

University Ringing



Starting a University Society

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1. Introduction

This article aims to guide those wishing to start or rejuvenate a ringing society at a university. This can be an incredibly rewarding experience. Whether you are beginning from scratch or trying to inject new energy into an existing group, this document gives you tips and insights to help you on your journey. It is based on the experience of founding the University of Warwick Society of Bellringers. It did involve a time commitment and could affect your studies if you are not careful!

Firstly, note that you may need to come up with creative solutions. In some instances, societies have struggled to meet membership requirements for accreditation with the student union. Innovative solutions and flexibility may be needed; sign up your housemates to start your group.

1.1 Finding a tower to ring at

One of the first challenges is securing a location to practice and ring. This can vary greatly dependent on your university set up and location. You will need to consider how many bells and how heavy the bells are when choosing your tower.

If you are a campus university, you may need to travel to a local tower. You could use a minibus to transport your group; this may bring the advantage of enabling a post-practice visit to a local traditional pub with good beer and snacks.

If you are in a city, you might have access to more towers local to the university.

1.2 Navigating local relationships

Building positive relationships with local ringers is crucial. These relationships can be influenced by past interactions between the university and the local ringing community.

Reach out to and engage with local ringers. Introduce yourself and your intentions. Some of your university ringers may join local bands which will strengthen your connections and relationships.

Involve ringing alumni. They can offer support, guidance and even participate in events.

1.3 Overcoming challenges

One of the inherent challenges is the transient nature of university life. Students come and go making it difficult to maintain a consistent group. Some ways to mitigate this are

- Create a welcoming environment: Foster an inclusive and supportive atmosphere so that new members join and want to stay.
- Use university resources: Seek support from university staff and administration. A non-ringing warden may be able to provide support including venues and social spaces.

- Have written rules: Students are learning and need a framework to follow. Give them boundaries to help them maintain the society once you have left.



TIP

Don't forget the social aspect! After-ringing pub trips and social events all help to build a strong community and foster a sense of belonging.

2. Positive Experiences

This section includes examples from successful societies set up in universities

- Engage experienced ringers: Having a core group helps build a strong foundation for your society.
- Talking to local ringers helps to identify current student ringers and engage with them to join the society.
- The support of a non-ringing accommodation warden can be invaluable. They can provide logistical and emotional support making a significant difference.
- Organise events to build momentum, a strong sense of community and to keep members engaged and building skills. Organising peals, quarter peals, and ringing competitions all keep students interested.
- Having access to a strong alumni network provides support and can provide guest speakers or ringers at social events.



TIP

Use all the resources available to you through the university as this will help you to build and maintain your society. ART may be able to help through their sponsored University Recruitment Package [University Recruitment Package - bellringing.org](https://bellringing.org/university-recruitment-package)

3. Conclusion

Starting or reviving a university bell ringing society is a unique challenge, but it can also be fulfilling and enjoyable. By securing a ringing location, fostering positive relationships with local ringers and making use of university resources and alumni, you can create a thriving bell ringing community at your university.