
A Basic Guide to Fundraising

Fundraising and financing a University Sailing Club can be a complex and time-consuming process, but this isn't necessarily the case. Having a plan of what you want, and what timescales you want to achieve it in, will make everything a lot easier.

This guide will cover a range of different sources of funding. It is a basic overview and is not intended to be an exhaustive guide by any means, so if you have further questions you should speak to the BUSA Development Officer (busacommittee@gmail.com).

Making a Plan

Step 1: What do you need money for?

This will affect the timescales and planning required. For example, funding to replace an old flight of Fireflys with new ones will require more time and a different funding approach compared to raising money to buy new wetsuits.

Step 2: What timescale are you working on?

As a general rule of thumb, raising <£1,000 can be achieved in a few months, £1,000-10,000 can be achieved in a year, while £10,000+ will generally take more than 12 months.

Step 3: How will you get there?

There are a range of different mechanisms to fund any given project. Some examples are given below, but which strategy you go with will vary depending on what you are looking to do, where you are and what timescales you are working on.

Funding Sources

University and Student's Union

Liaison Officers

The best place to start when looking for money for your University Sailing Club, is with your university itself. Most universities have a turnover in the millions and have large pots of money set aside for sports clubs and societies.

Have you tried asking for more money? Most universities have staff appointed to act as liaison officers between sports clubs and the university. These people are often looking after many clubs and probably don't have much knowledge of sailing as a sport.

Sitting down with them to explain the challenges you face in achieving your funding goal can help them understand why a sailing club isn't the same as another sport (such as rugby), and how your financial situation is different. Whilst they may not be able to just give you more money, they will know better what grants are available for your university and can help you write applications.

If nothing else, they can help you come up with a plan and provide a sense of accountability - they will be dealing with your club for much longer than your committee and can keep future generations of committee members on track.

Awards

Students Unions often run competitions, such as photography or participation events. These competitions can usually be entered by clubs and often have a cash or voucher prize attached.

Grants

Many Students Unions have pots of money for one-off grants. These are usually awarded for a specific project or equipment purchase and will require putting together a statement and/or gathering invoices for the cost of the project. These are designed for student sports clubs to apply for and as such are easier to obtain than national grants.

For example, there is usually a pot of money available for purchasing safety equipment that your sport cannot operate without. In the case of sailing, this could include buoyancy aids, first aid kits or wearable kit.

Selling a Product

A classic solution is to sell products to raise money for your club. Student's Unions will often let clubs put up a stall in the SU or department buildings and will be happy to promote fundraising efforts on their social media platforms.

Examples include:

- Cake sales
- Raffles
- Car washes
- Selling trinkets (such as rope keyrings, washbags made out of sails)
- Barbeques

Good publicity around sales like these are key to making them successful. This strategy is particularly effective if your university is willing to match-fund anything you raise. These sales are not limited to your university. Your host sailing club may be willing to let you host events

for their members. Having a rota for baking cakes to leave at the sailing club with an honesty box can be steady stream of income, but make sure to discuss this with the club first.

Charging Extra

It isn't a popular decision to pass on costs to your members. However, it can be a quick way of raising money. A membership price increase of £5 in a club of 40 people will raise you an extra £200. It is a very fine balance to find between charging enough to raise money, while not so much that it will be a participation barrier.

However, charging more isn't exclusive to membership fees. Charging an extra pound for social tickets, asking team members to cover petrol costs to events or asking for donations for kit hire can bring in small amounts of money throughout the year.

Sailing Related

Running a Team Racing Event

Another classic solution is to organise and run a large team racing event. Team racing events can make a profit of £1,000 per flight of boats, if they are organised well. Income can be generated during an event from team entries, social tickets and sponsorship. Running an event will be covered in the Events Organisation Guide.

Other Events

Events are not limited to team racing. Hosting other sailing events such as varsity or events for social sailors, fleet or match racing can all make a profit. Alternatively, if you are running weekends such as a boat repair course, instructor training or open tasters/training, consider opening it to other sailors/universities and charging more for non-members.

Alternatively, one-off events such as sponsored walks, sponsored sailing or another charity fundraising event often attract donations from friends and family. Hosting events such as an end of year barbeque or inter-club social can also work.

If you run an annual yachting week, for example, think about opening it to non-members or alumni with an increased price or producing trip merchandise with a small mark-up on the cost.

Providing a Service

Another way to earn money is in exchange for something else. If you own a serviceable fleet of Firefly's, hiring them to other universities/clubs for events is an option. Often, universities will either pay for hire or exchange boat usage in return for free entry to the event. Always check your boat insurance policy before lending them to other clubs and ensure you have an agreement in place in the event of damage being caused.

Providing volunteers for an event in return for money donated to the club or discounted entry tickets is also a good option in this case. This applies to more than just sailing events, and can be good for building relationships with local organisations.

Saving Money

The simplest way to ensure you have more money at the end of the year, is to not spend it in the first place.

For example, when you are looking to invest in boats for your club, consider if it is necessary to buy a flight fresh out of the mould. Could you get the same level of sailing from a flight that

are three years old, but cost significantly less? This largely comes down to club management and you will need to consider how it fits into your clubs development or boat replacement plan.

Similarly, if you are looking at repairing your flight of boats, is it really necessary to take them to a professional boat builder? Often for minor to mid-level damage, you can repair them yourselves for much less time and money than a professional repairer.

When buying kit, consider if it is something you buy frequently? If so, it could be worth spending a little more money and buy more, in order to get a bulk-buying discount.

This strategy does not apply if your Students Union have a 'use it or lose it' policy, regarding your funding for the year. If your funds are awarded at the beginning of the year and you lose them before the following academic year, consider having a savings account for the club or investing leftover money in something that will provide greater returns in the future.

Alumni Donations

Your alumni will probably have faced the same challenges to you during their time at university. Because of this, they may be sympathetic to your troubles and are a potential source of money and expertise for you. Getting access to alumni donations will require your club to have some alumni and to have a conversation with your union.

Depending on how your accounts are handled and what level of control your Student's Union has over them will alter how you can ask for donations and what kind of support your university can give you when approaching these alumni.

Alumni are not just a source of money, however. They will have more experience of the club than many members of your club or even committee and, if they have stayed in the sailing circuit, are likely to have skills you can take advantage of. Talk to them and find out if they might be willing to run coaching, help maintain your boats or umpire events for you, amongst other things.

Sponsorship

Whilst it can be hard to find, sponsorship can be a great way of bringing in money for a club. Most Student's Unions will have rules around what companies can become a sponsor and what they can give. They will also have dedicated staff to help with the legalities and contracts, so make sure to involve your SU during the process.

When looking for sponsorship, it is important to sit down and think about what your aim is and what you can offer in return. There is the obvious: logo space on hulls, sails and buoyancy aids, social media recognition, flyer space on your freshers stalls; but think outside the box too. You have valuable access to people that companies will be looking to employ in the future. Alternatively, you could offer a company access to your boats and instructor skills for them to run a team-building activity.

Shops may be willing to sponsor event prizes, bars or cafes may be willing to sponsor money or event space in return for frequent patronage or takeaway shops may be willing to offer you a discount on food.

Types of company to approach:

- Sailing companies
 - It might seem tempting to go straight to sailing companies (chandlers, kit providers, boat builders or holiday companies, for example), when looking for sponsorship, but remember these companies already have lots of options in the sailing world with much "bigger names" available than a student club. While

it is not impossible to get sponsorship from such companies, there are other places to target instead.

- Local businesses
 - Businesses local to your area are much more likely to receive something in return for sponsoring you than a big multinational company. It is also more likely that you will know someone in person to discuss it with, conversations in person are much more productive than emails.
- Family/friends/alumni connections
 - If one of your member's family own a company with money to spare, then why not approach them? Alternatively, your alumni may be able to advise you if their workplace is looking for a new club to sponsor and who to approach within that company.
- Companies that employ new-graduates
 - Having exclusive access to prospective employees can be a powerful bargaining chip. If lots of your alumni go on to work for the grad scheme of one company, try approaching them.
- Companies who make prizes
 - Sponsoring a club financially is not always an option for businesses. However, they may be willing to offer a prize for an awards evening or event in return for acknowledgement or advertising.
- Event sponsors
 - While companies may not be able to sponsor a club for a year, they may be able to support a one-off event. If you are in a position to be flexible with what you want, you have more options available to you.

Regional and National Grants

Grant funding is potentially an extremely rewarding source of funds for one-off projects and capital investment. There are a range of types of fund available, all of which will require some type of application process and a clear plan of what you will do with the money.

When writing the application, keep in mind that these organisations see lots of applications, so your success rate is likely to be low, maybe 20% when you are starting out. Don't be dissuaded by this, and if possible ask for feedback on unsuccessful applications in order to improve your next bid.

Funders generally have specific goals, areas or demographics in mind, and making sure your project aims align with their goals is critical to being awarded funding. You will almost always be asked how your project will have an impact and how it will be assessed, so having a defined way of measuring your impact (say through numbers of members, participation, gender breakdowns or racing performance) will help these applications.

Each funder will publish a guide to writing the application and what the fund is aiming to achieve. Read this carefully, as it will highlight areas of importance and critical failure points, and make sure to stick to any deadlines they set.

Regional and Demographic Specific Grants

BUSA does not maintain a list of potential funders, however most local councils, some charities and some national organisations such as UK sport do. The easiest first step is to search the internet, compile a list of potential grants, eligibility criteria and deadlines, and work your way through them steadily.

Grants are announced throughout the year, so setting up funding alerts or regular browsing is an easy way to make sure you don't miss out on potential funding.

Sport England/Sport Scotland

University sports clubs have a strong track record of being awarded money from Sport England and Sport Scotland. Student's Unions will probably have staff with experience in applying for these, as will the BUSA Development Officer and your RYA Regional Development Officer, so it is worth involving them in the process for extra help writing the application. These UK sport grant often have a longer reporting procedure compared to other, smaller grants, so you may be required to report things such as participation numbers over a several year period. This is therefore critical to factor in to any committee handover as failure to report on the numbers asked of you is likely to hurt future committees applying for money from the same source.

BUSA Development Fund

Specifically designed for BUSA sailing clubs with a project in mind that will benefit their club and region. For more information on applying, visit <https://busa.co.uk/news/busa-development-fund-2019-2020> or email busacommitee@gmail.com and speak to the Development Officer.

Sunsail Funding the Future Award

Another funding award aimed at University Sailing Clubs with a specific project in mind which will benefit the club making the application. For more information, please visit <https://www.sunsail.co.uk/sailing-clubs/grants-and-funding>.

Competitions

Green-Blue Challenge

The Green Blue has been running the University Sailing Sustainability Challenge every year since 2015. While it requires input in making your club environmentally friendly, there is prize money attached to success in becoming more sustainable. For more information, see <https://thegreenblue.org.uk/get-involved/programmes/sustainability-challenge/>.

Giveaways

Companies regularly run competitions and giveaways via social media. While they are mostly not cash, they can still be useful prizes (chandlery vouchers, tools, sailing kit etc) and can save you money when buying equipment in the future.

About the Authors

Joe is the BUSA Development Officer 2019-2020. He is the founding commodore of UHI Wind and Wave Club and has acquired over £13000 in funding over three years for the club. This has been through grant funding, event hosting and alumni donations including the BUSA development fund and the Sunsail Funding the Future fund.

Iona is the BUSA Vice President 2018-2020. She is the former treasurer and president of the University of Nottingham sailing club and worked alongside the Student Union in funding allocation, to raise around £17000 in funding over two years.