**General Committee Bible**

*By the 2022 - 2023 Universalis Board*

*Adapted from 2019 - 2020 Social Board*

*Adapted from 2017-2018 Social Board*

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# Welcome

*A Message from 2019-2020*

Dear committee!

The following document will serve as a guideline and bible to creating and running a committee. It will feature sections from the social board, the treasurer, the secretary, and the president about various things that revolve around how to run a committee, the impact it has on the community, and the role that the social board plays in your wonderful endeavors. First of all, on behalf of all the boards that came before myself and all the boards that will come after, I would like to thank you for investing your time, energy and effort into making this community what it is; a place of vibrancy and community with a genuine sense of care for others. Please continue doing what you are doing and try to help our community reach its full potential. Hopefully, the following document can serve as a template for transition bibles, a guide for newly formed committees and something to refer back to when one is unsure about something.

Best of luck with everything,

Michiel Nieuwenhuijs (Fall 19’ & Spring 20’ Universalis President)

*A Message from 2021-2022*

Dear Reader,

Michiel handled the niceties and appreciation splendidly. You’re reading this either to start a committee or because you’re currently lost in running the committee you’re in. Don’t worry, you’ve got this! Reading this manual is one of the first steps in sorting everything out, and you’ll find it much simpler than it first appears. The table of contents provides an easy way to skip to the relevant information, and our Universalis Board is always willing to answer any questions you have. Most importantly, you should soon know how to submit a budget request, and how to get help from Universalis for running events - the rest you learn along the way. I wrote the first iteration of this document four years ago as one of the social board executives and am glad to see it grow and improve with time. If you enjoy participating in committees and contributing to the community, then do consider joining the Universalis Board! I hope you have a fantastically active and healthy time.

Stephen A. McCarthy (Fall 17’ & Spring 18’ SB Executive, Fall 21’ & Spring 22’ Universalis President)

## 

## On inclusivity

As a UCM committee you are in charge of creating events for the UCM community. Everyone that joins UCM is automatically a part of our overarching organization: Universalis. Thus, everyone that is enrolled in UCM is allowed to attend any event organized by the committees within our organization. People outside of UCM and Universalis are usually welcome at our events, but always prioritize our members if space is limited. Be inclusive, be welcoming, but also be responsible!

# Brief Introduction

Dear reader,

The 2021/2022 Universalis board would like to thank you for your original contribution to the UCM community. We want to help you to make your projects come true through this guide which will (hopefully) answer the majority of your questions. Some of you may be accomplished committees about to celebrate your five-year anniversary, others may be brand-new. Whatever situation you find yourself in, this Committee Bible is here to lay down or remind you of the basic functioning of a committee.

*Please come to us at any time for any other questions or concerns!*

## Starting your Committee

Obviously, the first thing to do is to decide on a specific idea for your committee. The main “theme” should not be too narrow as a committee is more than a one-time project (consider a Fashion Committee, instead of a Clothes Swapping Committee as this might be too specific and wouldn’t allow any development in future events).

Having a specific idea, you now need to find other UCM students who would also be enthusiastic and interested in creating a new committee. You need at least three members (including yourself) who would fulfill the committee board functions (a chair, a secretary, & a treasurer). These three positions are crucial for the functioning of a committee and are required to become a committee. Let’s say you find a bunch of fellow students who are all passionate about cheese. Make a cheese a committee (not too far fetched - we did have a meat lovers committee at one point). Find at least 2 other students then distribute the board roles (note that the three roles need to be filled, but one member can hold multiple positions).

The next step of starting a committee is filling out the paperwork (fun!). You need to submit a proposal to the social board consisting of; the description of the committee and its purpose, the expected budget, and the kind of events you will hold. This proposal does not need to be 5000 words long, *it should all fit on a double-sided page.*

Once the proposal has been submitted, the social board will review the proposal and then ask to meet with the proposed committee chair to discuss it further. Upon agreement within the board, the committee will become a candidate committee and will be introduced at the next General Assembly (GA).

The difference between candidate committees and regular committees is the way that budget is handled, and its legal affiliation. Candidate committee budgets are handled on a case by case basis while regular committees must submit semester plans with an in-depth budget plan and work more intimately with the social board.

After being accepted as a candidate committee, make sure to be visible and active in the community and hold at least successful events. This will prove your enthusiasm and commitment for future functioning of your committee.

After the trial period (usually one academic period), the candidate committee can be voted into a regular committee at the next GA. If they do not qualify or have not been voted then, then to the social board’s discretion, can be kept as a candidate committee. Remember that once a candidate committee becomes a regular committee, they are expected to fill out a semester plan by the 3rd week of the first period of the semester.

## Committee Structure

Each committee must consist of three members at least: One Chair, one Secretary, and one Treasurer. These three members form the basis of the committee and are expected to keep it running. They are also expected to attend all General Assemblies and hand in their Semester Planning on time. Any committee board can add as many board positions as they wish, but the *minimum* is three members.

### Role of the Committee Chair

The chair carries the final responsibility for the smooth execution of all activities; calls and directs meetings; delegates tasks; makes sure everyone in the committee knows what to do when and feels comfortable; keeps track of the active members list.

### Role of the Committee Secretary

The secretary schedules committee meetings and takes minutes during each committee meeting to be distributed to all committee members and the committee executive later; controls the email and acts as the contact person within the committee; schedules events in cooperation with the committee’s executive.

### Role of the Committee Treasurer

The treasurer decides how much money an event will cost and communicates this in the Semester Plan; keeps track of how much money is spent during an event or activity; in direct contact with the Universalis Treasurer; final responsibility of financial matters lies on you.

Every committee has its own budget. However, those differ based on the character of a committee (consider that the party committee that organizes the Winter Gala might have a bigger budget than a Games Committee which organizes board games nights, etc.). The budget should be justified by taking into account what previous committees have received in the past for their events.

To note from the policy manual under article 4.1 section 5: “No event for which full participation per person is predicted to cost more than 10% of the UCM EU tuition fees shall receive funding from the Universalis budget.” This means that currently (academic year 22/23). Exceptions have been made for certain events under the supervision of the executive board treasurer. In special circumstances, such as with committees that organize big events, an exception to the rule of the 10% budget can be made at the discretion of the board.

Requesting additional budget during a semester should firstly go through the assigned executive who will consequently bring it up with the board. It is possible that the additional sum is allocated directly if it’s a small sum and there is significant room in the budget. However, additional budget must be officially requested in a GA in the majority of the cases (e.g. through the motion forms).

Because this is the order of the purchase process (first a committee spends money and is reimbursed afterwards), make sure to stick to your budget and not overspend! If you cannot afford to make the initial purchase you can contact the social board treasurer and ask them to complete the purchase for you. Note that this is an exceptional case.

Moreover, you should be aware that there are many things that the social board can provide during an event. Beer is ordered and sold by the social board. Basic snacks and soda can also be provided. This means that you should think about specific things your upcoming events might need (e.g. Theater Society would have to include money for props and costumes). You can also get different alcohol (e.g. wine as the Poetry Committee chose) or more diverse snacks (cheapest chips from AH might not satisfy everyone).

After you have submitted your budget and it has been passed you will be able to complete your predicted spendings. As a committee member, you have to go to a store and complete your planned purchase and keep the receipt. This is highly important, as the receipt must be attached to the reimbursement form. This form can be found in the boardroom at the treasurer’s desk. Fill it in and attach the receipt to receive a refund.

## Your executives

Your executives are your communication platform with the Universalis Board. They are there to communicate your wishes, problems, ideas, plans, triumphs and disappointments to the Board. All Board-Committee communication must go through the Executives, whether you want to plan an unexpected event, use the printer, book a room or ask for assistance, you must contact your Committee Executive. Please make sure you know who your executive is and have made clear agreements on communication and keeping each other up-to-date. Also please note, your executive is not there to check on or punish you, they are merely present to ease communication and make sure each side knows what the other side is up to.

## Semester Planning

Towards the end of each semester, you will receive a Semester Plan booklet that we will ask you to fill out. When the time comes around, we will make clear what is expected of you in detail. The Semester Plans were introduced so that everyone knows in advance when activities and events are being planned. This will help the Board of Universalis with their calendar (making sure dates are not double-booked) and the budget allocation (spending as much money on you as we can), but will also help you in keeping an overview on what is happening in and around UCM. Please remember that if you want to plan an event that has not been announced in your Semester Plan, you have to come up with a detailed plan and discuss this with your Executive and the Universalis Treasurer.

## Promoting an Event

Feel free to promote your event as you see fit, but please be aware that no one appreciates a spammer so keep it reasonable. You can use Facebook to promote our bi-weekly newsletter (send us an email at ucmsa-secretary@maastrichtuniversity.nl with all your information) or posters. If you need to use any poster editing software, feel free to come to the Board Room or message the Social Board Internal Executive (or email ucmsa-sb-internal@maastrichtuniversity.nl). You can also print your promotion material (within limits) using the Universalis copy card if it is working this year (some years it doesn’t get activated by ICT until well into the second semester, hopefully you have better luck). You may hang your posters on the designated poster boards around UCM and on the staircase in the Common Room. Please do NOT hang posters in any other areas. In addition, once your event has passed, please take down the posters again. We would also appreciate it if you could bring your posters to the Boardroom for archiving.

The Universalis Board will keep a long-term calendar and weekly schedule updated in the Common Room as well so the UCM community knows what is happening. If you have any other innovative promotion ideas and you do not know how to implement them/know if they are allowed, speak to your Executive!

## The General Assembly

The General Assembly is the final decision making body of the UCMSA Universalis. Every UCM student is a member of Universalis and therefore every UCM student may attend General Assemblies. General Assemblies typically consist of an update from the Universalis Board and a set of motions and amendments the Universalis Board or any other member of UCMSA Universalis (i.e. all UCM students) has suggested. These motions or amendments will then be discussed with the General Assembly and consequently accepted or denied. This is the only way major changes can take place within the association.

There will be around four General Assemblies every year and each Committee Board is expected to attend these General Assemblies in order to represent their committee. If a Committee Board Member is unable to attend, he or she must announce their absenteeism to their Executive and must try and find a replacement or fill out a proxy form. Attendance will be taken at the start of each General Assembly. For more information on General Assemblies please consult the General Assembly Bible.

## Active Member List

Each committee chair must keep track of the active members in his or her committee. An active member is someone who shows up at meetings, helps out at events or contributes to the existence of the committee in any other valuable way. The Universalis Board will ask for a definite active members list at the end of each semester to thank everyone for their contribution and enthusiasm.

## Use of the Boardroom

The BoardRoom is the office of the Universalis Board and Universalis Academic Council so if you need to ask a question, you are very likely to find someone there who can help you further. We can also temporarily store committee equipment. In addition, you may borrow any of the equipment/materials we have for committee events as long as you return it in the same state you borrowed it in. Depending on the board dynamic in the given year, you might find Board Members hanging out inside, it is currently at 1.030.

# Executives

## Why committees get an Executive

As a committee, you will have an executive who is part of the Universalis Social Board (SB). The SB executives are the link between the Universalis committees and the rest of the SB. The executive is your main point of contact to the SB. If you, as a committee, ever run into any trouble or have any Universalis/UCM related questions, your executive should be the first person you ask. Their job is to help you when needed and to help facilitate your events so that they run smoothly. executives are also responsible for informing committees about upcoming deadlines or tasks - such as with regards to reimbursement forms or handing in semester plans.

## Functions of the Executives in regard to the Committees

### Selling beer

Make sure you have made a request to have beer sold at your event early on - preferably while handing in your semester plan. If your committee has requested for beer to be sold at one of your events, your executive should be at your event to sell that amazing 50 cent beer (If you are reading this and the price of beer Universalis beer has gone beyond 50 cents, incite a revolution!). If your executive cannot make it for whatever reason, they are responsible to get another member of the Universalis board to take over their beer shift. If your executive does not show up and has not found someone to sell beer, contact them and the president of the Social Board to make sure this does not happen again. Beer can only be sold by Universalis board members and, if necessary, past Universalis board members. This means that committees cannot sell beer themselves. As of 2022, there also needs to be staff present in the building in addition to the security guard. They don’t need to be at the event itself, but they should be aware of the event happening and the committee should know where they are. This requirement has been enforced by the FSE Dean, so treat it seriously!!!

### Advertising

If you would like someone to create a poster to advertise one ofia, or pre your events, you can contact the Social Internal Executive directly on social media preferably through email: [ucmsa-sb-internal@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:ucmsa-sb-internal@maastrichtuniversity.nl). Send them all the necessary information that you want on the poster. If you want you can also give some instructions on what you’d want the poster to look like (theme, background picture, etc.). The social executive will create and print your poster and hang them up around the common room. If your committee would rather create their own poster, you are free to do so! If you want you can still send your poster to the social executive so that they can reformat it and print it out on A3 using the Universalis print card so you don’t have to pay for your committee’s printing.

Although posters look nice in the common room and may catch the attention of some students, advertising on social media reaches more UCM students. Some of the ways that you could use social media to advertise your events include:

* Posting your events on the UCM Students facebook group.
* Creating your own instagram (and/or facebook) page where you can post your events. Instagram is useful as you can tag the Universalis Social Board account when you advertise so that the SB can mention your event in their story.
* You can even advertise by telling the people in the common room, your tutorial groups, your friend groups, etc. about your event and that they should come join. A bit of shameless advertising always does the trick!

### Smooth running

Your executive is here to help make sure your events go well. There are several ways in which they can help, including (but not limited to) advertising for your event, avoiding and solving room clashes, and dealing with unexpected circumstances. While we encourage you to run things on your own, when problems do arrive your executive may be able to find solutions. A common problem is room clashes - it may be that we have reserved the room for your event, but that some other faculty member (staff or other) somehow also booked this room, and you no longer have a location for your event. While you - could - solve this on your own, your executive will probably be able to solve this much faster as they have an overview of all universalis events and rooms. You may be a new committee having trouble getting your first events successfully launched, in which case you might decide to brainstorm with your executive… The main point of this section is to make clear that your executive here is to help - not just inform you of deadlines.

## Communication and contact with Executives

### Relationship with the Social Board Executives

The Social Board Executives facilitate communication between committees and the Universalis board. This entails updating the committees with regard to changes in Universalis policies as well as just letting them know what the board has been up to. The main idea behind this is to increase transparency. Vice versa, communication entails also updating the board about what the committees are up to, how they are doing, what events are planned, and if they have any major problems. Good communication can easily be achieved via Facebook and personal meetings. Feel free to try out WhatsApp or something else if that suits you better. Concerning personal meetings, executives will try to have regular meetings with the committee chairs, especially when they face problems (crises will be discussed in more detail further down). Attending committee meetings is another option.

### Communication Channels

Concerning Facebook, committees are encouraged to set up Facebook or WhatsApp groups for their members where they can discuss issues but can also upload documents such as minutes from their meetings. For an executive, being a member of such a group makes it much easier to know what is going on and to directly intervene if there are questions. Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp (etc.) messages are also a bit more natural and more accessible than the university student email addresses and therefore the main channel of written communication. However, committees can have committee email addresses that they can use for external communication. If they do not remember their email addresses from previous boards or the related passwords, these can be retrieved via the ICT. The tech-staff responsible for this have changed a couple times in the past few years, so ask the current Universalis Board who to contact. If a new (confirmed) committee wants an email, this can also be set up via the ICT after talking to the Universalis Board.

## The distribution of committees among executives

We try to distribute committees as fairly as possible, to ensure smooth running, good communication, and avoid conflicts of interest. We make sure each social board executive has more or less the same amount of committees - at the time of writing, this means about 8 committees per executive. We then consider the weight of said committees. Some are almost completely independent, needing us only to schedule rooms, while others require lots of interaction. We also consider here the size of a committee. To make the workload fair for each executive, we try to evenly distribute “demanding” committees and “self-sufficient” committees. Finally, we distribute “dormant” committees and new committees. If a committee is dormant, it does not currently have a board.

Regardless of the status of the committee, we want executives to be invested - this is where personal preference does come in. It would not be beneficial to your committee to have an executive who does not relate to your concept, therefore committees are also distributed based on this factor. However, committees are **not**  chosen based on friend groups. This is because that bias could influence the committee - executive dynamic negatively and would not truly be in the best interest of the committee.

# Treasurer

*Motion forms for changing budget*

If a committee wishes to request more budget than what was allocated in the budget general assembly, the treasurer of the committee must contact the executive board treasurer.

*Reimbursement forms*

As a committee executing events, you are eligible for reimbursements for GA accepted budgeted events. In order to get reimbursed, a member of your committee must fill out a “Reimbursement form”. These forms are found on the Universalis website under “documents for committees”; <https://ucmsa.nl/documents-for-committees/>. It is important to double check all of the information written in the form before submitting it. Make sure to include a proof of payement in the form of a receipt. To submit the reimbursement form, send it to the treasurer’s email; [ucmsa-treasurer@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:ucmsa-treasurer@maastrichtuniversity.nl).

If an event exceeded the allocated budget granted in the general assembly. The committee must discuss it with the treasurer before submitting a reimbursement form. Only the treasurer can decide if the event can be granted more money for reimbursement. This implies that asking the social board representative to modify a budget may not be accepted by the treasurer, thus asking the treasurer directly is strongly advised. Any questions regarding money should be asked to the treasurer.

# Secretary

## *On room allocations and scheduling events*

As a committee, you are most likely eager to organise many events for the community. These events, of course, require a location to take place. This makes it very important to think about what kind of event you are organising, and what kind of room at UCM this event would shine in. For example, when you are planning on organising a lecture that will attract many students, you might want to organise this in the lecture hall, but if you organise a small and intimate event like a sharing circle, you might want to organise this in a smaller room. The kind of room can have a big impact on the success of your event! For that reason, we always ask committees to note down a preferred room for specific events in their semester plan. This is where the Secretary of the Social Board comes in: during the board weekend, the Secretary (with help of everyone else!) tries to schedule all events in such a way that preferences are followed as closely as possible whilst preventing clashes between different events. This is done based largely on your semester plan, and the preferred rooms you indicated. If anything changes regarding room allocations because of clashes or double bookings, your executive will let you know at the beginning of the semester.

During Board Weekend, the Secretary also marks down all events in a big calendar. This is done to get an immediate overview of all events, but also to make sure that larger events do not clash. If you are planning a bigger event, and you want a large turnout, it is important to keep in mind the timing of your event! Sometimes, these events do clash (let’s say that the Theatre Committee is planning a performance on the same day as the Musical Theatre Committee), and in that case we may move your event. Like changes in room allocations, your executive will let you know about any possible changes.

## Booking rooms

Not all events are planned at the beginning of the semester. It could be that you had to cancel an event and want to find a new possible date. It could also be that you decide to add an event (under certain conditions). In that case, I strongly advise you to book a room. Not only will booking a room ensure that no one else is using the room that you want to use at the time of your event, but it also ensures that the Social Board and Staff have a good overview of booked and available rooms for other bookings. If you want to book a room, *send an email to* [ucmsa-secretary@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:ucmsa-secretary@maastrichtuniversity.nl). You make booking a room easiest for the Secretary by being as specific as possible about your wishes. Instead of asking if any rooms are available, ask for specific rooms. If you have no specific room in mind, an email about room bookings should contain the following aspects to make everything run smoothly:

* The date of your event.
* The starting time of your event.
* The ending time of your event
* The kind of event (if a lot of noise is involved e.g. during and practice, the Secretary will try to pick a room that is more isolated).
* The minimum capacity, or at least an expected number of attendees so the Secretary knows how large the room should be.

*Please note: As of 2022 the building closes at 23:30 Monday-Wednesday, 20:00 on Thursdays, and 18:30 on Fridays, since the UCM building closes earlier, we advise you not to plan too much on Fridays.*

Once you have received a response, please stick to the room indicated by the Social Board! This helps everyone avoid clashes.

## **Budget plan/proposal - Semester plans**

At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to fill and hand in a semester plan. This will provide us (and you) an overview of all events you wish to organize in the upcoming semester. It is important to describe what the money will be allocated for, as the board will look over the budget plan and then it will get voted on in the first budget general assembly of the semester.

To prepare a budget plan, the committee must use a semester plan template which can be found on the Universalis website under Documents and then under Documents for Committees, but it will also be sent to the committee groupchat on messenger. When filling out the template, make sure to have checked the appropriate costs for the events and materials needed for the events. This document also includes requesting beer sales and budget. The title page should include the names of the old and new committee board chair, secretary, and treasurer. The document itself is sectioned into three parts. The first part has a week by week calendar, in which you should fill in the slots for each event. The second part is an event summary. Here you should provide a clear overview of your events: preferred date, time, event name, requesting beer, and requesting budget (y/n)- including cost descriptions, total cost and whether you will have ticket sales for this event. The third part is the total requested budget.

There are certain guidelines that are applicable to budgets for events. These can be found in the UCMSA Universalis Policy Manual on page 20. This document can be found on the universalis website under legal documents. Below are some of the guidelines.

*Certain guidelines apply to budget requests:*

1. Day trips may be funded up to 15 euros per participant excluding costs to the participants;
2. Trips longer than one day may be funded up to 30 euros per participant excluding costs to the participants;
3. Snacks and drinks at a (**recurring**) meeting/event shall not exceed 10 euros per event;
4. Funding for Speaker's gifts shall not exceed 10 euros per speaker;
5. Funding for prizes of some sort shall not exceed 10 euros per event;
6. Funding for Waffle Wednesday shall not exceed 25 euros per event;
7. No more than 50 euros per officer of the MoU will be budgeted for bonding activities.

Semester plans will be reviewed by the board during board weekend (first weekend of the semester), during which they will make sure to find a location for each (approved) event, might deny some events (for example if two separate committees are hosting the same event), and will pre-approve and adjust budget requests. In order for scheduling to go smoothly, you must hand in your semester plan on time. Once the semester plans have all been reviewed, your executive will come back to you to break down any changes, conflicts or cancellations.

Events that have not been accepted in the budget general assembly will not be reimbursed. Please note that the budget that is accepted in the budget general assembly is a maximum, and committees are strongly discouraged to go over budget. However, if small unanticipated costs appear, please communicate this to the executive board treasurer before the event to ask if it is acceptable. If the treasurer, accepts, the extra costs will be taken out of contingency.

As stated on the budget plan/proposal template, when the committee has finished their budget plan, it must be sent to the secretary of the executive board via email: [ucmsa-secretary@maastrichtuniversity.nl](mailto:ucmsa-secretary@maastrichtuniversity.nl)