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## ABOUT STARLITE

Starlite is about helping individuals up-skill themselves to add value to society in their own unique method. Starlite specializes in providing free resources for students, graduates, and entrepreneurs to use to grow their careers, businesses, and organizations.

# UNI SOCIETY GUIDE

BY **ARYAN VERMA & RYAN NINDRA**

Chances are, you've heard of the first week of university where societies give away freebies to anyone who writes their name and email on a form. And you, being the clever student you are, see a great opportunity to score a few free pens and keyrings. But why do societies spend hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars for signups?

Apart from all the free stuff, one crucial aspect of societies that most students pay less attention to is joining to become part of the society itself, working behind the scenes on all the awesome events that hundreds of students participate in. This guide will take you through what "see you on the other side" really means when it comes to societies!

## WHAT THIS GUIDE COVERS:

- Why You Should Join a Society
- Student Journey & Progression
- Application & Interview Advice
- How to Decide Which Society is Best

## THE BRIDGE BETWEEN UNIVERSITY & INDUSTRY?

Joining a society will help you gain a wide variety of hard and soft skills. Developing these transferable skills help to bridge the gap between your university education and the ever-changing state of industries. Employers are increasingly looking for leadership qualities in graduates, however opportunities to develop these are rare.

Societies facilitate the development of leadership and managerial skills of its members, as well as problem-solving, time management and other interpersonal skills.

Companies that wish to engage with young people (either in search for talent or to promote themselves) generally look to partner with societies as they provide an effective entry into the university demographic. In turn, societies build strong connections with their sponsors and therefore have access to a better perspective of the industry & potential careers.

### FUN FACT

*The generation who are yet to join the workforce (Gen Z) are predicted to have 17 different jobs over 5 different careers in their lifetimes.*



# CAREERS

# BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Upon joining a society, usually as a subcommittee member, you will have the chance to network with successful peers in higher positions who are usually in their final years of university.

Senior members often mentor and guide younger students with their career aspirations. Fellow society members are generally interested in pursuing careers in similar fields, such as investment banking and management consulting (for all the commerce peeps!), and it isn't uncommon to have a few society friends with you in your penultimate year internships!

Some societies make efforts to connect current members with their alumni through events or warm introductions. This helps you expand your network to people 2-4 years into their career, who can provide invaluable career advice and insights!

Throughout your society journey you will also have various opportunities to plan and host events, through which you will be networking with industry professionals regularly (Presidents / Vice Presidents usually build the strongest connections).



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# STUDENT JOURNEY

## SUBCOMMITTEE

Joining as a subcommittee or team member is the most common as it is the most junior position with the lowest levels of responsibility (relative to more senior roles). Depending on how the society is structured, you will have other subcommittee members joining in the same recruitment cycle as you. Groups of 3+ subcommittee members are supervised by one senior member, usually titled "Team Leader" or "Director", or any of a whole range of titles.

## PROGRESSION

Diligently and successfully contributing to a society for ~1 year generally shows that you are committed and competent to take on more responsibility and are ready for a promotion.

## PROMOTION TIMELINE

Societies have different recruitment cycles and turnover rates, so at some societies it would be possible to be promoted after one term/semester, while others could take more than one year (for senior roles).

## ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Common structures of societies include subcommittee, director, vice president, president, chairperson & national board (for multichapter societies), with responsibility and time commitment increasing at every level.

## EXECUTIVE ROLES

Society involvement is considered to be the most effective way to demonstrate leadership potential, because senior roles often require leading and managing others. Experience and progression in a society significantly enhances your attractiveness to potential employers for internship or graduate roles.

## APPLICATION PROCESS:

# WRITTEN APPLICATIONS

The first stage helps the society to get an initial impression of all candidates. This is where you have to try to get a foot in the door by demonstrating that you are a qualified and passionate student who can contribute effectively to the society. The many opportunities available to society members attracts many applications. Societies therefore want a bang for their buck and cull applications that do not show sufficient motivation and alignment.

Questions generally focus on why you want to join the society, relevant skills & experience, what you look to get out of the society, preferred portfolios, etc.

Personality questions have also started to spring up in some applications, such as your values, role models, favourite companies, food, music and anything else the society can come up with!



*"First impressions matter. The society application stage mirrors the mass culling of resumes in the application process of top tier firms."*

- ARYAN

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## A few pointers:

1. Some societies hold networking events before recruiting starts, where the “keen beans” would attend and try to learn as much about the society as possible. When applications open, you can expect to be moved into the “invite for interview” pile when recruiters see your name, because making an effort to understand the society beforehand shows determination.
2. It is also advisable to explicitly state in your application that you attended Event X, spoke to persons A, B & C and liked what they had to say about the society. ‘Name Dropping’ is an age-old technique and societies are aware of this, so don't rely on it to give you a free pass in; at most it can get you an interview. Mentioning that you have previously participated in their competitions and had an enjoyable experience shows that you are truly passionate about the society & have an appetite for learning.
3. If a word count is mentioned, it is good practice to stick to it and write as close to it as possible. Although being succinct is good, writing 50 words for a 200 word response leaves 150 words that you could have used to talk about how else you can contribute to the society. To the person reviewing your application, this can signal that you don't have much else to bring to the table.

# APPLICATION PROCESS: INTERVIEW STAGE

Being invited for an interview means that the society believes you have potential. The interview is your opportunity to shine and highlight your strong alignment with the society's mission. The tone of the interview can vary, with some societies adopting a more conversational style, while others stick with the professional approach.

Conversational interviews aim to gauge your energy & enthusiasm, and how well you can 'gel' with others in the society. Formal interviews aim to assess the quality of your responses and your skills. Career-focused societies tend to have more formal interviews because they look for sharp, driven and high achieving students that can conduct themselves in a professional manner in front of sponsors and industry professionals.



*"The key thing you can do to prepare for an interview is to remember how to be yourself. Talk about things that are important to you. Be hired for being you, and know your value."*

- RYAN

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## A few pointers:

1. No matter the interview style, it is good practice to prepare beforehand. Common interview questions include “tell me about yourself”, “what do you consider to be your biggest strength/weakness” and “tell us about a time you worked in a team”. A simple search for popular interview questions will be enough to get a rough indication of questions the interviewer may ask.
2. The interview will mostly include conventional questions, as the society wants to give you some solid interview practice regardless of whether or not you make it in. These questions will be common for most jobs, internships and graduate roles, and feedback is immensely valuable. Whether or not you are successful in being accepted into the society, always reach out to the interviewer afterwards and ask for any feedback that you can implement if you apply to the society again in the future.
3. Interviews often end with the interviewer asking if you had any questions for them. This is where the very best candidates excel (in real interviews too). There is no right answer, but you should aim to ask a thought-provoking or inquisitive question. A creative and relevant question can impress the interviewer and help you stand out from the other candidates in the interview stage. You can use the factors listed later in this guide as inspiration.



# THE BEST SOCIETY

Deciding which society is best for you can be a messy decision, especially when you don't know much about them. Always apply to as many societies as possible, but if you can get accepted into one, chances are that you can also get into others. These are some factors that can be used to decide how well a society suits you and your own goals.

## GLOBAL/NATIONAL CHAPTERS

Some societies are part of national or global networks. Large networks mean that the society can run larger scale events which, from an organising standpoint, could mean that you will be working with students from different chapters in other universities.

Coordinating projects at that scale is a great experience that looks impressive on your resume and is also a great talking point in interviews.

## FACULTY RELATIONS

Being endorsed by a faculty is always a plus. It shows that the society's purpose and impact is recognised by the university. Professors and lecturers are an untapped resource who have lots of industry insights and networks.

## NETWORKING EVENTS

Whether with alumni, professionals, or other students, a society's efforts to facilitate networking for you is definitely an important factor to take into consideration.

## SIZE + INDUSTRY REPUTATION

Larger societies are more likely to be known in the industry. When applying for roles, mentioning that you are or were at a reputed society gives you an advantage, and is a considerable value-add.

## YEARS IN OPERATION

The longer a society has been in existence, the larger its alumni network will be. Reaching out to someone in the industry who was in the same society as you is an effective networking strategy.

## AFFILIATED SPONSORS

Senior members of a society develop strong relationships with sponsors, so the number & size of firms/companies the society is sponsored by can greatly influence career opportunities.

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## *That's all folks!*

In summary, societies make up a large part of your university experience. Attending events and participating in competitions organised by different societies is always a great experience. But being part of a society should also be a priority, because it can provide an unparalleled experience and help you grow both personally and professionally! Follow us to stay up-to-date with our own recruitment rounds!



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Onwards and upwards,  
Aryan & Ryan

## Check us out!

[yecaustralia.com](http://yecaustralia.com)

*Young Entrepreneurs Connect (YEC) is a social enterprise dedicated to nurturing the next generation of leaders and impact-makers. We are Australia's leading youth organisation, impacting thousands of students in the YEC community!*

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