

New Club Incubator **A paper by the DPCS Monya Zard**

Current Process

The current process for the creation of new Clubs, Societies & Projects is as follows:

1. The interested group fills out the New Club Form available on imperialcollegeunion.org
2. The form is sent to the DPCS
3. The DPCS organises New Clubs/Projects Committee
4. At the committee the club has 5 minutes to present their application, 5-10 minutes of questions from the panel, than after the panel deliberates they are either accepted or rejected
5. After this the DPCS organises the setup of their Club on the Union's internal systems, and ensures that they have a meeting with their Management Group Chair to explain the rules and how to operate

Reasons for Rejection

In the meeting the New Clubs/Projects Committee consider the applications in the context of the New Club/Project Committee Standing Orders. Common reasons for rejection include, but are not limited to:

1. The new club overlaps with existing clubs, who either already cover the activity or could easily extend their activities to cover those proposed (for example Middle Eastern Society could easily run under Arabic Society)
2. The proposed club simply is not feasible when resources available are considered (for example Pilot Club had to reapply twice before they had reduced their resource requirements to make it both accessible to most students on some level, and to the Union to support)
3. The club has previously existed but was closed due to lack of interest
4. There are concerns over committee experience (often the case with ambitious clubs being proposed by students with no former experience of running clubs or similar projects)- this doesn't necessarily result in rejection, but may result in the club being approved on the condition that a more experienced student agrees to be on the committee to offer advice
5. There is question over the genuine interest in the club- for example if the signatures are all from one year and one department there may be a question of if there is a genuine demand
6. The proposed club does not have enough activities planned to make it viable, or would be more effective in achieving its aims working as part of a different area of the Union (for example Gender Equality were advised to run under our Campaigns system)

The current format offers all students the opportunity to have their ideas heard, but offers little in the way of long term support to the club once started. Frequently the Committee has difficulties judging whether clubs will be successful or not either get accepted and have little assistance in realising their aims, or get rejected and told to reapply once they have addressed certain issues. Such clubs are often quite inactive, whether due to lack of support or lack of interest (or a combination of both) we are unsure.

New Club Incubator

The proposed New Club Incubator will not change the submission processes we already have in place for the creation of new clubs. It simply gives the Committee a third choice, rather than having to say yes or no immediately. The NCI allows us to provide prospective clubs with an avenue to develop their ideas and aims into a format which can be supported by the Union, allowing new clubs test the viability and effectiveness of their ideas whilst providing support and training so that when they are approved they are in a much stronger position.

The idea is that the New Club Incubator would be particularly applicable to those 'borderline' clubs, usually affected by one or more of the reasons for rejection listed above. The NCI would provide the function to run test events and get support directly from the DPCS, to put the club in a stronger position when they are created.

The NCI would provide proposed clubs with the facilities to do the following:

- Book a room for a test event(s)
- Put up posters using the Union logo
- Create a Facebook group using the Union's name
- Receive support directly from the DPCS and relevant Union staff to run the test event

Process

At the NCC/NPC meeting, if it is felt that the club is potentially viable but would benefit from a 'test run' they can put it into the NCI. This will mean that the club will be able to make use of all of the above facilities in order to put together a test event(s).

The NCI will be a Club on NewERP, and the applicant on the New Club Form will be given a committee position without financial responsibility. They can then do the Requesting Spaces training and book a room which can be approved through the normal processes.

They will have a meeting with the DPCS to go through publicity rules and any other useful information.

The DPCS or MG Chair shall attend the event to provide assistance and to evaluate how well it has gone. Attendees at the event will be asked to fill in a short feedback form asking for their CID number as well as the following questions:

1. Did they enjoy the event? (Y/N)
2. Would they come to similar events again? (Y/N)
3. Would they join the club? (Y/N)
4. Do they have any suggestions for improvement? (free text)
5. Any other comments? (free text)

This will give feedback not just for the New Clubs Committee, but also to the organiser as to what people would want from the society.

The potential club will have a second meeting with the DPCS after the event to update their New Club Application Form before it is resubmitted to the New Clubs Committee for consideration. In cases where the DPCS or MG Chair feels the event has proved beyond doubt the club is viable, the form can be circulated via email for voting to ensure no delay in the new club getting started.