

## Communities of Practice/Staff Networks Terms of Reference

Communities of Practice/Staff Networks (from henceforth groups) are run by students' union staff for peers within the student movement. The aim of these groups is to connect, build relationships, and share good practice with people who are in the same field, or define into the same liberation group. They are key to fostering and sharing staff expertise across the movement.

### NUS' role and responsibility

- NUS is responsible for assigning a member of staff to act as liaison to each group. These NUS liaisons can provide some logistical support to the assigned group which can include managing meeting calendar invites and coordinating in person meetings along with the host students' union and are also responsible for acting as a 'gateway' between the group and NUS.
- NUS can provide guidance for group coordinators and share good practice with on how to best coordinate groups.
- NUS can support Communities of Practice/Staff Network related events and conferences as they would any other COP meetings, in line with these terms of reference. For larger conferences where the COP requires further input from NUS than that outlined in these terms of reference, NUS will liaise with COP leads and unions hosting events to ensure approaches taken, business model used, and roles and responsibilities are appropriate.
- NUS can promote the work of groups to relevant staff across the movement through national communications channels including but not limited to NUS Connect, Workplace and inductions.
- NUS can incorporate time into NUS' events for groups to meet and showcase their work.
- Liaisons can utilise the contacts they and other NUS colleagues have and suggest external speakers or facilitate the provision of NUS speakers where appropriate.
- NUS is responsible for flagging potential for cross-movement work with other groups or individual NUS member students' unions.
- Digital spaces for groups are provided by NUS through Workplace. Staff and officers from students' unions not affiliated with NUS are not permitted to engage in these digital spaces as they are a member-only benefit.

NUS role is not to:

- Drive meeting agendas: This is the property and responsibility of the permanent/rolling group leads and members.
- A NUS staff member can attend a group meeting to deliver a session/update around a particular theme by request only.
- Provide funding for the meetings or towards the cost of speakers or other expenses at group meetings.
- Engage in the liberation staff networks that exist within the movement: These spaces are deemed safe spaces for all our members and allow them to critique the work of NUS. This is also to ensure that there is not conflation of the issues between work that is going on in the movement, and the work of NUS.

Expectations of group leads (whether permanent or rolling):

- The students' union staff coordinators of each group are responsible for planning and hosting meetings, driving the agenda for meetings, as well as running meetings.
- Regional group leads are expected to provide feedback from meetings to their designated COP liaison including: themes discussed; any questions or problems that need answering; providing information about meeting attendee numbers if a NUS staff member is not present.
- To inform NUS about the topics of information most suitable for their meetings, well in advance, so (an) appropriate NUS staff member can attend and provide relevant information when needed.
- It is lead's responsibility to foster an inclusive and accessible space that members feel able and comfortable to engage in and be a part of. Part of this is ensuring that new attendees are welcomed, involved in discussions and that their voice is being heard.
- Staff members from students' unions not affiliated with NUS are permitted to attend an in-person group meeting at the discretion of the meeting chair/regional or rolling group lead.
- It is expected that group leads do not undertake activity or issue public statements that directly risks undermining the reputation of the NUS and its members. If unhappy with NUS' service to its members, the group lead should in the first instance raise this with the group's liaison in the expectation that a mutually satisfactory solution to any issues can be reached.

Expectations of overall network/group members

- It is the responsibility of the network/group members to foster an inclusive and accessible space that members feel able and comfortable to engage in and be a part of. Part of this is ensuring that new attendees are welcomed, involved in discussions and that their voice is being heard.
- Network members are permitted to spread the word about the group/s through their own networks, within their students' unions and to new starters.
- It is expected that the network will support the meeting host/chair before a meeting (by providing agenda items if applicable), and within in-person meetings. This includes supporting a chair that may be a first-time host by acting as a co-chair or leading specific parts of the meeting.
- The purpose of the network is to share and celebrate good practice, foster a supportive network of peers, and connect regions together.  
The networks do not exist to exclude members, or create an environment where members feel they cannot be present in a space due to the voices of others.