

A Paper to rehaul the Training and Support for Student CSP Volunteers

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Union Notes:

- The Union currently provides training to student volunteers involved with clubs, societies and projects (CSPs) through Officer Academy and the eActivities training section.
- Officer Academy:
 - Officer Academy provides the optional opportunity for volunteers to attend training sessions on the following:
 - President workshop: role of a president, health and safety (risk assessments), union and MG structure, union policies.
 - Treasurer workshop: what is eActivities, what is a claim, acceptable VAT evidence.
 - Secretary: room bookings, U18s, mailing lists, risk assessments
 - GDPR: data protection, using Office 365, handing over and gaining access to files.
 - Sponsorship: reasons for sponsorship, Sponsorship process, reaching out to sponsors, sponsorship proposal creation.
 - Budgeting: how to create an event budget.
 - Managing a team:
 - Conflict Resolution:
 - Officer Academy is currently held on a Wednesday in June (during term time) and a repeat is run before term starts in September.
 - Officer Academy is not compulsory.
 - Sessions are delivered by union staff who often don't have experience of volunteering at Imperial or as much experience using the student side of what they are teaching about.
 - Sessions are standard so all union volunteers receive the same quality of training no matter what the level of their role.
- eActivities:
 - The source of information provided by the Union outside of Officer Academy is in the form of the eActivities training section.
 - eActivities blocks volunteers from doing specific actions such as making a claim or making a transaction correction until they have completed the relevant quizzes related to that section.
 - Currently the only compulsory training quiz for any student volunteer is the Key Information quiz which provides very little information on how to use eActivities.

Union Believes:

- Officer Academy:

- Making Officer Academy optional results in senior volunteers remaining untrained for the duration of their term if they don't turn up to both sessions.
 - This often means they rely heavily on day to day support from other volunteers.
 - Officer Academy is run at times that are often inconvenient for students, either during a working day sometimes clashing with exams in June, or during holidays, resulting in key volunteers being unable to attend.
 - Sessions being delivered by union staff means they become very much tick-the-box sessions. This is not contextual or highly informational for attendees and is usually just information that could be presented through a handout.
 - Since all volunteers receive the same training it often means that more senior volunteers aren't being trained enough, and often get bored at Officer Academy. This lower level of training is also insufficient for those in senior roles who are meant to be more aware in order to make approvals of finances.
 - The current sessions administered at Officer Academy are outdated and not taught in a contextual manner, making the session less useful than imagined.
- eActivities
 - The eActivities training section is outdated to the point that committees have started becoming more dependent on handed-down knowledge from previous committees.
 - Relying on handed-down knowledge introduces the risk that important info will be lost for the society, where committees may not have the same information year-on-year, ignoring the experience of their volunteers. This can be detrimental to a society if the volunteer turnover rate is incredibly high.
 - The training quizzes are not sufficient education on eActivities and often are completed by guessing the answers, leading to no knowledge intake.
 - More pressure is put on senior volunteers who are more experienced with using eActivities such as management groups, as clubs may not have sufficient knowledge of how to go about a certain process that is vaguely described in the training section.

Union Resolves:

- Officer Academy and eActivities training should be designed, reviewed and delivered by senior student volunteers.
- Officer Academy:
 - Should be made compulsory for one financially responsible committee member per society. A society will only become financially responsible after attending one of these sessions and signing the financial responsibility form.
 - Senior student volunteers should deliver the sessions using their own presentation.
 - Sessions should be tiered:
 - Essential knowledge: (All financially responsible and senior volunteers i.e large societies, CU execs) open to all and covers the essential volunteer skills.
 - Advanced: Open to all but aimed at those in events or financial positions within constituent unions or large societies - this focuses on more advanced

sponsorship training, dealing with contingencies for larger valued events, thinking about situations when payments can't be processed etc.

- Sessions should run on evenings (6-8pm) and/or weekends rather than during the day, and the sessions should be run across multiple times to ensure as many students as possible can attend.

- eActivities:
 - Create example case studies that details a timeline of steps to show volunteers how to organise an event from start to finish.
 - These will include references to raising sponsorship, creating an event budget and the various payment methods that could be used to pay for different aspects of the event. Although some may be fictional, this contextual example could be designed to cover all the relevant aspects of eActivities and help new volunteers better understand when it's best to use certain things.
 - Let current volunteers select information that is most crucial for students volunteers to know
 - Restructure the quizzes to include questions on knowledge that is more naturally needed in day to day running of a society
 - In addition to existing training, a forum like space on eActivities could be implemented to have a space for people to ask questions and more senior, verified volunteers can answer.
 - This saves questions reaching the DPs and is already done informally between the CUs.