



A-LAW UNIVERSITY GROUP INFORMATION PACK

A-Law is pleased to announce the introduction of the A-law Student Group.

The purpose of the A-law Student Group is to provide a forum for students to discuss, debate – and ultimately improve – the welfare of animals through law, making the group the first of its kind in the UK.

This Student Group offers help setting up A-law University Groups and provides a student and academic electronic newsletter, *Animal Justice UK*. It also hosts an annual national essay writing competition, mooting competitions and careers events.

A-law University Groups

We understand starting a university group on campus 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 establishing and maintaining an A-law University Group.

As a guiding principle, we encourage A-law University Groups to take an interdisciplinary approach and work collaboratively. Animal law is by its very nature interdisciplinary and not all advocates will be enrolled in law! With this in mind, non-law students are welcome to become student members.

Naturally the process and ideas are not limited to this document and we encourage creativity and innovation in your approach!

If you would like further assistance, or if you have a specific concern not addressed below, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing studentgroup@alaw.org.uk, c/o Sally Shera-Jones.

How to start an A-law University Group

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, 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 or 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 (a template for which can be found below), goals, and other aspects of the group's operation.

3. Take advantage of existing on-campus communications:

- You may already be familiar with university and course-wide communications. Contact the administrator responsible and see how you can have the University Group featured with a notice. Draft what you'd like to be sent out, and ask your admin if it can be forwarded out to a specific cohort.
- Similarly, get in touch with the contact for student union announcements and newsletters, and have your University Group featured to generate interest.
- Announcements before or after a class can be very effective. If you're enrolled in a related law class or module, or if you know of any classes that may have an increased likelihood of interested students, ask the lecturer if you can make an announcement and invite the audience to sign up.

4. Look for other officers to help you run the group:

- However interest is found – whether by word of mouth, mass emails or anything else – there will be a need for at least one other officer.
- It is also worth exploring whether they would like to act as Treasurer.

5. Take advantage of Faculty events, induction days and open days:

- Keep a close eye on the university calendar to see if there are any upcoming events with increased foot traffic.
- A-law leaflets and journals are available on request to distribute or display at your university.
- It may be worthwhile to carry a clipboard or laptop to encourage potential members to sign-up on the spot.

6. Register your group:

- To become an official A-law University Group within your law school formally apply for affiliation with the student union using the student union guidance.
- After you have done this, formally apply for affiliation with A-law:
 - i. To register, you must have at least two active members to start an A-law University Group and you both must be members of the A-law Student Group;
 - ii. You must also register with and be accepted by A-law before adopting 'A-law University Group' as part of your group's name;
 - iii. Upon formation you must provide a list of officers and their email addresses for the current academic year to the Student Team at studentgroup@A-law.org.uk; and,
 - iv. There must be at least two active officers at any one time. Failing this, A-law accreditation may be withdrawn;

- v. You must use the 'A-law University Group' name at all times and across any social media accounts that your group creates.

Your first meeting: determine the group's scope and purpose

Feel free to start with an event, or perhaps a 'meet and greet' style meeting, with an open forum on the direction the group would like to pursue.

The purpose of A-law University Groups is to provide a forum for advancing awareness of animal law and the welfare of animals across the UK through education, campaigning, and lobbying. If your University Group would like to focus on a particular area, tailor the draft constitution below to include this as your purpose.

It's worth noting or clarifying to your members that the University Groups must align with the A-law mission. **This means maintaining a neutral position, with an inclusive and professional approach to differing views on welfare and rights-based positions.** More information on A-law's mission and activities can be found at www.alaw.org.uk.

When translating the group's purpose into an events plan, be sure to be realistic about what can be achieved within the academic year.

Be sure to include an agenda, and provide an opportunity for members to introduce themselves and offer input. Record names and email addresses for follow up communications.

It may be helpful to distribute some type of resource at this event, such as the most recent copy of Animal Justice UK.

Event planning

Hosting an event involves planning for the type of event(s) you'd like to hold and when, and, if relevant, finding people to take part.

1. Generate ideas

Activities can be as simple as holding a casual meet up with members, or could be include more complex events with speakers and screenings, or lobbying activities. It is vital that the activities suit each University Group's capacity, purpose and interests.

We envision A-law University Group activities may include debates, film and lecture seminars, discussion groups, fundraising, as well as facilitating opportunities to contribute to Animal Justice UK and other A-law projects. As long as the activities align with A-law's objectives, we encourage and support their implementation and we encourage all voices to be heard.

This is just the beginning; we welcome you to expand beyond these suggestions to maximise your impact!

2. Familiarise yourself with your 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 to 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 giving advanced notice to book a room depending on budget/size.

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

3. Finding speakers

Attending seminars and conferences can help you identify guest speakers. Whether these are through A-law or otherwise, you'll meet students, trainee barristers and professors throughout your university career and you may find these people suitable and willing to take part in an event.

Alternatively, you can approach people with expertise through their publicly available addresses, such as university email addresses for professors, and A-law can help source speakers for A-law University Group events upon request.

Next steps

You may explore working collaboratively with other A-law University Groups. Pooling your knowledge and experiences is a great way to increase effectiveness. We encourage collaboration with University Groups throughout the UK, and would be happy to facilitate this for interested groups.

A-law is happy to support University Groups in their activities. We can:

- Arrange for guest speakers to attend and speak to group;
- Assist with debate topics;
- Provide a forum for agenda and topics for discussion;
- Offer training i.e. in the use of Freedom of Information requests; and,
- Provide resources such as logos, leaflets, posters etc.

This list is not exhaustive, and we are happy to discuss ways we can further support your group. Get in touch with a student coordinator by contacting studentgroup@alaw.org.uk, c/o Sally Shera-Jones.

Troubleshooting

1. 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 University Group members would like to communicate, such as through Facebook, Whatsapp, LinkedIn or with a Slack team.

2. Evaluate and increase your effectiveness:

- Were there any factors that contributed to a particularly successful or popular event?
- Is there anything that could have been done differently?
- Share your insights with the Student Group in case this information can be used to assist other groups.

As this is a pilot, we'd love to receive constructive feedback and suggestions from A-law student members. This places you in a unique position to contribute to the way our Student Groups might operate in the future.

If you're finding it difficult to generate interested members, or to maintain current members, please don't hesitate to get in touch by emailing studentgroup@alaw.org.uk, c/o Sally Shera-Jones.

The Student Team is available to discuss issues and help with generating solutions and next steps tailored to each University Group.



A-LAW UNIVERSITY GROUP CONSTITUTION

- 1) The UK Centre for Animal Law (A-law) requires that affiliated groups incorporate the name 'A-law University Group.' For example, the 'A-law University Group: Aberdeen.' This name should be used at all times and across any social media accounts that your group creates.
- 2) You must have at least 2 active members to start an A-law University Group and you both must be members of the A-law Student Group.
- 3) You must register with and be accepted by A-law before adopting 'A-law University Group' as part of your group's name.
- 4) Once accepted by A-law you must become an official society, club, or organization within your law school.
- 5) Upon formation you must provide a list of officers and their email addresses for the current academic year to the Student Team at studentgroup@alaw.org.uk. There must be at least two active officers at any one time, failing which A-law University Group accreditation may be withdrawn.
- 6) The purpose of A-law University Groups should be to provide a forum for advancing animal law and the welfare of animals across the UK through education, campaigning, and lobbying (please contact studentgroup@A-law.org.uk if you are not sure what these activities involve).
- 7) Any law students currently studying in the UK can establish or join an A-law University Group and groups from other countries interested in becoming an A-law University Group are welcome to contact us to discuss this. A-law does not discriminate on grounds of age, gender, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage status or pregnancy.
- 8) It is up to the affiliated A-law University Group to decide on any roles the group may wish to create in order to run the group e.g. you may wish to appoint a Chairperson, deputy Chair, secretary, social media officer etc.
- 9) Elections can be held (if numbers in the group are sufficient) annually in order to appoint group officers. Majority vote shall apply.
- 10) Include A-law's Student Officer, Edwina Bowles and student coordinators (studentgroup@alaw.org.uk) in any e-mail lists.
- 11) Regular meetings must be held, but can be done so in accordance with the group's calendar.
- 12) You shall always have A-law in mind and you shall always act in a manner that is professional, polite, lawful, non-offensive and non-aggressive.
- 13) By joining an A-law University Group you promise to adhere to A-law's mission and you will not take part in litigation or offer legal advice, whether pro bono or otherwise, on behalf of A-law. You will contact A-law immediately should you have any issues in this regard.

14) Officers of University Groups must join A-law as student members. It is not mandatory for other members of University Groups to become members of A-law, but they are encouraged to do so.

15) In June and December of every year you must provide details outlining the activities your group has been undertaking. Please email the list of the activities to studentgroup@alaw.org.uk.



A-LAW UNIVERSITY GROUP APPLICATION FORM

University:

Full address:

Date formed:

Have you received permission from your university to start the group?

YES NO

Group Officers:

Name	Position held (if any)	Email	Phone number

Declaration:

I/We hereby agree to adhere to the A-law University Group Constitution.

Name:..... Name:

Signature: Signature:

Please return the signed form to studentgroup@alaw.org.uk.