

ALTERNATIVE BOPS

A practical guide produced by JCR Officers
in collaboration with Cambridge SU



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide was written by members of Christ's College JCR in collaboration with Cambridge SU, and accompanies an SU Council motion to promote the running of alternative bops, viewable here: <https://www.cambridgesu.co.uk/pageassets/yourvoice/studentcouncil/papers/Mich-I-2021-Agenda-and-Papers-Updated.pdf>

The guide covers what an alternative bop is, why to run them, and tips for event organisers, including ideas for activities at an alternative bop and how to make the events safe and accessible.

The ideas in this guide are suggestions that can be altered, improved on and tailored to suit your college. The main point of an alt bop is for students to have fun that couldn't otherwise if only a conventional bop was being held on a given night.

WHAT IS AN ALTERNATIVE BOP?

Alternative bops are non-alcoholic J/MCR events run at the same time as any College bop. They allow for the inclusion of students who do not want or do not feel comfortable to attend College bops.

They could consist of activities such as board games, Wii™ and Nintendo Switch™ via projectors, Just Dance, etc.

It is advised that College J/MCR's head alt bops but that members of College keen to help are encouraged to, so that the event may be tailored to individuals' needs.

WHY RUN ALTERNATIVE BOPS?

Alternative bops allow for the inclusion of students who cannot attend normal bops, and ensure that a "bop night" can be looked forward to by all of the student body.

ALTERNATIVE BOPS MAKE COLLEGE SOCIAL LIFE ACCESSIBLE TO...

Students who cannot or do not feel comfortable attending large gatherings

Many students may feel uncomfortable at crowded events - for example, those who experience claustrophobia, or anxiety over COVID-19. Students who are vulnerable to COVID-19 (e.g. immunosuppressed) may feel it is not worth the risk to attend large, close-spaced gatherings. Many disabled students find the crowded, noisy environment of conventional bops inaccessible and overwhelming.

Students who do not feel safe or included at events where alcohol is consumed

Many students may not feel comfortable around people consuming alcohol - for example, those with past traumas, or those with histories of addiction. Students who do not drink alcohol, including for religious reasons, may feel excluded at normal bops. In the context of University drinking culture, running an alt bops on a "bop night" also ensures nobody feels pressured to drink in order to participate. Alt bops provide a place where all students can enjoy their night whilst feeling safe.

TIPS FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

STAFFING AN ALTERNATIVE BOP:

Alt bops should be headed by a member of the J/MCR (e.g. the Ents or Welfare Officer). The "staff", like with normal College bops, could be made up of J/MCR Committee members and/or Ents Committee members. 1 or 2 people will be needed per alt bop as the format for the event is fairly simple and turnout is expected to be significantly less than that of the main bop. If any student shows particular interest in getting involved with College alt bops, it is encouraged that they should be given the opportunity to help as they may have ideas that better tailor the event. Setting up an Alt Bop Committee easily allows for this.

SOME IDEAS FOR ALT BOPS INCLUDE:

- Board games (these may be owned by the College J/MCR and/or College Board Games Society)
- Wii™ and/or Nintendo Switch™ projected onto a wall (students may be kind enough to lend their consoles to the alt bops if the J/MCR does not own them)
- Just Dance projected onto a wall (this can be accessed via a Wii™ or through YouTube™)
- Background music (since some people may find the regular bop too noisy, it is also a good idea to have a quiet space at the alt bop)

TIPS FOR EVENT ORGANISERS

RUNNING A SAFE AND ACCESSIBLE ALTERNATIVE BOP:

- If possible, run alt bops in a different part of College to the conventional bop in order to physically distance the two events. This reduces the chance of inebriated students entering the alt bop.
- If a student who is inebriated enters the alt bop it is best advised that one of the student "staff" asks the individual politely to leave, explaining the circumstances if possible.
- Run the alternative bop in a room which is as accessible as possible, and include accessibility information when you advertise the event. Some key things to consider are wheelchair access & the nearest accessible toilet, having seating and a quiet space at the bop, and catering to dietary requirements/making allergy information clear. The Disabled Students' Campaign has lots more useful resources for event organisers! <https://www.disabled.cusu.cam.ac.uk/resources/>
- It's suggested that alt bops are advertised with the poster/communications sent out about the main bop.

BUDGETING AN ALTERNATIVE BOP:

The cost of running an alt bop is estimated to be between £25 and £50 depending on the extent of food catered (i.e. snacks and fizzy drinks v. takeout pizzas). You might need a bigger budget to cover costs of decorations and activities if desired.

ALTERNATIVE BOPS



At the same time
as any college bop



A non-alcoholic
event



Wii, Switch, board
games, Just Dance



A less crowded
space



Run by your J/MCR



Makes bop night
fun for everyone