



WISEST Youth Council: STEM Club How-To Resources

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Starting a STEM club within your school can be a great way to explore science and make connections within your community. WISEST frequently gets questions from students looking for advice on starting a STEM club and has put together this document to provide a framework for creating your own club. We hope this sheet offers helpful suggestions to create a strong foundation for your club! If you have any questions please reach out to wisestyc@ualberta.ca

❖ **Create a mission statement/specific goal**

- A mission statement summarizes your club's main purpose and goals:
 - Consider what your club aims to achieve by the end of the year
 - As you gain more members, consider the goals of others and adapt to your statement as needed

❖ **Start a group**

- Consider reaching out to staff members or school administration (through email, booking a meeting, etc.) to explore your school's policies on creating clubs!
 - Your school may require a staff/adult supervisor for a club; if your school does not require a supervising adult, evaluate your goals for the club and consider whether adult supervision is required for your activities: field trips, competitions, finances, etc.
 - You may also need to register your club with the school or create a club proposal

❖ **Structure of the club (weekly meeting, biweekly, executive members)**

- Consider how you should structure your club to best meet your goals and mission statement
 - Do you need a formal structure with "executive" members with specific roles such as president, vice-president, general director, treasurer, outreach coordinator, marketing director, event coordinator, and/or secretary?
 - How would you designate "executive" team roles (ex. interviews, video application, friends or people you already know)? Would a more flexible structure with no distinct roles better suit your club's mission? This structure may better suit clubs with fewer members. Or, are there team leads for certain projects? Consider the role of a teacher supervisor in your club and if you need student leadership in addition to that.
 - Consider establishing a dedicated communication method for this team, such as a Google Chat, a Slack channel, or Discord. This structure may better suit clubs with many members and low teacher involvement.



❖ Advertising/Marketing

- Advertise your club/first meeting
 - Consider creating a Google Classroom for announcements, links, and other important club information
 - Does your school have social media accounts that you can use to advertise (Instagram, Facebook, YouTube, X, TikTok etc)? If your target audience is students, consider using Instagram and TikTok as your main forms of engagement. Are you allowed to create school and club-affiliated social media accounts?
 - Does your school have announcements you can use to advertise meetings?
 - Does your club have/need a specific brand or logo? Can you recruit members to design a logo? Do you have the budget/need for a professionally-designed logo?
 - Consider how you want to make and/or design promotional material (ex. Canva or pre-set social media templates/designs)
 - Consider starting a website for your club or a newsletter: you may need a member(s) with a specific role for newsletter creation and upkeep, as a newsletter can promote your club and events or other opportunities

❖ Finances/Fundraising

- Select someone to be treasurer or find an adult supervisor to handle finances: ensure there is a method in place to record all costs, revenue, etc., such as a Google or Excel Sheet
- Sponsorship opportunities:
 - Check to see if your school has funding set aside to support clubs
 - Seek out grants available for clubs in your province/city/region
 - Reach out to local businesses/sponsors who might be interested in supporting STEM through emails, meetings, etc.
 - *If the club does receive funding from sponsors, be sure to express gratitude and find a way to highlight their contributions through social media or other platforms
- Fundraising examples:
 - Selling STEM based merch, workshops/demonstrations to engage the community in STEM, food/bake sale, bottle drive, asking for donations, etc.
- Create a budget for all of the projects and events your club will hold. Make sure that you have extra funds to cover unexpected costs. It is important to note that many fundraising events will require budgets as well, so make sure that there is money and a budget to support any activities.



❖ First meeting

- Consider creating dedicated meeting agendas
 - These agendas may include an introduction/icebreaker, attendance, discussion topics, priority tasks, notes, weekly updates, breaks, conclusion
- Share an overview of the club structure and determine executive roles if applicable (see above for examples of executive roles and how to assign them)
- If not already decided, pick a consistent weekly meeting time and location for the club
 - Consider using websites or resources like When2Meet or a Google Form to weigh the input of club members
 - Do you need weekly, bi-weekly meetings? Or do you have meetings based on need (ex. only having meetings when there is an upcoming event, field trip, news or information you cannot efficiently communicate through email or Google Classroom)
- Brainstorm ideas for events, activities, and fundraisers
 - Do you want to start off with skill-building workshops?
 - Consider the types of activities your group is interested in.
 - For example: if your group is science-based, you may want to do a few experiments relevant to your team's goals. Some possible experiment examples include creating a lava lamp, extracting DNA from fruit, etc.
 - Seek out some competitions that may improve teamwork skills. For example, the APEGA Science Olympics competition.
- Establish a set of team norms and rules
 - Team norms are designed to outline how club members will interact and communicate, they can prevent conflicts from occurring and provide a way of resolving any conflicts that do arise.
 - Determine what rules or policies your club is required to have based on your school.
 - Ask members what other rules or norms they think are important.
 - Discuss how these norms/rules will be enforced and how new members will be made aware of them



❖ Maintaining membership/interest in your club

- Plan events
 - Determine what supervision is needed, if permission forms are needed, and identify any costs
- Types of events:
 - Try different science experiments
 - Participate in a competition (regional science fair, science olympics, etc.)
 - Volunteer with science-based organizations or charities (science outreach, tutoring, mentoring)
 - Networking event: Connect with past students who are now in university or pursuing a science career, and reach out to local science professionals
 - Field trips (zoo, science center, nearby post secondary institutions, provincial parks, rivers, farms)
 - Run a science outreach event for younger students: Put together experiments and invite students from other schools to participate
 - Consider reaching out to other schools. Do they have the same goals and initiatives in mind? If not, how can you mesh your goals with theirs to perhaps create a new project?
 - Consider collaborating with other clubs and organizations with similar goals to create networking opportunities or larger-scale events such as science fairs, fundraising galas
 - Ensure club members feel valued/have a voice in the club: for example, consider creating a Google Form or have a dedicated club contact/email where members can suggest meeting ideas or club events.
 - Establish club traditions: science fairs, hosted events, field trips, etc. may build anticipation and a sense of community within your club.

