

Student fundraising

Briefing: developing student fundraising

This briefing discusses ideas for improving the student fundraising that already happens in your union, and how you could start student fundraising. It also outlines the role of the National Student Fundraising Association.

What is 'NaSFA'?

The National Student Fundraising Association, 'NaSFA', was set up in 2011 at RAG Conference by a group of keen student fundraisers. Their intention when establishing NaSFA was to provide a representative body for all student fundraisers across the UK – not just for those called 'RAG' and not just for groups. NaSFA represents groups of fundraisers, regardless of how they are organised, but also represents individual fundraisers, too.

The NaSFA committee are elected each year at the NaSFA AGM, which is part of RAG Conference. There are six, non-portfolio committee positions, which are filled with students or student officers from higher or further education institutions.

NaSFA & NUS

After being established, the NaSFA committee felt that the best way to achieve success would be to partner with another organisation with similar values. NUS won the bid to support NaSFA.

NaSFA is completely independent of NUS and its' policies. Even if your students' union isn't affiliated to NUS, you can still be represented by NaSFA.

NUS provide support for NaSFA through promoting activities, providing spaces for meetings and training, and servicing all meetings. NUS also offers NaSFA the opportunity to have a presence at key events, such as National Conference.

The current student fundraising climate

Student fundraising has always been an integral part of students' union activity, and the currently popular model of 'RAG' has existed for hundreds of years in different forms. This heritage means that student fundraising is fairly well known outside of the student movement, albeit often known more for its fun events rather than positive impacts made.

This is changing; employers are starting to recognise the impact that student fundraising has on society, as well as on the individuals' personal development.

Participation in student fundraising is high, and has increased since last year; NUS' *Success in the Student Market* (2014) report indicates that 50% of students have taken part in fundraising, and that participation in student fundraising has increased by 2% from 2013.

The logo for NaSFA, featuring the letters 'NaSFA' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. The 'a' is lowercase and blue, while the other letters are uppercase and orange.The logo for NUS, featuring the lowercase letters 'nus' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The 'n' and 'u' are connected. To the right of the 's' is a white square. Below the logo, the text 'national union of students' is written in a smaller, black, sans-serif font.

Organising student fundraising

Student fundraising is structured differently in most students' unions; there is no perfect way to do it and your structure will depend upon your students' needs and the capacity of the students' union.

The different structures can be grouped based upon how funds are processed:

Single 'RAG'/fundraising group model

- All fundraising done by this group
- No other fundraising groups permitted
- Group usually managed as a society with an elected committee

'RAG'/fundraising group working with other groups

- All fundraising co-ordinated by RAG/fundraising group
- Clubs and societies can do their own fundraising but must notify/work with RAG

At Sheffield SU, societies can 'adopt a charity' from the RAG list of selected charities. They then focus their fundraising on their adopted charity.

Multiple fundraising groups

- Cause-focused/charity groups (E.g. Amnesty International Society/Unicef)
- No single 'RAG'/fundraising group
- Some SUs have multiple charity/cause-focused groups and a RAG

Student fundraising & existing communities

One of the best ways to boost the funds raised in your union is to work with existing communities. The two easiest options are to work with clubs/societies, and to work with the communities in university/college residences.

Clubs & societies

- If your SU model for fundraising involves clubs/societies and fundraising group working together, ensure that you introduce an agreement between the society/club and the fundraising group. Expectation management is really important here!
- Your student fundraisers can train your clubs and societies in key fundraising skills, such as communicating with impact, team work, and project management.
- Your clubs and societies will invest more time and energy into fundraising if they care about the cause. Get them to fundraise for specific campaigns/charities relating to their activity.

Residences

- Whether you already have an existing students' union residences committee/support structure or not, student fundraising is a great way to increase engagement.
- Establish contact with residents as early as possible. Some students' union put welcome packs into each bedroom or each kitchen. Student fundraising should feature in this if possible. Some SU fundraising groups offer to distribute the packs in exchange for the publicity.

The logo for NSFA (National Students' Fundraising Association) features the letters 'NSFA' in a bold, orange, sans-serif font. A small blue lowercase 'a' is positioned between the 'S' and 'F'.

- Some fundraising groups keep their work with residences fairly informal, however most have some kind of structured representation system. Perhaps you could have a representative for each hall? This representative is usually responsible for organising fundraising events and rallying their resident neighbours to come along.
- Competition is key for raising lots! Encourage the residence fundraising teams to compete against each other to raise the most/have the most people at their event/organise the best event, etc.

Planning for success

As with all student groups, it's crucial to plan main events and activities well in advance. Some of the more successful fundraising groups have a different focus for each term, which helps with planning.

Term one: recruitment & engagement

- Getting new volunteers involved
- Getting old members to re-join (make sure you show them that they're important too – it's not just about new recruits)
- Organising large-scale, fun events that will capture the attention of potential volunteers, and potential donors – make fundraising a big thing in your institution

Term two: consistency & capacity building

- Don't lose momentum – continue to organise fundraising activities
- Keep activity as regular as possible
- Consistency is important, but don't forget to innovate. Just because you've

- *always* had RAG Week in February, does not mean you have to stick to this. Question why you're doing something and if it will raise enough money to be worth the effort.

Term three: communication & planning

- Choose a date for counting your total – promote this and make a big deal about it. Perhaps make the total announcement into an event?
- Communicate with your charities and with wider society – tell them how much you've earned, do cheque presentations etc, but don't forget to tell press, your institution, and NaSFA.
- Planning for next year shouldn't wait until the end of summer – ensure you do a good handover between the committees, and get both involved in next year's planning. (There's a guidance document about [handover](#) on the Student Opportunities Resource Hub)

Something else to plan into your year of activities is selecting charities. This may happen at the end of the academic year, or at the start of the next. There is no 'right' way to do this but it is something to consider.

Further information

This briefing was created following a Student Opportunities Lunch & Learn webinar that took place on 17th April 2014. The slides from this webinar are available on the Student Opportunities pages on NUS Connect.

Further reading

[The National Student Fundraising Association \(NaSFA\) website](#) – regularly updated with content for student fundraisers and those who support student fundraising.



[The Charity Commission](#)

The Institute of Fundraising '[Code of Fundraising Practice](#)'.

[Five ideas for innovative fundraising](#), by Save the Children.

[Running an event safely](#) – guidance from NUS and the Health and Safety Executive.

[NUS Student Opportunities Resource Hub](#)

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



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