Your First 30 Days as a Student Leader

Start by listening, not announcing. For school councils, clubs and college teams, this guide helps you understand your role and choose one useful first priority.

MY ROLE SNAPSHOT

Who I represent

_____

Who I report to

_____

LISTEN

Ask students

What is working? What gets in the way?

Include quieter voices

Offer a written or private way to contribute.

Keep a short record

Note themes without exposing personal stories.

CONFIRM

Ask your advisor

What can this role decide, and with whom?

Check the process

Who approves spending, events and messages?

Read the handoff

Which commitments and deadlines already exist?

Your first useful output

Write three things you heard, two questions to check and one person to follow up with. Do not promise a change before you understand the need and your authority.

GET THE HANDOFF

Know What You Own Before You Commit

Meet the outgoing leader and your advisor, teacher or staff contact. If there is no handoff, build a short record together. Mark anything unconfirmed.

Ask for the essentials

- **Purpose, members and commitments**
- **Files, contacts and approved access**
- **Budget, deadlines and unfinished work**
- **Decision authority and escalation route**

HANDOFF NOTE

Illustrative entries - adapt to your group

1. **Purpose**
   Help new members find the right contact.
2. **Access**
   Ask the advisor for approved file access.
3. **Open work**
   Welcome session: date and budget unconfirmed.
4. **Authority**
   Confirm who can approve the session before booking.

Use a decision log from the start

Copy these headings into your shared notes. Record a proposal as **pending** until the person with authority confirms it.

DATE / DECISION OR QUESTION / OWNER
APPROVER / STATUS / NEXT CHECK IN

Use approved accounts. Never ask someone to share their password.

Make the Work Visible and Share It Fairly

Agree who does what, who needs a say and who can approve. Roles can be shared or rotated; one person should not have to carry the whole team.



Add names in your shared notes. Confirm the approver.

A first meeting that ends with next steps

Send the agenda and any reading ahead of time. Offer a way to contribute before or after the meeting if someone cannot attend.

5 min	Check in and agree the purpose
10 min	Share what you heard and what is still unknown
10 min	Choose one next action and a named owner
5 min	Confirm approvals, due date and next check in

Illustrative 30-minute agenda. Adjust for access needs and your group.

Choose One Realistic First Priority

STEP 1

Name a need you can explain

Use what students told you. Describe the problem before proposing an event or campaign. Ask whose experience is missing from your evidence.

NEED STATEMENT

“New members do not know where to ask questions.” Check this with members before treating it as a shared need.

STEP 2

Check effort and permission

Compare the value to students with the time, money and approvals needed. Choose something your team can realistically test alongside study, work and rest.

SMALL FIRST TEST

Draft a one-page contact guide with members. Ask the relevant contact to verify it before you share it.

STEP 3

Agree what you will learn

Name an owner, a review date and a simple sign of usefulness. Decide what would make you continue, change or stop. Do not claim success from activity alone.

REVIEW QUESTION

Can new members find the right contact? Ask for feedback after a small test and revise unclear information.

The contact-guide example is illustrative. Your first priority may be entirely different.

Ask Before You Book Spend or Publish

These questions are prompts, not institution rules. Confirm the local process with your advisor, teacher, staff contact or other authorized person.

Access

Who might be excluded by timing, location, format or cost?

ACCESS CHECK

- [ ] Step-free route or remote option
- [ ] Readable materials and captions
- [ ] Private way to request support

Budget

What will it cost? Who can approve it? How do purchases or refunds work?

BUDGET SKETCH

Item	Estimate
Room / materials	To confirm
Access support	To confirm

Approval

Who must say yes? What information and lead time do they need?

PERMISSION PATH

1 Ask — 2 Confirm — 3 Record

Communication

Who needs to know? Who checks facts? What consent is needed for images?

MESSAGE CHECK

DRAFT – NOT YET APPROVED

Audience / date / action / contact

Check details before sending.

Use the Month to Learn Then Adjust the Plan

An illustrative 30-day plan, not a mandatory timeline. Adapt it to your term, group, access needs and approval process. Allow extra time when needed.

Days 1 to 7

Listen to members.
Read the handoff.
Confirm your role and decision limits.

Days 8 to 14

Agree team roles.
Choose one priority.
Check budget, access and permissions.

Days 15 to 30

Try a small action after needed approval.
Gather feedback.
Review and adjust.

My first month

- [ ] Listen + handoff
- [ ] Roles + priority
- [ ] Check + test
- [ ] Review + adjust

Review date: _____

PAUSE AND REFLECT

Whose voice is missing?
What helped students?
What used too much time?
What will we keep, change or stop?

Leave a short record for the next person: decisions, owners, useful contacts and what you learned. Keep personal information in approved systems.