

Leeds University Union

Volunteer Policy

Last updated July 2011

Review date: July 2012 (To be reviewed by the Volunteering Development Coordinator)

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About Leeds University Union

Leeds University Union is a charity that helps over 32,000 students love their time at Leeds. Located at the heart of campus, the Union is a space to meet people, make new friends and get involved.

Six elected students are the leaders of our organisation, backed by volunteers and staff. A lot happens in our building, but it's also a hub for activity across campus, throughout Leeds and beyond.

By providing opportunities for development, support when things go wrong and representation to create change on issues that matter, our aim is to make a real difference.

Policy Statement

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 volunteers have the responsibility for running those activities and are supported by staff within Leeds University Union.

The organisation also runs community volunteering activities for both members of the public and members of Leeds University Union. These projects vary in size and scope but are all supported by the Volunteering and Community department.

Finally, there are opportunities for volunteers to get involved directly in departments at Leeds University Union, including Campaigns and Democracy Support, Volunteering and Community and the Student Advice Centre.

Purpose of this policy

This policy outlines methods of recruitment, procedures for supporting volunteers, mechanisms for protecting volunteers that Leeds University Union puts in place and the expenses policy. 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 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 three sections: the first for committee volunteers, the second for other volunteers and the third for the expenses policy.

Equal Opportunities Statement

Leeds University Union is committed to being an equal opportunities employer and strives to include all students with the aim of ensuring that the make up of our volunteer base reflects that of the community. To this end we have formal Equal Opportunities policies which volunteers can ask to see at any time.

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. Committee volunteers can expect to undertake this induction within 4 weeks of taking up their role.

The induction programme will include:

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

Training will also be provided throughout the year for any volunteers who wish to access it.

Health and Safety

Leeds University Union is committed to the health and safety of staff, members and volunteers. Please see the Health and Safety guidance for societies as well as for the Union for more information. Volunteers are covered by Leeds University Union's public liability insurance, which covers any awards of damages given because of damage to a person or property caused by an individual doing anything anyone does officially as Leeds University Union.

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.

Complaints Procedure

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 – Other LUU Volunteers

Recruitment

In line with our aims as an organisation, other volunteers with community projects or in LUU departments will be recruited from the whole of the student body and, for some projects, from members of the public as well. 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. Only individuals who, after these checks are discovered not to be suitable for volunteering, are excluded from being a volunteer.

Induction and training

All volunteers are subject to an induction upon taking up their roles. This induction will be delivered by the Volunteer Supervisor and will be appropriate to the role they are undertaking. 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 volunteering projects work and, if applicable, fits in to Leeds University Union's overall work
- Good practice and legal issues
- Health & Safety

Training will also be provided throughout the year for any volunteers who wish to access it.

Health and Safety

Leeds University Union is committed to the health and safety of staff, members and volunteers. Please see the Health and Safety guidance for societies as well as for the Union for more information. Volunteers are covered by Leeds University Union's public liability insurance, which covers any awards of damages given because of damage to a person or property caused by an individual doing anything anyone does officially as Leeds University Union.

Support

Volunteer supervisors are in place to directly support the work of volunteers. Volunteers can ask for a personal meeting with their supervisor at any time throughout the year. Furthermore, 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 supervisor, they can complain either directly to their supervisor's line manager who will be identified to the volunteer, or via other representative channels at Leeds University Union such as Activities Exec and the Student Exec.

Confidentiality

Some volunteering roles require us to carry out a screening process before volunteers can volunteer. Please see Leeds University Union's 'Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults policy' and the 'Safeguarding Screening Policy, Procedures and Guidance' for more information. When this happens, we will 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 3 - Expenses Policy

Any necessary expenses incurred by a volunteer will be reimbursed by the specific society/project/department providing the opportunity. All general volunteer expenses forms must be authorised. If this is a society,

it must be authorised by the signatories of the society account. These are usually the President, Treasurer or Secretary. If it is a Leeds University Union department, this will normally be the manager of the department. If it is another volunteering project, this will be the project coordinator or volunteer supervisor.

Necessary expenses include:

1. Meals up to £4, only if a volunteer volunteers for 4 hours or more over either lunch or dinner.
2. Resources: printing, stationary and other equipment
3. Training
4. Subsistence: biscuits, tea, coffee and squash
5. Transport costs: where possible, volunteers are expected to use public transport over taxis. When own transport is used, petrol will be reimbursed at a rate of 40p per mile for the first 100 miles of a return journey and 20p per mile for any miles over 100.

Volunteers must, where possible, contact their volunteer supervisor to gain approval for expenses.

Expenses can only be reimbursed where receipts are provided that are no more than 1 month old.