Society Partnership Scheme

Handover & Succession Planning for GP Societies

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A good handover should equip you and your new committee with the knowledge, support and signposting needed to hit the ground running.

For any GP Society to be effective and efficient in the long term, committees must turnover as seamlessly as possible. Outgoing committees have the responsibility to promote healthy development of a society by leaving a solid foundation for the new committee.

A good handover will ensure that your group continues to go from strength to strength - and not just in the immediate future.

What exactly is a handover?
This is when an incoming committee is preparing to take over a society and is introduced to their roles and responsibilities by the outgoing committee. It is useful to refer to the handover throughout your committee’s tenure, where possible updating it throughout the year and using it to identify skills you and the committee have developed. Remember to document this on your CV.

Why is it important?
It ensures that there is continuity between outgoing and incoming committees so that there can be long term plans and development opportunities for the group, it also fosters sustained success from one year to the next. It prepares the new committee to continue developing the group, and also limits the risk of repeating mistakes made by previous committees. It’s also the perfect time and space for sharing contacts, knowledge, and inspiration for your successors.

When should you do a handover?
Ideally the handover should be done within a fortnight of the Society’s Annual General Meeting (AGM). You need to prepare your successors for the role(s) they are about to undertake, so write your handover throughout the year, documenting your group’s activity so that you have the information prepared in good time - it’s easy to forget everything you have tried and achieved!

The good, the bad and the awesome (learning from the past)
Evolve and grow your society. By providing a clear and concise handover, you are giving the society a head-start on the year ahead. The easier it is to get going, the more opportunity for growth. By looking back, you’ll be able to move forward - making your events bigger and better; cultivating pre-existing contacts; becoming a staple society in your medical school and growing your membership as a result. Likewise, you’ll understand what doesn’t work! Going wrong can be the best learning opportunity and often strengthens your society in terms of foresight, planning and understanding of your audience. Handovers should be updated throughout the year, so if you encounter a problem, document it. Highlight all aspects of the society, the good, the bad and the awesome.
Handing it over! Top tips...

- **How to** - There are different options for handing over, so consider as a group how you might want to proceed. Ideally you should produce written documents, physically and digitally, that are stored in a space that can be accessed by the new committee i.e. Google Docs or a physical folder.

- **Communication is key** - Different people respond/interact in different ways, so where possible, tailor the handover to different committee members.

- **Let’s get together** - You can also arrange a meeting with outgoing and incoming committees together, or schedule one-on-one meetings, i.e. just secretaries together. It’s important for the two committees to work together for the period after the AGM (typically throughout the summer months). Arrange a meeting and social event (before the end of the academic year) to get everyone together in an informal way! You can arrange ‘speed dating’ as a means of getting to know the scope of the committee and the breadth of activity that goes on.

- **It’s all in your head** - Write down the ideas and knowledge in your head! So much communication goes on face-to-face or on via personal messages, you may not realise just how much you know! Knowledge is power and the incoming committee will need to be informed if they are to start off on the right foot! Think of all the things you wish you’d known when you took over in the role.

- **Hand it over** - Give the incoming committee your ideas and suggestions but don’t hang over them. Let them take responsibility and come ask you for support if they need to. By letting them make different choices or decision, should they wish, they start off the year feeling motivated and empowered.

- **Honesty is the best policy** - Offer clarity, but also be honest. What is a definite requirement of the role and what is a personal reflection and observation of what it actually entailed.

Tick, tick, tick!

Make sure your handover is structured around the following checklists. Please refer to your Students’ Union as they may have further requirements.

### Outgoing Committee:
- ✓ Share any problems you had and how you dealt with them
- ✓ AGM & Meeting Minutes
- ✓ Documents – photos, videos etc
- ✓ Finance report
- ✓ New committee contacts
- ✓ Events ‘how to’
- ✓ Who’s who of working with your university (freedom of information, risk assessments etc)
- ✓ Useful training dates or events
- ✓ Sponsorship or funding contacts
- ✓ Highlight & lowlight reel & lowlight of good practice and lessons learned
- ✓ Account details & equipment inventory

### Incoming Committee:
- ✓ Arrange an induction
- ✓ Meet who you must meet within your Students’ Union/Medical School
- ✓ Useful training dates or events.
- ✓ Update affiliation with Students’ Union, the RCGP, Medical School and any other relevant bodies.
- ✓ Read ‘Running & Leading a Successful Committee’ toolkit
What next?

- **Get on board & be rewarded** - Update your society's affiliation with the RCGP by reapplying to the Society Partnership Scheme. As well as an ever-evolving programme of toolkits, training and networking opportunities throughout the year, you will receive funding, goodies and merchandise for Freshers Fair and beyond.

- **Getting organised** - The RCGP have published *Running & Leading a Successful Committee* toolkit as part of the Society Partnership Scheme. Have a read of the document, think about how your committee functions and any actions you can take to make it that little bit more effective!

- **Plan the year ahead, together** - When elections and co-options have taken place, get the committee together to plan for the year ahead. Make it exciting, inspiring and interactive but also useful, inclusive and tangible. You could start the day with a 2-minute elevator pitch per person on what they want the society to achieve that year. By starting with 'blue sky thinking' and distilling these into realistic, concrete takeaways by the end of the session, committee members will feel ownership of the society's output and motivated to achieve. People usually find these “away days” to be a really useful bonding exercise and an excellent way to forge a common purpose (and to have fun!)

- **Save and template** - Make use of templates provided by RCGP and your Students' Union. By always using the same template, you will create a consistent and understandable way for your committee to digest information as well saving time and effort!

- **Sharing is caring** - By sharing all your documents in one place and providing access to all committee members, everyone can stay on the ball. Use collaborative resources such as Google Drive and Calendar to work together online and keep everyone up-to-date.

- **Train up!** You might be surprised by just how much free training is out there! Often your Students' Union and bodies such as the RCGP will offer society training on a variety of useful topics. Go looking for local opportunities and keep an ear to the ground.