

Leicester Students' Union Volunteering Policy

This policy should act as a guide for student volunteers to clearly highlight expectations and responsibilities of those undertaking volunteer positions through Leicester Student's Union (LSU). This policy is here to highlight the importance of volunteers to LSU, and to ensure it is widely understood that the enthusiasm and commitment of student volunteers (both for LSU and external organisations) is recognised, valued and celebrated by LSU.

Purpose

- To ensure that all students volunteering for LSU, or on a project organised by LSU, understand what is expected of them, and what is expected of LSU.
- To ensure student volunteers are acknowledged, supported and receive recognition for their role as volunteers both within LSU and external organisations.
- Defines the rights and responsibilities of LSU and its volunteers.

What is a volunteer?

- Volunteers are individuals who choose to spend their own time participating in tasks that benefit others (not close relatives) – the environment and community.
- This time is unpaid, and a volunteer is not employed by the charity/organisation.
- Anyone can volunteer – volunteering should be open to everyone, no matter the person's background.

Volunteer Rights (what you can expect from LSU)

- Every LSU volunteer has the right:
 - To be involved in any of LSU's volunteering opportunities.
 - To have a description of their volunteering role and what is expected of them.
 - To be given appropriate training.
 - To be supported in their volunteering.
 - To receive recognition for their role as a volunteer.
 - To be safe in their volunteering placement.
 - To stop or change their volunteering placement at any time by giving adequate notice.
 - To have their personal information kept in a secure and responsible manner, in line with GDPR.
 - We will not allow for student volunteers to replace paid members of staff.

Volunteer Responsibilities/Expectations

- To abide by all LSU's policies and procedures.
- To uphold LSU's values and avoid bringing LSU into disrepute.
- To act in accordance with LSU's Equal Opportunities Policy.
- To inform their relevant LSU staff member if they have a problem or want to leave an LSU project with reasonable notice.

- To attend training where appropriate.
- To consider their availability and maintain their agreed level of commitment, ensuring their studies take priority.
- To be open and honest with LSU and give feedback.
- To respect confidentiality procedures of LSU and the voluntary activity.
- To notify LSU if there is a change of circumstance relevant to their participation, to ensure reasonable and appropriate support is offered.

Union Rights

- Leicester Students' Union reserves the right to cancel a project at any time.
- Leicester Students' Union reserves the right to remove or replace a volunteer in a position who is not abiding by the 'volunteer responsibilities'.

Recruitment

- All students are encouraged to take part in volunteering activities, provided by both LSU and external organisations.
- Volunteers shall be recruited through LSU website, social media, posters, leaflets, and events.
- Recruitment and selection will be different for different volunteering opportunities. Procedures can involve an informal interview, application form and references; the process will be defined for each individual role.
- Each role will have a clear, complete, and current description of the duties and responsibilities of their role.
- Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers for LSU volunteering opportunities.

Partner Organisations

LSU will link with external not-for-profit organisation and charities who offer volunteering opportunities. LSU will review the organisation to ensure they are suitable for our students to volunteer with. They will provide specific documents to demonstrate appropriate policies are in place to ensure students have a safe and fulfilling volunteer experience. Only then will they be able to advertise their volunteering opportunities on LSU's website (Volunteering Hub).

LSU reserves the right to withdraw a volunteering opportunity from our Volunteering Hub if it is felt that the organisation or opportunity are no longer suitable.

Health & Safety and Safeguarding

- A risk assessment will be completed for all LSU volunteering opportunities.
- We recommend that anyone volunteering with an external organisation refers to the organisation's Health & Safety policies before starting to volunteer.
- Volunteers will only be required to have a full DBS check if relevant and the role involves sustained and direct contact with young people or vulnerable adults. These roles will often

require you to also undertake safeguarding training. Both the DBS check and training should be covered and provided by the external volunteer organisation.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will complete training and induction specific to their individual role as provided by LSU or external organisation. It may be required for volunteers to undertake additional training as they progress through their role. Any training requirement will be outlined on the volunteer role description.

Support and Supervision

- Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate for the role undertaken.
- LSU will be available for support throughout any student volunteer volunteering for an external organisation.
- Students volunteering with an external organisation should be provided with a named main contact and provided with regular support.

Complaints

LSU aims to identify and assist with solving problems at the earliest possible stage and will help to resolve any issues that may arise because of your volunteering or with the organisation you are assisting.

We encourage any student, staff, or community partner to contact us if they have any complaints or concerns by phone, email or in person, and we will endeavour to work with you to resolve the issue.

If you would like to have an informal discussion about any issues that may arise because of your volunteer opportunity, please email unionvolunteering@leicester.ac.uk

A copy of the [Complaints Procedure](#) is available from the Students Union website.

Confidentiality/GDPR

- Volunteer's details are held in line with LSU procedures and current Data Protection Legislation. See LSU [Privacy Statement](#).
- Volunteers must treat all information about service users as confidential except in circumstances which conflict with LSU's [Safeguarding Policy](#).
- Any student volunteering with an external organisation must adhere to their guidelines on confidentiality. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to be aware of the organisation's policies and procedures whilst they are volunteering.

Insurance

- All volunteers engaged in LSU activities are covered by the appropriate Employers' Liability Insurance and Public Liability Insurance.

- Any student volunteering for an external organisation will be covered by that organisation's insurance – as checked and verified by LSU.

Recognition

LSU recognises the outstanding contribution that our volunteers make to students' lives and the community. We will use every opportunity to recognise our volunteers and the impact they make. This includes recognising the hours dedicated to volunteering through volunteer 'hours certificates' and highlighting success stories on our website and social media. We also hold an annual award ceremony every May that includes volunteering awards. Volunteers can be nominated, or nominate themselves, for these awards – they aim to thank our volunteers for their contribution.