

# Guide to Organising and Running a Course with U3a Sapphire Coast

## Introduction

If you're thinking of running a course for U3ASC, these guidelines will give you an idea of what is involved and will get you started. If they make the whole process sound a bit daunting, don't be put off by that. Remember that the Program Team is there to help you with any of this. So, if you feel yourself starting to lose enthusiasm, can't solve a problem by yourself, or just feel the need for a pat on the back and a cup of tea, we're here for you ☺.

For more detailed information about the ongoing management of your course, once you've decided to go ahead and have had your course entered into the program, please read the **Managing your Course – A guide for Course Leaders** document. You'll find it also on the website (click Taking a Role, then Course Leader Resources). You should also take advantage of any Course Leader training provided by the Program Team from time to time.

## 1. General Information

- The term 'course' is used by U3ASC to mean any activity that is held regularly – it might be weekly, fortnightly or monthly – on an on-going basis over a school term (as opposed to 'one-offs' which are usually completed in one or two days).
- A course doesn't have to be on an academic subject. It can be on almost any subject of interest to members. It doesn't even have to require 'teaching' – many course leaders, for example, serve as coordinators of walking, games, reading, cinema critiquing, wine tasting, art and other groups.
- All courses are subject to the principles and policies of U3ASC. So if you're unsure whether your proposed course meets these, please refer to the document **U3A Sapphire Coast Policies on Courses and Events**, which you can find on the website (click on About Us, then Policies).
- But, even better, talk to a member of the Program Team. You can contact the Program Team Leader at [u3asc.programs@gmail.com](mailto:u3asc.programs@gmail.com). He or she will put you in touch with a Program Team member who will become your on-going contact for anything to do with your course. Your proposal, no matter what it is, will be welcomed, and your Program Team contact person will be keen to help you resolve any issues associated with it.
- It's always better to contact the Program Team well before the beginning of a term, so that there is time to put your course in the on-line program, and so that the greatest numbers of members possible see it in time to enroll.

## 2. Making a proposal

- First, contact the Program Team leader (see above), then discuss your proposal with your nominated Program Team contact person.
- Look at the **Course/Event Proposal Form** available on the website (click on Take a Role, then Offer a Course). It is a useful tool for documenting your proposal. It will let you know exactly what you need to consider in planning your event, and the information you need to provide to have your course added to the Program. You can complete the form yourself and then send it to your Program Team contact, or work through it with your Program Team contact person.

## 3. Planning your course

- Your Program Team contact person will be happy to help you with advice at any time, but basically it is your responsibility to organize your course.
- Some of the issues you might need to deal with include deciding on a day of the week, time, and duration of the classes; finding and booking a suitable venue; setting a fee to cover venue hire and any expenses you will incur; ensuring the availability of any equipment you might need each week; deciding whether you will provide morning or afternoon tea; assessing and planning to manage any risks associated with your venue or activity; and deciding who will be the contact person for further information about the event.
- Please note that unless you have Home and Contents Insurance with public liability insurance you should not plan to host the course or activity in your own home (see Managing your Course – A Guide for Course Leaders, Section 12 Occupational Health and Safety on the website under Take a Role, then Course Leader Resources).
- Your Program Team contact person will have had experience of helping to organize other courses, and will be able to help you identify anything you may have missed in your planning.

## 4. Setting an attendance fee

- In line with U3ASC's constitution, as a member of U3ASC you may not make a profit from running a course. But you should make sure that you recover any and all expenses you (and any guest presenters) incur in planning and running the course. Your costs might include (but are not limited to) buying equipment or materials specific to your course, printing handouts or other materials, travel to and from the course venue, venue hire, and morning or afternoon tea.

- Your course attendance fee should be determined by dividing the total anticipated costs by the estimated number of participants (yes, there's a lot of guess work involved in that – consult your Program Team contact person if you're having trouble with this).
- As a general rule, if the attendance charge is more than \$10 per week, your Program Team contact person can set up the online class management system to require that payment be made at the time of enrolment. This helps to ensure commitment and is, thus, some guarantee of numbers. Otherwise, you should just collect the attendance fee from participants on the day.
- If you're going to have a lot of costs up-front, you can ask your Program Team contact to organize an advance of up to 50% of your costs, or to provide a guarantee that your costs will be covered.
- If you don't think you will be able to recover all of your costs, you can apply, well in advance of the course, for a subsidy from U3ASC using the form **Application for Course Funding**, which you'll find on the website (click on Take a Role, then Tutor Resources).
- If your attendance fee is more than \$20 per person, or the total fees you collect exceed \$300, you will need to make a detailed accounting of your expenses, and send that to the Treasurer at [treasu3asc@gmail.com](mailto:treasu3asc@gmail.com).
- The U3A policy on what to do with any funds raised over and above what is required to reimburse you for your expenses is currently under consideration.

## 5. Promoting your course

- Your Course Proposal Form will be the basis of the information provided about your course in the Program, and the main source of information to members. There is no obligation to do anything more than that, but ...
- You might also want to write a brief promotional blurb and send it to the Publicity Coordinator at [u3ascsec@gmail.com](mailto:u3ascsec@gmail.com) for inclusion in a media release to the print, radio and on-line media. You can do this at any time – eg if you want to attract more participants at some stage during the term. A photo relevant to your course would help in getting placement in print media. Make sure that you have the consent, and names, of the people featured in the photos and try to make the photo interesting – photos of people sitting around a table listening to someone are not very newsworthy.
- And/or, you might also like to write something and send it to the Publicity Coordinator (see email address above) for inclusion in the U3ASC monthly newsletter. Again, you can do this at any time during the term.

## 6. Running your course

- Your responsibilities as a course leader vary considerably, depending on the nature of the course you're leading. The responsibilities that are common to almost all courses, though, include:
  - Maintaining contact with your participants by email or phone
  - Ensuring that your venue and any needed equipment is available and set up on the day (you should ask your participants to help with this)
  - Checking that your participants are actually members of U3ASC (see **Policies on Courses and Events** on the website – click About Us, then Policies)
  - Keeping an attendance record. This is a requirement for insurance purposes. There is a proforma available on the website, if you want to use it – click Taking a Role, then Course Leader Resources. Or you can make your own, but you need to get your class members to sign each week to show that they did, in fact, attend that week.
  - Collecting course attendance fees
  - Providing morning or afternoon tea
  - Paying your venue provider and subtracting your expenses from the fees collected.
  - Advising your Program Team contact of any changes you want made to your program entry before the beginning of each new term, or whenever changes occur.

For more detailed, technical information about how to manage your course once your course is up and ready to go, please see the document **Managing your Course – A Guide for Course Leaders** (in Course Leader's Resources).

We hope you're feeling excited or inspired, rather than put off. And we look forward to hearing about your course proposal and adding you to the ranks of the wonderful volunteer Course Leaders, who make U3ASC possible.