

Section 2 - Connect with your University



Get to know the Students' Union

At some point, when you visited your chosen university, you will probably have come across the students' union. It's a good idea to familiarise yourself with your university's union in advance of arriving on campus so you know what it is, what it can offer you and how it can support.

When you arrive on campus, the union will hold a freshers' fair or similar welcome event. The university registration process may also take place in a students' union building, so make sure you locate it on your campus map.

Your union is more than just a place that sells cheap beer (though they usually do that too). Students' unions are run by reps elected by students, and they're responsible for representing you – so you can go to them for all kinds of support. Here are some of the things the students' union will offer:

Enjoy playing sport?

Your union will probably run a sports club for the sport you love the most as well as many others you may never have heard of. Why not try a new sport, or one you haven't played for a few years? Not only does it get you some exercise, you'll make great friends and there are all sorts of positions of responsibility that keep these clubs running. You can develop your leadership skills while having fun - all good stuff to put on your CV.

Have a hobby?

Your union will probably provide a society that will link you up with other people who have the same hobby. And even if they don't, you can start one.

Having problems at university or college?

Not only will your students' union be able to offer advice, or at least direct you to the best place to receive advice, but they will also be able to find ways of addressing the problem through lobbying or campaigning on your behalf. So if your halls of residence aren't clean enough, the bus routes not frequent enough or your course feedback not good enough then go to your union – they will be able to help.

Want to develop your skills alongside your education?

Whether it be running a club or society, volunteering in the community or getting elected to a union committee to lead campaigns on issues that affect you and your fellow students, your students' union will help you develop your employability skills.

So don't just think of it as a place for drinks and discounts. At university you will make lifelong friends, share unforgettable experiences and develop your skills and ideas to become the person you want to be.

National Union of Students

The NUS is a voluntary membership organisation which promotes, defends and extends the rights of students and develops and champions strong students' unions. Most university students' unions are part of the NUS.

Have a look at the NUS website for further information about campaigns as well as advice and student discounts.

<https://www.nus.org.uk/>