



SME
NEXT
Professional 101 Guide

April 2021

Welcome!

What is SWENext?

SWENext (pronounced “s-wee-next”) introduces K-12 students to the SWE community by connecting them with professional and collegiate SWE members. SWENext clubs are open to all ages and genders, and clubs of any size can be formed out of school groups, local friends, already established clubs, etc.

Clubs are not limited to any specific activities but are encouraged to engage with local engineers, host outreach events, work towards STEM competitions, and even attend SWE conferences! SWENext clubs are a way that you as a collegiate or professional engineer can inspire the next generation of engineers!



Your Role

Your involvement as a SWE Counselor or Club Advisor will depend on the age of your club members. High school students are encouraged to gain leadership skills and look to mentors for basic guidance. Middle school and elementary school aged clubs will require more hands-on planning and involvement. This guide will largely focus on developing high school clubs.

If you are the representative SWE member and the club has a more permanent advisor (e.g. a teacher), at a minimum you are asked to stay in contact with the club and support where necessary, but constant club contact is not required.

Table of Contents

CONTENT

Adult Leaders.....	4
Youth Protection.....	5
Building A Club.....	6
Registration FAQ.....	9
Events for Clubs.....	12
Building a Network.....	14

Note:

This guide was created with influence from collegiate and professional sections that have existing SWENext programs whose ideas and methods for starting clubs have been refined over the years. Thank you to sections that have shared their fun and creative ideas!

Adult Leaders

SWENext Clubs are required to have an active SWE member (either a Professional, Collegiate, or K-12 Educator member) as a SWENext Counselor. Though not required, clubs are encouraged to also have a Club Advisor (e.g. K-12 Educator, Boy and Girls Club Counselor, etc). The Club Advisor is encouraged to become a SWE K-12 Educator member. By registering the club under the Club Advisor, it gives sponsoring SWE sections the flexibility to change Club Counselors without needing the SWENext section to change their registered SWE member.



Club Advisor

- Typically a teacher or organization leader
- Liaison to school or organization administration
- Responsible for maintaining safety and youth protection during all activities
- Acts as main point of contact for SWENext members on a day-to-day basis
- Ensures club is upholding school/organization bylaws
- Present at every meeting

SWENext Counselor

- Typically a SWE professional or collegiate member/section
- Main liaison to SWE
- Provides support when needed for events and activities; not required to attend every meeting
- Answers any questions regarding SWE's processes and mission
- Ensures club is upholding SWE principles

Youth Protection

The health and safety of the students is the top priority. SWE does not currently require full background checks to become a SWE Counselor or Club Advisor, but using discretion is advised to ensure all interactions between youth and adult mentors are appropriate.

Interacting with Minors and Privacy Concerns

Check with SWE, your organization or your university

- Follow any youth protection (YP) guidelines set in place by your university, company, or organization. Some universities will require background checks and the registration of all SWENext activities.
- If the SWENext club is associated with a school or other youth organization (e.g. FIRST Robotics, Boys & Girls Club, Girl Scouts, etc.), check with the organization's YP guidelines.

Privacy Forms, Media Release Forms, Etc.

- Before taking pictures or any media, check with all guidelines set in place. You may need to obtain a media release for all of your SWENexters.
- If helping a SWENext club host an outreach event, this form will also be relevant to any attendees of the event.
- See the following resource center for SWE minor media release forms:

<https://swe.org/about-swe/governance/resource-center/>

- For online events specifically for signature SWENext programming, use this minor consent form:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSewwDV_-cnYfbqDjl7nqNGRsasyOkfoma_r1aTiEOWTtFpb7w/viewform

Rule of 3

- For any communication, both in-person or virtual (email, virtual workshop, etc.), make sure that there are at least 2 adults when speaking to one or more youth (e.g. CC another adult on an email).
- This is a common rule used in most youth protection guidelines, and is a good practice to maintaining a professional atmosphere around youth.

Building A Club

Collect
Resources

Find an
Enthusiastic
Advisor

Find Motivated
Students

Register
the Club

Help Define Club
Goals and
Direction

Develop a
Leadership Team

Find
Opportunities

There are many keys to helping a club successfully start, but two are the most important: the **people** and the **purpose**.

SWENext does not require clubs to engage in any particular activities, and this commonly leads to clubs forming aimlessly and interest dying quickly.

Before starting a club, make sure that you have ideas for the future of the club and how the club will be maintained.



Building A Club

Collect Resources

Before approaching an organization or school about SWENext, formulate a plan and collect resources to help people better understand the purpose and benefits of SWENext. Check out these resources:

SWENext Website:

<https://swe.org/k-12-outreach/youth-programs/>

SWENext Clubs 101 Guide:

https://swe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/clubs101guide_06102020-1.pdf

SWENext Club Activity Guide:

https://swe.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/club_activity_guide_07202020.pdf



Find an Enthusiastic Advisor

If you are a professional or collegiate SWE member in the SWENext Counselor role, you may not act as the primary advisor. Find an enthusiastic teacher or other adult mentor to be the Club Advisor. They will have more consistent contact with the youth, so it is important to find someone who is encouraging, energetic, and willing to support the purpose of SWE.

Building A Club

Registering the Club

Registering Your Club with Their School/Organization

Please take caution to ensure that the club is following any necessary steps to register with their individual school or organization if required. The Club Advisor should be able to help with this.

Registering Your Club with SWE

Register the Club Advisor as a SWE K-12 Educator Member here:

<https://swe.org/membership/k-12-educator-membership/>

Register the club for free here:

<https://swe.org/k-12-outreach/swenext/swenext-clubs/swenext-club-registration-form/>

You are encouraged to register the club under the Club Advisor if they have chosen to become a K-12 educator mentor.



Registering Individually with SWENext

Each club member must also individually register as a member of SWENext for free here:

Under 13 years old: <http://marketing.swe.org/l/858553/2020-08-11/3z2z9>

13 and older: <http://marketing.swe.org/l/858553/2020-07-27/2rstw>

Have members register at their first meeting! As new members join, continue to update the roster and remind members to register online.

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Registration FAQ

How do I know the club is registered?

Once the registration is filled out, the club is officially registered. Expect to hear from SWE in the beginning of the following month. Do NOT resubmit registration if you do not hear back immediately.

What communication will I receive as a Club Advisor/SWE Counselor?

You should expect to hear from the SWE Student Programs Committee every few months. Check spam to make sure that emails are being received. Most emails will come from swenext@swe.org or swenextclubs@swe.org.

When will my club be added to the club map?

Clubs are added to the map approximately monthly. The club map is a great way to find other clubs in the area. See the map here:

<https://swe.org/k-12-outreach/swenext/swenext-clubs/>



Building A Club

Find Motivated Students

SWENext encourages leadership development. If starting a high school club, try to find a sophomore or junior that is motivated to help build the club. These students will not graduate as soon as the club starts, helping to create a legacy leadership team. Finding these students is invaluable as they are better able to convince their friends of the club's merit and get peers excited to join the club. Where can you find these students?

Existing Outreach Events

- Is your SWE section hosting an outreach day?
- Are there any community STEM days?
- Look for participants as well as any student volunteers and their teachers/mentors

Your Alma Mater or Other Local Schools

- Are you still in the area you grew up in?
- Can you connect with the teachers and students at a local school? Does your company support a STEM day or science fair that can help you connect?

Pair with Existing Clubs

- SWENext clubs can be used as an addition to pre-existing STEM clubs. However, if possible, it is encouraged that SWENext clubs stand alone. Some students may not be able to give the commitment necessary for a robotics or engineering team, or they may not be sure if STEM is for them. SWENext is a more relaxed community that encourages exploration.
- Look for FIRST/BEST/VEX robotics teams, Scouts, Boys & Girls Clubs, etc.

Building A Club

Help Define Club Goals & Direction

When starting a club, sit down with the members and establish goals for the semester. By working towards an end goal, the members will be able to unite together quicker under a common purpose. A club's purpose can be anything from outreach to college & career development to team building.

Develop a Leadership Team

Help the students gain leadership skills. Here are some suggestions for the leadership team:

Core Five

- President, Vice President, Treasurer, Activity Coordinator, Promotions Manager
- Each club will have a different setup, but all leadership roles should help the club work towards its established goals

SWE Liaison

- Main point of contact between SWE Counselor and students
- Sometimes communication with the Club Advisor can be difficult and student leaders are often more responsive.

Find Opportunities

As SWE Counselor/Club Advisor you are not responsible for determining all activities and events for the club. However, being able to help provide ideas will help inspire club leaders to decide what the club would like to do. Your section is also highly encouraged to host small events for your clubs! See the next section for some ideas!

Events for Clubs

Here are some ideas for events your section can host for the clubs!

Virtual Events

Virtual Mentorship & Monthly Meetup

Develop a mentorship program where SWENexters can pick your brain about engineering major and career choices and learn more about the amazing opportunities they can get involved in as an engineer. Have a zoom call once a month where mentee/mentor pairs can do some speed networking. You can make it as structured or as laid back as you like!

Virtual College/Company Tour

Do a virtual college/company tour and show them what it's like to work/learn virtually. Explain how your company/college adapted and explain how you meet your daily goals.

College Readiness 101 Webinar

Host a webinar series with topics such as FAFSA, resume building, Common App essay and more to prep your SWENexters as they begin their college journey.

Virtual Scavenger Hunt

Design an internet quest where SWENext club members find influential female STEM role models in various disciplines who fit certain descriptions! Wrap up the event by sharing personal college and career paths and experiences.

In-Person Events

SWENext Leadership Training

Host a leadership conference to allow SWENext club leaders to share best practices and get leadership training.

Engineering Workshop

Organize a workshop to help your SWENext club members learn about different engineering disciplines in a creative and hands-on way!

Design Challenge

Invite your SWENext club members for a day of problem solving and critical thinking. Stimulate the minds of your SWENext members by creating a design challenge. Give them a prompt and ask them to use the design cycle to create a solution!

Campus/Workplace Tour & Lunch

Arrange a day (or multiple days) where your SWENext club can visit your campus or workplace for a day! Allow them to shadow you as you attend classes/meetings at work, and then have lunch to wrap up and share thoughts.

Events for Clubs

Society Hosted Events

SWENext High School Leadership Academy (SHLA)

SWENext High School Leadership Academy (SHLA) is a program that provides awareness and inspires high school students to pursue careers in engineering and technology. SHLA provides students with leadership training, college advice, self-development topics, and the opportunity to experience the SWE community first-hand through networking, coaching, and mentoring to learn techniques to pursue STEM careers.

Invent It Build It (IIBI)

Each year at the annual societal SWE conference, SWENexters are invited to attend Invent It. Build It. Through this opportunity, students have the chance to meet real engineers and learn what they do, receive information on how to select the right college, where to find scholarships and how to be a successful engineer, work on hands-on engineering activities, explore the Invent it. Build it. EXPO and much more.

SWENext Clubs Awards

The Society of Women Engineers strives to recognize the successes of SWENext students and SWENext clubs that do exceptional work in developing a community for students to explore engineering and other STEM fields. Each year, SWENext Clubs have the opportunity to compete in our SWENext clubs Challenge, SWENext Best Practices events and more. Cash prizes, international recognition and admittance into SHLA are among the prizes clubs can win!

SWENext Clubs Challenges

Each season, SWENext clubs have the opportunity to participate in virtual challenges that test their creativity, teamwork and problem solving skills. There will also be opportunities to network with other clubs and share best practices.



Building a Network

When your section supports the needs of multiple SWENext clubs, we refer to that conglomeration of clubs as a network. Managing a SWENext network can be rewarding, but can also quickly become overwhelming. Here are a few tips to help you effectively develop a network that allows you to support each of your clubs most effectively.

Defining Clear Communication Lines

Emails

Emails are often the easiest way to check in on your clubs, provide resources, and deliver timely information.

- Use emails to interact with your club members, but try to limit these communications to individuals that you know will check their inbox frequently and will promptly respond (this is less common among students in 8-12 grade).
- Lean on your SWE liaison as the primary person of contact. Designating a specific individual from each club is also a useful way to minimize the number of emails your section sends and receives.

Surveys

Surveys can be dispersed regularly and to multiple clubs at one time to collect information such as: recent meetings, club activities, and feedback.

- Keeping surveys short and simple (think yes/no or multiple choice questions instead of free responses) in order to ensure better response from your clubs.
- Surveys can also be used to collect documents, like permission forms, photo release forms, or charters and meeting minutes discussed below.

Charter

Many professional and collegiate sections struggle to maintain consistent lines of communications with their clubs. SWENexters are fantastic investments of time, but it is important that you establish accountability for them.

- Filling out a charter will formally establish your relationship to each club, and will likely make the club feel more committed to making progress.
- This will help establish good communication habits between you and your clubs, and will also ensure that your clubs can make the most out of their relationship with you.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are a great, structured way to stay up-to-date with each of your clubs' general meeting activity.

- Consider developing and dispersing a template so that you can stay informed on what your network is up to without creating extra work or sending extra emails.
- If asking for meeting minutes, be sure to stay on top of making sure clubs submit them at a consistent rate.

Building a Network

Provide Student-to-Student Mentorship

As your network grows, you may find that you have less one-on-one interactions with your SWENexters. An in-person or digital mentorship program can help ensure that your SWENexters are still getting that personal connection with a SWE member.

Mentors

If you have the bandwidth, consider offering a mentorship program to your clubs or to individual SWENexters. This allows for a mentor to develop a more personal relationship with an individual or small group of SWENexters.

Digital Pen Pals

Another way to develop one-on-one relationships is to develop a digital pen pal program. This is a program where SWENexters connect with a collegiate or professional on a monthly basis to discuss a predetermined topic. This type of program requires more volunteers, but each volunteer has a fairly low time commitment.

NOTE: you may not be able to provide 1-to-1 mentorship depending on the Youth Protection policies your university, company, or organization adheres to.





Questions? Comments? Concerns?

**Reach out to:
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Follow us on Instagram!

@swenext

