

# Amnesty International

## How to recruit and retain members



### Recruitment

Make an impact at your Freshers' Fair. Plan well in advance for your Freshers' Fair – this is the key time to recruit new members.

Check out the “How to make an impact at Freshers' Fair” leaflet for ideas and advice, or contact the Education and Student Team at Amnesty ([student@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:student@amnesty.org.uk)).

Find out if there is a separate Freshers' Fair for overseas students and book a stall at this event.

Promote the Amnesty Student Conference (usually in November each year) – this should generate enthusiasm.

### Show people they can make a difference!

Get together some Amnesty success stories to show newcomers, or invite a former POC (Prisoner of Conscience) to speak about his/her experiences.

Openly celebrate your success when you reach a certain goal.

Emphasize the personal connection of Amnesty International. Read out some personal testimonies and provide information on different countries so that the issues are more real, perhaps show an Amnesty DVD or topical film to get your message across.

### Recruit at events not meetings

Building recruitment around regular meetings is not always the most effective way to attract newcomers. People are more likely to join an organisation that is action oriented and fun to be involved in.



### Appeal to people's self interest

Some people join organisations to meet new people with similar values. So try to make the atmosphere informal and fun.

Give all members a chance to challenge themselves and take on new tasks.

### Be visible

Set up weekly information stalls in your Student Union.

Hold Stalls at public events, such as your Student Union General Meeting.

Organise events like concerts, speakers, demonstrations or vigils.

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Smaller events can also be an effective way to reach people. Organise petition drives, letter writing campaigns and street theatre.

Chalk bodies on pavements to represent “disappeared” people and then hand out information about “disappearances” and AI’s work.

Try and get the name of a bar or room in your Student Union named after a well know human rights figure (eg. Ken Saro-Wiwa).

See if you are able to put up Amnesty posters around your campus or Student Union (contact the Education and Student Team if you wish to order some).

### **Publicity is the key**

You can never put up too many posters, or hand out too many leaflets.

The competition for people’s attention is high, so be innovative! Try out a series of cryptic posters and/or splash a bit of colour across ordinary black and white posters.



If you don’t have one already, try and get an AI notice board put up in your Student Union.

Publicise your diary of events/meetings in your union, on the university website/intranet and on social networking sites, for example, on your Facebook group wall, or MySpace group page. Have a regular time and place for meetings if possible.

Submit letters to your Student Union newspaper about current human rights issues.

Keep your student newspaper / magazine / radio station informed of any of your activities or fundraising events and see if they can publish your success stories and group news.

### **Don’t ignore newcomers**

Don’t make newcomers feel like they are arriving in the middle of things. Make sure that they feel welcome and make clear that there are plenty of ways in which they can get involved, but be careful not to overwhelm them.

### **In an emergency...**

Rope in friends or lecturers to help out.

Put all your energies into planning the next Freshers’ Fair.

Remember that all is not lost – even if you are down to only 2 or 3 members.

### **Retention**

Make sure that everyone feels useful and involved in the group’s activities, that everyone has a role which fits both their capabilities and liking.

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Let members control their own commitment; no one likes to feel trapped.

Do be open to suggestions and challenges: Show respect for other people's ideas and opinions.

Show you are grateful for the effort that people put in.

Make sure that meetings are interesting and well organised (see "How to run a good meeting").

Operate a "buddy system" – in which new members are looked after by existing members (perhaps those on the same or similar course or in the same Halls of Residence).

Don't set unrealistic goals – aim for what you can actually achieve.

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If you have any ideas for recruiting and retaining members, which we could add to this leaflet, then please contact:

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