

7 Starting up an FE SU: Clubs and Societies

Clubs and Societies are how we describe enrichment activities that institutions or SUs provide for their students. These could be sports, activities, crafts, advocacy-based gatherings, hobbies, trips, experiences, and anything else that fosters inclusion and involvement in extra-curricular activities.

Why should you do this?

It fosters student attachment and engagement with your institution – it builds a sense of positive community – and it improves educational progress. It brings students who would otherwise not be engaged in your work through your doors and improves the scope of student opinion that you can gather.

You should aim to have clubs and societies that are student-led. This leads to greater engagement in these activities, eventually lessening the workload of staff who are tasked with supporting these societies. It also teaches students valuable skills in running organisations and event organising. Having student-led enrichment also means you're much less likely to put on events or opportunities that have low turnout too.

Key Partners

- Institution sports provision
- Students
- Other local students' unions
- National sports and activities organisations

'How To'

- **What do you already have?** Map out what provision already exists at your institution – there is no point in replicating work at this stage.
- **Let students lead** – Build a system where students can set up their club or society. This should be as simple as possible and give clear explanation of what support you can offer them.
- **Let students know what's on** – Organise a way of publicising to students what clubs and societies are available to them as well as how they can go about setting up their own. E.g. stalls at freshers events, a page on your website listing all clubs and societies with contact details etc.
- **Evaluate as you go** – Run a trial with one club and society, evaluating the process of establishment alongside the students running it so you can find any problems that are arising.
- **Partnership** – Work with academic staff to see what support or expertise they could offer individual clubs and societies.

Next steps – How to grow from here

- Once your system is up and running you can start to think about what other college provision could be moved under your system. Are there existing sports activity that could be more student led for example?
- Join up with other local students' unions to explore opportunities for students from across different institutions to come together.
- Share ideas and ask questions on NUS Workplace – there's the [FE Staff group](#) and the [Student Opportunities group](#)

Useful Resources

- The [NUS Connect Student Opportunities Hub](#) has training guides, guidance, inspiration sheets on a number of topics and information about how to show the impact of your society and clubs activity