

MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT

Purpose

The Member Code of Conduct clarifies the standard of behaviour expected from each u3a member.

Scope

Relevant to all u3a members

Member Code of Conduct

- Members are expected to know, follow and promote the [Principles](#) of the u3a Movement at every opportunity.
- Members must always act in the best interests of Torrige u3a and the u3a Movement, strive to uphold its reputation and never do anything which could bring their own, another u3a or the u3a Movement into disrepute or expose it to undue risk.
- Members are expected to use Torrige u3a's resources responsibly and only to further its stated charitable [objects/purposes](#).
- Members are expected to reflect the current organisational policy of Torrige u3a, regardless of whether it conflicts with their personal views.
- Members are expected to abide by Torrige u3a's [procedures and practices](#).
- Members are expected to treat each other with dignity and respect at all times.

Principles, Objectives and Purposes of the U3A

The "Welcome" page of our website carries an implicit description of the Principles, Objectives and Purpose of the U3A. For those requiring an Explicit description, please read the definitions below.

The Principles of the u3a

U3A (University of the Third Age) movement is designed to promote lifelong learning and community among people no longer in full-time employment. The movement is non-religious and non-political.

The three core principles of the u3a movement are:

- **The Third Age Principle:** Membership is open to all in their "third age," which is defined not by a specific age, but by a period in life where full-time employment has ceased.
- **The Self-help Learning Principle:** Members form interest groups to learn from one another, with enjoyment being the primary goal rather than qualifications or awards.
- **The Mutual Aid Principle:** Each u3a is a self-funded, independent, mutual aid organisation where members share skills and knowledge (no teachers or learners, only members).

Additional Principles and Values:

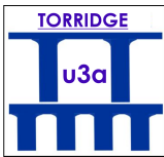
- **Voluntary Management:** No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- **Inclusivity:** Members strive to make the u3a accessible to everyone.
- **Independence:** Each local u3a is managed by its members to suit its local context.

Objectives of u3a

The u3a (University of the Third Age) is a UK-wide movement aiming to provide accessible, affordable lifelong learning for retired or semi-retired people. Its core objectives are to foster intellectual stimulation, skill-sharing, and social interaction among members through voluntary, self-help, and "learn for fun" activity groups.

Key objectives of the u3a movement include:

- **Lifelong Learning for Pleasure:** Promoting education for its own sake rather than for qualifications, covering hundreds of subjects to encourage mental stimulation.
- **Self-Help Educational Model:** Operating on the principle that members learn from each other. Members share their own knowledge, skills, and experience to teach one another.
- **Social Inclusion and Community:** Reducing isolation by providing a friendly, social environment that fosters new friendships among older adults.



- **Community Contribution:** Highlighting the continued value and active contributions of older people to society.
- **Accessibility:** Maintaining low membership fees to ensure learning is accessible to all, regardless of background.
- **Challenging Ageism:** Challenging perceptions around aging by amplifying the voices of members in public conversations.

The u3a is structured as a network of independent local groups that are self-managed, offering a wide range of activities from academic study to arts, crafts, and physical pursuits.

Purpose of the u3a

The purpose of u3a (University of the Third Age) is to provide educational, creative, and leisure opportunities for retired or semi-retired people, fostering lifelong learning for enjoyment rather than qualifications. It promotes positive aging through peer-to-peer teaching, enabling members to share skills, make friends, and stay active.

Key aspects of the u3a purpose include:

- **Peer-to-Peer Learning:** Members share their knowledge and skills with each other, meaning there is no distinction between teachers and learners.
- **Voluntary and Self-Funded:** It is a, voluntary, and self-managed movement where groups are run by members, for members.
- **Social Connection & Positive Aging:** It aims to keep members mentally and socially engaged, fighting negative stereotypes about aging and helping prevent isolation.
- **Accessibility:** There are no educational requirements or qualifications, and costs are kept low to remain accessible.
- **Diversity of Activities:** Groups cover a vast range of subjects tailored to local member interests.

Procedures and Practices (Policies)

Procedures and Practices are encapsulated within the **Policies** of the Torrige U3a, which are themselves based on recommended policies of the U3A Central organisation. Procedures and practices are designed to ensure safety, inclusivity, and adherence to charitable purposes, managed locally by committees but aligned with national guidance from the Third Age Trust.

Key procedures and practices include:

1. Membership and Guiding Principles

- **Open Access:** Membership is open to all in their "third age"—defined as the period in life when full-time employment has ceased.
- **Peer Learning:** Members learn from each other; there are no distinctions between teachers and learners.

- **Voluntarism:** No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a.
- **Code of Conduct:** Members must act in the best interests of their u3a, maintain dignity and respect in their interactions, and avoid bringing the organization into disrepute.

2. Operational Procedures

- **Local Management:** Each u3a is independent and managed by an Executive Committee (trustees) responsible for strategy, management, and compliance with charity law.
- **Annual General Meeting (AGM):** An AGM is held annually to present trustees' reports and accounts. 21 days' notice is typically required.
- **Interest Groups:** Members form groups for learning and activities. These require approval from the committee, and group leaders must adhere to local rules.
- **Data Protection:** U3As must comply with GDPR and local data protection policies, ensuring member information is only shared with consent.

3. Safety and Risk Management

- **Risk Assessments:** Routine assessments are conducted for activities, venues, home-based activities, and day trips.
- **Safeguarding:** Procedures exist to protect members from harm or neglect, including reporting mechanisms to a designated trustee.
- **Incident Reporting:** A formal Incident Report Form is used to document any accidents or incidents that occur during u3a activities.
- **Insurance:** The Third Age Trust provides Public & Products Liability insurance for members, which covers accidents and damage in connection with u3a business.

4. Governance and Grievance Policies

- **Equality and Diversity:** Policies ensure that u3as are inclusive and comply with anti-discrimination laws.
- **Grievance Procedure:** Problems are addressed in the first instance through informal discussion with a Groups' Coordinator or Trustee. If unresolved, formal written complaints are directed to the Committee Secretary, with potential for mediation or action.
- **Confidentiality:** Committee proceedings and sensitive issues are kept confidential to protect members.

5. Finances

- **Self-Funded:** U3As are financed through membership subscriptions, which are kept as low as possible.
- **Financial Accountability:** Treasurers must maintain records of all transactions, bank funds, and present annual accounts to the membership for approval.

These practices ensure that the u3a remains a member-led, supportive environment for lifelong learning.