

lets go clubbing!

Education is about more than books. Education is as much about learning about the world around you, activities and people than it is anything else. Part of the way this happens is just to do stuff – different stuff, unusual stuff, normal stuff. Just stuff. Get involved. You'll have a richer and more satisfying time when you study if you join clubs and get into the many and varied groups. You'll meet people you normally wouldn't meet, and you'll ensure you have a balance in your study life. *Smart Start* looks at activities and organisations on campus.

Student organisations

These guys are the hub of most campuses. They act on behalf of students.

- Keep an eye on course quality, teaching, amenities and organise general advocacy for students in all areas.
- Assist you if you're having a problem with a course.
- Keep students up to date with the political decisions. Watch out Government – if something is not cool with a students' association, expect lobbying or demonstrations.

A student organisation (or a student union) either offers services or a political voice for students on campus. They are run and owned by students and nearly every campus has one.

All student organisations are run by students, so they will understand where you're coming from. Depending on the size of the institution, services vary.

Student organisations primarily are split into two categories.

Unions

Student unions offer services. These can vary from legal advice, sports, childcare, bars, food. From pool tables to performances.

Student associations

These are the organisations that are generally the political arm. They are the voice for student rights. From protests to politics.

But wait, there's more...

There is a third category which encompasses both a union and an association – these are called student guilds.



TAFEs too

TAFEs also have lots of activities and usually a busy student association bumbling around organising things. But many TAFE students also work full-time, so the culture is often different on and around campus. That doesn't stop TAFEs being great places to start getting involved with activities, and they are also superb places to meet like-minded people because you will come into contact with people who are interested in similar things.

Uni clubs and hand-planes

There are clubs and groups on campuses that deal with just about every serious and/or ridiculous thing you can possibly imagine. Here's just a sample A-Z of just 26 of the thousands of things you can do.

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|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| • Archery | • Jazz | • Spelunking |
| • Basketball | • Karate | • Trout fishing |
| • Cocktails | • Law | • Ultimate Frisbee |
| • Debating | • Modelling | • Ventriloquism |
| • Epicures | • Needlepoint | • Wargames |
| • Fencing | • Orienteering | • X games |
| • German | • Photography | • Yodelling |
| • Hellenic | • Queer | • Zoology |
| • Ice skating | • Rally | |

(Hand-planes are when you hang your arm out the car window when you're on the highway and move your palm so your whole hand soars up and down in the breeze.) Just start your own club. It's easy.

Your education provider might give you assistance and will have all the forms you need. You'll have to do a bit of paperwork, perhaps draft up a constitution (they'll have a standard template but you'll be able to add cool stuff like 'members must be able to maintain altitude when car is travelling below 60kph') and find a few people around campus who you suspect also think hand-planes are cool (perhaps not quite such an easy task).

You might get funding and set up a bank account, elect your executive (squadron) and go on hand-plane trips into the outback. Maybe even defend Australia in the event of conflict.

HAND-PLANES!? Let's say there's no club for what you're really into, which is hand-planes.

ARE THEY COMPULSORY TO JOIN?

Great question! The government is going to reintroduce a student services fee but at the time of going to press it hadn't been finalised as to how much it would cost or what exactly it would cover. But you can expect to pay around \$250 and it will cover a range of activities such as sporting associations, legal advice, food providers and so on, depending on which uni you go to. The one thing you can be sure it won't cover is political organisations.

EXTRA-CURRICULAR

Student organisations organise loads of events such as O-Week, gigs and parties, right down to simply making sure the common rooms or lounges are well equipped for a bit of time out.

ACADEMIC SERVICES

Student organisations often have a representative who attends academic board or university council meetings so the student body has a say in how things are run. They also express student worries regarding management or ineffective teaching.

STUDENT POLITICS

It's tradition that students have a lot to do with politics. At university you'll find heaps of people passionate about the state of the planet and the will to do something about it. Of course, that doesn't mean that only the most cosmic of issues deserve activism, you may just be worried about the steak sandwich you had at the uni cafe. Whatever your beef, chances are someone else is concerned too. There are many ways to be heard and the student voice often resonates right to Canberra!

FYI

The National Union of Students (NUS) is the peak body for higher education students – <http://unistudent.com.au>. It is made up of almost all campus student organisations in Australia, and represents over 600,000 students.

