

University of Lincoln Students' Union  
**Volunteering Policy**

April 2010

Page

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<b>Contents:</b>	<b>1/2</b>
<b>Aims Overarching statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Objectives</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The role of the volunteers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Statement of intent</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Expectations of the SU and Volunteer</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Volunteer expectations:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Expectations:</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Advertising of volunteer roles</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Recruitment of volunteers</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Screening of volunteers</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Induction and training</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Volunteer expenses</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Support and supervision</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Communication</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Health and safety</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Insurance</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Equal opportunities and diversity</b>	<b>7</b>

<b>Grievance</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Disciplinary procedure</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Data protection</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Confidentiality</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>External Agencies</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Exit interviews</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>External Agencies</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Policy Implementation</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Policy review</b>	<b>9</b>

## Overarching Statement of aims

**This policy aims to demonstrate the University of Lincoln Students' Union's (SU) commitment to our volunteers and to volunteering opportunities, by setting out how volunteers should be treated, what they can expect from us and what we expect from them.**

### Objectives

- To adopt a consistent and cohesive approach in all services and support to volunteers
- To ensure all volunteers are treated on an equal and fair basis
- To ensure all volunteers are properly supported in a safe and inclusive way
- To ensure all volunteers' contributions are recognised and rewarded
- To provide volunteers with high quality service and support to make sure they get the most out of their volunteering experience
- To ensure all staff, officers, trustees and volunteers fully understand why volunteers are involved and what role they play in the organisation
- To ensure objectives are met through ongoing monitoring information.

### The role of Volunteers

There are many opportunities that volunteers can participate in within the community and SU and each volunteer role has its own individual role description.

We work with partner organisations to offer the broadest range of opportunities, however, we will not work with an organisation which has values and policies that conflict with our own.

### Statement of Intent

Volunteers will only be used where it is appropriate and where roles have been specifically designed for volunteers. They will **not** be used to replace paid staff.

## **Expectations of the SU and the Volunteer**

### **Volunteer expectations:**

Volunteers will not be expected to undertake any tasks they do not feel comfortable with, or be asked to give more time than they feel able to commit to.

### **Expectations:**

Volunteers will be expected to undertake the relevant training needed for their role; work within SU values and visions; be polite, professional and inclusive with whomever they work. Volunteers will be required to complete the relevant feedback and monitoring forms; comply with the policies and procedures stated within this document and those additional policies and procedures specific to their role/organisation. Could we put something here about expecting them to make an agreed and manageable time commitment?

## **Advertising, recruitment and selection of volunteers**

### **Advertising of volunteering roles**

Volunteer roles are advertised through the relevant SU channels. Profiles and role descriptions for all projects and opportunities should be made accessible to all students, in a variety of formats. All projects and opportunities should be advertised on an equal basis and the SU will strive to ensure that the advertisement process is accessible to all University of Lincoln students and complies with the Equal Opportunities policy.

### **Accessibility**

Recruitment materials and information should be presented in an accessible way and relevant to the diversity of students. This process should include:

- Positive images of volunteering that reflect the ethos of the organisation used in advertisements and resources.
- Photos should avoid stereotyping volunteers
- Glossy paper should be avoided
- Clear texts should be used at all times.
- Jargon, acronyms or excessively complicated words should be avoided.

## **Recruitment of Volunteers**

Volunteers may be required to complete an application form, attend an interview, provide references, attend a selection meeting and attend project specific training before being recruited. This will be decided on an individual opportunity basis, dependent upon the nature of the opportunity and the role of the volunteer. The recruitment procedure should be made clear for each opportunity.

All information and application forms should be made available in an accessible format.

The SU will strive to give feedback to all unsuccessful volunteers stating, if possible, the reason why they were unsuccessful. If the reason for being unsuccessful was not made by the SU, the SU will strive, wherever possible, to obtain feedback from a third party.

Volunteers should be informed of the aims of the opportunity or organisation, and a full role description will be available.

## **Screening of volunteers**

Certain opportunities will require volunteers to undertake a CRB check and other training.

<http://www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk/>

The SU has a duty of care to protect its volunteer participants and staff involved in opportunities.

All volunteers are required to attend a Volunteer Induction or an equivalent SU training session which will aim to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to help them get the most out of their volunteering experience. It will include an introduction to the opportunities, support, resources and recognition available through the SU. Students will think about their expectations as a volunteer, what makes a good volunteer, what they can expect from the SU. It will also include basic health and safety training. Volunteers will be signposted to the relevant health and safety information.

## **Volunteer Expenses**

Volunteers should not be out of pocket due to their volunteering activities and all reasonable expenses will be reimbursed with the prior agreement of the relevant organisation.

## **Support and Supervision**

All volunteers will be provided with support before, during and after their volunteering activity from designated SU staff members or partner organisations. Volunteers should know how and where to access this support.

Volunteers on student led projects will be supported by project coordinators, the co-ordinators can receive one to one support from SU staff on how they can best support their volunteers.

## **Communication**

Volunteers will be informed about important events, changes to operational procedures and current and future developments which may affect their volunteering. Volunteers should know how to communicate their feedback on an issue effectively and feel confident that their views will be considered.

## **Health & Safety**

If the volunteering activity is with a Students' Union managed project then the volunteer should work within the SU's Health & Safety policies.

If the volunteering is with an external organisation then the volunteer should familiarise themselves with and work within the host organisation's Health & Safety Policies.

Copies of these documents are held with ULSU Volunteering and all opportunities are checked before they are offered to volunteers.

Volunteers may be required to undertake role/task specific Health and Safety training.

## **Insurance**

The Students' Union strives to ensure all its volunteers are protected and insured.

If the volunteering activity is with a Students' Union managed project then the volunteer is covered by the SU's Insurance.

If the volunteering opportunity is with an external organisation then the volunteer will be covered by the host organisation's Insurance

Copies of these insurance documents are held with ULSU Volunteering and all opportunities are checked before they are offered to volunteers. If volunteers have any problems they should contact the office who will help.

For the purposes of insurance it is essential that volunteers report any incident and or accident - in all circumstances this should be reported to the SU Volunteering Co-ordinator and in the case of an external organisation it should also be reported to the volunteer supervisor.

Volunteers who organise their own volunteering placement should contact the ULSU Volunteer Co-ordinator for insurance advice.

## **Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

The SU undertakes to:

- Ensure no less favourable treatment is given to any individual or group whose characteristics are protected under the Equality Act 2010.
- Formulate and implement a programme of positive action to promote equality of opportunity within the SU and in our relations with other organisations.

The SU aims to do this through monitoring recruitment and selection procedures, ensuring volunteering opportunities are accessible to as many students as possible and providing appropriate training to staff and volunteers.

The SU will encourage the formation and development of student groups that provide for the distinctive needs of our diverse community, provided their aims and actions are consistent with the overriding principle of equal opportunities. We subscribe to the UL Equal Opportunities and Diversity Policy.

<https://portal.lincoln.ac.uk/C7/C5/Equality/default.aspx>

## **Grievance and Disciplinary procedure**

### **Grievance procedure**

We seek to resolve all grievances informally where possible. A copy of our complaints procedure is available online:

[http://www.lincolnsu.com/files/complaints\\_procedure.pdf](http://www.lincolnsu.com/files/complaints_procedure.pdf)

We also endeavour to support students who have a grievance with an external organisation .

### **Disciplinary procedure**

All students are subject at all times to the University Student Regulations, Code of Conduct and disciplinary procedure.

<https://portal.lincoln.ac.uk/C2/StudentServices/Document%20Library/Student%20Charter%202010.11.pdf>

<https://portal.lincoln.ac.uk/C18/C3/StudentConductandDiscipline/DocumentLibrary/UniversityDisciplinaryProcedure-GuidelinesforConductingInvestigations.doc>

All staff volunteers are subject to the University Staff Disciplinary Policies. The SU reserve the right to remove persons from SU membership.

## **Data Protection and Confidentiality**

### **Data Protection:**

In order to operate efficiently and constantly evaluate and improve our services, the SU has to collect and use information about people with whom it works, including volunteers. The SU will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and correctly and adhere to the principles of Data Protection as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

### **Confidential information**

In some roles volunteers may come across confidential information. It is essential that information is kept confidential and failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

## **External Agencies**

If an agency works with vulnerable adults and wishes to recruit SU students as volunteers, they should have an up to date Child Protection Policy.

## **Exit interviews**

Exit surveys will be undertaken with volunteers wherever possible, to receive feedback on their personal development through their volunteering role and how well they feel they were supported by the SU or placement provider. This will help to inform the SU as to how they can improve the support they offer volunteers.

## **Recognition**

The SU realises the valuable role that volunteers play and annually certificates this to recognise the contribution. The SU will also dedicate budget funds towards volunteer recognition and developing projects and programmes that enable a volunteer to receive official recognition for their role. Volunteers will be signposted to relevant recognition opportunities.

## **Policy Implementation**

A copy of this policy and handbook will be made available to all SU staff and they should have the relevant training so that they are aware of how the SU supports volunteers and what role they are expected to play.

All staff with responsibilities for supporting volunteers will be given the relevant guidance and training. Staff should approach their line manager if they feel they need additional training to carry out this part of their role.

## **Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SU Volunteer Committee.

**Date of policy: May 2010**

**Date of review: May 2012**

**Reviewer: SU Committee**