

# Running a STAR group

*How to build and maintain a successful STAR group*



## Changing committees

Everyone has to leave university at some point, and this means leaving your beloved STAR group as well! Passing on the knowledge, skills and experience you have picked up to the next crop of students is vital for the long-term success of your STAR group.

Here's some suggestions for how to handover the running of your group.

### Why have a committee at all?

Having a committee (or 'Exec', etc) will give the group greater stability, better decision-making ability and will ensure that no one becomes too stressed with all the responsibility. With different members of the group taking responsibility for different areas you are more likely to get things done. Students' Unions also usually require that there are certain elected officers in your society.

### Identifying people to takeover

If you've got a big strong group with plenty of people interested for next year, then it should be easy! But keep in mind the following:

- ★ **Be Clear** - people need to know what they are committing to
- ★ **Be Reassuring** – let people know that they can take on less responsibility if they need to; they are not signing their lives away, all contributions are welcome
- ★ **Advice and support** is available from the STAR national team for new committees by phone, email, or visits. We can talk things through using our knowledge of how other groups have been successful.
- ★ **FREE Committee Training** is on offer in June! If they're unsure about running a group, or what STAR is about, they can come to this event to prepare for next year.
- ★ **Rewards** – chance to lead a group, establish lasting projects, great addition to CV, chance to develop important skills for planning, managing, etc.

If you don't think you have anyone in your group who might be able to take over, and you need to find some more people, then you could:

- ★ **Advertise** for the roles through all available channels (volunteering bureau, other societies, relevant departments) – including a free invitation for STAR national Committee Training
- ★ **Hold an open election** – advertise widely, make sure people know they can nominate themselves without previous activity or knowledge
- ★ **Events** – advertise at any related event you can, run by STAR or not!
- ★ **Invite national team** to speak at an intro event

## Handing over responsibility

If you've got some new committee members, the next challenge is to have a smooth handover to prepare your successors. If you can, try the following:

- ★ **Face to face handover** - have a separate meeting, this gives an opportunity for the new committee to ask questions
- ★ **Set a date** for when your successor will take over from you completely. This will avoid confusion for yourselves and others you work with
- ★ **Make information accessible** - if you have lots of old bits of paper and materials, try to make sure they are organised so they are easy for someone else to use
- ★ **Help arrange a meeting** between the new committee and key people you work with
- ★ **Introduce them to STAR national** – send us their email, or encourage them to give us a call
- ★ **Exchange contact details** so they can ask for advice next year

The best way to handover to the next committee will be by writing things down. You will be giving them a lot of information, so just telling them won't be enough.

It might help to **write a short summary**, putting all the key information in one place. You could aim to include:

- ★ **Outline of your role** - what you were responsible for, the main difficulties, any tips you picked up.
- ★ **Activities List** - a list of what your group did this year, how it was done, positives and negatives, recommendations for next year.
- ★ **Contacts List** - a list of all important and useful contacts (inc. who they are, what your contact with them has been about)
- ★ **Friends and partnerships** - a brief list/description of the societies, groups, departments and organisations who you've worked with.
- ★ **STAR calendar** - Committee Training in June, National conference in November, Freshers' Pack in September, Action Week in February/March.
- ★ **National team support** - what the national team can offer: specialised training, ideas shared from across the network, contact with other STARs, advice on activities, projects, and events.
- ★ **Tips** - it's often the little things that will really help, make sure your experience is not lost!

Note: using a group email address is a good idea because then everyone you work with will be able to stay in touch with the new group.

## What to do if you don't have a new committee

If you are worried that you won't find any new members to run your STAR group, then you can take some steps so that the information is kept safe for a future re-birth!

- ★ 'Handover' to **STAR National** all information and contacts. If students get interested the following year we can help them pick up where you left off!
- ★ Contact **local partner organisations** and inform them of the situation. Ask them to contact STAR national to discuss possible ways forward.

- ★ Contact **Societies sabbatical officer** or equivalent. ‘Handover’ the society to them for safe keeping. Ask if they can book a freshers stall for STAR national to run to recruit more students.
- ★ Contact **Union volunteering bureau / Student Community Action**. Ask if they can keep any volunteering opportunities open to students next year.
- ★ Ask if any similar, friendly **societies** will keep knowledge of past work, continue to advertise certain opportunities, and encourage interested students to start a new group by contacting STAR national.

## Committee roles

The roles that you have on your committee – and your committee size – will depend on the activities and needs of your group. The important thing is to make sure you always identify a set of tasks that need doing *before* creating a role (rather than creating a role and later finding that it isn’t clear what this person is supposed to do!).

We’ve included some standard roles and tasks that you can consider when creating the roles for your group.

### Chair/President:

- Coordinate overall activity
- Ensure group stays focused on its aims
- Support other committee members in their roles
- Act as chair for group meetings
- Communicate with the STAR national team
- Communicate with the Students’ Union, other societies and external organisations

### Secretary:

- Take minutes of meetings
- Write emails to members
- Manage website/Facebook group
- Support Chair/President with administrative tasks

### Treasurer:

- Record donations/money raised
- Prepare any budgets/grant application forms for your student’s union
- Organise floats for stalls/activities

### Volunteering Coordinator:

- Maintain contact with volunteers and update them on project info, changes and developments
- Keep in contact with local refugee support organisations
- Ensure volunteers have access to the information and advice they need
- Make sure the contribution of volunteers is recognized

### Campaigns Coordinator:

- Make sure the group is updated on STAR national campaign info
- Coordinate group campaigning actions
- Communicate with local organisations with mutual campaigning aims
- Keep updated on local campaign events