



START AN ANIMAL LAW SOCIETY



UK CENTRE FOR ANIMAL LAW

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STEPS TO START AN ANIMAL LAW SOCIETY

We understand starting an [animal law] student society can appear to be daunting at first, particularly given the heavy workload for law students. As such, this document has been drafted to assist with breaking down the steps, and offering some ideas to establish and maintain your student society.

- 1. Your first step should be to determine whether there are any similar societies on campus.**
 - While there may be ideological overlap, for example with a vegetarian and vegan society, zoology or animal welfare, it may be worth highlighting that an animal law student organisation does not necessarily run in direct competition.
 - If there are similar societies on campus, reach out to and ask whether there might be potential for collaboration between your groups. This can be as simple as cross-promoting events, to co-organising an event.
- 2. Check your university's student union material for guides on how new societies are formed.**
 - These are likely to include application forms, as well as the need to draft your society's constitution, goals, and other aspects of the organisation's operation. You may also be required to have a certain number of officers/ members to form your group.
- 3. Look for co-officers.**
 - You can try contacting the admin at your department to send a mass email, hang posters around your campus, attend the beginning of lectures etc to get the word out about your potential society to garner interest.



4. **Leverage school events, orientation and open days.**

- Keep a close eye on the university calendar, to see if there are any upcoming events with increased foot traffic.
- Recent feedback suggests carrying a clipboard or laptop, to ensure sign up on the spot.

5. **Register your group.**

- To become an official society, club, or organization within your law school, formally apply for affiliation with the student union using the student union guidance, as suggested above.

FIRST MEETING

Determine with your new team the purpose of your society. Maybe it is a forum for advancing awareness of animal law and the welfare of animals across the UK.

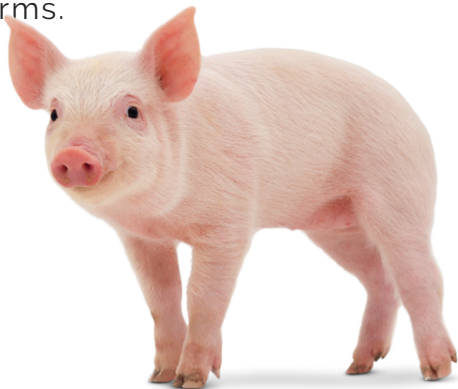
- If your society would like to focus on a particular area, tailor the draft constitution to include this as your purpose.
- When translating the group's purpose into an events plan, be sure to be realistic about what can be achieved within the academic year.
- Play to the strengths and interests of your society members - do you have specific talents like researching or public speaking, running or fundraising, etc. Or do you have a passion for the dangerous dog legislation, farmed fish welfare or animal testing.
- Perhaps begin your first meeting with a brainstorming activity where you determine your team's strengths and interests, so you can carefully select what you'll accomplish under your society.



FIRST EVENT

You could start with an event, perhaps a 'meet and greet' style meeting.

- You could invite a guest speaker to this event to present on Animal Law more generally, or any other topic of interest.
- You could invite [for example LUSH or animal equality, or some other organisation] to host a stall at your event.
- You can try to secure funding to provide resources or snacks at your event.
- You may even wish to poll your attendees to see the sorts of areas of interest they have, and attempt to incorporate this into your society agenda for the coming terms.



1. **Generate ideas:** Activities can be as simple as holding a casual meet up with members, or could be more complex events with speakers and screenings, or lobbying activities. You could include debates, film and lecture seminars, networking, discussion groups, fundraising, conferences, guest speakers both in-person or online, policy projects, blogs and articles - as well as facilitating opportunities to contribute to A-LAW projects.



EVENT PLANNING

As mentioned above, it might be worth at your very first meeting offering time for brainstorming, where all your members can give their interests and strengths. You can see how your interests align, and what you might want to delve into with your termly events and efforts.



2. **Familiarise yourself with the student union's events-booking processes:** Student unions may have particular rules regarding speakers, such as approval periods for speakers. Be sure to familiarise yourself with these rules to ensure compliance and avoid delays.

This will include checking the room-booking policy. The student union site will be the first place to start, and it may involve specific advanced notice to book a room depending on budget/size.

For example, an event with a budget of £300 may require 6 weeks advance notice to the student union, whereas an event with a budget of <£250 may require one week's notice. Room size is also likely to be a factor.

These formalities will need to be checked and followed through. If you're unsure on details, contact the student union representative at your university – they're there to help.

3. **Finding speakers:** Networking events and attending seminars can help with finding guest speakers. Whether with A-LAW or otherwise, you'll meet students, trainee barristers and professors at these events, and you may find these people suitable and willing to take part in an event with your society.

Alternatively, you can approach people with expertise through their publicly available addresses, such as university email addresses for professors.

4. **How can A-LAW help:** A-LAW is happy to support animal law student societies in their events and beyond. We can:

- speak on your campus, or virtually
- help with idea generation for your events and projects
- help source speakers for an A-LAW event

This list is not exhaustive, and we are happy to discuss ways we can further support your society. Email: studentgroup@alaw.org.uk.

Troubleshooting: Communication is central to effective organisation: use new technologies and apps to your advantage.

- Try using Google docs for easier collaboration, sharing ideas, and for breaking down responsibilities when it comes to planning your activities
- Discuss ways that the society members would like to communicate – whether through Facebook, Whatsapp, LinkedIn or with a Slack team.
- Evaluate and increase your effectiveness
 - Were there any factors that contributed to your success?
 - Is there anything that could have been done differently?



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