

FRESHERS FAIR SURVIVAL GUIDE

Putting on a stall for Freshers can be daunting so we've put together this guide to give you something to go on. We'll discuss plans, decorations and recruitment as well as a few top tips from people who have been there, done that, got the lurid green Freshers Helper t-shirt. I hope it's helpful.

If you want us to send your team a Freshers Pack or have any questions, shoot us an e-mail ([universities\(a\)caat.org.uk](mailto:universities@caat.org.uk)). Good luck with it all and send us lots of pictures!



1. Getting started

- **Over the Summer:** Keep an eye out for emails about the dates of your societies fair. Dig out any good photos of your previous demonstrations or actions that you might like to use. Look on the CAAT universities website for information about what arms dealers or the military are up to near you. Contact us for your CAAT Freshers Pack and any help you need.
- **Two weeks before uni:** Get in touch with your Students Union (a societies sabb, president, friendly neighbourhood admin person) to see if there are any forms to fill out, if there are any deadlines, ask what kind of set up there will be and, ideally, find out where the stall is going to be in advance of the fair. Find a date for your first meeting/bring and share/info night/welcome party and book a room so that you've got an event to invite curious and enthusiastic freshers to.
- **September:** Think about how you're going to use the space given to you. Will you have a backboard? Could you project something onto a wall or back drop? Do you have a tablecloth? We can lend you one if not. We'll send you some in your Freshers Pack but you might like to design some additional flyers and posters for your stall to add interest and make it relevant to your uni. Alternatively, download and adapt them and our banner from the CAAT universities website.
- **2 weeks before the fair:** Meet up with your group to exchange final ideas and to arrange a rota for the stall. You're going to want at least two people on there otherwise it can be overwhelming when the lunchtime rush hour comes through! Also ensure that enough people will be around to set up and to pack away.
- **1 week before the fair:** Prepare all materials for the stall: posters, banners, sign-up sheets, flyers, petitions, powerpoint displays, photos, pens for sign-ups, etc. Assemble and make props if you're going to use them.
- **Few days before the fair:** Double check everything. Make lists of what you're taking. Ensure that everyone knows where they are going to be and what their role is.
- **Day before:** Pack for the fair. Charge up laptops and cameras.
- **On the day:** Get there with time to set up and wait for the students to start wandering through. Engage with everyone, at least say hello. Don't wait for people to come to you, ask them questions and try to initiate discussion. Advertise your first meeting. Get their contact details.



Don't feel like you have to limit your presence to the fair itself - there are plenty of ways to draw attention to your group during freshers week: put up posters in halls of residence or the SU, hand out flyers in the canteen, or hold an informal welcome party.

2. What to expect

On the day, the Sabbaticals Officers will arrive early to set up the room, while clubs and societies will usually arrive early-morning (check with your SU to see when you should arrive). Societies are normally allocated the stalls alphabetically or separated into interest groups. All societies will be allocated a table and at some unis you can request a free standing back board as well. It can take longer than you think to set up a stall so make sure you give yourself plenty of time.

Freshers Fairs typically start mid-morning and end late afternoon, with the peak period around lunch. It can be a long day so make sure you have a rota of people for your stall. If there is just one or two of you, make sure you bring yourself plenty of food and water!

3. Stall Presentation:

There will be dozens of stalls competing for the attention of the freshers so it is important that you stand out. You may want to think about creating a large banner or eye-catching posters. (It may be worth investing in a professional colourful banner which can be used year after year). However, if you don't have the cash for this, there are alternatives. For example, why not download a 'banner' from our universities website? The individual A4 letters can be printed out and put together to create a banner. (You can make them more eye-catching by flicking red 'blood' stains onto them).

Order some CAAT posters, or make your own – these can be pinned up onto a display panel (if they are provided) or pasted onto cardboard and propped up on the table. Another way to decorate your stall is to have a laptop displaying facts and images concerning CAAT's message. You can download a Powerpoint Presentation from this website which you can adapt or use as it is. If you are feeling creative, why not make your own?

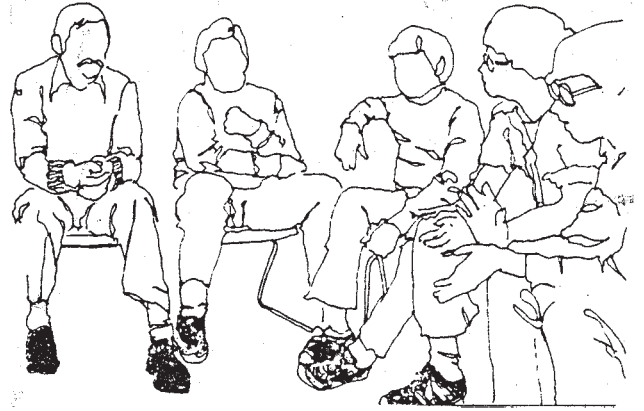
It's a good idea to think of way to make a visual impact, using props and costumes for example. This needn't be expensive – for example, you can wear 'bloodied' clothes or combats (bought from a charity shop) and carry toy guns – anything to get your message across and make your group stand out.

Remember to also keep lots of sign up sheets (and pens!) to hand so you can record the contact details of any interested students.



4. Talking to Students

The idea of campaigning may be new to many of the freshers who visit the fair, and some may be intimidated by the idea of protesting or confused by the issues. Therefore, it is important to come across as accessible and friendly. Avoid acronyms or assuming any previous knowledge.



5. Handouts

You will want flyers to hand out to freshers who turn up to your stall. These handouts will contain important information about your group – who you are, when your first meeting is and how students can join. The freshers will receive dozens of flyers from stalls, so it is important your flyer stands out in some way. If you have the cash, you might consider printing your flyers professionally (using color for example), or turning them into something less likely to be thrown away - a bookmark for example or a postcard.

However, even if you don't have the dosh, you can still make a memorable handout. The universities website has flyers for you to download and adapt. Consider printing them on coloured paper. Remember that college printers are in high demand during the days leading up to Freshers fair – if you can print your flyers in advance it'll be a lot less stress!

6. Freebies

Who doesn't love a freebie? It is amazing the difference that a big box of sweets makes to attracting freshers around a stall. Why not theme your sweets and buy a big jar of fizz bombs? Injecting a bit of humour into your stall can make your group seem less intimidating to students who have never had any experience of campaigning.

If you don't have the finances for this, why not bake your own cookies, sweets or cupcakes? For minimal cost you can create some delicious treats (themed if you are creative enough!) to ensure a steady flow of freshers to your stall! You may need to check with your VP as some SUs do not allow home baked goods for health and safety reasons and you might want to have a list of ingredients handy for new religious, gluten-free, vegan or vegetarian friends.



CAAT works to end the international arms trade, which has a devastating impact on human rights and security, and damages economic development. Large scale military procurement and arms exports only reinforce a militaristic approach to solving global problems.

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7. First meeting:

Your stall handouts and posters should advertise the time and place of your first meeting (this typically is when students will become paid-up members). Remember that there will be a lot of groups and societies competing for the attention of new students, so try to make your first meeting as accessible and fun as possible. Ideally it should be styled as an informal introduction to arms trade issues with no obligation to sign up.

When planning your first meeting, bear in mind that there may be many students who are interested in the issues, but may be a little intimidated by the idea of joining a group or campaigning in general. You might want to style it as a 'welcome party'. Again, if you can provide some homemade nibbles and a cup of tea this might tempt a few extra students!

You might be an old-hat at holding meetings, but if you want some guidance on what to include here are some tips:

- Introduce your group and its aims, the CAAT organization, and the campaigns.
- Give a short talk on the issues of the arms trade. (If you're not confident, we can send someone to talk!)
- Get people excited - if you've got a protest planned, talk about it.
- Get your audience to achieve something - sign a petition or write letters together.
- Give people an opportunity to take on a role.
- Don't try to fit too much in - keep to about an hour and focus on the important stuff.
- Go for a social afterwards!

8. Remember

There are any number of things that can be forgotten but the most important thing is that you turn up and enjoy yourself. The fair is an opportunity to talk about something you feel passionate about and shouldn't be a massive stress.

SEND US PHOTOS AT UNIVERSITIES(A)CAAT.ORG.UK AND GOOD LUCK!



Checklist

- Rota for the stall
- A packed lunch
- Your eye-catching costumes and props
- Sign-up sheets
- Handouts
- Stall decorations: posters, laptop, banners
- Pens
- Freebies
- Smiles!