

Leeds University Union

Volunteer Policy

Leeds University Union (LUU) is a member-led organisation with over 31,000 members, all students of the University of Leeds. It provides a wide range of services from retail and bar outlets to housing and academic advice, from democratic activities to leisure time activities and sports.

Leeds University Union is committed to providing opportunities for its members to take on roles of responsibility, empowering them to lead activities for their peers and develop new skills and abilities that will help them outside of their academic learning.

To this end members, through election at activity group AGMs, are encouraged to take on volunteer committee roles. These roles have the responsibility for running those activities and are supported by staff within Leeds University Union. There are approximately 630 volunteers taking on these organising roles.

The organisation also runs community volunteering activities with approximately 500 registered volunteers. These projects vary in size and scope but are all supported under the Volunteering category of Student Activities.

The Value of Volunteering at LUU

Volunteering has been identified as a valuable part of LUU for varied reasons, the most important of which is the benefits offered to our members.

Without the committee volunteers hundreds of other students would not have the opportunity to take part in the range of student activities currently on offer at LUU.

Volunteering gives students valuable skills, knowledge and experience which cannot be achieved from an academic degree alone and thus volunteering increases their chances of employment in the future. Through volunteering a more rounded student experience is gained, friendships are forged and our members are able to interact with the community within which they live. LUU's student volunteers will always be able to request a reference to assist with future employment.

Student volunteers also bring great benefit to the local communities in which they live, through projects they establish and run and also

through meaningful partnerships with local community, voluntary and faith sector organisations.

Access to & Support for Volunteering at LUU

LUU aims to make accessing the volunteering opportunities available to its members as easy as possible. By promoting volunteering through the various methods of internal advertising and by promoting a wide variety of opportunities to suit all interested parties. LUU are also committed to making the registration process for volunteering opportunities as smooth and accessible as possible and are keen to support all student led ideas for new volunteering projects.

Leeds University Union is committed to promoting diversity and strives to include all students and remove all barriers to students wishing to take up volunteering roles, with the aim of ensuring that the make up of our volunteer base reflects that of the student community. To this end we have formal Equal Opportunities policies which volunteers can ask to see at any time and a Volunteering Diversity Working Group has been formed which will scrutinise the volunteering diversity statistics and develop a strategy and action plan to act upon any discrepancies identified.

LUU has a comprehensive Health & Safety Policy which all student volunteers have access to and are required to work within. They are required to undertake a Risk Assessment for all activities and have the support of staff from the Student Activities department with this task (the Safety Coordinator and their Development Coordinator).

Purpose of this policy

This policy outlines methods of recruitment, procedures for supporting and mechanisms for protecting volunteers that Leeds University Union puts in place. It is also a statement of intent, highlighting the importance we place on volunteers and their activities. Furthermore, it can act as a reference guide for volunteers so that they can clearly see both their rights and how they can expect to be treated, as well as their responsibilities and the expectations that we have of them.

The document is split into two sections: the first for committee volunteers and the second for community volunteers.

Section 1 – LUU Committee Volunteers

Recruitment

In line with our constitution and aims as an organisation, committee volunteers will be elected at group AGMs. Only people who are registered members of that activity group will be able to stand for election. Associate and life members cannot stand for election, neither can members of the general public. This is in line with point 4.8 in Leeds University Union's core constitution.

Induction and training

All committee volunteers are subject to an induction upon taking up their roles. This induction will be delivered by the Development Co-ordinator appropriate to their group.

The induction programme will include:

- Introduction to LUU Student Activities
- Volunteering policy
- Expectations of volunteer
- The role of the Development Co-ordinator
- Activities Board, the Student Activities Officer, and your Assembly
- Health & Safety
- The paperwork for activity groups
- How funding works
- Writing your plan & budget

A programme of skills training will also be provided throughout the year for any volunteers who wish to access it.

Support

The Development Co-ordinators are in place to directly support the work of committee volunteers. They will have at least one formal scheduled meeting each academic term to ensure that any problems can be dealt with and that feedback on support can be given.

Volunteers can also request a meeting with their Development Co-ordinator at any point during their time in office. Development Co-ordinators are also available for volunteers to drop-in at the office.

If volunteers are unhappy about the service they are receiving from their Development Co-ordinator, they can complain either directly to the Student Activities Manager, or via the representative from their assembly. There is also a formal questionnaire for committee volunteers to complete at the end of their time in office which will assess the performance and service they feel they have received from their Development Co-ordinator.

Confidentiality

In supporting committee volunteers, we need to collect personal data from those people so that we can contact them throughout the year. The access to this data is restricted to only those staff in the Student Activities department who work with and support the groups.

Leeds University Union would never pass on personal details without the volunteer's express, written consent. All physical documents containing personal data are stored in lockable filing cabinets. Electronic copies of the data are stored on a secure part of our computer system that can only be accessed by staff in the Student Activities department.

Section 2 – LUU Community Volunteers

Recruitment

In line with our aims as an organisation, community volunteers will be recruited from the whole of the student body. There is no limitation on who can apply to be a volunteer. All potential volunteers will be thoroughly checked using references and where appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks. This process is clearly explained, including the fact that a positive disclosure does not necessarily mean that the individual would be excluded from volunteering. Only individuals who after these checks are discovered to not be suitable for volunteering are excluded from being a community volunteer.

Induction and training

All community volunteers are subject to an induction upon taking up their roles. This induction will be delivered by the Development Co-ordinator appropriate to their group or the Action Co-ordinator. Community volunteers can expect to undertake this induction within 4 weeks of having their application to volunteer accepted.

The induction programme will include:

- Why do you want to volunteer?
- Volunteering policy
- Expectations of volunteer – rights and responsibilities
- How the community volunteering projects work.
- Good practice and legal issues
- Health & Safety

A programme of skills training will also be provided throughout the year for any volunteers who wish to access it.

Support

The Action and individual project co-ordinators are in place to directly support the work of community volunteers. Volunteers can ask for a person meeting with either of these supporters at any time throughout the year. Furthermore, community volunteers can expect to be contacted at least once a year to ask about how they are finding their volunteering experience.

If volunteers are unhappy about the service they are receiving from their Co-ordinator, they can complain either directly to the Volunteer Development Coordinator, or via the representative from their assembly.

Confidentiality

In supporting community volunteers, we need to collect personal data from those people so that we can contact them throughout the year.

The access to this data is restricted to only those staff in the Student Activities department who work with and support the groups.

Leeds University Union would never pass on personal details without the volunteer's express, written consent. All physical documents containing personal data are stored in lockable filing cabinets. Electronic copies of the data are stored on a secure part of our computer system that can only be accessed by staff in the Student Activities department.