

# Guide to Groups

**University of Cumbria**  
Students' Union



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# Useful Contacts



**James Wells**

Activities Officer

[james.wells@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james.wells@cumbria.ac.uk)

James is here for all things groups, volunteering, extracurricular activity, welcome week planning and professional signposting. He has plenty of experience in running a Group, so is great to seek advice from.



**Annabelle Robinson**

Welfare Officer

[annabelle.robinson2@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:annabelle.robinson2@cumbria.ac.uk)

Annabelle can be contacted for information on any ongoing campaigns, advice on your own wellbeing-related initiatives, to pass any feedback on about things affecting your welfare, and to help you gain further understanding of support available. They also work to support student networks.



**Eleanor Armstrong**

Academic Officer

[eleanor.armstrong2@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:eleanor.armstrong2@cumbria.ac.uk)

Eleanor is here for all things teaching, assessments, placements, and learning resources. She also oversees the Academic Representative system – so you might see her in workshops and training sessions throughout the year!



**Grace Wakeman**

Groups Coordinator

[grace.wakeman@cumbria.ac.uk](mailto:grace.wakeman@cumbria.ac.uk)

The designated staff member to manage all things Groups and networks, from setting up and running a group, to planning events and campaigns.

# The Yearly Planner

For confirmed dates, please keep an eye on your Teams channel for announcements.

## **Welcome Week**

This happens during the last two weeks in September.

## **Compulsory Group Training**

More information can be found on page 9.

## **Workshops**

These are optional, but helpful!

## **Student Volunteering Week**

Campaigns and awareness days happen all year round! If you would like to get involved or your group is interested in something...get in touch with your Activities Officer, James Wells.

## **Election Period**

Where we elect Campus Reps, Officers, and our NUS Delegate.

## **New Committee Election**

## **New Committee training**

## **Planning for Welcome Week**

## **End of year celebrations**



# What Makes a UCSU Group?

A Group is a number of individuals who share the same passion for a sport, an interest/hobby or activities that support their studies. A UCSU Group will be run by a committee of 2 or more people. All Groups are listed on our [website](#).

## Why Affiliate to UCSU?

- Support from staff, including a dedicated Groups Coordinator and Activities Officer.
- Access to funding.
- Tailored training opportunities.
- Appropriate insurance cover.
- Help with promotion and marketing.
- Access to location bookings.
- Visibility to the student body via our website.
- Support with planning events and activities.
- A platform to help you manage your memberships and events.
- An online system to manage your finances.

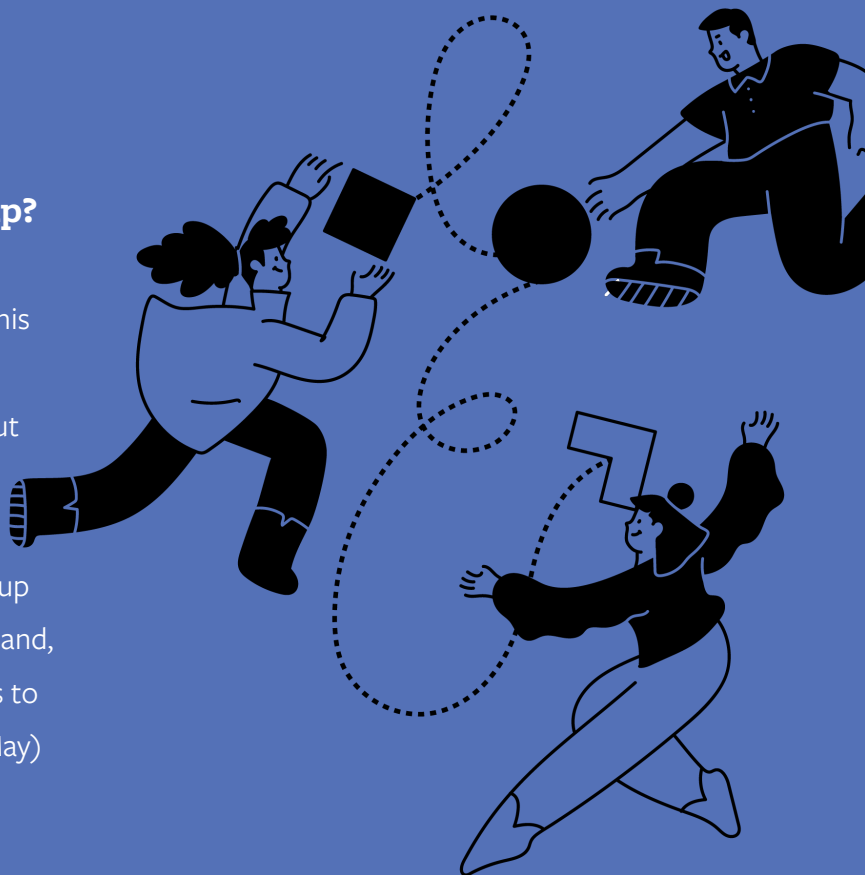
## What is Meant By a Student-led Group?

All UCSU affiliated Groups must be student-led. This means that whilst there may be external support, current students should be making decisions about running the Group and its activities.

In order to help ensure that this is the case, a Group needs its members to elect a committee annually and, decide whether to re-affiliate to UCSU. This needs to be completed by the end of the academic year (May) to ensure longevity of the Group.

## What Does a Committee Do?

A committee runs your Group. It can be formed from (at least) 2 or more people and it must have a person responsible for the Group's finances (a treasurer) and a person who has undertaken Health & Safety training. Some Groups choose to nominate individuals to hold named positions such as Chairperson, whilst others just split tasks between committee members.



Below is a list of potential roles your committee may include and the activities that **need** to be completed:

### **Position: Chairperson**

You steer the group in the right direction.

#### **Things You Need to Do**

- Link with the Groups Coordinator and attend relevant training. The entire committee can take in Group training.
- With your committee, decide on the aims of your Group, and the different activities you will host to achieve this.
- As a committee, organise opportunities to recruit new members and expand your Group.
- As a committee, organise fundraising activity, such as events and sponsorships.

### **Position: Treasurer**

You monitor and track your Group's funds.

#### **Things You Need to Do**

- Keep track of spending and income within your Group.
- Set Group membership fees for the year.
- Look for and apply for funding (e.g. grants).

### **Position: Secretary**

You monitor the website and organise Group meetings.

#### **Things You Need to Do**

- Consider which promotional media is best for promoting the Group.
- Ensure ALL members (and committee) are registered for your Group.
- Set dates for committee meetings for the year.
- Update the Group's hub and landing page on [www.ucsu.me](http://www.ucsu.me) and keep other social media up to date.
- Organise opportunities to recruit new members.

### **Position: Health & Safety Officer**

You keep everyone safe.

#### **Things You Need to Do**

- Plan, register and ensure adequate risk assessments are completed for every activity and event.
- Commit time to attend Risk Management training.
- Make sure all members are registered correctly in the Group.

### **Position: Captain (Sports Teams)**

You manage your team during fixtures.

#### **Things You Need to Do**

- Submit team sheets ahead of sports fixtures.
- Coordinate all aspects of team management.
- Act as the match day contact.





## Group Training and Workshops

UCSU runs training sessions and workshops throughout the year to help you progress your personal skills and excel as a committee and as a Group. Keep yourself updated with the Student Groups Hub Teams channel to ensure you don't miss out – you can ask the Groups Coordinator or Activities Officer for more details!

Training sessions will usually be hosted via Teams and will be available to access on Blackboard if you are unable to attend. We strongly advise that you join these as it forms basic knowledge of running a Group and can count towards your Performance Reckoner score.

### Training helps you build the basis for your Group including:

- How to write a risk assessment.
- Money, Money, Money!
- How to run a group.
- How to plan an event.
- Website training.

Workshops are more likely to be face-to-face. Please let us know how many people from your committee are able to attend each workshop, as the number will determine whether it will run or not.

### Workshops May Include:

- Leadership
- Marketing
- Managing Conflict

**A UCSU Group must be run by a committee of 2 or more people (a treasurer and someone who has completed the H&S training).**

**Affiliating to UCSU provides your Group with support, funding, appropriate insurance, promotional aid and much MORE!**

**The UCSU offers Group training and workshops to help you and your Group develop skills needed to run a successful Group e.g. writing a risk assessment, managing finances etc.**

# Membership

All Groups must charge a minimum membership fee of £1.00. This ensures affiliation to UCSU and funds part of the cost of running the Groups web hub, and provides a small amount which UCSU uses for the development of student Group's through the Group Development Fund (GDF).

**Anyone can join the Group, but only current students can be on the committee.**

Membership fees are set at the beginning of every academic year by the committee. Such fees should be set to cover the expected running costs of the Group and should be reviewed at the end of every year.

Every member of a Group must have a valid membership before undertaking any activity, sport-related or otherwise. This is because **only** Groups and their members that are affiliated, are covered by UCSU insurance. In order for insurance to be valid, all Group committees and their members must abide by UCSU safety regulations, as laid out in this handbook.

## Top Tip!

When setting membership fees, try and avoid underselling your society. If you can show students/ your members what you are doing, what you plan to do for the year and that their money is not being wasted, charge more! This allows you to host better and more regular events for the future, without worrying too much about finances and not receiving the Group Grant you applied for.

**Groups must charge AT LEAST £1.00 per membership, to cover affiliation fees and to go towards the GDF.**

**Only members who have paid their membership are covered by UCSU insurance.**

# Money Matters

All Student Groups have a virtual account with UCSU.

If you are a new Group, you receive a Start-up Grant of £75 once you have sold three memberships. If you are taking over from an existing Group committee, the Groups Coordinator will confirm your current balance to you. All active Groups will have access to their account statement and current balance through their Groups Coordinator and the UCSU Finance Officer.

The committee has responsibility for managing and utilising all Group income and expenses. This is the role of the treasurer, if your committee has one. In order to do this, relevant training will be given.

## Making Payments From Your Account

In order to make a payment from your Group's account, you must complete the appropriate money request form on the 'Running a Group' page on the UCSU [website](#).

Forms are available to either claim back money you've already paid out OR ask UCSU to purchase something for you. There must be a receipt for every purchased item. Please make sure these requests are made 10 working days before you need the funds.

### Small Expenses

- No more than £50.
- A small purchase for an activity.
- Paid out by members and refunded by bank transfer.
- Things like food, refreshments, small prizes or equipment for an event.

### Large Expenses

- Anything costing more than £50. We will purchase on your behalf.
- This could be larger items or bookings for venues and transport.



**Money Request form  
submitted on  
[www.ucsu.me](http://www.ucsu.me)**

**Groups Coordinator  
checks you have funds  
available.**

**Payment made to you  
by bank transfer (please  
allow 10 working days).**

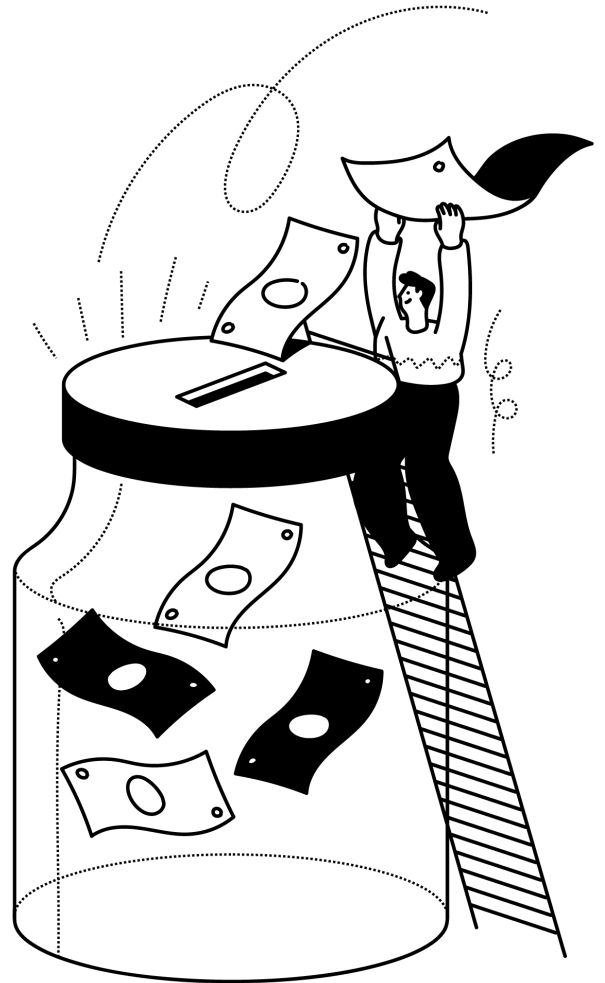
**Items purchased for  
you by Groups  
Coordinator.**

## Paying Money Into Your Account

To make cash payments into your Group account, you must complete a paying in form, which is available from any UCSU office. Any Group member can make a deposit and only one signature is required. Please ensure you collect a receipt for your own records.

Payments can also be made by bank transfer. Please ask your Groups Coordinator for more details.

For sponsorships, you will need to request an invoice to be sent to your sponsor, meaning the payment can be collected on your behalf and transferred to your account. Please note that sponsorship money may take longer than 30 working days, as payment terms usually apply.



**New Groups receive a Start-Up grant of £75, ONCE they have sold three memberships.**

**It is the committee's responsibility to manage and utilise Group income and expenses.**

**All the relevant forms for making payments from your Group account can be found on the UCSU [website](#).**

**Ensure you have receipts and request at least 10 working days before you need the funds.**

## How to Generate Income in a Group

Groups have several sources of income, including:

- Membership fees
- UCSU Group Grants
- Sponsorships
- Local and national funding initiatives
- Fundraisers

### Membership Fees

Ideally, you want your Group membership fees to cover the running costs of the Group. The amount that you charge will also be dependent on the expected number of members, your fundraising efforts, and the events and activities you will host throughout the year.

You may want to consider setting different types of memberships. This can allow students to be more flexible with their money, as well as encouraging more students to join your group at any time or at different levels. For example:

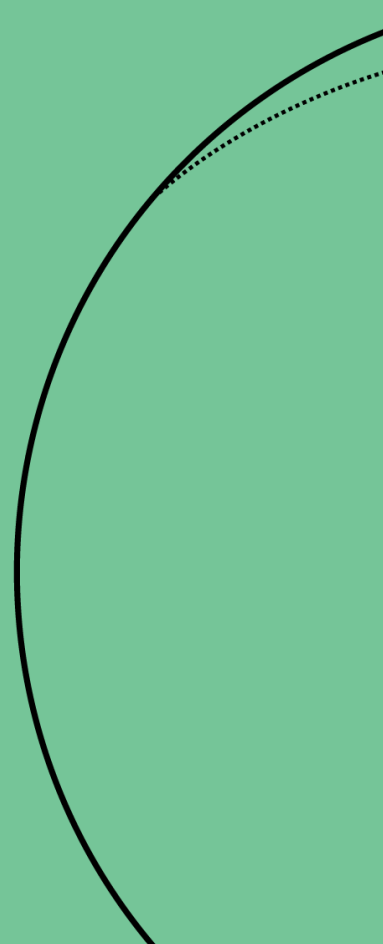
- Full year membership (includes all events, kit and equipment).
- Half year membership (includes all events, kit and equipment).
- Social membership (only access training and nights out, or access to events that are not course related).
- Experienced membership (returning students/people that do not need new equipment).
- Give it a Go membership (for the first and second month OR 5 events of your choice).

## Reducing the Membership Fees

You may be worrying that your prices are a little steep and that students will not join due to this. Here is what you could do:

- Recruit more members than you had originally planned.
- Assign some of the running costs to be covered by fundraising (remember that once you are committed to fundraising, it must go ahead, or the Group will go into debt!).
- Look for a sponsorship to help cover some of the costs.

It is important that, once set, membership fees are collected as soon as possible – a taster session is fine, but then ask people to commit before they attend the next session.



## Here is the best practice way to work out how to set your fees:

1. First things first – grab the accounts from last year.
2. Look at travel costs – these can stay fixed but often go up.
3. Review equipment and what may be required – the Groups Coordinator can help cost this out.
4. Add an extra £1.00 per expected member, to cover your affiliation fee.
5. Total everything up.
6. Decide what you are going to do with your opening account balance – Either add it as a cost if you are in debt; deduct it from the total cost if you are in credit; or disregard it for now to invest it into the Group for the future.
7. Now, divide the total by the number of members that you forecast for the group. You should now have the figure that you should charge per person, in order to cover running costs.



## UCSU Group Grants

The UCSU Groups Grant exists to support the running of Student Groups. There are three application windows each year, with available grants being announced on the relevant Teams channel, when applications open. Any unspent money at the end of the year will be used where UCSU sees fit.

**Please allow at least 10 working days from the closing date to hear back from us.**

Grant Round	Applications Accepted	Likely Grants	Notes
1	End of August – Early September	£500 £400 £300 £200 £100	
2	Mid November – Early December	£500 £400 £300 £200 £150 £100	
3	End of March – Early April	£200 £100	This grant is usually for courses that run over summer months.



## To be eligible to apply for a UCSU Group Grant:

- All committee members must have up-to-date memberships.
- At least 5 members need to be registered through the UCSU.me platform (applies to the first time you apply only).
- Have a committee of at least 2 core members, who have received the compulsory training.
- Have not been in breach of the UCSU Groups Code of Conduct.
- Be on track with spending from previous grants.

Applications will need to be submitted online, and the link is released on the Student Groups Hub Teams channel when applications open. This will ask you to:

- Explain the aims of your Group.
- Describe the activities of your Group.
- Submit costings that shows how you intend to use the grant.

Don't worry! The Groups Coordinator can help you with the application if needed. You should also have income from selling memberships and fundraisers so, you should not need a grant to cover the full running costs of the Group.

Alongside this, the application requires you to complete a Groups Performance Ready Reckoner. Group grants are allocated according to your Group's scores. For example: If there are 3 grants available, but 4 Groups apply, the Group with the lowest score will be unsuccessful. They will then move down into the next grant value tier and be reassessed. This continues until either all grants have been allocated or all applications have received a grant.



## The Groups Performance Ready Reckoner

Criteria	What you need to do	Points	How we assess this
<b>Running Your Group</b>			
A	Each group leader has completed at least one training session or connected with the Groups Coordinator for advice.	1	UCSU records
B	A plan of scheduled activities is accessible to members.	1	Viewable on UCSU.me page
C	You advertise clear aims and goals.	1	Viewable on UCSU.me page
D	You creatively use your UCSU.me hub to effectively advertise your group.	1	Viewable on UCSU.me page
E	Group leaders have completed optional training since the previous grant round.	1	UCSU records
F	You cover your running costs using membership fees and fundraising activities.	1	UCSU records
G	You've registered an event.	1	UCSU records
H	Your group has at least five active members.	1	UCSU records
I	You have run a Welcome Week or Welcome Back event (not including Freshers' Fair or UCSU organised Give It A Go sessions).	1	UCSU records
<b>Growing Your Group</b>			
J	You use Group Grants and/or Exceptional Project Funding to support developmental or larger scale activities.	2	UCSU records
K	You have run and registered a developmental or larger scale event (e.g. conference, trip or tournament).	2	UCSU records
L	You have registered 3-5 events.	2	UCSU records

M	You have 6-10 active members.	2	UCSU records
N	You have 11-15 active members.	3	Evidence will be required – for example, attendance registers.
O	You have 16+ active members.	4	Evidence will be required – for example, attendance registers.
P	The Group and its members have taken part in a volunteering activity.	2	Evidence required – for example photos, article, & news story.
Q	You have run an activity which has been attended by non-members.	2	Evidence will be required – for example, attendance registers.
R	You have received recognition from UCSU for your activities (e.g. article, congratulatory message).	2	Evidence required – for example screenshot, article, news story on UCSU.me.
S	You have received recognition from the University for your activities (e.g. article, congratulatory message).	2	Evidence required – for example screenshot, article, news story on UCSU.me.
T	You have represented the University in an external competition or event.	2	UCSU records

## Looking Outside Your Group

U	You have run an activity raising funds for a charity since the previous grant round.	3	UCSU records
V	You make active adaptations to your activities or how you run your group to encourage gender equality.	3	Evidence required – for example a description of how you've adapted a specific activity or strategies you use to achieve this
W	You give consideration to the needs and requirements of different ethnic groups.	3	Evidence required – for example a description of how you've adapted a specific activity or strategies you use to achieve this.
X	You make active adaptations to your activities or how you run your group to enable access for participants with disabilities.	3	Evidence required – for example a description of how you've adapted a specific activity or strategies you use to achieve this.
Y	You have set up a process to review your activities, identify practices which are not inclusive and plan for change.	4	Evidence required – review records

## Sponsorships, Contracts and Other Agreements

To support your Group's finances, it may be useful to seek a local company/multiple companies to sponsor an activity, team, event, or anything else appropriate. However, these "contracts" should **never** be entered into lightly and, in all cases, advice should be sought from the Groups Coordinator **BEFORE** any negotiations are initiated.

Once advice has been sought and clearance given, you will need to complete an appropriate sponsorship form, which your Groups Coordinator can provide you with. The form will:

- **Clearly outline what the agreement is.**
- **Define responsibilities for both parties.**
- **Declare what the value of the agreement is and how it is going to be paid.**

In order to make the agreement as binding as possible, both interested parties must sign and date it. Please make sure that all paperwork is carefully completed as once it is signed, it is binding – partially completed agreements will be considered void.

In the scenario of a verbal agreement or joint sponsorship, clear, realistic and achievable agreements must be made. Take this to your Groups Coordinator for confirmation; once confirmed, this is then transferred into writing and signed by both parties.

**REMEMBER:** If your sponsor wants to put their name on your kit, they must pay more than it costs to replace the kit, after the agreement comes to an end.

## Local and National fundraising initiatives

If you wish to run a project, applying to fundraising initiatives can provide income to support this. The different grants available depends on what your Group are trying to achieve but, the websites below are useful to see what time of funding is available:

[www.grantsonline.org.uk](http://www.grantsonline.org.uk)

[www.grantfinder.co.uk](http://www.grantfinder.co.uk)

[www.getgrants.org.uk/funding-finder](http://www.getgrants.org.uk/funding-finder)

**Don't forget! Your Groups Coordinator is available to help you source funding.**



## Fundraisers

Fundraisers are a key part of a Group's income. As well as generating funds, they are a chance for you to be imaginative and have some fun!

**REMEMBER: This does not always have to be a bake sale – even though everyone does like a good cake, try and think outside of the box!**

### Ideas could include:

- Asking people to sponsor you to complete a challenge e.g., a public sporting event.
- Making items or gifts to sell.
- Putting together an exciting, ticketed event e.g., Murder Mystery evening.

There are lots more ideas online if you need a little inspiration, and don't forget that your Groups Coordinator can give you advice on how to make a fundraiser happen.

## Applicant Visit Days

Applicant visit days are a perfect way to:

- Sell your group to upcoming students.
- Secure more members before the new term starts (including ones from other campuses).
- Get an idea of what new members want from your Group.
- Show other students what you can provide them with.
- Gain extra funding, from the SU into your bank account.

**Groups main way of generating income is through membership fees.**

**You will want the membership fees to cover the cost of running the Group e.g., events you are planning to do, travel costs etc.**

**You can create different types of memberships if you want such as, full membership, half year membership or social membership.**

**Other ways of generating Group income includes grants, sponsorships, fundraisers, and fundraising initiatives.**

**Group grants are based on your Groups' Performance Ready Reckoner score.**

# Events

## Why Market Your Event?

Marketing your event correctly with UCSU can make a big impact using minimal effort.

Getting the word out there about your event increases the number of people who are aware of your event, which then HOPEFULLY leads to greater attendance! As a Group, this can then increase the potential of more members. It also helps you look more professional and coordinated, while positively impacting others university experience.

## How to Market Your Event?

Get in contact if you would like UCSU to promote your event, we can do this on our main social media pages and Officer profiles. We can also send a short

paragraph of text over to the weekly Student Global email too.

But, you should also do your own marketing, to ensure the event is a success, such as:

- Share images within your friendship, course and house circles.
- Get friends to tell other people they know.
- Posters around campus.
- Use multiple types of media.
- Take pictures of your event, to show others next time.

**You should think about the type of audience you are marketing towards and the timings of your marketing.**

## A Brief Guide to Planning Your Event

1. **Have an idea!** Inspiration can be found [Here](#).
2. **Think about money!** Work out if you need to spend money and if so, where is it going to come from?
3. **Break it down!** Split it up into smaller tasks and agree who is responsible for completing each task.
4. **Risk assessments!** Create a risk assessment to keep people safe.
5. **Any externals?** Are you inviting anyone not associated with the University or UCSU to deliver your event? If so, you will need to read the External Speaker Policy and complete an External Speaker Request form.
6. **Any food?** Are you having food at the event? If so, talk to us about it as there are different requirements for certain situations.
7. **Submit everything!** Register your event and submit your completed risk assessment. We need these 2-6 weeks in advance, depending on the size of your event.

## What Can UCSU Offer You?

### A standard design package from our Graphic Designer

- A4/A3 poster
  - Facebook post image
  - Facebook cover
  - Twitter post image
  - Instagram post image
  - Instagram story image
  - We can send a screensaver to the University Marketing Team
  - Anything else? Just ask.
1. Depending on the nature of your event and circumstances at the time, advertisement via Student and Staff Globals, on-campus screens and posters on our noticeboards.
  2. Mentoring for marketing an event correctly and social media, from your Activities Officer or Communications Coordinator.
  3. Useful online and printable resource bank.
  4. Active Teams Group chat with your Groups Coordinator and other relevant staff.
  5. A Teams Channel to ask questions, talk with other committees, share resources and access key information.

**Please be aware that information for this needs to be sent via email approximately 3 or 4 weeks prior to when you plan to use it.**



## After the Event

Firstly...RELAX! Well done for organising and hosting your event!

We now advise that you use some time to reflect on what went well and what could be improved for next time – this could be done using a self-evaluation document if you like.

You can also use the event pictures to:

- Post on social media and raise your profile.
- Add to your Group's website description to break up the text and show students what you can offer them.
- Share your experience with UCSU in a small article for the website.



**Events are a great way to encourage new members to join your Group, whilst keeping the members you already have, interested.**

**PROMO = FOMO!**

**Market your event through posters, social media, word of mouth – which UCSU can help you with!**

**Complete your risk assessments for each event.**

**Think about costs of the event, any external speakers and if you want food.**



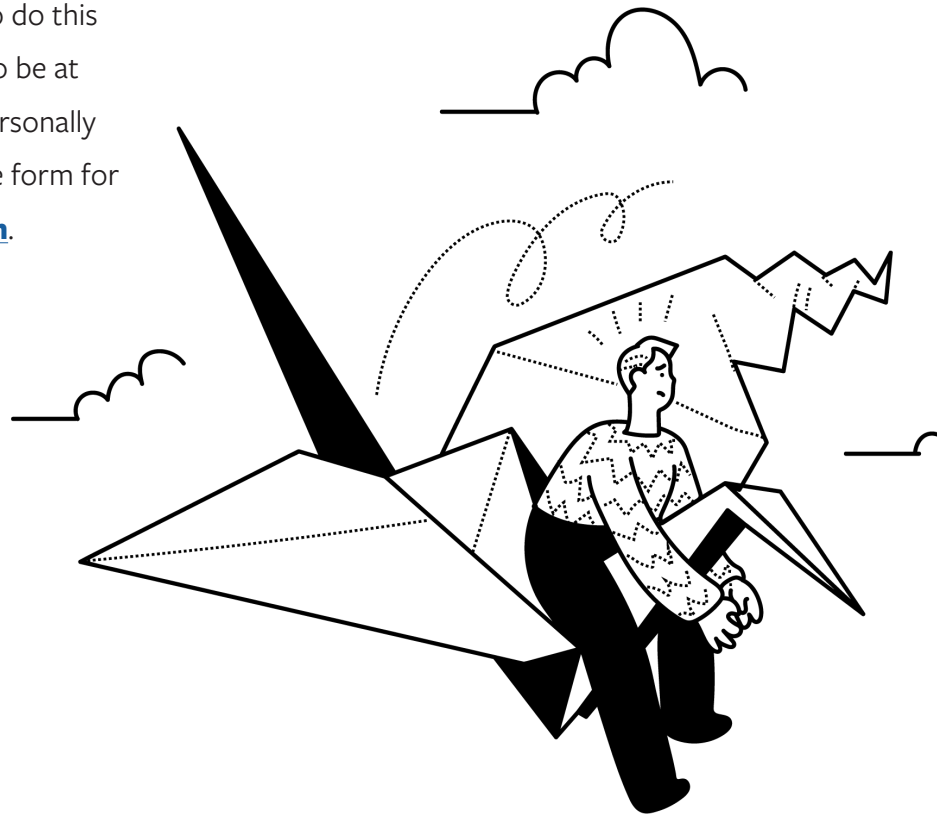
# Travel

There are multiple ways in which you can travel to and from events, some of which can be cheaper than others. For example:

- For a large number of people travelling together, try coach hire, **OR** block booking train tickets.  
**Your Groups Coordinator can help you organise and book these.**
- Individual students can be named drivers for your Group. These students **MUST** be registered with UCSU to ensure all basic requirements for driving with others are complied with. Failure to do this gives potential for yourself and others to be at risk or in a situation where you could personally be responsible for damage or injury. The form for this is here: [Group Driver Registration](#).

Compensation for fuel costs, through the Groups funds is possible. It is usually 45p a mile, but this can be negotiable if you would prefer to subsidise the price of travel for your members that are driving.

If you allow plenty of time in your planning to consider transport, it will give you chance to choose the best options and to get support from your Groups Coordinator, if needed.



**If you need travel, then let your Groups Coordinator know so they can hire a coach for you.**

**If you want to drive yourself, you MUST be a registered driver (fill out the form on the UCSU website).**

# Accident and Incident Reporting

On rare occasions, things don't go according to plan and that **MUST** be recorded, in order for it to be followed up, if necessary. You can do this by completing the **Accident/Incident Report form**.

Once complete, the form will be automatically sent to your Groups Coordinator.

UCSU has a legal responsibility for reporting certain types of accident, incidents and dangerous occurrences arising out of their activities to the University and enforcing authorities. UCSU, together

with the University, also has a duty to investigate and keep records of accidents, incidents and dangerous occurrences.

Whenever, during one of your events or activities, there is harm to an individual or damage to property, this must be reported to UCSU as soon as possible.

For clarity, here are some examples of what must be reported:

## Accident Examples

Contact with moving machinery

Hit by moving vehicle

Injury while manual handling

Fall from height

Drowned or asphyxiated

Exposed to fire

Contact with electricity

Assaulted by person in line of work

Hit by object

Collided with stationary object

Slip, trip, fall

Trapped by something collapsing

Exposed to harmful substance

Exposed to explosion

Injured by an animal at work

Sport/Dance

## Incident Examples

Fire

Intruder alert

Malicious damage

Accidental damage

Near miss

Student anti-social behaviour

Fire alarm

Youth nuisance

Theft

Dangerous occurrence

Illness

Tampering with fire precautions

More information can be found [here](#).



# UCSU Groups Code of Conduct

All activities undertaken by the Group must be carried out safely by working within the Health and Safety Guidelines of UCSU and the University. Risk assessments must be carried out for all activities and submitted to UCSU in advance. Before carrying out any activity, formal approval from UCSU must be received.

Groups must act in accordance with the principles of UCSU's Equal Opportunities Policy and not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to sexuality, race, gender, age or disability.

All members must respect the rights, dignity and worth of all other Group members regardless of age, gender, ability, race, cultural background, religious beliefs or sexual identity. They must also ensure that threatening or intimidating behaviour is not tolerated towards members, students, staff or the public.

Groups are expected to be committed to providing a quality service to their members and to promote and facilitate the activities and interests of the Group rather than their own interests and activities.

Both committee and ordinary members are reminded that when participating in the Group's activities, they are representing UCSU and the University of Cumbria. They must conduct themselves accordingly as representatives of their Group, UCSU and the University.

Behaviour deemed to be unacceptable by either UCSU or the University, may result in disciplinary action taken against the individuals or Group as a whole. This may include warnings, removal from competition, financial penalties and dissolution, depending on the outcome of an investigation.

## Groups By-Laws

For more information about UCSU's constitution and other By-Laws, visit: [By-Law 11 Groups](#)

**To run a successful Group, these are very useful to read and understand!**

**If you would like more information on the UCSU Policies, visit: [www.ucsu.me/policy](http://www.ucsu.me/policy)**

**UCSU**  
STUDENTS' UNION

# University of Cumbria Students' Union

