
The RMIT University Student Union (RUSU)
Clubs & Societies Program

A Guide To Building Strong Partnerships Between RUSU Academic Clubs and linked Program, Schools, and College (PSCs)

**RUSU
CLUBS**

Aims of This Resource

This guide provides information to support academic clubs and Program/School/College (PSC) relationships by ensuring they are:

1. Developed with a clear understanding of RUSU and its' clubs and societies program.
2. Mutually beneficial, equitable, and realistic.
3. Consistent with the club's aims, autonomy, and accountability.
4. Aligned with RUSU and RMIT University priorities and processes, particularly compliance matters.

RUSU Clubs and Our Organisation: An Overview

About RUSU's Clubs & Societies Program

RUSU's clubs program supports a wide range of student-led organisations, including:

- » Academic Clubs: Enhancing the academic experience of students.
- » Social Clubs: Promoting shared interests and connections.
- » Cultural and Nationality Clubs: Celebrating diversity and cultural identity.
- » Faith-Based Clubs: Supporting spiritual growth and community.
- » Political and Activist Clubs: Encouraging civic engagement and advocacy.

The university's Student Life club program, by contrast, supports sports and creative clubs.

NOTE: Not every group calling itself an RMIT club is (nor can be) part of either the RUSU or RMIT Student Life Club program.

RUSU as an Organisation

RUSU is not a club. It is a fully incorporated organisation with Australian charity status. Key features include:

- » Governance by Students: An annually elected Board of over 25 RMIT students lead RUSU. This is the Student Union Council.
- » Staffed for Impact: Employing 30 permanent staff across three Melbourne campuses and engaging multiple casual student staff.
- » Volunteer-Driven: Over 200 students are enrolled in RUSU's volunteer program, contributing to its mission.
- » Primarily funded through SSAF: SSAF legislation and an annual funding agreement between RUSU and the University determines the annual clubs program budget and the broad parameters of how it may be distributed/used.

RUSU Affiliate Clubs

Each RUSU-affiliated club operates as an independent, democratic, and not-for-profit organisation. Key features include:

- » Constitutional Governance: Each club has its own Constitution guiding its operations.
- » Student Leadership: Clubs are led by an annually elected executive team of currently enrolled RMIT students.
- » Purpose-Driven Activities: All club activities must align with the club's Aims and Objectives, prioritising the benefit of enrolled RMIT students.

Club Registration and Compliance

To maintain their status as official RMIT student clubs, RUSU-affiliated clubs must:

1. Annual Registration: Reaffiliate with RUSU each year to remain active.
2. Compliance Standards: Meet strict obligations, including:
 - Event risk management planning and approval for all events.
 - Child safety.
 - Data management and Privacy protection.
 - Responsible service of alcohol and food safety.
 - Copyright matters.
 - Funding processes and financial administration
 - Adherence to RMIT's student conduct and related policies.
 - Adherence to the Clubs' own Constitutional requirements and RUSU Clubs Regulations.
3. Activity requirements - at least four (4) events/activities each year.

Important – Privacy Guidelines

1. PSCs cannot share student lists or contact details with clubs nor vice versa
2. PSCs must not email students directly about clubs/events unless the info is included in regular general communications, such as PSC newsletters.
3. PSCs may share club information through general areas of Canvas.
4. Clubs must not share member details with third parties without explicit consent of each member.
5. The RUSU Clubs and Societies Department receives club member data for clubs related reporting, compliance, and funding purposes only.

For specific privacy advice, contact RMIT Privacy Office: privacy@rmit.edu.au

Supporting Positive Relationships

How PSCs Can Support Clubs

Funding and Sponsorship

- » Cover event costs directly or reimburse clubs upon receipt of receipts/invoices.
- » Provide lump-sum sponsorships for events or annual plans through direct deposits or RUSU's club sponsorship invoicing process (these invoices are accepted by Workday).

Industry Connections

- » Facilitate guest speakers, judges, mentors, site visits, internships, and sponsorship opportunities.

Club Leader Mentoring

- » Support ideas, challenges, succession planning, and leadership recognition.

Promotions

- » Include clubs in PSC newsletters and events.
- » Allow clubs to use noticeboards and make event announcements in class (by arrangement).

Other Initiatives

- » Host coordination meetings for linked clubs.
- » Recognise club leaders at events or with certificates.
- » Invite club leaders to PSC events to improve networking skills and connections.

How Clubs Can Support PSCs

- » Promote PSC events and opportunities to members.
- » Align club activities with PSC priorities where applicable.
- » Provide extracurricular activities that complement classroom learning.
- » Build student networks, foster belonging, and offer feedback on PSC initiatives.

How RUSU Supports These Relationships

- » Provides base funding for clubs, additional event funding opportunities (competitive applications), training, resources, and templates.
- » Encourages clubs to find alternate funding sources, including memberships, events, merchandising, sponsors, and partners.
- » Assists with event planning, risk management, leadership development, and team building.
- » Facilitates club participation in university orientation and other events.
- » Advocates for club and club leader needs within the university.

- » Develops systems and resources promoting club and leader development in compliance-focused environments.
- » Supports effective collaboration between clubs, PSCs, and external departments.
- » Helps resolve conflicts and issues, escalating where required.

Pinch Points

Common Barriers to Successful Relationships Between Clubs and PSCs

1. Uncertainty about contact points and frequent changes in contacts.
2. Limited PSC internal coordination about linked clubs.
3. Absence of formal agreements, causing transparency issues.
4. Program/School/College changes affecting club identity and outreach.
5. Differing priorities or interests between clubs and PSCs.
6. Resource competition or inequitable arrangements.
7. Workloads affecting both students and staff.

Common Misunderstandings About Academic Clubs That Can Be Barriers

1. “PSCs and linked academic clubs ‘must’ collaborate.”

Clarification: Collaboration between PSCs and their linked clubs is optional. Both are autonomous and can decide whether to work together based on mutual interests.

2. “PSCs can ‘direct’ linked club operations or ‘dictate’ funding use.”

Clarification: PSCs cannot direct club activities or dictate how clubs use funding. Exceptions to this will be where formal arrangements are made between the PSC and the club Executive in relation to funding or other resources provided by the PSC. RUSU strongly recommends the use of written agreements in these cases.

3. “Clubs can participate in assessable academic activities or pay for required materials/training.”

Clarification: Clubs are extracurricular, so club funds and efforts cannot be used for academic assessments or required materials or training.

4. “Academic Club leaders ‘must’ also be SSCC (Staff-Student Consultative Committee) members or vice versa.”

Clarification: Club leaders and SSCC members have distinct roles. Participation in one does not mandate involvement in the other.

5. “Clubs can replace the function of SSCC.”

Clarification: SSCCs address academic matters and are an RMIT requirement for every academic program. Clubs are student created and managed, independent, and democratically governed entities with Constitutionally enshrined formal Aims.

6. “Clubs, as not-for-profits, ‘must not’ make any profit.”

Clarification: Clubs can generate a surplus (profit) if it is reinvested into their operations and activities to achieve their objectives.

7. “RUSU has sufficient resources to fully fund and support all club needs.”

Clarification: RUSU provides base funding and additional support but expects clubs to supplement their budgets through other means, such as sponsorships, sales and membership fees.

8. “Academic Clubs are easy to set up and run and everyone benefits!”

Clarification: Not every cohort can sustain a club, nor is a club always the most effective solution to address challenges or needs. Encouraging students to establish clubs solely to meet PSC KPIs or to address budgetary constraints is both unethical and unsustainable. Similarly, club leadership is fundamentally a service role; clubs initiated or led by individuals prioritising personal gain over collective benefit are more likely to fail.

Key Links

Full process to start a new club/restart a lapsed club

- » www.rusu.rmit.edu.au/startaclub

RMIT website student club information

- » www.rmit.edu.au/students/student-life/clubs-societies

RMIT clubs event risk management application (ERMA)

- » Clubs to complete – FYI only

RMIT Privacy Office

- » privacy@rmit.edu.au

SSCC information and support

- » www.rmit.edu.au/students/careers-opportunities/student-representatives
- » Anna McLeod – Manager Student Partnerships & Engagement – RMIT Student Life/Student Group: anna.mcleod@rmit.edu.au

SSAF information

- » www.education.gov.au/higher-education-loan-program/approved-hep-information/student-services-and-amenities-fee-ssaf-and-sa-help#toc-student-services-and-amenities-fee-ssaf-and-sa-help-fact-sheet

RUSU Clubs & Societies Department Staff

- » To connect with the RUSU Clubs team for further advice, please contact us through our department email – rusu.clubs@rmit.edu.au