

International Officer.

Welcome

Guide



OBESSU

Organising Bureau of
European School Student Unions

Dear International Officer,

Welcome and congratulations on your new role! It is of great importance that Member Organisations have a strong and functional structure for international cooperation. This ensures a maintained quality of participation and better results for both OBESSU and the member organisation.

There are many different ways to create this structure, none which would suit all member organisations owing to the many differences between organisations' sizes, capacities and focus on international affairs. The most important thing, however, is flexibility of the structure, and shaping it to suit your own organisation.

Some organisations have an international officer, some have a board member responsible for international work and others have a team of people working on international work, such as a working group for OBESSU. With this document, we would like to smoothen the introduction to your new function and suggest how to make the transition as simple as possible. Moreover, if you want to learn more about OBESSU, the ways of participating and about your possible future tasks, we share with you some short explanatory videos to watch as well as some documents to read, especially before statutory events. Last but not least, we explain what our expectations of an international officer are and what should you expect from our side.

How to prepare for your role?

□ **Introduce yourself**

Write an introductory email or make a post on the Member's forum (explained below) to all of the OBESSU MO's, OBESSU Board, Secretariat. By doing so, we will be able to change the contact email in the database, we will add you into necessary mailing lists and we will add you to the basecamp. You can also ask the previous IO to tell us that there is a change, whatever the usual practice in your organisation is.

□ **Create a database**

As a competent international officer you should create a database that you will need it for your further work. Database should include all OBESSU contacts (secretariat/ Board/ monitoring committee) and OBESSU documents, such as Political Platform, Statutes, Policy Papers, Work plan, Internal documents and etc which you can find on our website.

□ **Follow others and cooperate if you want to!**

You live in a huge world and there are a lot of things happening around you. So don't forget to always follow OBESSU and other MO's work (newsletters, facebook, twitter or instagram are a good way to stay updated). Unfortunately, we at OBESSU cannot help you do organise your own projects, but we can provide you with contacts, and you will always have time during our events to discuss opportunities for cooperation with other members. Moreover, Basecamp is always here for you to reach out with an open call of interest to all other member organisations.

□ **Talk to us!**

Do you have questions, comments, suggestions? Are you not sure what you have to do, where to find information or how can you contribute? Drop us an email and we will help you!

What does OBESSU expect from you?

As International Officer you are the main contact point between your organisation and OBESSU. OBESSU is its member organisations, so it is crucial that you partake in or delegate others to participate in all aspects of the work of OBESSU. Without your input, we cannot be a truly representative body and the work of the board and the secretariat might be less effective.

→ Statutory Meetings and Other Events

There are many different events taking place throughout the year, covering a wide variety of topics, depending on that year's workplan. The International Officer should attend the two statutory meetings of OBESSU, the General Assembly (GA) and Council of Members (COMEM). At these events OBESSU Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations come together to discuss policy and vote in elections. International Officers should become familiar with the OBESSU internal documents, such as the Political Platform (core political beliefs of OBESSU) and the Policy Papers (more topic-specific documents outlining OBESSU's beliefs and aims) and propose amendments, amendments to amendments and even new documents for OBESSU to adopt. Becoming familiar with these documents is essential to having an informed debate during statutory meetings.

Other events occur throughout the year, where participants from all organisations can attend. Sometimes it makes sense for an International Officer to attend, and other times another member from your organisation might participate and gain more for your organisation from attending a particular event. The International Officer should coordinate the selection of this person within their organisation, and aid in their preparation for attending an event. This can involve speaking to them about OBESSU, using this tool and discussing any relevant OBESSU policy papers related to the event, for example.

→ **Input to Policy Work**

The OBESSU Board attend meetings and events with stakeholders throughout the year to represent school students on a European level. Sometimes they will need to share good practices, and will ask the membership for those. Similarly, surveys are carried out throughout the year which feed into OBESSU campaigns and advocacy work. In order to shape the best campaigns and truly represent members, it is essential that the International Officer feeds into these surveys and consultations.

→ **Participation in Working Groups & Other Structures**

Every year working groups are formed around particular topics. This is a great way to get a more internal look into OBESSU and also gain experience both personally and for your organisation. When a call is launched for a working group and you believe your organisation can input positively, apply yourself or send the call to other people in your organisation who you think might be suitable.

→ **Dissemination of Knowledge**

It is essential that learnings from OBESSU events don't stay at the event. The International Officer should ensure that the follow-up stages to an event do happen, and that the rest of your organisation also benefits from being an OBESSU member. This might mean producing a report and presenting to your Board at your next meeting, using some methods and workshops that you have learned from your own organisation, or doing a follow-up activity after an event using the knowledge you have learned to create a multiplier effect.

To summarise, **the roles of an International Officer are to:**

- Attend Statutory Meetings and other events, and delegate for others to do so where appropriate;
- Input into OBESSU policy work ;
- Participate in working groups and other structures (where appropriate)
- Disseminate knowledge and experience gained at OBESSU events

Tips and tricks: what do you need to know before you start as a successful IO?

Are you a new international officer and you don't know what OBESSU is, what will you need to know and how can you get involved? We have some tips for you!

How are we going to communicate with you?

Basecamp is a platform we use for communication. We have different camps, in which we share relevant information. As an international officer you will be automatically added to the **OBESSU Member Organisations' Forum**. Basecamp allows you to react and reply and initiate messages. We will add you to basecamp when you become an international officer, and we hope it becomes a space you use often to find information and to react to things that concern you. Feel free to ask questions and react to posts! It is a space for you, so use it to your benefit.

Every now and then you will get an automatic check in question which creates a space for you to share what your organisation has been up to, so others can get inspired.

Some people complain that basecamp sends them daily reminders : it is all about what you decide you want, you are in control of your own settings so do not let it discourage you from using it. Moreover, you get a notification when new announcement is made on basecamp, so if you forget to check it it will still be in your email. Important things, such as calls and invitations are sent to your email as well, to ensure they get to you.

Moreover, using basecamp means all the information is in one place, so if you cannot find a specific call in your email inbox, it will always be on basecamp.

If you do not know how to use basecamp, we suggest you watch these videos:

[How to use basecamp for discussion?](#)

[How do you make basecamp a tool to share information?](#)

[How do you manage your notifications?](#)

If you are still unsure, let us know and we can talk to you.

If you prefer, a handy way of using Basecamp is by using the [**app**](#). Using this means you never miss out on any updates from the OBESSU world.

You are also very welcome to email or call us directly. You can find our [**contact details**](#) on our website. Each organisation has a contact board member, who will schedule check in calls or emails with you every now and then. We will tell you who your contact board member is and or if the board member changes.

What is OBESSU ?

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) is the platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland and brings together Member, Candidate and Affiliate Organisations from all over Europe. All Member Organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic school student organisations. To learn more about us, visit our [website](#) or watch an [explanatory video](#).

Structures and democracy in OBESSU

What is your role as a member organisation, what can you do, how and when do you contribute to the organisation and who checks on OBESSU bodies? To find out, read the [statutes](#) and watch a short video which explains our [organisation democracy](#).

Where and how do you meet OBESSU and the membership?

Throughout the year, we organise different events and meetings which are agreed upon by the membership in a workplan and OBESSU membership is often invited. Moreover, we have working groups and our events have preparatory teams in which we also have representatives of the organisations. To find out more on how can you participate, watch a short [video](#).

Policy work and how can you contribute?

OBESSU represents your interest on the European level, but to do so, we need to know what you want and need. All our positions are approved at statutory meetings, and you can propose a whole document, propose amendments to the existing or proposed documents and you can vote to decide what will become a position of the organisation. Moreover, we always have discussions before the official voting part, either on

Basecamp, through consultations or in person. To find out more, watch a short [video](#).

Are you an international officer who is leaving the post? Handover!

Make sure that before you leave your post, you update the new international officer and help them prepare for the role. Let us know (you, your organisation or the new officer) that there has been a change so we can update our mailing lists and contact list on basecamp and we will share the IO welcome pack with the new person.