

Reward and recognition

Using a reward and recognition scheme to improve the quality of student opportunities

This guidance document explains how reward/recognition can be structured for your student groups. It also considers why this is important and how it is part of good volunteer management.

Volunteer management

Students' unions have a variety of volunteering opportunities that are unique to them. Staff and officers in unions manage the opportunities and the teams of students who lead them.

Volunteer managers are expected to:

- Provide training so that the volunteers can perform their role
- Reward volunteers
- Recognise their efforts and achievements
- Offer constructive criticism, advice and coaching to encourage improvement
- Provide role descriptions
- Outline your expectations from them and theirs from you
- Build the work of volunteers into the wider work of the organisation
- Support volunteers to gain skills and experience
- Provide a safe working environment

If you are interested in improving your volunteer opportunities and provision, it may be worth suggesting that your union applies for the [Investing in Volunteers](#) status.

It is interesting to consider Frederick Herzberg's [motivational theory](#), and Abraham Maslow's [hierarchy of needs](#) when thinking about volunteer management.

Key to successful volunteer management is reward and recognition. A number of students' union have designed schemes where their groups (usually clubs and societies) fulfil certain criteria and are rewarded with prizes or certification.

Creating your reward and recognition scheme

Currently there is no standard format for such schemes but there are some common ideas:

- Workbook – can be online, downloaded document/excel spreadsheet
- Checklist – printed or online
- 'Leader board' – in union on wall with all clubs and societies listed. Points awarded or items ticked off when achieved.

It is important to consider when and how often you will allow the groups to submit evidence. This can be done once at the end of the year, continuously, or at set points across terms.

Think about what will work best for your union.

It is also important to consider the rewards and recognition the groups will receive.

Some ideas currently being used in students' union are:

- Certificates
- Premium position at Freshers' fair (for following year)

- Printing credit
- Access to grant funding
- Logo design
- Advert on SU website
- Premium spot in SU newspaper/magazine/blog/radio
- Extra funding
- Better room hire choice
- Physical award
- Club or society with most points wins Club/Society of the year
- Nomination to NUS Club/Society of the Year
- Committee prize (experience)
- Special training
- Discounted tickets to SU events for members
- Free social
- VIP access at events for committee
- Merchandise
- Logo to use on promotional material saying they are a 'bronze' society (EG)
- Better spot on SU website
- 'Hall of fame'
- One of prizes (gift items)

Key questions

Below are some questions that are worth considering if you're designing a strategic development tool and/or reward and recognition scheme:

- Who is it for? Clubs/societies/volunteering committee/academic reps/student media? Spend some time thinking about who the volunteers are in your students' union and consider how each will engage with this process.
- What do you want your clubs and societies to gain from the process?
- What do you want the SU to gain from the process? Why are you doing it?

- What are the minimum requirements that you hope for your clubs and societies to meet?
- How will you reward and recognise their activities and achievements?
- Will the scheme be compulsory or optional?
- What may the potential stumbling blocks be?

Problem solving

We've identified a few issues that have been encountered by students' union introducing new systems.

Staff capacity

Introducing anything new takes time and effort from staff. You don't have time to do either of these things!

Solution: consider where your current processes are inefficient or just hard work. Could they be improved with a new structure? For example, many staff spend much time chasing health and safety paperwork. Could this be introduced as an essential requirement for the basic rewards?

No buy-in from student groups

The clubs/societies/groups don't like change and they're not happy about this new system.

Solution: could you introduce it as optional for year 1, and then highlight the successes of those groups who tried out the system?

Perhaps speak to the committees and ask what rewards and incentives would convince them to get involved?

Poorly planned and not successful

Solution: use this briefing to guide your research and design, and consider your

students' needs and expectations. This can't guarantee success but it will help!

No funding – we can't afford rewards!

Your union doesn't have the funds to provide expensive rewards or to give away prizes. Without rewards, committees won't bother doing the activity.

Solution: create a funding bid and ask the university or an external organisation to fund the scheme.

Offer rewards that you already provide. For example if you already offer free logo design or discounted tickets for societies, re-package this as part of the reward scheme. The committees will soon change over and they won't know that it wasn't always part of the package.

Further information

This briefing was created following a Student Opportunities Lunch & Learn webinar that took place on 17th September 2013. The slides from this [webinar](#) are available on the Student Opportunities pages on NUS Connect.

Reading

NUS [Success in the Student Market](#)

[Investing in Volunteers](#)

[NCVO](#) (National Council for Voluntary Organisations) advice on strategic planning

[Skills Third Sector](#) advice on managing volunteers

Contents

This inspiration sheet contains content from:

- Birmingham City University Students' Union
- London School of Economics Students' Union
- University of Hertfordshire Students' Union

If you have any questions about this guide or would like to suggest any amends please contact rosie.hunnam@nus.org.uk.

Birmingham City University Students' Union

About

A new recognition scheme to help support the work of Student Groups to ensure they fulfil their potential. It outlines the minimum requirements expected from all Student Groups to ensure that every group has the same base to work from and then it is up to the passion and drive of leaders to move up to the top level of 3 stripes.

It is hoped the scheme will improve the quality of all of our Student Groups as we have a variety of groups at different levels.

The idea

We have many Student Groups all with varying levels of success and commitment; whilst we want to ensure they remain student led we also want to ensure that students who purchased membership for a group were getting a quality service.

This hasn't always been the case as some groups would not follow up after the Welcome Fair and engage with their new members so the basic level of the scheme is what we expect all Student Groups to do before and throughout the academic year.

We also have some amazing groups and the idea was that this scheme could also reward them for all the hard work they put in and encourage some healthy competition between groups to receive the highest level of 3 stripes.

We created a "Team BCU" brand two years ago with a tiger being the figurehead of the brand due to the University logo being a heraldic tiger, we then used this to create the 3 stripes recognition scheme with 3 stripes being the highest level.

Development stages

We utilised the mailbases from NUS to gather some initial ideas from other institutions and asked for schemes already running to be sent to us so we could get a good grasp of how they were ran nationally. We also attended the NUS Zone Conference and sat in a session with Surrey that we found very interesting and inspiring.

After getting a good grasp of schemes already run by other institutions we involved our Student Group Leaders to ensure they were part of creating the scheme, I think this is essential as it means the idea isn't just sprung on Student Groups and they have the opportunity to shape the project. We then put together all the ideas into the 'Earn Your Stripes Scheme' and presented it again to leaders for their final approval.

Advice

This will be the first year of implementing the scheme so we will see how it goes before being able to give any more info, the key thing is to ensure that it will not take lots of time to administer and should be something that can be easily checked.



Follow up

Attached are the BCU criteria for sports and societies for 'Earn Your Stripes'.

For more information about the scheme, please contact [Micheal Gale](#) at Birmingham City University.





Development and Opportunities

Earn your stripes – Sports & Societies

To be recognised as a society by the Union for September 2013, all groups will need to be at the Basic Stripe level.

While this level looks demanding, it mostly consists of compulsory administration to give your group the best possible chance of success. If you are not at this level you will not be eligible for room bookings, union accounts and finances, and promotions including Fresher's Fair and the Union website.

The more that your group achieves, the more Stripes your group will achieve. Each Stripe requires more work and becomes more challenging!

Basic Stripe:

- A fully completed and personalised Constitution
- A fully completed and signed copy of the Leaders Details Form by each committee member
- A signed copy of the Declaration by each committee member
- A fully completed copy of the Employment framework by each committee member
- A fully completed and personalised Development Plan
- Supply a photo and a personalised introduction to the society for promotional purposes (ie. Fresher's Fair booklet and website). Must be continually updated through the year.

Once these have been completed the below are compulsory for every recognised student group. Your group will be temporarily suspended if you fail to maintain the following criteria.

- All committee members must purchase a membership
- Represent your group at September's Fresher's Fair
- All committee members must attend both Student Group Leader Training sessions. (September and January).
- Hold at least one event, meeting or social per term. (Details of which must be submitted to DO.)
- All committee members must attend a 1-1 meeting each term with their delegated member of DO staff.
- At least one committee member must attend the monthly Society Council. (This does not have to be the same person.)
- All committee-meeting minutes must be taken in full and sent to the groups delegated member of DO staff.
- Completed risk assessments for each new activity
- Regular room bookings if bookings are required for the group. (Can be weekly, monthly etc.)
- Hold an AGM meeting and notify the delegated member of DO staff.
- Hold fair and correct elections
- Email all member via the website consistently and copy in delegated member of DO staff.



Two Stripes:

- Uphold all of the Basic stripe criteria
- Hold at least two events/meeting or socials for all members per term
- Update the Union website page with a news article or event at least once per term
- Hold an activity or a promotion at event at least one other campus than the one you are based at
- Achieve what is outlined in your personal Development Plan and review your plan with the committee
- Create a form or social media to enhance the visibility of your group
- Support another student group with an activity

Three Stripes

- Hold an event with a Sports Team and/or RAG
- Offer at least ? hours of volunteering as a society for a local cause of your choice
- Upload a personalised video to your SU website page
- Social to a SU official event?
- Promote the Students' Union Leadership Elections and the National Student Survey to your members



Hertfordshire Students' Union

About

STAMPS (Societies Training and Merit Participation Scheme) is an initiative which we designed to help support and guide societies in growing, becoming more active, promoting themselves more and engaging in charitable fundraising and volunteering activities.

This is an OPTIONAL scheme for societies but has proved to be of great benefit to societies that engage with it.

The idea

The idea was to encourage societies to become more active and develop. The setting of certain objectives means that participating societies market themselves more, ensure they hold various events and activities, help them collaborate with other student groups and also become more socially responsible through fundraising and volunteering.

There are associated awards for societies which reach each level (such as a pull up banner, free promotional materials, funding etc).

This was inspired by the STARS (Student Training and Activities Reward Scheme) initiative from the University of Nottingham Students' Union. The aim was to overcome societies affiliating but then failing to grow or fully support their membership.

Development stages

We went on a Students' Union tour to the University of Nottingham Students' Union,

Leeds University Union and Warwick Students' Union, in order to see how they reward their student groups for their achievements.

We also held an internal committee with Student Activities staff, sabbatical officers and society committee members, and decided upon what was needed from the STAMPS initiative.

For us, STARS from the University of Nottingham Students' Union, was most like what we wanted to achieve and was also what was most practicable for us by looking at resource availability.

Advice

There are two main things we would have liked to do slightly differently from the outset.

Firstly, societies fed back that rewards needed to be a little higher/more than they were when we first implemented STAMPS, so we have done this successfully over the last year.

Secondly, societies also identified that the STAMPS criteria was too high for newly affiliated societies (as they are new and so are usually small in membership numbers). As a result, we are now looking at a revised system to accommodate lower criteria for societies less than one academic year old.

Our advice to anyone else starting a similar rewards scheme is to:

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- look at 3 or 4 other Students' Unions to see what they do, as differing budgets and resource levels can dictate what you can practically offer as society rewards,
- speak to societies directly to identify what rewards would be most beneficial and/or needed to them, as if the rewards are not desired then societies will not participate in the scheme, and
- really celebrate societies successes on and around campus, social media, student media publications, email, newsletters etc so that their successes are valued.

The only real thing that did not go to plan was that not all societies got involved, but we quickly realised that this is because some societies just do not want, need or desire to participate. We counteracted this somewhat by increasing rewards, but also had to accept that some societies simply do not wish to engage with the initiative.

Indicators of success

STAMPS definitely helped societies grow and become more active, and also introduced some friendly competition between societies as those participating wanted to be the first to achieve bronze, silver and gold etc. It has also helped us to increase the number of paid members over the two academic years by approximately 15%.

STAMPS has actually not involved a great deal of additional work, but has made the life of

societies much easier, as it gives them targets to work towards and actions to achieve. This in turn raises their profile, gets them new members and helps them grow.

To measure the impact of this, we look at the number of paid members societies have, the number of press releases in student media they have, the number of marketing materials we authorise and the number of bookings we process (venue hire, classroom bookings etc). This is because we can identify increases in activity throughout the year.

We also have an end of year survey for societies to review how the STAMPS process has been, what we do well and what could be improved, and what rewards are appreciated and desired the most.

Further information

We hold four Societies Federation meetings a year for society committees, and here we discuss STAMPS progress each time and offer help, advice and tips. This helps us to ensure that STAMPS is encouraged throughout the year.

In addition, in our end of year feedback 2012-2013, we identified that 75% of societies engage in STAMPS, and 100% of societies found our service 'Easy' and 'Okay' to use, showing that it is something that makes a real significant difference to societies at Hertfordshire Students' Union.

Attached is the Hertfordshire SU document explaining the criteria for STAMPS.

For more information about the scheme, please contact [Ciaran O'Brien](#) at Hertfordshire SU.



STAMPS

We have developed a system for recognising and rewarding societies. This system links society activities and plans for development with rewards. We want you to be recognised for the hard work you put into your societies and to actively work to develop your societies to make them sustainable for the future.

To be an officially recognised society (in order to receive union funds, book rooms etc) each society must achieve at least Red status. We welcome your comments so please remember to give us your feedback on anything you can suggest so that we can benefit you better!

The Societies Coordinators are here to help you through all stages of the scheme so you can always come in and ask for help and ideas. When you achieve each STAMPS task then you **MUST** ensure that you let us know ASAP so that we can give you the right accreditation level and keep your record up to date!

RED

Red accreditation is new this year: it allows new or small societies to achieve the basic criteria of being a society. While all societies must meet these requirements, for new or small societies it means you have a structure in place to ensure you get off the ground and progress over the years.

You should have:

- 15 paid members
- Completed a generic Risk Assessment and Society Constitution
- Held one event
- Attended a Societies Induction session
- Met with the Student Activities team to build a development plan

BRONZE

Bronze accreditation is designed to help develop societies by ensuring that societies are actively meeting the needs of and providing other benefits to your members. You should have:

- Held three events (workshops, lectures, socials, trips or meetings)
- Actively promoted a volunteering opportunity to your members
- Attended one Society Federation meeting
- Attended one Student Skills Training session
- Had one article printed in UniVerse or Blue Moon (print or online)
- Provided feedback on the Societies Induction Session

What will you get in return?

You will get access to Union publicity including StudyNet posts, use of notice boards, campus plasma screens and promotion via Hertfordshire Students' Union Societies' social media; Bronze accreditation on the SU website, and use of the Bronze STAMPS logo on promotional material and other union publications; presentation of a Bronze STAMPS certificate at our annual Student Recognition Evening (SRE); and £20 in your society account for the **first five** societies to achieve Bronze accreditation.

SILVER

Silver accreditation is designed to help societies develop further and become more sociable and collaborative, thus enhancing the experience of your members and your profile on campus. You should have:

- Achieved Bronze accreditation
- Had two articles printed in UniVerse or Blue Moon (print or online)
- Had one promotional slot on Crush Radio or Crush Underground
- Raised money for RaG by running your own fundraising event
- Attended three Student Skills Training sessions
- Run a joint activity with another society
- Attended two Society Federation meetings

What will you get in return?

You will get 40 A3 and 150 A4 or 300 A5 posters or leaflets printed for free for society promotion; Silver accreditation on our website, and use of the Silver STAMPS logo on promotional material and other union publications; presentation of a Silver STAMPS certificate at our annual Student Recognition Evening (SRE); and £40 in your society account for the **first five** societies to achieve Silver accreditation.

GOLD

Gold accreditation is designed to help societies operate at their very best, promote their events and activities fully and show willingness to support charitable and community based activities. You should have:

- Achieved Silver accreditation
- Held two events that actively seek to engage with non-members
- Attended five Student Skills Training sessions
- Had three articles printed in UniVerse or Blue Moon (print or online)
- Submitted all required risk assessments as and when necessary
- Participated in a Hertfordshire Students' Union Volunteering project or activity
- Successfully held committee elections for 2013/14
- Attended all four Society Federation meetings
- Applied for a Student Activities Grant (whether successful or not)

What will you get in return?

You will get 60 A3 **and** 200 A4 or 400 A5 posters or leaflets printed for free for promotion; Gold accreditation on our website, and use of the Gold STAMPS logo on promotional material and other union publications; presentation of a Gold STAMPS certificate and additional seat allocation at our annual Student Recognition Evening (SRE); £60 in your society account for the **first five** societies to achieve Gold accreditation **and** a pull up-banner; priority locations at the Freshers Fair (term one) and Refreshers Fair (term two) plus additional performance slots (if desired); and increased campus coverage of society posters distributed by the Student Activities team.

London School of Economics Students' Union

About

STARS is the LSE accreditation scheme for societies and AU clubs. The societies and clubs have to fill out an application form with what they have done over the year. The SU Staff and Sabbatical officer then review all the applications and judge them according to their submissions.

We find it is important to have the SU staff and sabbatical do it because sometimes the applications do not represent how much the society have done. E.g. some societies find it very hard to sell themselves and others are very good at selling themselves.

They are ranked Bronze, Silver, Gold and Double Gold. Double gold is a new award for groups that have won Gold twice. We have different criteria that we judge them on but the criteria is designed to be easy and open to all.

The idea

We judge the societies and clubs on organisational skill, community spirit, attending union events and training, the events they do, financial management, and how well the society is run.

The scheme offers rewards to societies such as freshers' priority placement, money for freshers', tickets for (university or union run events), free logo design, clothing discounts through our supplier. We are always looking to expand the rewards that we give out.

Development stages

We encourage them to record things throughout the year but its mainly done at the end. However, they have to attend SU training that we do, and GIAG and other SU stuff so we record that.

Indicators of success

The scheme has been running for four years but it has really taken off in the last two. Last year we had 80 nominations and the year before we had 16 in total.

Further information

Attached is the LSE STARS scheme document.

For more information about the scheme, please contact [Iain Pullar](#) at LSE SU.





Student Training and Awards Recognition Scheme

Intro

STARS is a scheme aimed at supporting you as a Society, Media Group member or Sports Club – aiding development and rewarding excellence for what you *can* achieve and what you *already* achieve. The following document is an explanation of how the award scheme works, and on what basis merit is awarded

Awards

Bronze Award

Clubs, Societies and groups who achieve Bronze accreditation receive:

- *Logo to use on all materials for 1 year*
- *Bronze status in all Union materials and on the Union website*
- *Facilitated strategy planning sessions to help plan and support long-term development*
- *Free Logo Design*
- *Discounted branded merchandise.*

Silver Award

Clubs, Societies and groups who achieve Silver accreditation receive:

- *Logo to use on all materials for 1 year*
- *Silver status in all Union materials and on the Union website*
- *£50 to spend on Freshers' Fayre promotion*
- *Free Logo Design*
- *Discounted branded merchandise*

Gold Award

Clubs, Societies and groups who achieve Gold accreditation receive:

- *Logo to use on all materials for 1 year*
- *Gold status in all Union materials and on the Union website*
- *Prioritised consideration for Freshers Fayre Stalls*

- *Prioritised consideration for Union facility bookings*
- *£100 to spend on Freshers' Fayre promotion*
- *Free Logo Design*
- *Priority Tickets for LSE events.*
- *Discounted branded merchandise*

Further Awards

Clubs and Societies who achieve Gold consecutively will receive.

- A special logo to say they have won the consecutive awards
- Clubs and Societies who have achieved Gold 3 times in a row will be inducted into the Hall of Fame.

*Opportunities to assist or benefit a limited number of clubs and societies often arise and we will continue to add to the benefits awarded to those who achieve STARS awards

Process

The process is as follows:

- 1) Read and fill in the nomination form.
- 2) Collate any supporting evidence.
- 3) Submit nomination form and any evidence to Iain Pullar, The Societies Development Coordinator,
- 4) (i.t.pullar@lse.ac.uk) by the Thursday 21st March.
- 5) Applications are judged over the Easter break.
- 6) Awards are announced and presented at the SU Award night on Friday the 3rd of May.

It must be stressed that the award decisions will be made taking into account what your group already achieves, your capabilities and your size/make up

Awards criteria

Below is a list of areas which will be taken into account when considering STARS accreditation. You don't need to have done all of the suggested things; they are just there as examples and to get you thinking about how you could have fulfilled the different areas highlighted. Don't hesitate to contact the Activities and Development Officer (su.activitiesdevelopment@lse.ac.uk) or Iain Pullar (i.t.pullar@lse.ac.uk) if you have any queries about what might fall into these criteria.

Excellence in operations

Let us know how your group is excellently run. Have members of your group attended most or all of the SU training sessions? Have you planned handovers for your new committees? Do you hold open and fair elections, then submit registration documents and grant requests on time? Is your group financially stable? How have your events gone?

Volunteer Opportunities

How has your society supported it's active members and provided them with unique opportunities. Do your members represent the group in national competitions or meetings? How do you support your members to take positions of responsibility in the SU and wider society? How does your group encourage those with no prior experience to get actively involved? What qualifications opportunities have you provided for your members?

Contribution to the student body

Let us know how your society has contributed to the general student experience at LSE. This is your chance to let us know about what you've done for all LSE Students. Did you get involved in official SU initiatives like Give It A Go? Did you arrange any events with other student groups? Has your group had a representative at the UGM on a regular basis? Have you collaborated with other Clubs or Societies

Contribution to wider society

You should use this space to tell us what your student group has done to positively contribute to wider society. Does your society promote any form of volunteering? Do any events you host have a focus on improving wider society for all? Has your group linked up with other similar groups in the country?





Student Training and Awards Recognition Scheme Nomination Form

Club / Society:

Individual(s) completing the form:

Please explain which of the criteria you believe your club/soc has met this year and give examples of any evidence which you may be able to provide.

You should include which training sessions you have attended along with any actions taken as a result of these sessions.

You may also submit additional information / evidence to support your nomination.

You do not have to fulfil every single criterion and more information on each of the main headings can be found on the introduction sheet.



Please demonstrate how your club / society has shown the following:

Excellence in operations

Volunteer Opportunities

Contribution to the student body



Contribution to wider society

If you won an award last year, what category did you receive? What have you done differently this year.



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