**GETTING  A u3a STARTED:   (See attached Notes).**

1.   Set up a Steering Committee

2.   Contact Age Action

3.   Choose a name and logo.

4.   Open an email  account.

5    Find a Venue

6.   Decide  which weekday, and what frequency of meetings you prefer.

7.  Prepare a Registration Form, noting requirements of Data Protection law.

8. 0pen a Bank Account

9. Select style and content for a Constitution (see some  u3a websites)

10   Plan a programme  outline for at least the first four months..

11   Announce Preview Meeting and advertise it.

12. Preview Meeting preferably in chosen Venue.

OPENING  DAY….

**PRACTICAL STEPS  TOWARDS  SETTING  UP  A  U3A  GROUP…..**

**1.**Gather a **Steering  Committee :** six to eight people , to identify Chairperson, Treasurer, Secretary (Minutes and curating email address) , Membership Secretary, Programme Director, IT Director, Webmaster ( if needed .  Gender balance is admirable if it can be arranged.   Basic Computer literacy is essential.  Committee officers need a deputy with equal knowledge, to step up when holidays or illness take over.  The more people who understand the in-house technology the better.  .  Keep brief Minutes to record decisions made and responsibilities accepted. Experience has proved  that it is preferable to look for suitably active  people and invite them in, rather than ask for volunteers.

2.  Contact  **Age Action** to register your interest to start a group.  Their website has a list of all groups and you can  visit those in your vicinity.  This will help you to identify the tone and style you wish to adopt for your branch, bearing in mind the U3A principles  of active participation - not merely passive listening.   All groups  will exemplify peer -led lifelong  shared learning in a relaxed and friendly social environment.

3.   Choose a **name**and logo….it is best to use your town/village name for easy identification.  The logo can be of your own design or incorporate something of existing U3a symbols.

4.  Set up an **email account** .   Not only does this assert your serious intent but any enquiries it generates can help you to evaluate interest from potential members.

5, **Venue**    Look for  a building with adequate parking, wheelchair access, good local transport links, catering facilities serving light refreshments ..or at least be sure there are cafes  nearby because social interaction is an important part of the U3A  ethos.    Is there an In -house projector and screen?     Secure  storage will be needed for capital equipment as your group may  gradually acquire it .     .  Is there insurance cover for fire and theft held by the Venue owner of  will your group be responsible?  Age Action can advise.     The capacity of the  meeting place will  ultimately  decide the size of your membership list.

6.  **Timetabling**  The majority of u3a branches run a fortnightly meeting on a weekday morning.  These  have a  dual function combining a social occasion and an illustrated talk or lecture from a visiting speaker or a member.       Avoid Mondays as Bank Holidays occurring on Mondays will eat in to  your calendar.      Decide whether and when to close for holidays ….Closing down entirely for July, August and December is recommended as attendance drops in warmer weather and everyone is busy in December.   Always start on time…latecomers disrupt and disturb both speaker and audience,  and to avoid this, it might   be preferable to socialise with coffee  etc *before*any lecture begins.     Also decide which timetable to use….that is either  to  coincide with the academic year beginning in September or the calendar year in January.

7.   Prepare a **Registration \* Form** to be issued  online when collecting the subscription. .  All business should be conducted online as it is cheaper and quicker.    Note the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

8.  Open a **Bank Account.**Decide the amount of your membership subscription and make arrangements for this to be collected online when completing the **Registration \* Form ..**see 7 above

9.Devise a **Constitution** if you so wish, and put it on your website.  If no website,  make sure hard copies are available to all who request it.

10. The **Programme**Director, ( along with a small Sub Committee  of say 2 others, ideally including the IT Director)  will look to book speakers.  Invited external speakers are not paid in cash, but tokens, book or otherwise , may be issued.      U3a members do not receive monetary,  or  any other rewards ,´  from U3a.

((Where to find Speakers:.

Perhaps a Committee member has specialist knowledge or experience   to share as an illustrated talk..?     Are  there  local retired academics,  authors, poets, journalists, artists, musicians, local historians, all types of knowledgable men and women in the locality who are happy to talk for about an hour on their own subject?   Ask  at the Library, Art Gallery or Museum.  Is there a local Historical Society schedule of events from which you can engage a speaker…look at u3a websites  to check out their  recent contributors ( this is a very valuable source).   Keep a balance of subjects for variety and  universal appeal.  Local , social and  national  history, current affairs, literature, music, art history, science in myriad forms,   are all popular topics. )).

11.    When you have a name, a venue and an email account you will want to **advertise….**this need not cost money.  Write a Flyer announcing the launch of the new group,  not more than  2 weeks before your planned Preview Meeting.   Distribute this  sheet  with date, time and venue in clear prominence and take it to church halls, Parish Rooms, Doctors’ surgeries, Supermarket  notice boards, Gyms, Golf Clubs, Bridge Clubs, Probus groups, Soroptimists, Retirement Homes …anywhere retired people may be found.   Also Parish and Community magazines and free  local newspapers…

12.  **Preview Meeting….**this is designed to inform  interested parties  about your intentions , so hold it  in your chosen venue if possible.  Introduce your Committee,  who  should  wear name badges with your logo …explain U3a methods.  You can give out hard  copies of the u3a document explaining  the Origins and Principles  of  the u3A movement to be downloaded from the Home Page of the  www. [u3adldk.ie](http://u3adldk.ie/) .website.     See if you can show video clips of U3a  groups in action which may be found on YouTube.     Keep a register of attendees.   Encourage Q  and A .   End  by announcing your Opening Day and give details of how to register …allow time at the end for the committee to mingle and answer questions ..

Between then and Opening  Day,  you can start to register people online…

**OPENING  DAY**. …invite any appropriate local dignitaries inc.perhaps a  representative from local university if there is one near you.   Let those who haven’t yet registered do so in person at a table staffed by your committee inc. the Treasurer and Membership Secretary. Serve light refreshments and announce your programme for the coming few weeks.  Finish with an interesting lecture.      Good Luck !