



WELCOME

TO VOLUNTEERING

**A HANDBOOK FOR
STUDENT VOLUNTEERS**



**LEICESTER
STUDENTS'
UNION**

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WELCOME

Thank you for taking an interest in volunteering!

This guide will take you through what you need to know about volunteering; the benefits of volunteering, what it entails, how you can get involved, and how the Students' Union can help!

Volunteering your time offers incredible benefits, both for personal growth and future career opportunities.

By assisting those in need and supporting community-focused charities and organisations, you'll not only make a positive impact but also gain a strong sense of achievement and develop valuable, transferable skills.

Best of all, volunteering can be fun!



THE STUDENTS' UNION

The SU volunteering team is here to help you find volunteering opportunities!

We partner with a variety of organisations and charities who advertise their opportunities on our online Volunteering Hub.

Use our Volunteering Hub to find your perfect opportunity and we will support you throughout the process, during your time volunteering, and even once you've finished and need help articulating your skills and logging your hours.



If you can't find anything on the Hub that you like the look of, or you're not sure what you want to do, feel free to get in touch to discuss your options unionvolunteering@leicester.ac.uk, or drop into the SU office in the Percy Gee building for a chat!



Aleksej

Our Volunteering and Community Coordinator Aleksej Gubka, will be happy to discuss any questions you have about volunteering.



STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Mariya Shan, won the prestigious Frank May Volunteer of the Year 2023-24 category at the Leicester Students' Union Awards, for her array of impressive and impactful volunteering.

When asked about what she learnt by volunteering and her highlights, Mariya said:

"The most enjoyable and rewarding aspect of my volunteer roles has been witnessing the incredible transformations in the women we've supported as they rebuild their life after trauma.

Each smile, each moment of progress and each story of resilience just warms my heart.

"I absolutely love the sense of community and solidarity amongst the volunteers and staff. Working with such passionate and dedicated people is truly beyond inspiring. We all share the same goal—to empower women and fight for their rights."



“Volunteering as a Math tutor with Action Tutoring has been an enriching experience that has equipped me with a diverse set of skills.

As an international student, volunteering offers an array of invaluable opportunities. It's a chance to deeply connect with the local community.

Volunteering allows for personal and professional growth, providing hands-on experience to develop crucial skills like communication, teamwork, and leadership, which are highly transferable and sought after by employers.”

Ayushi Mehta



STUDENT



VOLUNTEERS



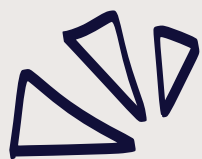
STUDENT VOLUNTEERS



“Wanting to gain experience in Forensic Psychology, I volunteer with the Leicester County Council to work with the police.

With my volunteering relating to crime and psychology, I have gained experiences which I can apply when applying for future psychology careers. By doing volunteering in a new area, you can find things you like and don't like.”

Vlad Makar



STUDENT VOLUNTEERS



“I have been a volunteer worker for Warning Zone... I have taught 10–11-year-olds about the importance of being safe online.

There are many valuable skills I have gained... these include: strong work ethic, teamwork, and leadership. All of which will help me in the future!

“Volunteering as a student gives you a sense of reward. As well as giving the opportunity to truly make a difference.”

Megan Cole

WHY SHOULD YOU VOLUNTEER AS A STUDENT?



People choose to volunteer for a variety of reasons.

For most, volunteering is about making a difference to a cause that is important to them.

As well as this, volunteers get a lot out of the experience.

Volunteering is beneficial to everyone involved!

Volunteering improves the lives of others

- Giving up your time can help not-for-profit organisations deliver important community services that they otherwise wouldn't be able to do.
- Contribute to your community - give something back.

Meet new people

- Expand your social network and boost your social skills.
- Strengthen ties to your community and give an increased sense of belonging.
- Meet likeminded people with similar interests.

WHY SHOULD YOU

VOLUNTEER AS A

STUDENT?



Gain new skills and experiences

- Gain a wide range of skills which can help when you come to apply for jobs.
- Sets you apart from other candidates by having different interview answer examples.
- Shows that you have interests outside of your degree course.
- Try out a prospective career option and gain experience in the field.

Staying happy and healthy

- Volunteering has been demonstrated to improve your general wellbeing and make you feel happier!
- Provide you with a sense of purpose and keep you mentally stimulated.
- Gain a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction, increasing your self-confidence.
- Spend time doing activities that you genuinely enjoy, are interested in, and support!

WHAT TO CONSIDER

BEFORE VOLUNTEERING

When trying to find a volunteering opportunity that will suit you and that you will enjoy, consider the following:

- What skills can you bring and what will you be good at? (For most volunteering roles you won't need any prior skills, but it can be good to consider what you think will suit you best).
- What community initiatives are important to you, and is there a cause you are passionate about?
- How much time can you commit?
- Do you prefer being front facing or behind the scenes?
- What skills do you want to develop? e.g., organisation, public speaking, leadership, communication.
- It should be fun and fulfilling!



USING THE

VOLUNTEERING HUB

TO FIND OPPORTUNITIES



Our online Volunteering Hub on the Students' Union website is a great way to search for volunteering opportunities.

We check every organisation who offers opportunities to students. This way, you can be sure that everything advertised on our Hub is safe, fun and will make a huge difference to the cause!

Once you have found an opportunity that you like the look of, click 'apply for this opportunity'. The organisation will be notified of your interest and will contact you to discuss further details and talk you through any applications etc.

You should hear from the organisation within 1-2 weeks, but please get in touch with us (unionvolunteering@leicester.ac.uk) if you haven't heard anything, and we can help with communication.

Once you begin volunteering for an organisation, they will be your main port of call regarding this volunteering opportunity. However, the SU is always here to help and support you, so please don't hesitate to get in touch if you need anything.

WHAT ROLES



COULD YOU LOOK FOR?

There are a wide range of volunteering roles, and usually something to suit everyone! You might want to consider...

- Volunteering with children
 - Roles in heritage and the arts
 - Supporting vulnerable adults and the elderly
 - Sustainable options e.g., conservation or working with animals
 - Volunteering with offenders, victims of crime, or the police
 - Roles related to sport, health and wellbeing
 - Opportunities in marketing, PR or media
 - Web design or IT related
 - ...and many more areas
- 

Start by searching for an opportunity on our Volunteering Hub! We aim to cover as many of these categories as possible, but the availability will be varied and you may not find your perfect match the first time you search!

APPLYING AND

PREPARING FOR A

VOLUNTEERING ROLE



Most organisations looking for volunteers will love you to apply if you show you are:

- Eager to help and put your skills to good use.
- Hardworking, trustworthy and reliable.
- Able to commit to the time the organisation needs (there may be some wiggle room with timings – make sure to discuss this and be honest about how much time, and when, you can commit).

Once you have applied for an opportunity (on the Volunteering Hub or somewhere else) ...

- You can expect to hear back from most organisations within 1-2 weeks.
- They may ask you to fill out a more detailed application, depending on the role.
- You may be invited for a phone call or in-person interview/chat – again this will depend on the role. Some opportunities may have some specific requirements e.g., experience using social media.

APPLYING AND

PREPARING FOR A

VOLUNTEERING ROLE



When volunteering for the first time, it's a good idea to come prepared...

- Check when you're needed – what hours are you committing to?
- Do a bit of research on the organisation so you know what to expect.
- Keep up to date with any paperwork they've asked you to do e.g., references or DBS application.
- Check if there are any rules or instructions e.g., dress code.

EXPECTATIONS



What should you expect from an organisation?

- To value and respect you as a volunteer.
- The opportunity to volunteer in a safe and welcoming environment.
- Support and guidance from a member(s) of staff.
- Clear role description and explanation of your main activities.
- An induction covering policies and procedures.
- Treat your personal information with care and discretion – should only be used in line with their privacy policy.
- The right to change your mind about carrying out a voluntary activity.
- Recognise your contribution as a volunteer.
- Reasonable expenses covered e.g., DBS and travel (this may not always be the case, but often is).

EXPECTATIONS



What will be expected from you?

- Have good relations with people you meet when volunteering (staff, other volunteers, public)
- Abide by the organisations code of conduct and relevant policies and procedures.
- Ask someone (e.g., volunteer manager) if you're unsure about anything.
- Participate in relevant training sessions.
- Let your organisation know if your availability changes.
- Treat confidential information shared with you sensitively and in line with their privacy policy.
- Update them with relevant information if it changes e.g., contact info.
- Ensure you have read and understood risk assessments relating to the activities you are being asked to carry out.
- Do not feel pressured to do something you consider to be unsafe. We will always support you in such a situation.

Further details on rules and regulations for volunteers can be found in our Volunteering Policy([link](#)).

EXPECTATIONS



What can you expect from us (the Students' Union)?

- Support in choosing the right volunteering opportunity for you.
- Ongoing support and advice during your time volunteering.
- Support if you have a complaint about your time volunteering.
- Advice on how to articulate/demonstrate your new skills in your C.V, applications and interviews.

LOGGING YOUR

HOURS AND SKILLS ON

THE VOLUNTEERING HUB

The Volunteering Hub can also help you keep a record of your volunteering experiences. Logging your hours and skills will create a very useful resource to look back on when writing applications!

To log your hours...

- Visit your volunteering profile and select 'log hours'.
- Select either 'add a community project' or 'add a committee role'.
- Select your chosen project or role and click 'log hours'.
- Continue to log hours for each day that you volunteered for that specific project/role.
- They all add up, so make sure to log everything, even if you only have 1 hour to log!

Logging your skills is similar to logging your hours.

- Once you have added a project/role, select 'add skill' and fill in the fields.
- If you need help articulating your skills/examples, please get in touch.

Visit the 'How to Log Your Hours & Skills' page on our website to see more detailed information.



Logging hours and skills can also earn you awards! We have 25, 50, 100 and 200 hour awards. These will look great on your CV and recognise your hard work and commitment...

RECOGNISING YOUR

VOLUNTEERING

ACHIEVEMENTS



We aim to recognise the hard work and dedication of all of our student volunteers. We have a few different ways of doing this:

In order to receive a 25, 50, 100 or 200 hour certificate, you will need to use our Volunteering Hub to log your volunteering hours and skills (see previous page on how to do this). At the end of the year, we will check all hours and skills logs to make sure they meet the requirements. We will then send out your certificate!

The requirements for achieving a certificate are as follows:

- You will need to log a certain number of skills in order to achieve the different volunteering certificates. E.g., in order to receive the 25 hour certificate, you will also need to log 3 skills.
- Any volunteering hours logged will have to have been completed through a charity/not-for-profit organisation that is either registered on our Volunteering Hub, or can be verified by us as a legitimate charity/not-for-profit organisation. We may ask for contact details to confirm your volunteering.

RECOGNISING YOUR VOLUNTEERING ACHIEVEMENTS



Every May, the Students' Union hosts an awards night, where students get recognition for their hard work and dedication - including for volunteering!

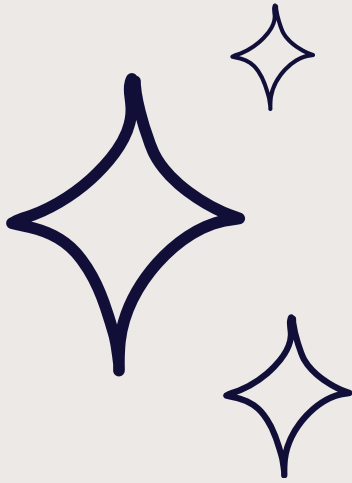
As a student who volunteers, you can be nominated, or nominate yourself, for various awards that will celebrate your exceptional volunteering.



We are always looking for volunteer stories to share with other students on our website and social media. This is a great way of celebrating and recognising all that you have done, while also encouraging other students to get involved!

If you would like to share your story with us, and we be happy for us to share it online, we would love you to get in touch at unionvolunteering@leicester.ac.uk

RESOURCES/CONTACTS



As well as using the Volunteering Hub to search for opportunities, The University advertises one-off opportunities on their Make a Difference page.

You can also reach out to the University Careers team who can help you search for volunteering roles, part-time jobs, graduate jobs, and more!

<https://le.ac.uk/study/undergraduates/careers/career-development-service>

Contact us at
unionvolunteering@leicester.ac.uk

Come and say hi at the SU office in the Percy Gee Building, Mon-Fri, 10am-4pm.

Visit the Volunteering Hub on the SU website!

