

Give it a go

Developing a Give it a Go programme

Find out more about what Give it a Go actually is, and why it is beneficial to develop a programme in your students' union. This briefing identifies how to design Give it a Go, how to develop an existing programme, and tips for overcoming common problems.

Introduction

'Give it a Go' is a name used by students' union to describe a programme of taster events and activities that students can have a go at. These are often one-off, special events and tend to include some activities organised by clubs and societies.

Give it a Go programmes have been running in some students' union for over 10 years and for some this is now an established activity. In others it is a new initiative being explored to open up new activities to students.

Give it a Go activities

There isn't a set type of activities, nor is there a specific combination of certain events.

Give it a Go programmes can include:

- Trips/tours
- Skills sessions
- Masterclasses
- Lectures
- Club & society taster sessions
- Commercial events
- Language classes
- Craft workshops

Session ticket prices are normally quite low (£2-10) or sometimes free, as the purpose is not to

make profit but to offer a range of interesting activities.

Benefits of Give it a Go

There are many benefits to running this type of programme of activities:

- Students who haven't engaged with clubs and societies previously can try them out with no obligation to join
- Students who engage with one or two clubs or societies can find out more about others
- It's easier for students who are 'time poor' to get involved with new activities
- Low price Give it a Go sessions are accessible to students who could not afford full club or society membership
- The students' union engages with more students
- International students particularly enjoy Give it a Go programmes
- Sessions can be highlighted as good for families, which opens up the students' union to more student parents
- The programme can be designed to fit the budget of the students' union – it doesn't need to be expensive
- Trips can sometimes make a small profit, if organised carefully
- Give it a Go can provide many events that aren't focused on alcohol

Where to start

When designing your Give it a Go programme, you should:

- **Talk to students** – find out what sort of activities they would like, how much they would spend and how much time they would commit
- **Budget** – Give it a Go doesn't need to cost much money but it is important to identify how much, if any money, you have to spend.
- **Schedule** – you could run a year-long programme, one programme per term, a welcome programme. Decide when yours will be.
- **Clubs and societies** – decide if you would like them to run sessions and decide how you will organise this.
- **Marketing** – how will you promote Give it a Go?

Development stages

Develop your Give it a Go programme by introducing one of these ideas:

- **Specialists** – identify experts within your students' union/institution or pay external experts to deliver sessions.
- **Clubs and societies** – increase the number of club and society sessions by making Give it a Go a compulsory activity. Incentivise this through your reward and recognition scheme.
- **Student staff** – employ student staff to support the management and promotion of Give it a Go or to run the trips.
- **Profit** – identify sessions where the price could slightly increase to start creating a profit. The funds raised can then go to further improve Give it a Go.

Problem solving

We've collated some advice for overcoming problems encountered by students' union already running Give it a Go.

No funding

Give it a Go doesn't need much funding. It needs some staff time and probably a logo and some poster/leaflet design.

If this is a concern, consider who you could contact for funding.

Could you work with the careers and employability department to organise Give it a Go skills development sessions? They may help with funding.

Have some sessions that are only for students living in halls of residence and ask for funding from the accommodation office.

In students' union where Give it a Go is established there is evidence stating that it is popular with international students. Take this evidence to the institution and build a case for using Give it a Go to engage international students.

Insurance

You may have separate insurance for students playing sport, and be worried about Give it a Go participants doing sports activities without correct insurance. Contact your insurer and explain the situation – they will be able to advise you.

Poor attendance

If you organise Give it a Go sessions and there is poor attendance, consider:

- Marketing – is it effective?
- The right sessions – talk to students again and get feedback
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- The right time, location and price – find out if these are stopping students participating

Further information

This briefing was created following a Student Opportunities Lunch & Learn webinar that took place on 16th July 2013. The slides from this [webinar](#) are available on the Student Opportunities pages on NUS Connect.

Contents

This briefing contains content from:

- Leeds University Union
- Swansea University Students' Union
- University of Greenwich Students' Union
- University of Liverpool Students' Union
- University of Sheffield Students' Union

If you would like any further information about anything in this guide, please contact [Rosie Hunnam](#), Student Opportunities Co-ordinator at NUS.



University of Greenwich Students' Union

How long have they run GIAG?

The programme launched in April 2011

When does their GIAG run?

- Runs continuously throughout year
- 3rd term has less events

What opportunities are available in their GIAG?

- 10 'highlight' events each term
- Signposting service to exciting things happening around London.

Who runs these?

Cath Taylor is the full-time Student Activities Co-ordinator. Give it a Go forms a small part of her job description. Cath is supported by student staff who work around 7 hours per week during term time. Cath considers their course and then develops their student staff role around this. For example if employing someone studying events management she will encourage them to run some of the events in the Give it a Go programme.

How do you advertise your GIAG programme?

- Part of wider marketing (paid for by marketing dept.)
- Most advertising online (keeps costs down)
- Facebook page for GIAG
- Leaflet for 'highlight' events

What are the costs to students?

Most of the Give it a Go sessions run at cost, but some funding from the institution is used to subsidise the most expensive activities. Trips cost around £15-25.

What are the costs in running GIAG?

The main cost is the full-time and part-time staff time. Most of the events are free or very low cost, and the funding from University is used to subsidise transport and ticket costs, as well as officials for recreational sport. Cost of these to Union this year was £310.

Where do the funds for GIAG come from?

Greenwich SU received £4,000 funding for last 3 years, from the Educational Development Unit in the University. This funding was granted on the condition that GIAG must have skills and employability focus.

Give it a Go was also used as a mechanism for re-writing the Student Activities Co-ordinator job description, which resulted in an increase of block grant. The job description was altered from being just Sports & Societies coordination to all of the SU Activities.

What staff do you have running GIAG?

Sessions are run by the Activities Coordinator, Activities & Volunteering Support Worker, Activities student staff, and volunteers.

How many students participated this year & how many sessions did you run?

Highlight events

30 sessions run
267 attendees

Badminton weekly sessions

Term-time weekly sessions

Average of 20 attendees per session (best attended session 45 attendees)

Dodgeball

6 week course

12 students completed at least 5 of 6 weeks

Signposted events

84 events

112 attendees

How do students get a ticket?

Tickets are mostly purchased online through the GIAG event-specific webpages, through the SU website. We also facilitate sales in cash via our Union receptions where students have problems paying online, but most payments are completed online.

Where events are free we encourage students to register (either via email or £0 online tickets).

We also use Facebook event confirmations as vague guidelines for judging anticipated turnout.

Most successful elements

- GIAG provides great work experience for the student staff involved, as they are an events management student.
- The programme engages many international students.
- The university funding continued for a second year, demonstrating that they perceive GIAG to be successful.
- Being in London means Greenwich can signpost to exciting activities happening across the city.

Developments for the future

- Societies and clubs will be asked to run at least one GIAG or meet and greet event in term 1. Those who don't will be given less priority for grant funding.
- Cutting down the number of themes/areas to improve clarity, but increasing number of highlight activities per term to 15.
- Update the GIAG website
- Improve engagement from home students – they have asked for more recreational sport so Greenwich will introduce that.

Top tips for SUs wanting to start a GIAG session

- Go for it!
- Start small with one or two areas where your students really want to see activities. Survey students to find this out before designing your GIAG programme.

More information

Have a look at the University of Greenwich Students' Union [website](#).

For more information, contact [Cath Taylor](#), Student Activities Co-ordinator.

Leeds University Union

How long have they run GIAG?

The Give it a Go programme at LUU has run since 2007.

When does their GIAG run?

- September – December
- January – Easter
- Summer: a few trips but not the main GIAG programme.

What opportunities are available in their GIAG?

- Societies (all 300 have the opportunity to run a session – ‘societies’ also includes sports at Leeds).
- Trips (most Saturdays)
- Skills sessions (E.g.: car maintenance, cooking, meditation)
- Craft sessions (E.g. mug painting, cushion making, bunting making)
- External companies run sessions
- Meditation sessions run by Student Counselling Centre

Who runs these?

- Societies and clubs run their own sessions
- SU organise and manage all trips
- SU organise one off classes. Some of these classes are run by teachers or specialists that are employed by LUU just for the Give it a Go programme.
- The programme is organised and managed by Give it a Go Co-ordinator and Administrator

How do you advertise your GIAG programme?

- Booklets created and distributed by:
4,500 International Office
9,000 halls of residence

+ more to each building on campus
+ provided in offer packs by some schools in the university

- 2 A0 posters within Union building
- Stall at Freshers’ Fairs

What are the costs to students?

- Day trips cost around £15/20
- Weekend trips costing around £100
- Other sessions range from £2 - £30 depending on equipment/travel costs
- 2/3 of society sessions are free

What are the costs in running GIAG?

Coach hire

LUU ensure that ticket price of a half full coach covers cost. If a coach costs £300 to hire for 50 seats, LUU charge £12 so that if only 25 students attend, the coach is paid for. This means that any tickets sold over 25 will be profit.

Advertising

Around £4,000 spent printing booklets (c.18,000 booklets)

Materials

Around £200 per year on supplies for sessions.

Society incentives

Around £50,000 – if a society runs a GIAG and 15+ non-members attend, the society is granted £200. If less than 15 non-members attend, the society is granted £100. Societies less than 1 year old are not given grants. Grant money cannot be spent on food, alcohol, hoodies.

Where do the funds for GIAG come from?

- Incentive funding is provided by LUU
- Trips make around £9,000 profit per year.

What staff do you have running GIAG?

- Full-Time Give it a Go Co-ordinator
- Volunteer trip hosts – recruited through Joblink. Put on mailing list, emailed on Monday about the next Saturday trip. First to reply gets the job. They are given £5 lunch allowance and free entry to the trip.

How many students participated this year and how many sessions did you run?

Around 11,000 students (6,000 of which were international students) participated in the programme. We organised around 250 sessions per term.

How do students get a ticket?

- All tickets administered through LUU box office and online. (All events have a ticket even if they are free).
- Societies cannot sell tickets – must direct people to the box office or online. This means that LUU can control venue capacities.

Most successful elements

- GIAG is very large and popular – most recent survey puts awareness of GIAG scheme on campus at 94% of respondents.
- Trips are always popular and successful but are declining due to a number of factors (mainly financial)
- Mug painting is always successful and is cheap to run
- Membership following GIAGs is always noticeable (For example, Backstage Soc in Autumn 2012 gained 47 new members from GIAG).

Developments for the future

- Working on a GIAG Ambassador scheme to have an undergraduate and postgraduate representative in each Halls and each School who will have a pot of money to put on sessions. There will be prizes at the end of the year for 'Most Profit', 'Best Community Event', etc.
- Expansion of programme to include more 'mass' sessions including all the dance groups running a taster session, and the outdoor groups working together to put on a week-long activity break.
- Working with academic Schools to better advertise the programme to personal tutors so they can encourage tutees to try out and join societies.
- Development of 'skills' section to include vital skills to help integration into University life and also in academia.

Top tips for SUs wanting to start a GIAG session

- Most of their sessions costing over £5 (excluding trips) are less popular than those costing less than £5. Free sessions are the most popular.
- Use existing activities and facilities to start with and don't introduce new activities straight away.
- Aim for being self-sufficient before trying to put on a huge programme.
- Trips are the main way of making money for GIAG. Their most popular trips are within 2 hours driving time. Look at what is relatively local and not accessible via public transport – organise trips to there!

Anything else?

Insurance

- Public liability insurance covers all activities under GIAG.
- Societies do their own risk assessments when they apply to run a GIAG session.
- Any session with food = must have food hygiene certificate and any caterer involved must have a hygiene score of 3 out of 5 stars and Public Liability Insurance of £10m.

Running trips

Volunteer trip hosts are given a mobile with credit for use in emergencies, as well as an information pack. LUU staff are also encouraged to be trip hosts, which gives them a good chance to work directly with students. GIAG Co-ordinator remains on call at all times in case of emergency.

More information

Have a look at the Leeds University Union [website](#).

For more information contact [Danielle Thornton](#), Give it a Go Administrator.



Liverpool Guild of Students

How long have they run GIAG?

The programme began in June 2012.

When does their GIAG run?

Give it a Go is run in the Autumn and Spring terms.

What opportunities are available in their GIAG?

- Society activities
- Trips (on Wednesday afternoons and on Saturdays + 1 full weekend trip per term)
- Volunteering opportunities
- Skills and training (E.g.: food hygiene certification)

Who runs these?

Societies run their activities. Some of the activities are organised internally and some are outsourced to external organisations.

How do you advertise your GIAG programme?

- Posters
- Welcome week and Refresher packs contain GIAG information
- LGoS 'guide book'
- Website
- Social media
- Training
- Welcome talks

What are the costs to students?

The trips and some of the skills sessions cost money.

What are the costs in running GIAG?

- Advertising/printing: around £100 per year
- Printed supplies for trips (maps/guides/info sheets/emergency information)
- Wages for GIAG assistants

Where do the funds for GIAG come from?

- £10 per student in halls is contributed to Liverpool Halls of Residence activity fund. This fund subsidises all big trips for halls students by 75 per cent
- Halls Student Committee Co-ordinator position is funded by the University
- GIAG effectively pays for itself as a small profit is made on trips/sessions, which covers the cost of advertising, printing, and Assistants' wages.

What staff do you have running GIAG?

- 50% of the Halls Student Committee Co-ordinator time is spent co-ordinating GIAG
- 2 x assistants per trip. They are paid at student staff rate.
- Digital Design Co-ordinator produces the publicity

How many students participated this year and how many sessions did you run?

Around 2,000 students participated this year. We are not sure of an exact number of sessions.

How do students get a ticket?

Some activities are ticketed and some they can just turn up and have a go.

Most successful elements

The trips have been very popular, and there have been more societies involved this year.

Developments for the future

Introduce tickets. Not ticketing events means that sometimes there aren't enough people and the session has to be cancelled last minute. Also we intend to increase the number of skills sessions.

Top tips for SUs wanting to start a GIAG programme

- Ticket all events and charge a small fee, as it encourages students to actually attend
- Try and find money from the University to support all or part of the programme.
- Speak to students before starting your GIAG planning – what do students want to do?
- Keep costs of trips as low as possible
- The student staff GIAG Assistants positions are a great way of developing students
- Think about the time of year for running certain trips (consider seasons and weather!)

Anything else?

At Liverpool Guild of Students we tried to introduce some themes (E.g.: child friendly events). These weren't popular so now instead

they advertise that children are welcome at particular events and on trips.

More information

For more information, please contact [Ruth Dalton](#), Halls Student Committee Co-ordinator.

Have a look at the Liverpool Guild of Students [website](#).

University of Sheffield Students' Union

How long have they run GIAG?

The Give it a Go programme has been running at the University of Sheffield Students' Union since 2001.

When does their GIAG run?

4 programmes per year:

- Introduction (Freshers' & Week 1)
- Autumn (Week 2 – Christmas)
- Spring (Feb – Easter)
- Summer (April – end of year)

All are term time only.

What opportunities are available in their GIAG?

- Sports
- Creative
- Societies
- Mind & Body
- Music & Dance
- Languages
- Skills
- 'Other'
- Day trips

Who runs these?

The Activities Programme Co-ordinator manages all of the Give it a Go activities. This includes organising one-off classes and trips.

Societies and clubs run their own sessions.

How do you advertise your GIAG programme?

- Marketing booklet – printed and online
- Web space on SU website

What are the costs to students?

Ticket prices vary.

What are the costs in running GIAG?

- Salary for Activities Programme Co-ordinator
- £3,000 student staff wages ('Team GIAG')
- Training costs (refreshments and equipment)
- Coaches for trips
- Printing marketing materials
- Paying teachers and specialists – around £25 per hour

Where do the funds for GIAG come from?

A budget is allocated for some of the running costs of GIAG, however the programme is designed so that all costs for activities cost *must* be covered by ticket sale price for that activity.

What staff do you have running GIAG?

- One full-time staff (since November 2008)
- 5/6 student staff on payroll who work around 8 hours per week running the trips
- Clubs and societies run sessions

How many students participated this year and how many sessions did you run?

9,000 tickets were sold for approximately 500 sessions.

How do students get a ticket?

- Tickets are sold centrally by the SU at the box office and on the SU website.
- Most sessions have a price (very rarely free)

Most successful elements

- Trips make a profit which can be used to further develop the GIAG programme
- Societies and clubs keep 77% of ticket revenue for their events = good fundraiser for them.

Developments for the future

- Would like to build a database at point of sale (Box Office) to understand demographics of who is buying tickets. Not enough time at the point of sale to do this at the moment.
- Quality of sessions varies – Sheffield SU would like to improve consistency of quality in club/society sessions.
- They would like to offer customer service training all students who deliver sessions.
- They would like to offer more employability sessions.

Top tips for SUs wanting to start a GIAG session

- If you're just starting out, run a good variety of sessions but don't run many sessions. It's better to have quality rather than quantity!
- Make it easy and accessible – remove as many barriers as possible for students getting involved.
- GIAG engages international students really well, so think about how you can make the sessions appeal to them

More information

Have a look at the University of Sheffield Students' Union [website](#).

For more information, please contact [Anna Tummon](#), Activities Programme Co-ordinator.

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