

10 steps to Starting a STAR group



So you've decided to start your own STAR group? Brilliant!

To help you get going here are some key things you need to do or think about.

- ★ **Contact STAR National.** If you haven't already, then get in touch with Jack Hansen (Student Network Coordinator) to talk about what you'd like to do and find out more about what STAR groups do. Before you do so it is worth double-checking if there is a similar society on campus and how that might affect your group.
- ★ **Speak to your Students' Union.** Contact the person responsible for societies (e.g. Societies Officer) and find out what you need to do to set up a society and what support the Union can provide for your new group.
- ★ **Form your society committee.** You need to appoint people to the positions required by your Students' Union and any other roles necessary to take responsibility for other tasks you may have. This will sometimes be a formal election with a Union representative present, particularly if you have a large number of people to begin with. However, it may be more appropriate to have an informal meeting where positions are agreed by consensus, especially if this is considered provisional and you intend to hold open elections later in the year.
- ★ **Register your society.** To be a STAR group you have to be a student society. You will usually need to collect some signatures (e.g. 15-30) and get at least 3 people to agree to be on the new committee (e.g. as Chair, Treasurer, Secretary). You may need to wait before the Union confirm your registration.

What can student societies get? You will most likely get some or all of the following:

1. Added to list of societies so students know you're there!
2. Funding for your group
3. Advertising opportunities at society events, including Freshers' Fair
4. Free training and advice on basic aspects of running a student group from Student Union officers
5. Access (or easier access) to university facilities and equipment

It's also a requirement to become a STAR group and join the STAR network by affiliating to the national charity.

- ★ **Affiliate to the STAR network.** Ask STAR National for a copy of the Affiliation Agreement for you to check, sign and return to officially become a new STAR group!
- ★ **Hold your first meeting.** Get together those who are interested to plan your first steps, including getting more members and organising your first events or activities.
- ★ **Promote your group!** The first thing you'll need is members, and plenty of them. You need to make sure that as many people on campus know that there is a STAR group at their university. To start you can try...
 - Freshers' Fair. This is the best opportunity to recruit members, but at other times of the year there may be a 'Re-Freshers Fair'.

- Linking up with similar societies to share what you're doing and talk about ways to work together.
- Starting a Facebook group. An easy way to build support among friends and advertise.
- Attending university events. Check the Union Diary for events such as "One World Festivals" and "International Weeks" which you could book stalls at and/or organise events for.
- Contacting relevant departments. See if you can advertise on departmental notice boards or contact lecturers and departments who you think may have a natural fit with your group's aims and interests.

★ **Get your STAR resource pack.** Ask STAR National for a box of lovely materials, including leaflets, stickers, beer mats, balloons, refugee leaflets, campaign info, etc.

★ **Organise your first public event.** Kick start your group by holding an introductory evening open to all students, and remember, advertising your event is key! A member of the STAR National team will be happy to come and speak.

A number of different events will work, e.g. a short talk, a film and quiz, or a music night. Whatever you do try to keep it simple and make sure that people leave with some basic info about STAR and refugees and a clear idea of how to get more involved. This could be part of a presentation, or through brief announcements, or leaflets handed at the door.

★ **Find local volunteering opportunities.** STAR National can help you find local refugee projects and organisations to volunteer with. Get in touch with Emily Crowley, Volunteering Project Coordinator, to discuss what you're interested in doing.