking through these:

- What will your first event be?
- How are you going to build community early on?
- Do you want to charge a membership fee, or let people join for free?

For the first time ever, every new club or society will be given £100 as a gift to get you started. Have a think about how you'd like to spend this. Whether you spend it on your first event, publicity posters, or even Instagram ads, you can't really go wrong! If your society has existed in the recent past, such as Vietnamese or the 93% Club, you may even find that you've inherited some funds from the previous committee.

Term 2

During Term 2, you're welcome to start running low-risk community-building events. Please see "Running an Event" for more information on this.

Term 3

By **May 20th 2026, you'll be expected to create a constitution**. This will be an important governing document that describes the core aims and objectives of your society, and will formally outline the activities your society will run in the future. It will also formally describe which roles your committee will have, and what the responsibilities of each will be.

2026—27

Summer Holiday Planning

In the Summer Holiday, your incoming committee will be expected to carry out two major forms:

- **Core Activity Submission**, which outlines any "core activity" your society will run throughout the year. This means you only need to do a single risk assessment for your core activity, rather than an individual one for every piece of activity you run.
- **Welcome Fair Sign-Ups**, which will allow your society to have a stall at the Welcome Fair. As a new society, this is particularly important!

Term 2

Term 2 will be a very important period for your society. **Annual Budgeting** is an annual exercise, where you decide how your society will spend money in the upcoming year. You will formally set your membership price at this point, and also have an opportunity to request an annual Grant from the Union. We allocate around £425,000 every year through this process, so definitely not something to miss!

You will be expected to submit an "Incubator Report" during this period, to outline how the society has been running. This will be reviewed by the New Activities Committee, who will decide whether to promote your group, and formally solidify its presence at Imperial College Union. To be eligible for promotion, you should have:

- 20 members
- Filled all principal roles in the leadership elections
- An approved constitution
- An Incubator Report submitted
- An Annual Budget submitted
- A Core Risk Assessment submitted.

Sources of Information

Weekly Newsletter

Your Imperial email will be added to the Activities Team's weekly newsletter. This is the best way for us to let you know any updates as they come, as well as things like upcoming deadlines.

eActivities Training

eActivities is our primary platform for the management of clubs and societies and is where you will handle any financial documentation. It also hosts training articles relating to anything financial, so it's always a good idea to check it before making a purchase or payment:

https://eactivities.union.ic.ac.uk/training

Freshdesk Knowledgebase

As a general rule, our Freshdesk platform hosts training articles for everything that **isn't** finance related. If you need to learn about anything from room bookings to borrowing equipment, this is the place to look. You can also use the website to ask a question to the Activities Team:

https://imperialcollegeunion.freshdesk.com/support/solutions

Documentation and Governance

Membership Sales

One of the first things you'll need to decide is whether to charge a fee to become a member of your society. It is generally recommended that, in your early days as a society, it'll be much easier to get people on board if membership is free, though you'd need to fund your events in some other way (e.g. through selling tickets).

Once you decide your membership fee, please email me at dpactivities@imperial.ac.uk, and I will set this on the system and enable membership sales so people can join your society!

Constitution

According to our Clubs, Societies and Projects policy, every student group *must* have a constitution. A constitution allows your membership to hold the committee accountable, and works towards structuring a club or society that is democratic, fair and transparent. Typically, a constitution will include the following points which are editable:

- Name of the club or society
- Aims and objectives
- Committee positions
- Committee job descriptions
- Additional activities.

There are certain elements that *cannot* be changed, such as those relating to finances and how they must be managed in accordance with our financial regulations. You will be expected to create a constitution by May 20th, and your mentor will support you in doing this. Changes are to be submitted via the eActivities platform, under:

Administration > Clubs, Societies and Projects > Documentation.

Committee Structure

When creating your constitution, you are also expected to consider your committee structure. By default, every society *must* have a Chair, Treasurer and Secretary, but you're welcome to add more roles if these are helpful. For example, some societies choose to add a Sponsorship Officer, or perhaps a Welfare Officer. Your mentor will support you in this decision.

Finances and Funding

Managing your Finances

Introduction to eActivities

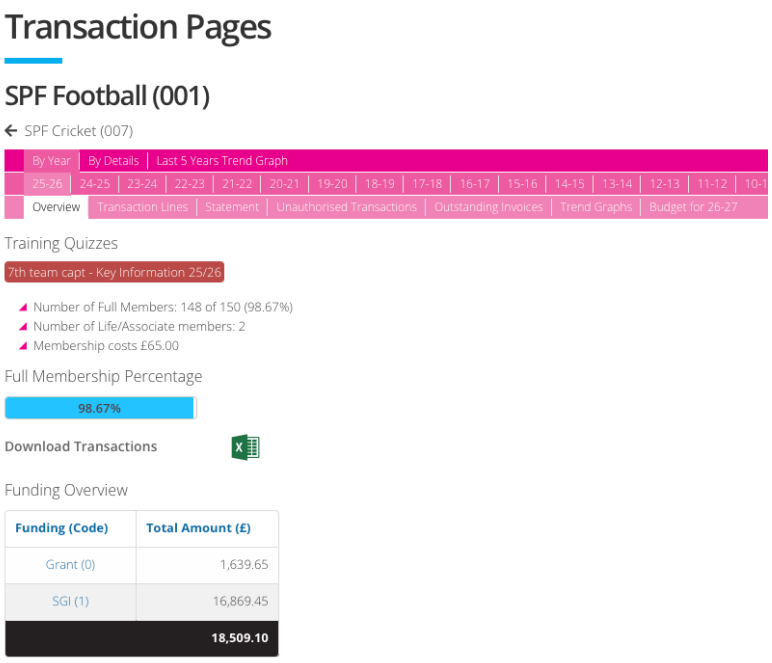
As all clubs and societies are part of Imperial College Union, any funds your society has are held in the Union's own bank account, and any income or expenditure must come through this. To manage this systematically, we use a bespoke tool called **eActivities**. You can use this website to view your club or society's current financial balance, and to spend money from the society's account. While this section is quite dense on information, **these financial processes exist to protect you, the society, and the Union**.

eActivities also hosts the training outlining our financial procedures.

Link to eActivities **Link to Finance Training**

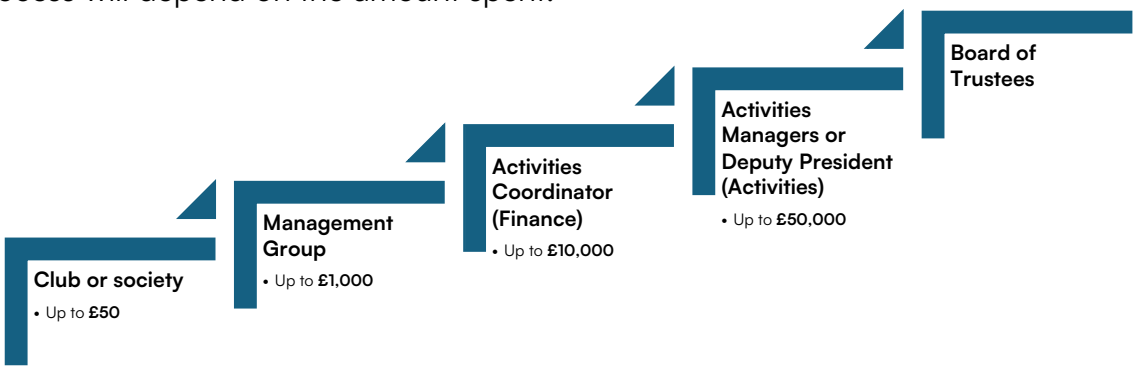
At any time, you can view your current balance on Transaction Pages, found via:

Finance > Transaction Pages.



Expenditure

Any expenditure made by your society will first go through an approvals process. This process will depend on the amount spent:



Depending on what you buy and who your supplier is, there are three main processes you may use to purchase something for your club. All three can be found under the **Finance > Expenditure** tab on eActivities.

Claims

Claims are used for smaller expenditure, when you or another member of your club or society spend your own money and need to be reimbursed by the Union from your group's accounts. Before spending any money, please check that your Chair or Treasurer has approved the purchase and that your group has enough funds. **It is strongly recommended that amounts of £200 or more should be paid via a Purchase Order or Credit Card request.**

Claims have strict requirements regarding evidence. Evidence must include proof of purchase (e.g., a receipt) and proof of payment (e.g., a screenshot of the transaction in your mobile banking app.

Receipts	For payments of less than £250, till receipts are usually sufficient evidence - full details of the requirements for different types of receipts are given on the Suitable VAT evidence page - for purchases of £250 or over, you should try and get a VAT invoice. Please ensure that the receipts you provide are printed and not handwritten, the Union will only accept handwritten receipts in exceptional circumstances.
Other purchase documentation:	Other documents which describe the expenditure clearly. If these documents do not meet the requirements for VAT then VAT cannot be reclaimed. Examples could be purchase confirmation emails.
Bank or credit card statements	These can be used as proof of payment. It will support other forms of evidence where it is not clear from those documents who made the purchase or that the payment has been made.

Receipts not in GBP (£)	Evidence for expenditure not made in sterling should be accompanied with a copy of the bank statement entry showing the exchange rate. If this is not available, the exchange rate on the date of purchase should be included in the notes.
No documents	In rare circumstances you may not be able to provide any of the above documents to support your claim, in this case please contact the Deputy President (Activities).

VAT evidence is essential for the Union to reclaim VAT on purchases. If it is impossible to gather sufficient VAT evidence, then please justify this in the Claim notes.

Please read the training page on Claims in full.

Purchase Orders

When making a larger purchase from a supplier, you should use a Purchase Order. This is a written document used to request goods and services from a company or person. It is effectively a contract between the two parties and has to be paid if the other party receives it. These are generally paid once the goods have been received, but can also be marked as *pro-forma*, where the Union will pay the supplier in advance of receiving the goods.

Please read the training page on Purchase Orders in full.

Credit Card Requests

In some cases, a supplier may not accept payment through a Purchase Order, such as hotels, Airbnb's, and flight bookings. In such cases, payment can be made through the Union's credit card.

To pay via credit card, please make a Credit Card Request on eActivities. Once approved, you can come to the Union Offices (in Beit Quad) on Monday or Wednesday at 2-4pm, and a member of staff will make the payment to the supplier on your behalf.

Please read the training page on Credit Card Requests in full.

Income

Selling Tickets

The primary way to receive money is selling tickets through our website. We have just released a new process, for which information can be found here.

For sales on the door, you may borrow one of the Union's card readers (or "PDQs"). Please read the training articles on the equipment hire process and additional information on PDQs to learn more.

Invoices

A Sales Invoice is a document issued to a customer or client to record a sales transaction and request payment. At ICU, sales invoices are generally used to receive income for sponsorships or from donations. Be careful about the VAT rates on a sales invoice: most sales invoices will need to charge VAT at the standard rate (S1 — Sales Standard Rated 20%). Exceptions to this are donations, where a SN code can be used.

Please read the training page on Sales Invoices in full.

Sponsorships

Imperial's student groups have achieved sector-leading success in attracting sponsorship funding, and many ICU societies boast a strong tradition of sponsorship support, enjoying long-standing relationships and retaining the same partners year-on-year. This can be an effective way to boost your income, and help cover costs for equipment and events throughout the year. If this is something you may be interested in, I'd recommend reading the "Introduction to Sponsorship" training article on Freshdesk.

Annual Budgeting

Annual Budgeting is one of the most important tasks for a committee in a given year, and it's when you decide your financial plan for 2026-27. It is also your chance to request for an annual grant of money from the Union, and we give out around £425,000 a year from this process.

This process has traditionally happened in March, though we're looking to push it back to the Easter holidays this year. You'll receive more information on the process once it is confirmed and will receive full support from your mentor.

In the meantime, I would recommend reading the Annual Budgeting Training Articles for some background on the process as a whole.

Funding Opportunities

Initial Grant

For the first time, all new societies will be given £100 of seed funding to help you to grow. It is up to you to decide what to spend this on, though it may be helpful to spend it on your first event, or print posters for publicity. **This money cannot be spent on:**

- Charitable donations.
- Any expenses for events where the proceeds are donated for charity.
- Purchase of alcohol.
- Funding of gambling activity or prize pots.
- Any activity which is in contravention of ICU's or Imperial College's policies and values, or the law.

Additional Funding Opportunities

The Union operates four "ad-hoc" funding pots, which can be applied to throughout the year. As a new society, you are eligible for all of these.

The **Activities Development Fund** allocated £70,000 per year to help fund **new and developing activity**, or unbudgeted success. While Rounds 1 and 2 have already occurred this year, you are still able to apply for the final round, with a deadline of **15th May 2026**. If this is something you're interested in, I would recommend reading the training article and policy to learn more.

The **Harlington Fund**, allocating £50,000 per year, is administered by Imperial, and exists to support student groups in purchasing equipment or facilities. The next round has an application deadline of **8th May 2026**. Please read the training article if you're interested in this.

The **Trips Fund** allocates £25,000 per year to help support club or society trips, as long as it contributes to their core aims and objectives. There is one more round this

year, with an application deadline of **8th May 2026**. Please read the training article for more information.

The **Expanding Reach Fund** has £16,000 this year to allocate to student groups who are running activity that addresses barriers that we've found impacts engagement in student groups. If this is something that you think you may be eligible for, or if you'd like to run a targeted event to support these goals, please read the relevant training article.

Running an Event

Summary of Processes

When your club or society wants to run an event or go on a trip, there's a clear and easy process to follow so everything stays safe and supported by the Union. To summarise all I'm about to say: **if your event is bigger than a regular meeting, or involves external people or leaving campus, please submit an Activity Proposal.**

Activity Proposal and Risk Assessments

Most activities that go beyond your group's regular meetings require an **Activity Proposal Form**, which includes a **Risk Assessment**, to be submitted before the event. This includes things like large socials, outdoor events, guest speaker sessions, formal dinners, conferences, competitions, trips, and anything involving external suppliers or attendees. Smaller **members-only meetings** don't generally require a full proposal. The Activities Team will review your submission and let you know if anything needs adjusting.

You may also need supporting paperwork depending on what you're doing, such as a **budget on eActivities** (if you're selling tickets, or the activity costs £500 or more), or booking contracts for external venues.

To ensure your event or trip gets approved in time, submit your forms well before the activity date. Deadlines vary depending on the size and type of activity: basic activities should be proposed at least three weeks in advance. If your event involves an external speaker then this becomes six weeks, and for trips it's one month for UK Trips, or two for International.

Events and Trips Information

Event Budget

If your event costs more than £500 to run, or if you're selling tickets, then please additionally submit an **Event Budget** on eActivities. More information can be found on the eActivities training pages.

A Final Few Things...

Room Bookings

One of the key perks of becoming a Union-affiliated club or society is access to spaces throughout Imperial's campuses, as well as our own Union Building, for free. For a list of spaces that are available to book, check out "Club & Society Bookable Spaces" on Freshdesk. **For more information on how to book rooms (spoiler alert: it's another easy-to-use form), check out the "How To" guide on Freshdesk.**

Equipment Bookings

One of the little-known services we offer is various equipment that you're able to rent. We have the following, available free of charge:

- 5 First aid kits
- 2 Projectors
- 2 Projector screens
- 2 Water urns
- 4 Foldable tables
- Crank handles
- 2 PDQ Card Machines (training required)

More information here.

We additionally offer a minibus service, where your society can rent one of our various minibuses for a trip, or training outside London. You need to take a theory and practical test before using these, and they do come at a charge, but there's plenty of information here.

Good Luck!

Thank you for reaching the end of this guide, and I hope it answered some questions. Best of luck with running your new society, and please remember that your mentor and I are just an email away if you have any questions.

All the best,

Tom

Deputy President (Activities)