

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the u3a movement were produced by The Third Age Trust in 2014, and are based on the original Objects and Principles written by Peter Laslett in 1981.

The u3a Movement is non-religious and non-political and has three main principles.

The Third Age Principle

Membership of a u3a is open to all in their third age, which is defined not by a particular age but by a period in life in which full-time employment has ceased. Members promote the values of lifelong learning and the positive attributes of belonging to a u3a.

Members should do all they can to ensure that people wanting to join a u3a can do so.

The Self-help Learning Principle

Members form interest groups covering as wide a range of topics and activities as they desire; by the members, for the members. No qualifications are sought or offered. Learning is for its own sake, with enjoyment being the prime motive, not qualifications or awards. There is no distinction between the learners and the teachers; they are all u3a members.

The Mutual Aid Principle

Each u3a is a mutual aid organisation, operationally independent but a member of The Third Age Trust, which requires adherence to the guiding principles of the u3a movement. No payments are made to members for services rendered to any u3a. Each u3a is self-funded with membership subscriptions and costs kept as low as possible. Outside financial assistance should only be sought if it does not imperil the integrity of the u3a movement.