Sponsorship Resource Pack

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# Introduction

## What is sponsorship?

Sponsorship (noun; spon-suh-shuhp) is money or the provision of support (product/services) that is given, usually by a company, to support a person/organisation/activity, typically in return for something (e.g. advertising).

## Why would you want a sponsorship deal?

Securing sponsorship is a great way to receive money or support which will ultimately help fund your student group for the year, making you less reliant on grant funding that is not always guaranteed.

Sponsorship can also help improve the financial future of your group, setting it up to grow over the years, or you could even use it to help rectify an old debt.

But, although the monetary benefits are great, there are other positives too. The agreement could look to help raise awareness of your group to other students who interact with the company that sponsors you, helping your group to grow. Or the company sponsoring you may offer grad schemes, internships, or part-time jobs that members and committee could apply to knowing the company already and therefore taking advantage of prior connections to boost them through applications.

## Financial Goal Setting

Before you reach out to companies, try to have a think about why you are wanting to secure sponsorship

* Are you looking to fund a specific event/activity?
	+ If this is the case, it would be good to have a secure idea of how much you need so you can go out asking for the exact amount needed, or more than the amount needed - you never want to rely on a sponsorship to fund an event and then not have enough funds!
	+ Companies will also appreciate seeing an exact plan, knowing where their money is going and that it is being used for a purpose.
* Are you wanting to make up funds to achieve a better financial future?
	+ Where grant funding is never guaranteed, sponsorship is a great way to secure funding each year.
* Do you need to pay off some debt?
	+ Unfortunately, when you are elected onto a committee, it is not always a guarantee that the group’s bank account will be healthy. Occasionally, there is the chance you will take over a group that is in debt, or that is very close to being in debt.
	+ Sponsorships are a great way to correct this position, either cancelling out some of your group’s debt or helping remove it altogether.
* Establish a strong relationship for future
	+ If you work hard to make the sponsorship agreement successful, it is more likely that it will be able to continue in the future, providing your group with a consistent amount of funding - you will be the committee that set up your group’s legacy with this great opportunity!
	+ In the future, a strong and positive relationship between your group and a company also has the potential to provide benefit for members and committee when looking for internships/grad schemes/paid work.
	+ To maintain a relationship with a company, make sure to include it in your committee handover. Explain to the new committee the agreement you had set up, what you received from the company, and what you did for them in return. Why not introduce the new committee to the person you speak to at the company via a Zoom call, or even ask to meet them for a coffee?

# How to secure a sponsorship deal



# How to find a sponsor

## Company Sponsors Database

To support you in finding a sponsor, we have created a handy database that lists a whole load of companies who are willing to talk to student groups about sponsorship!

Full instructions on how to use the database can be located on the database itself.

Check out the database here!

## What companies to target?

When you start looking for sponsorship, it can seem daunting. There are hundreds of companies to target, but where do you even begin? You want to start by putting together a list of potential sponsors as a committee, something to give you a starting point to work from and provide a bit of structure for your search.

Start small with past supporters and family/friend connections. These people know you and/or your group, and it is this knowledge you can draw on to present a sponsorship proposal.

* Royal Holloway has a proud alumni network that you can also use to your benefit. Each year, students leave your group and enter into jobs at various companies - why not reach out to your connections? They will know the value of sponsorship for the group and can point you in the right direction of who to contact within the companies they work for. If they are able to, they may even put in a good word for you!
* If you are pursuing a sponsorship with family/friend connections, this does still need to be agreed upon by the whole committee and clear terms set out to help you avoid any potential conflict of interest.

Next, look to external companies not directly known to your group and try to figure out how you can provide a link between them and your group to make this sponsorship deal seem like the most natural and logical thing.

* Core Aims : think about your group’s core aims and try to reach out to companies that have an interest in this particular area, associating the company with the activity and membership of your group.
	+ i.e. let’s say one of your aims is to to provide members with ways to work to conserve and protect their local ecosystem, you could reach out to companies that value conservation
* Location : Egham may not be the most vibrant city in the world (or a city at all..!) but the local companies all know the university - why not reach out to local businesses for sponsorships? They know the university, and chances are the agreement would hugely benefit both of you - you send more customers their way, and you get discounts and/or funding!
* Recognition : there are companies out there that will find a huge benefit in associating with students at Royal Holloway, University of London.
	+ Any company with graduate schemes will always be looking to get their name known by uni students!

Why not check out sponsormysociety.co.uk or unisponsor.co.uk for more options too!

Here are some ideas of different companies you could reach out to, to help get you started:



## Who not to approach

When looking for sponsorship, it is important to note that you must abide by the RHSU Third Party Promotions Policy.

There are a series of core principles that need to be upheld when working with a third party (i.e. a company that sponsors you):

* Any agreement must work in harmony with the Union’s strategy, constitution and policies [link to each of these].
* The Union cannot enter an agreement with an organisation if there is ongoing/pending legal action or dispute through a relevant service such as the Advice Centre.
* Due to the Charities Act 2011, the Students’ Union must remain politically neutral and cannot enter an agreement which lends support to any political party.
* The Union cannot enter any agreement which represents a conflict of interest or is likely to cause serious or widespread offence.
* Advertising must adhere to the British Code of Advertising, Sales Promotion and Directing Marketing as set by the Advertising Standards Authority.

There are also a number of exclusions that you need to be aware of when considering companies for sponsorship. You cannot have any of the following:

* Promotion of tobacco products, weapons, gambling or illegal drugs.
* Promotion of financial organisations and payday loan companies with punitive interest rates.
* Promotion of cosmetic surgery or organisations promoting an unhealthy body image.
* Advertising that infringes on any trademark, copyright or patent rights of another company.
* Advocacy of, or opposition to, any politically, religious, environmentally or socially controversial subjects or issues.

# Reaching Out & Marketing Yourself

## Knowing what to offer

A key part of securing sponsors will be knowing what you can offer and it’s important to tell companies exactly what it is you’re able to offer them.

When reaching out to sponsors, you should tell them what they can expect if they decide to sponsor you. For example, if you were to promote them on your social media three times a term, how many people would that reach? If you decided to deliver a presentation about their company to your members, how many members do you have that could potentially attend?

Here are some more things to consider when deciding what to offer a sponsor:

You also want to make sure you don’t sell yourself short! Think about the University and the Students’ Union and how many students are currently enrolled and also think about your group and the amazing things you deliver each year. 

Companies want to know who they are working with and what they will be able to get in return, so be detailed about everything you’re able to offer. Also be completely truthful about what you can offer, as you don’t want to oversell what you can do and then put yourself in a position where you cannot meet the agreement!

Make sure to think about:

* How many **members** do you have?
* How many hits does your **webpage** get?
* How many social media **followers** do you have?
* Do you have any **flagship events** that attract a large number of people?
* How many games or competitions have you **won**?
* What has your group **achieved** in the past?

Some more top tips:

* **Include data** - companies love to know the return of investment, so try telling them exact numbers for membership/social media followings etc
* **Match your ethos** - your group will have certain values and culture that is key for your group which can help you relate to any company with the same values and culture
* **Unique** - there is something about your group that makes you unique and it will not be found in any other group (maybe your demographic, or that you have direct contact with ‘x’ students) and this can be extremely attractive to the right company

## Knowing what to ask for

The key thing here is to ask for what you need based on your objective, being careful not to over or under sell yourself! Sponsorship is a promotional business tool for companies to tap into the student market and raise their profile while making valuable connections to students. Sponsorship partnerships can be a great tool for both you and the companies that sponsor you so look at your sponsorship objective and ‘ask’ accordingly.

Monetary sponsorship can be really helpful, as long as you are asking for a reasonable amount. You can’t ask a company for £2000 because you’re a great student group and have a history of doing well. You can ask multiple companies for £100-£500 that add up to £2000 because (1) you have consistently shown you are a strong group (2) you are looking this year to have the financial backing to improve ‘x’ aspect and (3) they would get \_\_\_\_ out of the deal.

Non-monetary sponsorship is just as important, if not more so in some cases.

For example, say you are a group that has to travel regularly across the country to get to competitions/events etc. You could approach a travel company (taxi company/coach hire) and ask them to provide you with transport for ‘x’ number of activities. Or, hypothetically say your group needed a certain number of costumes/specialised kit you cannot get anywhere else. You could approach a company that provides the item(s) you are looking for and ask for them to supply the item(s).

It isn’t all about the money, and it is always valuable to remember that you can ask for material things too!

When you are receiving non-monetary sponsorship, it is important to remember that it needs to benefit all group members. For example, you cannot accept a sponsorship that promises an internship to your group’s president, but you could accept a sponsorship that offers early warning of an internship position to all group members.

## Reaching out

Once you have an idea of who you’re going to approach, what you’re able to offer, and what you would like to ask for, you can start reaching out to companies. You want to make sure that you emphasise the benefits of sponsorship to the company and present your group not only as a worthy cause but also as a nice fit with their business goals.

When reaching out, you should include a proposal that outlines:

* Your past successes
* Your future objectives
* Why the company should sponsor you and what they can expect in return
* How you fit in with their business objectives
* How the money will be spent (if asking for a monetary sponsorship)
* Contact information

**Top Tip:** when contacting a company, try and research their staff team on their website in order to be able to personalise your email or phone call.

Have a look at this email template to get an idea of what you should say:

*1 January 2100*

*Dear Mr Smith,*

*I am reaching out to you on behalf of the QuizMasters Society at Royal Holloway Students’ Union to enquire as to whether your company, Quizzing World, would be interested in sponsoring our group.*

*Our society aims to bring together students at Royal Holloway with an interest in quizzing, providing an opportunity to meet like minded students with an affinity for general knowledge! We have around 140 members annually and we run fortnightly quizzes for them to get involved in. We also attend tv quiz show tapings when possible, and support our members to take part in the application and testing process during the University’s search for their yearly University Challenge team.*

*In the future, we are looking to establish an inter-university quiz competition to take place each year, inviting universities from across the country to take part in the Royal Holloway QuizMasters Showdown and battle it out for the title.*

*We are hoping to secure a sponsorship of £300 so we can replace and update our quiz equipment. This will benefit all members by helping to professionalise our fortnightly quizzes and it will also be a great step in the right direction of one day being able to invite other universities for the Royal Holloway QuizMasters Showdown.*

*We would also be interested in our members being able to access a 15% discount from yourselves. This would be of huge interest to our members and would mean you receive more exposure to students as well as likely increasing your revenue.*

*A few things we are able to offer in exchange for sponsorship include:*

* *Your logo on this year’s society merchandise, worn by approximately 100 members around campus and the local Egham area.*
* *Promotion of your company to our social media, which has over 300 followers, and a mention in videos posted to our YouTube channel, which has 120 subscribers.*
* *The opportunity to attend our events, including any of the fortnightly quizzes.*
* *The opportunity to come in and give a presentation to our members and/or the wider Royal Holloway community.*

*We would be happy to set up a meeting with you to discuss this proposal further, and answer any questions you may have. Please do just let me know if this would be of interest to you!*

*We look forward to hearing from you at your earliest convenience.*

*Best wishes,*

*Your Name*

*Committee Position of Your Student Group, on behalf of Your Student Group.*

## Negotiating a deal

When it comes to negotiating, things can seem tricky… You don’t want to feel like you are asking for too much, but you don’t want to get less than you deserve!

**Top Tip #1** - Make sure to do your research. Try to get a feel for the company and use this as a basis for communicating with them about the deal. If you have an understanding of the goals and targets of the company, you can tailor your proposal to them and show where you fit into supporting them to achieve these. Definitely know their products and how they link to the student demographic.

* Some companies will have a specific amount set aside for sponsorship, so see if you can find out what this is.
* If they sponsor a lot of student groups, they may have a set amount they give out to each group.
* Research when they plan their budgets and try to ask around that time, as it will be easier for them to budget you into their future plans.

**Top Tip #2** - Benchmarking is key. Setting parameters on what you are asking for and knowing which companies are most suitable for it can help you be successful.

* There is no point in asking a small, local business to sponsor you with a large sum of money, because it is unlikely they will be able to fulfil it and the answer is likely to be no.
* If you know exactly what/how much you need, let the company know this and they can either offer to fulfil this in part or on full, or you can ask for a deal that covers this either in part or in full.

**Top Tip #3** - Tailoring

* Try to change your proposal and tailor it to each individual company you reach out to. It shows you have paid attention to who you are contacting and care about the communication more than sending a generic message, helping sway the company in your favour .

**Top Tip #4** - Know your worth

* Some companies might try to negotiate a lower offer, so make sure to have discussed with your committee beforehand a minimum amount you would be willing to accept.
* Remember you have an amazing platform and audience for them to benefit from, so don’t undersell yourselves.
* Be prepared with your statistics and examples of what you have achieved and are able to offer.

Check out a few examples below of previous group sponsorship deals.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Sponsor Offered... | Group Offered... |
| £600 | Attending venue weekly Encouraging at least 30 members to attend at a time |
| £200 | Promote events on social mediaHave sponsor presence at two eventsLogo on merchandise |
| £250 | Forward four emails onto membersShare four social media postsLogo on webpage |
| 25% off food20% off drinks | Promote events on social mediaLogo on webpage |
| £150 | Bring 15 people to a sponsor eventPromote event on social media |
| £200 | Promote events and sponsor on social mediaHave sponsor presence at two events |
| 80% discount to subscription£200 | Three social media posts about sponsorLogo on social media and webpage |
| £500 | Promote sponsor on social mediaLogo on event promotional material and webpagePromote sponsor’s opportunities throughout the yearOpportunity for sponsor to host an event |
| £4000 | Promote events on social mediaDistribute promotional material at group eventsDisplay sponsor’s logo at eventsSponsor granted opportunity to host and speak at up to two eventsHave largest space at careers fairComplimentary table at annual event |
| £1500 | 10 social media posts over the yearSponsor able to send promotional material to be sent to members throughout the yearPromote sponsor when discussing careers contentPromote sponsor in Freshers’ material |

## What if they say no?

The key thing to tell you is don’t be disheartened if they say no.

Some companies might not be in the financial position to sponsor a student group, or it might not be one of their priorities right now. Don’t stop looking and reaching out to other companies! Go back to the list you drew up of potential sponsors or do some more research and start again.

Also think about asking them for a reason as to why you were unsuccessful or general feedback on your proposal. They might have some helpful tips that will help for next time! And potentially they might be open to discussing a sponsorship in the future when their circumstances change!

# Securing the Deal

## Signing the sponsorship agreement

You’ve managed to secure a deal? Great! Now all you need to do is fill out the [template sponsorship agreement available on Freshdesk](https://rhsu.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/75000011039-sponsorship-how-to-make-money-and-get-great-contacts). It’s really important that you do this, as having this agreement in place will protect you and your sponsor as well as outline the exact terms to avoid any confusion in the future.

Your sponsorship agreement should outline both what you’re offering the company and what they are giving you in return. Once you’ve filled the template out, email VP Societies & Sport (VPSocSport@su.rhul.ac.uk) the draft agreement.

**Any sponsorship agreement not signed by the Students’ Union is not valid.**

Your VP Societies & Sport will review the agreement to make sure it is in line with the third party promotions policy we mentioned earlier and that you’re getting a fair deal. Once approved, a representative from the SU will sign the agreement and send it across to you. You’ll then be able to get the company to sign the agreement and make sure to save the signed version on your Google Drive for easy access in the future.

If it’s a financial based sponsorship then you will need to make sure you collect the following information:

* Registered company name
* Registered company address
* Company registration number (if applicable)
* VAT number (if applicable)
* Company contact name (ideally this should be someone from their finance team)
* Email address
* Phone number

The Student Opportunities team will then be able to arrange for an invoice to be raised and sent to the company, so they can arrange payment.

## Fulfilling the agreement

Now that the agreement has been signed and payment has been made (if relevant), you need to make sure you uphold your end of the deal. If you don’t meet your terms of the agreement, the sponsor would be within their right to ask for their funds or merchandise to be returned to them.

If there are any external factors impacting the ability to fulfill the agreement then make sure to reach out to the sponsor as soon as possible so they are aware you are working on a solution.

## Maintaining a good relationship for next year

Just because the agreement has been signed and you’ve received your goods, does not mean that is the end of your sponsorship journey!

Maintaining a positive relationship with the sponsor can be incredibly valuable for your group. It may result in a long term relationship that would see the sponsor supporting you in future years, and perhaps they might even consider a better deal.

So what can you do to maintain a good relationship?

* Invite your sponsor to come along to your events, performances, fixtures etc.
* Keep them updated with your success and how you are meeting the terms of the agreement - use examples and exact statistics!
* Ask if they are happy with how the agreement is going, and respond to any feedback positively.
* When the agreement is coming to end, make sure to reach out and thank them for their support. Try to include some detail on how the past year has gone, and express your interest in working together again next year!
* Introduce the sponsor to the incoming committee