

Meet Organising Guide

Meet organising can be lots of fun and very rewarding. But it does involve a little bit of work to ensure that the trip runs smoothly.

To help you keep all of the information in one place, we use a Google Docs to record details of drivers, pre-signs and other details. [The committee page on the website](#) has a link to this document.

Contacting Drivers (two Thursdays before sign up)

The Meets Secretary will send out an email asking for drivers for your trip at 7pm on the Thursday 2 weeks before the trip (12 days before sign up). The Meets Sec will CC you in the email and ask all drivers to contact **one** of the MOs. When asking for drivers, the Meets Sec will remind them about the driver discount on the trip fee. It is £10 for car drivers and minibus drivers, and fuel is paid for by EUHWC.

There should always be two drivers per minibus for safety reasons. You will need to calculate how many vehicles are needed to fill the hostel beds.

- Check the Meet Organising Doc to see how many minibuses have been booked for your trip, and whether they are 14 or 12 seater.
- Use the table below as a guide to how many spots the minibus will *actually* give you - numbers change because you will need to pile bags and food on seats on weekend trips, and use even more space for crampon boxes/ice axes in winter.

	Day Trip		Weekend Trip	
	Non-winter	Winter	Non-winter	Winter
14 Seater	14	13	12	11-12
12 Seater	12	12	12	11

- A list of all current car drivers and their car sizes (number of spaces, including driver) is on the Car Drivers tab of the Meet Organising Doc.

The first drivers to be pre-signed are the MOs. You must **not** open the trip to Committee pre-signs until the Meet Sec has sent out the drivers email. Non-MO Committee members should respond to this email in the same fashion as other drivers.

You might get more requests for driver pre-signs than you need. If so, do not send confirmation

emails out until the next morning when you have sorted who will drive what. Sign people up first-come-first serve either way. Add any remaining drivers to a “driver reserves” list in case you get dropouts. Make sure you add the names of the drivers to your trip on the MO Doc.

Some trips have been booked a high number of minibuses in case we cannot obtain enough car drivers. If you do not have enough minibus drivers to fill the number of buses, you must tell the Meet Sec to cancel the extra buses **more than a week before** the trip, or we will be charged for them! If in doubt, ask the Meet Sec.

Preliminary checks (2 weeks before the trip)

About 2 weeks before the trip, you should check the accommodation and transport bookings, as hostels will occasionally change their number of beds between our booking and your trip without letting us know.

The number for the hostel is in the Hotel Bookings tab of the MO Doc. Call the hostel to check the number of beds, dates, the exact location and any special restrictions. Make sure the hostel is counting the double beds as two spots in the quoted bed number. You should also give the hostel an estimated time of arrival.

You should also check when the minibuses are available for pickup (sometimes they are returned late on Fridays). You should also get the registration numbers of the vehicles to make sure we get the correct buses, and to write on route cards.

Advertising the trip (Thursday before sign up)

On the Thursday before sign-up you should advertise the trip to the club. You need to send an email to the main mailing list and update the trip page on the website. You should also post a link to the trip page on Facebook and Twitter.

You can base the email and trip page content on previous trip adverts. You need to include the following details:

- Where the trip is going
- A short description to make the trip sound fantastic
- The trip dates
- Time and location of departure, with a link to a map
- Details about sign up night (usually the following Tuesday at 8:30pm in the regular pub)
- The cost
- Ask again for drivers if needed (and remind them of the £10 discount, and pre-sign)
- A link to the trip page on the website for discussing walk plans
- Links to useful resources for planning walks (walkhighlands, provide OS map numbers)
- Links to weather (and avalanche) forecasts (MWIS, metoffice, SAIS etc.)

Try to really sell the trip. Provide information about the area, a small map and a few pictures to make the trip seem more inviting. The trip page on the website can include images too – use a club photo if possible, otherwise use a picture with reproduction rights. Make sure comments are enabled on the page so people can discuss walk plans at the bottom of the page.

Pre-signs (Thursday before sign up)

Pre-signs are usually given to the following people:

- 1. Meet Organisers
- 2. Drivers
- 3. Committee
- 4. Walk Organisers on the freshers' day trips **only**

The pre-sign should be allocated in this order. It is up to the Meet Organisers who should get a pre-sign, but the fairest approach is to allocate them on a first-come first-served basis, and this is easiest if all the emails come to one person. You should grant only the minimum number of pre-signs.

Make sure all of the drivers are listed on the Google Doc.

Committee members also get pre-signs and in return for that they will be expected to help out on the trip if you need them to. Send a separate email to the committee asking who wants a pre-sign. They can add themselves to the Google Doc.

Walk organisers do not get pre-signs except on the Freshers' day trips. After that, there are generally enough walk organisers on the trip anyway.

Before Sign-up

Download an up-to-date copy of the members' database and the electronic sign-up sheet. There are links to these on [the committee page on the website](#).

The electronic sign up sheet is used at sign-up to add people to the trip. The members' database should be pasted into cell B3 of the Database tab in the signup sheet.

If you can't take a laptop to the pub, print out a blank sign up sheet and bring that along instead.

All pre-signs should be added at the top of the list on the sign-up sheet. Don't forget both Meet Organisers as well. The Secretary should arrange to bring membership cards to the pub for sale but it might be worth checking this. If you are in any doubt if a table has been reserved at the pub, phone and check. A box or envelope to put money in is also a good idea.

Arrange to get hold of the club mobile and charger, make sure it is topped up, and get at least two sets of gear room keys - one for each Meet Organiser.

Sign-up Night

Get to the pub a little early and set up camp. Remember to bring along an extension lead for your laptop charger if necessary. Don't let anyone who's there before 8:30pm sign up before that time – it's not fair! Ask the people waiting to arrange themselves in a single-file queue according to who arrived first. Do not sign people up if they approach from the sides or behind, and if the people form a mass around you, pause sign-up until they reform the queue.

Sign people up on the sheet and collect their money. Be thorough with the sign-up sheet, to the extent of being anal! Add any notes, such as required leaving times, need for loaned gear, or food allergies.

It is also essential to make it clear to people what gear they need on the trip. There are always a few who don't understand what "stiff soled walking boots" means during the first few trips of the year. It may even be worth bringing along a pair of boots to show people.

If you are using the electronic signup sheet, start typing the name in the small column under the arrow and hit enter when it comes up, the rest of their details should appear magically and all you need to do is check the phone number and email address - very important to have in case you need to contact them! If you're using paper, and for new members, make sure you ask them every column. Note down how much they have paid and whether it was cash or cheque. If you are struggling for change, use the bar. Make sure you get trip money off of everyone. **NO MONEY = NO TRIP!** You can be more lenient with pre-signs and drivers (as they need to get money back for fuel) and **DO NOT** take money from people that are added to the reserve list.

Make sure that non-students who have not been approved by EUSU are aware that they need to be approved before they can come on a trip.

It is up to you to decide when to stop taking names – a few reserves is useful in case of dropouts (but don't take money off of reserves just yet). Often you will be able to find extra hostel beds and a car or two – but make it clear that reserves will not have a place until they have been offered one on the phone or by email and they have replied to accept the offer.

Post Sign-up

All trips must have 10% first aiders and not too many beginners; if you do not meet these requirements then the trip cannot go ahead. The number of beginners that can go on a trip depends on the conditions: a ratio of 1:6 in summer or 1:3 in winter is advised. Make sure you have enough walk organisers trained in winter skills and confident to teach other people on winter trips (typically November-April).

If you are short of drivers then get in touch with the Meets Secretary for a list of all the drivers and beg them for assistance. Failing that, the trip will have to be reduced in size unless you can find someone else to sit the minibus test at short notice, or even cancelled.

If you have decided to try and get some extra places on the trip, phone the hostel directly. Extra places may be arranged at any time between signup and departure. If you get places please phone the next person on the reserve list and offer the place – make it clear that they only get one chance to accept the place and they are bound to pay. If there is no answer, or you have to email, make it clear that they have to return your call and accept the place by a deadline or it will be offered to the next person on the reserve list. Go through the reserve list in order. People know the order in which they were signed up and will catch you if you skip around.

Dropouts will usually contact you last-minute by email. If you can replace them from the reserve list, they will get their money back when the replacement pays up – but if you don't get a replacement, normally you cannot offer a refund. If they drop out well ahead of time (Wednesday) but you cannot fill their space, it is up to the Treasurer whether the dropout should get a refund.

You must also make sure that non-students who are not approved by the SU can be approved before the trip – check this with the Secretary. When contacting the SU by email, please use your University email address.

The way to move people around on the electronic signup sheet is quite simple. Select across from the membership number to the right hand side of the sheet and then Cut (NOT Copy). Then click on the membership number cell where you want to move the person to and press Insert Cut Cells. It is usually better to move people down as they drop out, rather than moving people up one by one from the reserve list. Test it out on a separate copy of the file and keep a backup.

Count the pre-signs, number signed up, etc. on your trip sheet and fill in Trip Statistics on the Google Drive so that we can keep track of demand. You'll fill in the rest after the trip.

Make sure you have switched on the club mobile, it is charged and has credit. Also make sure you have gear room keys. Check the club mobile and your email frequently and reply to it.

The EUSU form (at least 48 hours before the trip)

Two forms **must** be sent to the Sports Union at least 48 hours before the trip, otherwise the trip may not be able to go ahead and the club risks getting fined. This is usually **4pm on Wednesday** for a weekend trip.

The first form has all the details about the trip and is in on tab SU-page1 on the electronic

signup sheet. You need to fill in all the details on this form. You are the trip leader, the Edinburgh contact is a committee member who is not going on the trip. The First Aider you name is the first person on the trip list who has a first aid certificate. This page should then be saved as a PDF file to be sent to the SU.

The second form is on tab SU-page2, and should be filled in automatically with a list of people coming on the trip. If not, manually enter the details. This page should also be saved as a PDF.

Send **both** forms to the Sports Union, either by emailing them to sports.union@ed.ac.uk or printing them off and handing them into the EUSU office. Please do not under any circumstances email the electronic sign up sheet to the SU!

If there are any changes to the trip list, these forms should be updated and new copies sent to the SU.

Arrangements (day after sign-up)

You should send an arrangements email at least 2 days before the trip. You should have a list of email addresses of people who are on the trip - please always use this list for arrangements emails and do not email the whole club. Copy the list of email addresses from the emails page of the electronic signup sheet into the **BCC field** of your email. This means that everyone receives a copy of the email but they can't see everybody else's email addresses. This is important as there are lazy people out there who like to hit Reply All.

The email needs to contain lots of details. Look at previous emails for hints. The email should contain:

- Details of the meeting point and time at the Pleasance, and the CSE map from the MO folder on the Google Drive.
- Links to kit lists on the website and any special gear required (mention suitable boots, hats, gloves and layers, especially for winter trips).
- How to collect any requested gear.
- Include a weather forecast and links. Look at the outlook on MWIS and check the BBC and Met Office too.
- What food they need to bring. For a weekend trip, this is breakfast and lunch for Saturday and Sunday. Mention that milk, tea, coffee, hot cocoa, and dinner on Saturday are provided. Mention that we pass a supermarket and chippy on Friday evening for dinner.
- Social programme – are you encouraging BYOB or organising a pub trip?
- Include the club mobile number so people can call if necessary. Make sure the phone is switched on and that you keep it on you.

You also need to email all of the drivers to confirm the arrangements. Check who are collecting the minibuses and be aware that private hire vehicles are issued with varying amounts of fuel.

Minibuses should be issued with a full tank. If it's a long drive then remind drivers to fill up along the way, Inverness is ideal (and cheaper) for a fuel break if you're heading up the A9. Check that car drivers know to bring their car. Make sure the drivers know where the hostel is, how to check in if they arrive first, and where you are stopping for food on the way.

Start an email chain or Facebook group with the Walk Organisers that are on the trip. Make sure that the spread of walk plans is compatible with the ability of the members on the trip. If there are many epics planned for a trip with many beginners, you should either encourage someone to lead an easier walk, or lead one yourself. Ask WOs to write up their route cards and send them to you before the trip to print (they can also plan and write them in the hostel, so don't forget the blank route cards).

If there are double beds in the hostel, it is better to get this sorted before the trip. Ask good friends or couples to claim the doubles when they arrive to the hostel.

On the Day

Make a plan for the day as you will be busy.

For weekend trips you need to go shopping. The budget for food is as follows:

- £2.50 per person per meal *including* milk for a normal weekend

Go for a meal that is simple, inexpensive, and tasty. If it has meat, make sure you provide an equally interesting vegetarian option. Take every effort to cater for everyone's dietary requirements such as dairy intolerance, gluten intolerance, high sensitivity to spices, etc.

Make sure to choose a meal with plenty of staple food (rice, pasta, beans etc.) as you are feeding a group of very hungry people. See if Food Sharing Edinburgh have any free bread loaves you can bring as a side to your meal. Make sure the portion sizes are large, but don't overbuy, as there is usually food left over on trips. Ask people to bring tupperware if you are concerned you have bought too much.

Remember that hostels will have limited pots and pans, so don't plan recipes that use multiple dishes for each step or you will spend a lot of time washing up between courses. Pudding should be easy and transportable. If the pudding needs frozen fruit, make sure to transport it in sealable containers. Transport eggs carefully.

Be careful when scaling up recipes. For example, spices do **not** scale the same as basic ingredients and can leave you with a hellish inferno instead of nice chili!

Buy **milk** for breakfasts: one and a half 6pt milks per 10 people. So for 40 people, that's 6 x 6pt milks. For the shopping it is useful to arrange with a driver to go with you, or at least pick you and the shopping up. Research where ingredients are cheapest before you shop - frozen food

at Farmfoods and Lidl or Tesco for most everything else. There is a large Lidl near Peffermill, where the minibuses are, if you want to use the minibus to shop! Make sure to check the gear room or ask the Gear Sec before purchasing food - the gear room will have almost every spice, vanilla essence, sugar, treacle, flour, cans of beans and lentils, stock cubes, tea, coffee, and hot cocoa! Do NOT buy more before checking.

Print off the Trip List, the completed route cards and many blank route cards, the MWIS weather forecast, the avalanche forecast (if necessary), and the Emergency sheet. If it is a RentaHostel booking, print off the SYHA sheet too. Add all the drivers and your fellow MOs as mobile phone contacts, if you haven't already. Stay in contact with each other, and remain contactable on the club mobile, your own mobile and via email if possible.

The Pleasance

Get to the Pleasance around a half hour early. If one person can tick off everyone as they arrive and the other goes in the gear room to sort out club kit and requested personal kit that works quite well. Make sure you **sign out** all the club gear out of the gear room. As you tick people off, make sure they have paid for the trip. If not, get money off of them! This is especially important for reserves who are now on the trip.

As you tick people off, ask them to show you their boots. If anyone shows up without good boots (or in jeans for a day trip), send them home, or let them come to hang out in the hostel and go for a "loch walk" - they won't get a refund either way. Waterproofs can be borrowed from the gear room.

Get people to help take gear out to the buses and load up luggage. If there are any no-shows, phone them; don't wait more than a few minutes. Talk to the other meet organiser and make sure you haven't forgotten any gear. Make sure you have OS maps for all areas you will drive through on the way home, not just the area around the hostel! Double-check the drivers know where they are going. Leave on time!

Day Trips

For a day trip, walk organisers should decide what walk they want to do **before** the trip. Again, this is possible with an email chain or Facebook group. Do walk sign up, weather reading, and avalanche reading at the Pleasance before getting on the bus. If there is only one bus, it is also possible to do walk sign-up whilst en route. In winter, crampon fitting faff should also be done before leaving the pleasance.

If you have enough room in the minibus, take the spare clothing boxes.

Arriving at the Hostel

Car drivers will probably arrive first and should tell reception that they are part of the EUHWC group. As meet organiser you will have to sign the group in, so when you arrive go straight to the reception desk. Introduce yourself by name, but be aware that the booking is probably in the name of the Meets Secretary.

Find out which beds we have been allocated and make sure everyone finds a bed. Ask people to place their belongings on their bed so that others know which ones are claimed. Also make sure people know where the kitchen is, to store food.

Walk Planning

Plan enough walks for 5-8 people per walk. Walk organisers need to fill in a route card, which they may have done before the trip. You know how many beginners are on the trip, so make sure there are enough suitable walks for beginners and don't leave the classic walks neglected. Committee members with pre-signs can be required to do what you ask, so get them to organise an easy walk if necessary, or organise one yourself. Take the time now to consider transport and whether it will limit the size of some walks and tell the walk organisers this.

Sign drivers up to walks first, before signing people onto them, so that you know how many spots each walk has. Have a mental picture of what buses and cars are going where. If a walk doesn't have a driver or a bus, see if you can figure out an easy shuttle that minimises the amount of time waiting at the roadside. Everyone going back to a hostel or pub is good, as minibus drivers can shuttle out from there.

Walk Sign-up

Get everyone together in the lounge/dining room and get them to listen to you. Send a helper around to make sure no one is already in bed.

You should start by summarising the weather forecast and the avalanche forecast, then ask each walk organiser to describe their walks in order of difficulty from easiest to hardest. Add comments where needed. At the end, summarise the walks and point out which walks are good for beginners and which not.

This is also a good opportunity to tell people any other necessary information. For example, any specific requirements of the hostel such as bedding, and helpers for washing up. Also, if the trip is in winter, tell people that they need to fit crampons before going to bed, and to ask for help if they have not worn crampons before.

Walk organisers will have their route card and should talk to everyone as they sign up to identify people who are not suitable and redirect them. Circulate and direct people around if they are looking lost. If a walk is full, then redirect people elsewhere. If a walk has no demand, persuade

the unpopular walk organiser to run a more popular walk in the opposite direction. Try not to shuffle people around too much.

Walk Logistics

Collect the route cards. Count to make sure everyone has signed up. Make sure people fit into the allocated transport. Route the buses and make sure all drivers know where they are required to go and where they have to pick people up in the evening. Show them on a map, write it down with grid references if that helps. Do **not** rely on mobile phone contact and always have a back-up plan that everyone is aware of in case a walk runs late. If bus swaps are happening, don't rely on on-the-hill meetings – leave the keys with the bus (under front driver side wheel arch unless all decide otherwise) so that the first group to the bus can get in it. Route cards should be left at the hostel in an obvious place, if walking on Saturday, or on the dashboard of a bus if walking on Sunday.

Group Kit

Walk Organisers are responsible for this, but new and old walk organisers alike may need reminding to take a first aid kit, 2 maps and compasses, an emergency shelter and extra headtorches. Ropes must only be taken if someone knows what they are doing with them. Make sure the walk organisers have the club mobile number and that their numbers are entered into the club mobile.

During the day

Make sure the club mobile if left on, is set to ring loudly and is monitored at all times. If it rings, answer it immediately. This is the main point of contact for walk organisers. The club mobile is to be used for on-the-hill contact. Do not let people change transport plans unless you can inform everyone concerned and everyone is accounted for.

Ask the group with the earliest expected return to start preparing dinner by chopping vegetables. Tape the recipes on the kitchen wall if they need direction.

End of the day

Account for everyone as they return from the hill. If a group doesn't return on time, try phoning them. Use the route card and the trip list. If you can't contact someone on the walk, assess the likelihood that they can be seen from the road, or met on the road, and send a single driver out. The driver should have good cell reception. Keep calm and keep the information to a select few, to avoid group panic. Mountain rescue should be called about 1 hour after the **latest** expected finish.

Check that expected finish was reasonable (for a common route, use Walkhighlands or ask someone who has done the route before) and assess the likelihood of extra hills being bagged

or the group descending via a different route. Check the group list for any people who are known to walk slowly or have known recurring injuries. Consider the length of time that the group requires to drive between the hill and hostel.

Saturday Night

As soon as people have returned from the hill and showered, get them to think about walks for the following day. As the previous day, get people to fill in route cards and figure out transport for the walks.

Cook for everyone! People will be more than willing to help chop/de-can etc.

Again, do another walk sign-up. Get everyone in the same place and listening. Give them an update on the weather, and get the walk organisers to describe their walks. It is also important to tell people what to do before leaving the hostel the following morning. Usually, the hostel needs to be cleaned (all plates, cutlery and dishes washed and dried) and floors swept. Bed linen usually has to be stripped and placed in a laundry basket. Ask the hotel warden for hostel specific details of what needs to be done, and what time you need to leave by.

Leaving the Hostel

All minibuses should go home with a gear room key, ideally in the hands of a committee member. It is likely that each vehicle will return to Edinburgh on it's own. Make sure to check on the progress of walks via mobile. Ask all WOs to text or call you after they get down from the hill. As the previous day, all walks need to be accounted for, and if a group does not return from the hill, mountain rescue should be notified.

On your return

Have all buses contact you on safe return. Make sure all kit is returned to the gear room and signed back in, and that bus drivers know who is returning the bus and what to do (CSE buses must be clean, tank full of diesel, paperwork correctly filled in and signed, keys posted and the compound locked). If you get back to Edinburgh late then make sure the bus drivers can get safely home from Peffermill, if no other options are available then get them to take a taxi which should be paid for by the club.

The Aftermath

Sign all the gear back into the gear room. Compile a list of what is missing and any items that have been found. Send a trip aftermath email, again, only email those on the trip. Compile a trip financial record which you should send to the Treasurer as soon as possible along with all receipts. Collect receipts for fuel and food and get the Treasurer to write refund cheques.

Make sure you have completely filled in Trip Statistics!

Now grab yourself a drink, you deserve it. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

Useful contacts

- EUSU: sports.union@ed.ac.uk
 - 48 Pleasance, EH8 9TJ. Access by matriculation card.
 - Monday-Friday 09:30-16:00
 - <http://www.eusu.ed.ac.uk>
- Minibus bookings: Duncan Veitch
 - duncan.veitch@ed.ac.uk
 - 0131 667 0347
 - Sports Transport Pool. Upstairs in the Admin Wing, CSE. Ask at front desk for access.
 - Monday-Friday 09:00-16:00
 - Quote "Hillwalking Club" in all communications
- CSE front desk (minibus keys)
 - 0131 650 2585
 - 46 Pleasance, EH8 9TJ
 - Monday-Friday 07:30-21:30, Saturday 08:50-17:30, Sunday 10:00-17:30
 - <http://www.sport.ed.ac.uk>
- SYHA Central Reservations
 - reservations@syha.org.uk
 - 0870 1 55 32 55
 - 7 Glebe Crescent, Stirling FK8 2JA
 - <http://syha.org.uk>
- EUHWC Club Mobile
 - 07818 295 571
- Chippies along the way
 - Pitlochry "Plaice To Be"
 - 01796 473737
 - 8 West Moulin Road, PH16 5AD
 - Monday-Saturday 12:00-14:00, 16:30-20:30, Sunday 16:30-20:30
 - Tyndrum "Real Food Cafe"
 - 01838 400235
 - Sunday-Friday 10:00-22:00, Saturday 08:30-22:00