

# GSU Guide to Obtaining Sponsorship 2019/20

This guide will provide you with some helpful tips to get you started on your mission to raise funds and support your student group's aims & objectives throughout the year.

Although the Union provides help towards achieving these core aims & objectives, we're aware that many groups want to do more. Because of this groups may want to approach external companies to ask for extra funding or other types of sponsorship.

This guide is a broad outline and you should be creative in your proposals. If you want further advice you can always contact the Student Activities team at the Union.

## Preparation

Before you start looking for sponsorship, there are a few important steps to take to prepare your case, make a proposal and start asking companies for sponsorship.

### Prepare your Case

Proper Preparation and Planning Prevents Poor Performance.

Before you approach any potential sponsors, you should define the needs of your student group.

- What resources do you need for your student group to develop?
- Why do you require sponsorship?
- What are you looking for? Money, resources, venue hire or all the above?

Be honest and upfront about what you need from the company as well as what you are prepared to do in return for them (i.e. names on programmes or signage etc). Your sponsors will want to know exactly what's happening with their money.

### Don't sell yourself short

When selling yourself to a company, you want to make sure you're being accurate.

- **Under selling** the student group would be an injustice and may lead to an unsuccessful bid for sponsorship (or an unfair deal!).
- **Over selling** the student group would be considered poor practice which could not only lead to a negative response, but also to giving you a bad reputation.

Here are a few statistics to consider for your proposals:

- Greenwich is home to about 30,000 students and approximately 14,000 (almost half!) of those students live within a 10-mile radius of the University campus

- Greenwich Students' Union is a registered charity dedicated to improving the student experience.

More specific features about your group that you can talk about are:

- How many members do you have?
- How many games or competitions have you won?
- How far do you travel for your competitions?
- What past achievements have been made by your Sports team/club/Society?
- How often do you meet for events?
- What events are you attending as a Society this year?

## **What are you going to ask for?**

Ask for what you need based on your objectives.

Always think is this agreement a **Win** for you, **Win** for the student group, **Win** for the sponsor.

### **Action Phase**

#### **Who are you going to approach?**

With your committee, identify a list of your potential sponsors. They may be past sponsors, companies with personal connections to the group, companies within your specialised area, or a business with an office/branch within the local area.

#### **Research the companies you plan on approaching**

Understanding the goals and business targets of the company allows for a more tailored proposal. It is also important to understand how the sponsorship of your student group helps achieve these goals - you should understand their products and how they relate to the student market.

#### **What do you have to offer sponsors?**

It's important to tell companies exactly what benefits you can offer them.

Try and give potential sponsors both qualitative and quantitative benefits. For example, instead of saying that 1000 students will see their logo you can say, '1000 students will recognise that you are supporting our Society and Sports clubs and are endorsed by a student group which will raise your profile with the Greenwich student community'.

Some other ideas of what you can offer:

- Positive exposure to students
- Co-branding of publicity (use their logo on your promotions)

- Website links from your webpage to theirs
- A presence at events that you run
- Presentations to students as organised by your group
- Help them collect data or feedback regarding their brands or products
- Organising events at their venue and publicising them
- Being a regular customer at their venue

If possible, prepare a marketing plan as to what you expect to do in terms of promotions. This way the potential sponsor has an idea of exactly what they may receive. Be sure to personalise it with their logo!

## **The Sponsorship Proposal**

Your proposal should emphasise the benefits of sponsorship to the company. Try and word your proposal in a way that the company identifies you as a worthy cause and as a nice fit with their business goals.

Sponsorship Proposals should include your group's successes, objectives, USPs, marketing plan, and relation to the organisation.

You should change your proposal for every company you approach. Make it unique for each company as they are all unique and will have different corporate visions.

### **The Approach**

Start with a phone call to a company's reception to try and identify your best point of contact.

From there, consider approaching them:

#### **By Phone:**

Be prepared and have all your research in front of you. Decide what you're going to say before you dial. This method can leave a lasting impression. It will give you a chance to discuss your proposal with the company and listen to your sponsor's initial response to the proposal. If there is an initial interest from the company, try to progress the phone call and schedule a face to face meeting where you can go over the project in more detail.

#### **Email:**

Use the body of the email as a brief introduction and set the right tone for the proposal. Emails will generally be shorter than a letter but still set the same tone. Use that opportunity to tell your contact that you will follow up with them after they have had time to look at your proposal. Include the rest of your information to the e-mail as attachments but make sure to use common viewing packages to avoid any unease for viewing your proposal.

#### **Face to Face:**

If possible, in addition to the research you have already done on the company, do some research on the individual you are about to meet. Stay calm and take advantage of the fact that a face to face interview can be quite flexible. Listen to what your potential sponsor says and respond accordingly with what you have to offer. A face to face meeting could be scary for some people but if you've done enough research and preparation you should breeze through.

### **Dealing with a “No”**

If you get a “no” don't feel bad about asking for a reason as to why you have been unsuccessful. Be polite and ask for general feedback regarding your proposal or approach and they may have some helpful hints that will help you with the next company you decide to ask. The important thing is to maintain the relationship for next year as you may find you don't have to look very far to get sponsored in the future

### **Closing the Deal**

The Activities team need to be kept informed on the progression throughout you and will have to sign off on all agreement before they are processed. We are happy to advise you and work with you to ensure you get the best deal.

You need to speak to them regarding payment and raising an invoice. If it is financial support that you have asked for, make sure you get all payment and cheques upfront before the activity takes place or before you start branding all of your publicity with their logo. The Student Activities staff can help with raising an invoice to a company to ask for the payment once a contract has been signed.

### **Writing a Contract**

A contract may seem too formal for the type of sponsorship activity you are doing but don't forget that the nature of sponsorship is a business transaction, so a contract is an important part of the deal. A contract will protect you, will also protect your sponsor and will outline what activity will be happening on both sides of the partnership to avoid any confusion.

Some things your sponsorship contract should include are:

- Title for your sponsored event or Sports club/Society name
- Relevant dates (start/finish) or relevant event dates
- Financial terms including amount, payment date and VAT inclusions/exclusions
- What you have agreed to do for the sponsorship
- What the company has agreed to do for the sponsorship
- A line for signatures and dates from both you and the sponsor

When printing off a contract, print off three copies of it. Get them fully signed and give one to your sponsor, keep one for your own records, and drop one off with the Student Activities Co-ordinator to be kept in your Union records. You can also request then for any invoices to be raised relating to the contract.