

ATTRACTING MEMBERS TO YOUR ISOC

First Impressions Count: Freshers' week

As we all know, the key to attracting and retaining members is having a successful freshers' week. However different methods work for different ISocs but the following are a series of suggestions that have been found to be effective:

Get to Know Your Town

Have a day out around the town to familiarise the new students with the area. By taking them to halal shops, shopping centre, restaurants, places to visit, they get to know the town and one another.

Buddy System

Encourage the international students to befriend home students, so that they can improve their English and learn more about how to live within the UK.

'Chill' to increase Brotherhood and Sisterhood on campus!

ISocs can be seen to be unwelcoming and sometimes boring, especially in comparison to the activities that are being planned on campus. Therefore ISocs should try to think of creative ways of attracting membership. This could be done by holding movie nights, henna party, football tournament etc. these events should not be exclusive for Freshers Week but should also be organised all year round.

"Entertain your hearts, for hearts become blind when they are weary." (Bukhari)

Reminder about Halal and Haraam

When new Muslim students come to university, they can become distracted by the 'exciting' life around them and can get negatively influenced. Therefore ISocs might want to host a light-hearted event in which the ISoc members get to share their experience (of uni life) with everyone so that new students do not feel like they are struggling on their own.

Welcome New Members

Existing ISoc members should make an extra effort to make new members feel welcome and more involved within their ISoc and campus life.

Da'wah to Muslims

ISocs need to recognize the importance of making an effort to engage more with their Muslim Brothers & Sisters, in the wider campus community. ISoc members can try to get to know more Muslims who are less practicing by, inviting them to their houses or visiting them and insha'Allah helping them understand more about Islam by example and sharing knowledge with them, when asked. More practicing ISoc member also need to remember not to make initial judgments about the less practicing members.

Prophet of Allah, upon him be peace, said, "A believer is not a fault-finder and is not abusive, obscene, or course." (Bukhari)



SALAM
FOSIS
Islam Awareness Project

Market your ISoc: early publicity

- To increase membership, wear t-shirts with the logo of the ISoc on it & give out flyers about what the ISoc will be doing during the academic year, to Muslims on campus or ones attending the mosque.
- Get organised, compile a calendar of events that the ISoc will be organising throughout the year and promote it during Fresher's Week.
- Stick-up posters of ISoc events around campus (in the library, halls, Students' Union, etc), so Muslims know where to go to find a familiar face.
- Advertise the ISoc services and events using various mediums; the Student Union website, SU magazine, university radio etc.
- ISoc website: start or update the website with up-and-coming events and names of the new committee, so that members know where to go to if they have any problems.
- **Order the FOSIS freshers pack**, to distribute at the freshers fayre stall. Put the ISoc events calendar in each pack so that students are aware of the events that your ISoc are organising, through out the year.

Benefits of ISoc membership

- Make members aware of the benefits that they receive in exchange for their membership fee e.g.
 - Meeting Muslim brothers' and sisters' of all nationalities and from all walks of life.
 - Getting involved in the ISoc to spread the message of Islam.
 - Receiving help with problems such as finding accommodation, problems with studies etc.
 - Gaining knowledge of Islam through talks & classes organised by the ISoc throughout the year.
 - Gaining important skills (organisational, interpersonal) by organising various events around campus, and getting the chance to add something onto their CV.
 - Having fun!

Did you know?

✓ Muslim students are not lazy or inactive, they just need to be engaged in an effective way... the Muslim Students Survey (FOSIS, 2005) showed that at least 1 in 2 Muslim students (55%) are currently in active volunteering, mostly charity work. Therefore encourage your ISoc to volunteer in the local community (visiting hospitals etc) by getting them in contact with the campus or local volunteering centre.