

Working in the office

Information for prospective and new volunteers

Office hours are 9.45am to 3pm on weekdays. The office closes for approximately four weeks over Christmas/New Year but stays open during other school holidays.

Our volunteers work in pairs, generally one day per fortnight. Our practice is to provide new staff with a couple of days of one-on-one training before being rostered for duty on a day that suits them. Then new staff are always paired with more experienced workers.

The main qualifications for being a U3A City office staffer are a cheerful and friendly disposition and patience. The workload tends to be cyclical. It is demanding from October to February when membership renewals and course applications come flooding in. From March onwards it is generally quieter.

The main things that get done in the office

Answering enquiries: People often come in or phone the office to find out about U3A, what it offers and how to join. We have information packs to give or post to them, but many want explanations and often a chat as well.

Assisting tutors: Helping them with attendance rolls and sometimes keys and equipment.

Taking apologies: There are several calls each day from members who can't attend classes, and these have to be noted on the attendance rolls.

Phoning people: If a class is cancelled or a venue is changed, we may have to ring the students to let them know. And also make sure the room booking is cancelled.

Enrolling short courses: Members ring up to book places in the short courses advertised in each *City News* newsletter. Their names are then added to class rolls or waiting lists.

Helping to manage class lists: We have to note withdrawals from courses so that vacancies can be filled. We then ring people on waiting lists to offer the places.

Processing memberships and bookings: This involves taking money, writing receipts, issuing membership cards and completing various forms.

Banking: Counting money, filling in the deposit book and going to the bank. More frequent in some months, e.g. October-November when members are renewing their subscriptions.

Dealing with the mail: Fetching it from downstairs, stamping and sorting it.

Checking and dealing with emails: We will show you how to do this, if you choose.

Entering members' details on our database (known as 'Canopus'): If you want, you can learn this, and also how to search Canopus for information.

How the office is managed

We are all volunteers, and at the moment we have no one willing to be 'in charge' of the whole show. To take responsibility for managing everything is a big ask. Instead, we function with a number of admin volunteers who share office administration responsibilities. Currently they are **Helena Ling, Fran Sciarretta, Keith Stewart and Alison Thornton**. You can phone, email, or leave messages for any of the admin staff – they will pass your query to a relevant colleague if necessary.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING YOUR U3A