

Department of Student Residence Affairs

House Committee Survival Guide
2016



House Committee Survival Guide

Table of Contents	Page
I. Preamble	2
II. Annexure A	
House Committee Constitution	18
1. Structure of the House Committee (HC)	4-6
Protocol	6
2. Meeting Procedures	6-7
3. HC Guide to Programming	7
3.1. Drafting a Program	7
3.2. Budget	8
3.3. Finance Policy	8
3.4. Roll Up Your Sleeves	12
3.5. Advertising	13
3.6. Show Time!!!	14
4. Discipline	14
5. Emergencies	15
6. Maintenance	15-16

PREAMBLE

The primary purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of basic information about HC and Residence relations, rules, programming, meeting procedures and budgeting. It seeks to provide an easy accessible source of more general information about the residential guidelines.

This material was selected to help HC perform more effectively and to increase the development of future leaders for each structure. As much as HC is a functioning structure, the absence of strong committee network will make it increasingly difficult for the work of the society to be accomplished as energy, time are spent recreating the same activities year after year.



1. Structure of the House Com

1.1 Chairperson

- 1.2 Secretary
- 1.3 Finance Officer
- 1.4 Sports Officer
- 1.5 Media & Publicity Officer
- 1.6 HIV/AIDS & Community Development Officer

1.2 Individual responsibilities and powers of H/C members

1.2.1. Chairperson shall:

- 1.2.1.1 Exercise supervision over all portfolios, ensuring that at all times members perform their duties efficiently in the best interest of students.
- 1.2.1.2 Chair meetings of the House or delegate such duty to any member of the House Committee
- 1.2.1.3 Be a member of the JCC.
- 1.2.1.4 Be a co-signatory to all transactions of the House Committee.
- 1.2.1.5 Present a chairperson's report to the AGM of the House Committee.

1.2.2. Secretary shall:

- 1.2.2.1 Be the chief administration officer of the HC.
- 1.2.2.2 Prepare the agenda for the HC as well as the House meetings.
- 1.2.2.3 Take minutes during the meetings and keep the HC files
- 1.2.2.4 Organize HC, residence meetings and AGM in consultation with the chairperson.
- 1.2.2.5 Carry out other duties as delegated by the HC.
- 1.2.2.6 Present an organizational report to the AGM on behalf of the HC Collective.

1.2.3. Finance Officer shall:

- 1.2.3.1 Be responsible for drafting the budget proposal for consideration by the HC and administering the budget.
- 1.2.3.2 Appropriately allocate a budget guided by students needs.

- 1.2.3.3 Provide advice to HC on its financial matters.
- 1.2.3.4 Initiate and implement social awareness programs within residences.
- 1.2.3.5 Present detailed statements concerning any expenses incurred during the course of the year.
- 1.2.3.6 Carry out other duties as delegated by HC.
- 1.2.3.7 Present a financial report to the AGM on behalf of the HC.

1.2.4 Sports Officer shall:

- 1.2.4.1 Facilitate sports activities that encompass all sporting codes in the residence.
- 1.2.4.2 Liaise with other sports officers from other residences so as to co-ordinate inter-residence activities.
- 1.2.4.3 Liaise with sport union on matters concerning residence sports.
- 1.2.4.4 Co-ordinate the acquisition and the maintenance of the residence sports equipment.
- 1.2.4.5 Carry out other duties as delegated by HC.
- 1.2.4.6 Submit monthly report to the Secretary for the attention of the HC.

1.2.5. Media and Publicity Officer shall:

- 1.2.5.1 Be the chief editor of the residence publication.
- 1.2.5.2 Be responsible for the issuing of notices and publications on behalf of the House Committee.
- 1.2.5.3 Promote the residence and the activities of the House Committee.
- 1.2.5.4 Carry out other duties as delegated by HC.
- 1.2.5.5 Submit monthly report to the Secretary for the attention of the HC.

1.2.6. HIV/AIDS & Community Development Officer shall:

- 1.2.6.1 Initiate and lead the student development programs in the residences on behalf of the H/C,

- 1.2.6.2 Organize HIV/AIDS related activities and projects on behalf of the House Committee.
- 1.2.6.3 Initiate and implement hygiene and cleanliness in the residences.
- 1.2.6.4 Carry out other duties as delegated by HC.
- 1.2.6.5 Submit monthly report to the Secretary for the attention of the HC.

2. Protocol

While the House committee is a sub-structure of the SRC, it has an interesting line of reporting within the department of Residence Affairs. The house committee firstly reports to the Residence Assistant (RA), the next line is Residence Life Officer (RLO), the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC), the Head of Residence Student Affairs, the next line is the Manager Residence Student Affairs, and lastly is the Executive Director – Students Services.

It is important for house committees to observe this reporting line and raise all concerns and issues following this protocol. This allows for accountability and responsibility in the various levels of our administration.

3. Meeting Procedures

It is important to note that the house meeting is used as a means of communication between the House Committee and the house which is the students living in that particular residence. The notice for a meeting should be able to indicate the issues to be addressed so that it captures the interest of the students and attract them to attend the meeting. The first thing that should happen in a house meeting is the tabling and the adoption of the agenda.

The chairperson will table the agenda to the house which shall be structured in the following form:

- Official opening and welcome
- Apologies
- Declaration of interests
- Confirmation of the minutes of the previous meeting, this might only apply to house committee meeting and not the house meeting.
- Matters arising from the meeting, applicable in the house committee
- Agenda items for that particular day

- Other related matters or general
- Date of the next meeting and closure

The role of each official in a meeting is as outlined below:

- The chairperson is responsible for chairing the meeting.
- The General Secretary does most of the reporting on behalf of the committee.
- The Treasurer will report if there are financial issues to be reported.
- Other members will speak on issues relating to their portfolios; otherwise they will add on the reports and answer any questions that may be directed to the structure.

The proceedings for the meeting should follow this format:

The chairperson will table the matter and allow the committee to report or speak on the matter. He/she will then allow the members of the house/committee to ask clarity seeking questions. After these set of questions, then allow members to discuss the matter. The discussion should arrive into a decision which is taken as a meeting resolution. In the event there is no consensus in the matter and there are differing views, the chairperson will use the voting a deciding factor.

4) House Comm. Guide to Programming

All too often HCs attempt to plan without assessing the needs of their residents. The tendency is to plan based on personal needs and then be upset when students do not participate in your programmes. You may want to start out your year with a written interest assessment questionnaire, which lists a number of possible programs and ask people to evaluate how they feel about having those programs on their floor. The survey may also include a section for students to reply if they have specific interests. You can then decide on programs out of what students have chosen.



Being able to plan an event will help you in the future. Employers are seeking people who are able to plan projects and follow through with details.

4.1. Drafting a program

Now you have evaluated and come up with a great idea for a program, all you have to do now is decide when to have it. Take each of the items that the residents expressed interest in, set tentative dates. Check around the Residence Life Year Planner for what other activities or events are planned for that date. Take into consideration the best time to hold the activity. Think about the most visible and accessible venue.

Discuss your programs with your RA and make a submission of your plan of action to the RLO for further discussion and approval. After both the RA and RLO have approved your plan of action and signed it, you can then submit to the Residence Life Coordinator (RLC).

4.2. Budget

Make sure that you know your residence House Committee budget allocation before you decide on a program. The HC budget is determined by the number of registered students in your residence. There is a 60/40 split ratio (of the house funds) between developmental and social programmes and this must be factored in the planning of all programmes.

The following is a detailed HC Finance Policy:

4.3. HC Finance Policy

3.3.1. Introduction

The number of students per residence determines the house committee budget. Allocations are made per registered student @ **R180.00** p.a. The number of students in residence is confirmed at end of April and the budget figure for the first semester is adjusted. This means no functions / events before the confirmation of students.

The HC budget is proposed as part of the Housing budget, this is mainly because not all students pay cash towards House funds, in many cases funds are recovered in future through sponsorships and late payments. In that note please bear in mind that House Funds are using a debit entry system not until the Housing funds are approved, then funds can be transferred into the House Fund account. Until then while running on a debit entry system each and every transaction committed before the approval of funds is charged a debit interest which is a negative impact on the account. Therefore it is imperative to budget for at least +-R1000.00 per block towards debit interest in order to avoid the negative carried forward balances that has incurred over the years.

4.3.2 General Rules

- a) All financial transactions must be conducted via the Residence Life Co-coordinator & the Financial Administrator. If any finance related transactions are conducted without prior knowledge of the two above mentioned offices the University of KwaZulu-Natal will not be held liable for consequent debts/liabilities.
- b) The following time period is required for:
 - 1) Order Numbers – three working days
- c) All income generated (sales, membership fees, donations, and sponsorships) must be deposited into the HOUSE COMMITTEE'S cost centre by the end of the **next working day** following the function. **No exceptions, if monies are not deposited at cashier's no further expenditure will be authorized until this occurs.**
- d) (1) The HOUSE COMMITTEES are required to submit a budget and a general plan of action on how allocated funds are to be spent within 28 Days of the receipt of allocation. This must be approved by THE **RLC** before submission to the Financial Administrator. Expenditure cannot be incurred until such a time as the budget is approved, however in the interim all proposed expenditure has to be pre-approved by the DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT RESIDENCE AFFAIRS. **Failure to submit an approved budget within this time frame will result in the immediate freezing of expenditure until such time that one is handed to the Financial Admin.**
- e) House members are also required to submit a final budget for each planned event at least 14 days before the event is scheduled to take place. Some events may need authorization from the University's Social Functions Monitoring Committee and these will require about 28 days advance application to this committee. Please note that bigger functions may require even more time as they involve ticket sales and payments to numerous suppliers.

It is important to also note that for University funded events; no alcoholic beverages may be purchased and paid for using University funds. For self-funded functions, and subject to approval by the Social Functions Monitoring Committee,

alcoholic drinks may be purchased/sold- subject to obtaining a liqueur license. By self-funded events, it is understood to mean - events sponsored or funded external to the University.

- f) The HOUSE COMMITTEE will nominate, at the beginning of the year, at least two, but preferably three executive members of their structure to sign for all financial related transactions of the COMMITTEE. At least two signatories will be required to authorize expenditure **and a letter of motivation for the expenditure must be submitted.** Specimen signatures of the nominated persons are to be included with the approved budget handed to the RLC & Financial Administrator; the two individuals nominated will also receive access to the cost reports pertaining to them only. A new authorized signatory's form must be completed should the committee change before the next budget application submission. No reports will be generated by the Financial Admin and handed to office bearers.
- g) **The Treasurer is to prepare statements for presentation to their Committee.** The Financial Admin can be consulted for advice in preparation of these statements should the need arise.
- h) Any expenditure that was not budgeted for must be approved by the DEPARTMENT OF STUDENT RESIDENCE AFFAIRS.

4.3.3. Areas of Concern:

4.3.3.1. Identifying sources of Income

- Ticket sales
- Sponsorships
- Donations
- Sale of food, drinks

4.3.3.2 Organizing an event

- Enough security
- Proper control and collection of monies
- Booking of venue
- Transport

- Enough budget for the event

4.3.4. Finances

4.3.4.1. Payment of goods and Services: Purchase Requisitions

- These are completed by the Financial Admin office (on the receipt of all necessary documents approved by RLC) for the purchase of any goods or services from a dealer or trader.
- It will take **three days** after receipt of a quotation for an order number to be generated.
- Order numbers will only be generated if there are sufficient funds available.
- Only creditors approved by UKZN Buying office can be used.
- There will be no cash float or petty cash allowed.
- No cheques or cash will be issued.
- STUDENTS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO BE SOURCING QUOTATIONS AND ENGAGING WITH UNIVERSITY SUPPLIERS.**

4.3.4.3 Inter Departmental Requisitions (IDR's)

- These must be obtained from the Financial Admin office for any transactions between the COMMITTEE and other University Departments or Divisions.
- Any transaction that involves debiting any account of the COMMITTEE must originate from the HOUSE COMMITTEE and must be authorized by the RLC and submitted to the Financial Administrator.
- Two executive signatory members of must sign the IDR in conjunction with the Financial Admin.
- IDR's will only be authorized if there are sufficient funds available.
- IDR's must be arranged far well in advance for them to be processed.

4.3.4.4. Social Functions

- All functions require a formal budget to be prepared and handed to the RLC & Financial Administrator at least 14 days prior to the function. Budgets should be pre-approved, either by the social functions committee or by the DEPARTMENT OF RESIDENCE AFFAIRS 28 days prior.

Where tickets are to be sold for the functions, the proceeds have to be deposited at cashiers the next working day and the unsold tickets returned to the Financial Administrator the next working day as well. **Failure to do the above will lead to the immediate freezing of cost centers until the situation is rectified.**

- b) **No unauthorized expenditure is to be incurred from ticket sales or monies borrowed from individuals. Any payments made from income generated by the function without prior consent of the Financial Administrator will be treated as personal expenditure by the committee hosting the function and as such will have to be refunded to the University.**

NB: All social functions ON CAMPUS need to be authorized by the SFMC (Social Functions Monitoring Committee).

4.4. Roll up your sleeves....

So now you have an idea and date! The next step is putting the program together. You can look at making arrangements as a real pain or view it as a learning experience that will help you in life. If you take the second view, you will enjoy the experience of project planning and continue to develop your skills and residents.



The role of the chairperson is extremely vital at this stage as s/he must oversee the implementation of the program ensuring that all members of the committee are pulling their weight.

A good programmer uses a checklist to organize details of the event .e.g.:

- Have funds been allocated for the event?
- Have the Residence officials been informed about the event?
- Have necessary forms been submitted and approved?
- Is the venue confirmed?
- Have security arrangements been made?
- Are catering requisitions approved and have an order number?
- Has the entertainment been selected?
- Has the Dj contract been secured and approved through proper channels?

4.5. Advertising

The program **MUST** be publicized at least two weeks prior to the date of implementation. To avoid last minute complications, the arrangements must be made several weeks prior the program.

Advertising can make or break a program. You may have the best idea in the world, but unless people know the 5 'W's: *who, where, what, why and when*, the program may flop. Mention the programs during the floor meetings or have them in conjunction with floor meetings.

It is best to use two waves of advertisements. The first wave will be about a week before the program so that people can plan ahead; the second wave should be three days prior to the event.

NB: A large-scale program (i.e., semi-formal, talk show/ debate) will need much earlier advertisement. Place posters and flyers up at least two weeks prior to the event; add a little information at a time on the same poster.

Always remind people the day of the program. **Door knock, Door Knock, Door Knock!!!!**

4.5.1 Some hints to help when planning publicity

1. Make use of Bulletin boards
2. Flyers and posters in unique areas
3. Word of mouth (House Meetings)
4. Personal invitations
5. Newsletters
6. Monthly Calendars
7. E-mail
8. Web-pages
9. Include Refreshments

4.5.2 Themes

Develop a theme or logo and use it throughout your publicity! Picture the idea or logo all around you. You can get ideas from some of the following places: Magazines, posters, newspapers, clip art, comic strips, quotes, etc.

4.3.5.3 Signs

The signs, posters, and flyers you design will be a vital part of your programming. Here are a few hints to make your signs more successful.

- Drop all extraneous matter, topics, and minor details at the outset of your planning.
- Write down what you want to say. Use only specific information to tell the story.
- Make your sign an attention getter.
- Make it larger, a different colour, and different font or use colours.

4.6. Its Show time!!!!

- The persons in charge must arrive early enough to make sure all last minute details are handled.
- Make sure to meet presenters at a predetermined location to make them feel comfortable and avoid confusion.
- Have someone introduce all presenters and special guests at the beginning of the program.
- *Reporting on programmes*

It is important after each programme that the report is produced. The report should cover the resources used against the resources budgeted for as this reflects on the spending behaviour of the committee. Secondly the attendance of students should be reported as this gauges the success of such of a programme. Thirdly the impact of the programme to ascertain how far it has gone in achieving its intended goals. Fourthly the recommendations should be given for future improvements.

5. Discipline

It is important to note that as student leaders if we expect students to be disciplined, we need to be disciplined ourselves. The first step in achieving this is through earning respect which can be achieved through the way we conduct ourselves. As an example a male house committee is known to be always drunk and the female house committee member who is known from changing cars, will never any respect from students and therefore cannot be able to discipline students

It is important to recognise that discipline in the residence is applied in order to maintain order and create a conducive environment to study. Discipline is enforced through rules and the important element of this is that student leaders need to be consistent in applying the rules thereby disciplining students.

Good leaders are those who are able to lead by example. So it is important that students are exemplary and are not found to be the ones breaking the law.

6. Emergencies

The important thing that we need to know about emergencies is that they need to be reported to the security in the residence and RMS. It is not our job to determine the seriousness of any but ours is make sure that we report and then the security or RMS will then decide the seriousness and the course of action. Emergencies can be classified as accidents, medical emergencies or maintenance. With regard to accidents and medical emergencies, the university has a provision for an ambulance service available to take students to hospital. When you experience this situation, you need to advise security and RMS and make sure that you give them the details of the student in the form of the student number, the residence and the room number. When the ambulance takes the students to the hospital, we need to make sure that they are accompanied by either the roommate or the friend. When students are discharged, we need to also make that they travel back to residence safely.

In the event of maintenance emergencies, you also need to advise the security and RMS in order for RMS to call the technician who is on standby to come and fix the problem. It is important they you always record the time when technicians arrive and the time when they leave so that the invoice will be the true reflection of the time spent fixing the problem.

Please note that it is important to record everything in the occurrence no matter how less important, serious and small it may look.

7. Maintenance

The issue of maintenance is Asset and Buildings Officer's responsibility but the House Committee has a role to play in this issues. The first role is to ensure that students do not vandalise the residence property and in this way prevents the need for maintenance. Secondly the house committees are there to communicate any maintenance problems they may identify

in the building to the Assets and Building Officer. Thirdly the house committees are responsible for following up on the reported maintenance problems on behalf of students.

It is important for house committee members to understand the process that is followed in dealing with the maintenance problem. The Assets and Building Officer fills in the requisition form which gets to be sent to technical services. Technical services department will then allocate a relevant technician to deal with the matter. If it is electricity, an electrician will be allocated and if it is a water or toilet problem, the plumber will be allocated. The university has a pool of technicians who will be appointed to deal with maintenance for that particular academic year and then technical services will choose from these technicians. After hours these technicians are on standby and they can be sent even at night to deal with maintenance emergency problems.

In a normal situation, it should take a maximum of three days for maintenance problems to be resolved.

When major maintenance work is to be carried out, it will normally be carried out during holidays and if not every possible step is taken to minimise inconvenience on students. These types of jobs will be communicated to house committees and they are then expected to communicate and explain these to students.

GOOD LUCK!

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