

## **UEA Students Union Volunteering Policy**

### **Introduction**

This volunteer policy sets out the principles and practice by which we involve volunteers and is relevant to staff, volunteers and trustees within the organisation. It aims to create a common understanding and to clarify roles and responsibilities to ensure the highest standards are maintained in relation to the management of volunteers.

### **Our commitments**

We recognise volunteers as an integral part of UEASU. Their contribution supports our mission and strategic aims and complements the role of paid staff. We aim to encourage and support volunteer involvement to ensure that volunteering benefits the organisation, our members and the volunteers themselves.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. Volunteers will not be used to replace staff.

We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us, including those from a widening participation background. We are also committed to actively breaking down barriers that may stop some students from accessing volunteering opportunities and working with our volunteers to understand what these are.

We recognise that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

### **Who is a volunteer?**

Volunteers are individuals who undertake activity on behalf of our organisation, unpaid and of their own free choice.

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Please refer to HR for further information about these. Trustees are volunteers with responsibility for the organisational governance of the organisation.

**Volunteers may be involved on a one – off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis. They may be involved:**

- in the direct delivery of our services
- organising our student groups
- providing feedback to our institution
- on our board of management as trustees
- in community engagement to raise awareness of our work

- in one off events and promotional activities
- in our offices or in our venues

### **Volunteers are valued for:**

- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisations
- Contributing and improving the experiences of other students
- enabling us to be more responsive and flexible in our approach
- championing our cause within the wider community
- enhancing the quality of our work and of client experience
- Promoting the wellbeing of users of services, staff, local communities and themselves.

### **Standards of good practice**

UEASU management practice is informed by the Investing in Volunteers Quality Standard for volunteer management.

### **Roles and responsibilities**

All volunteers will have a designated staff member/volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. Staff responsibilities for volunteers will be explicitly referred to in their task/role description.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits.

However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers expect of the organisation.

### **The organisation expects volunteers:**

- to undertake their role with enthusiasm and a proactive attitude
- to be mindful of all others always ensuring inclusivity
- to abide the union members code of conduct and where relevant project codes
- to adequately consider their availability and suitability for the role, ensuring good time keeping and continued commitment to ensuring studies take priority
- where specialist volunteering is being undertaken e.g. buddying and the beneficiary relies on constancy full commitment to the role is required
- To be punctual, reliable and honest throughout their role
- to make the most of opportunities given, e.g. for training

- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines and communicate regularly with their supervisor/s
- to notify their supervisor/s as soon as possible if the volunteer role is not for them or they can no longer commit to the role – if a volunteer feels they cannot speak to their supervisor they should seek the line manager of that supervisor to speak to
- to notify their supervisor if there is a change of circumstance relevant to their participation, to ensure reasonable and appropriate support is offered
- from time-to-time UEASU may ask for information to form case studies, good news stories, press releases and marketing materials: you may be asked for your consent for your volunteering information and photos to be used but it is not obligatory if you do not wish to.
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies
- to enhance the reach and impact of the organisation and champion volunteering to other students

#### **Volunteers can expect:**

- to understand the reason and importance of the role
- to have a clear task/role description
- a named supervisor/s who has the relevant knowledge and experience to support them in their role
- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
- to receive adequate induction, training and support
- to receive specialized training where appropriate for the role
- to have access to relevant organization policies and resources for their role
- to receive regular contact from their supervisor in regard to updates to their role or activities
- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment under the public liability of the Union
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
- to receive out of pocket expenses in line with UEA(SU) expenses policy
- to have opportunities for personal development and be signposted to relevant employability events
- to be recognised and appreciated
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
- to know what to do if something goes wrong

Please note some of the above may differ in society or club committee positions, due to the level of independence they adopt. A clear and obvious example of this would be the SU would not provide a task description to a specialised committee role it did not have expertise to develop. But will however work with the society to develop one.

#### **Recruitment, selection and election**

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, including written role descriptions which set out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits.

Volunteer roles at UEASU, may be filled via recruitment, selection or in the most instances election.

Recruitment and selection of role can involve an informal interview, application form and the taking of references; the process and criterion will be defined and consistent for any given role. However, this role will be tailored in line with the requirements of the role. For example, the recruitment/selection process for trustees, regular volunteers and for volunteers for one off event will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

When a volunteer role is elected, they will be treated as if they were selected and subject to all aspects of the volunteering policy. The election process will be outlined by the UEASU Bye Laws, policy or guidance in line with the relevant role.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to in recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted, to attract interest from different sectors of the community. Positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate.

### **Safety, Safeguarding and Emergencies**

A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Emergency procedures will be shared with all volunteers to ensure they are prepared for basic emergency procedures.

Volunteers will be only be required to have a full DBS disclosure check if relevant and if their role involves care giving and/or sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk. These volunteer roles will also be required to undertake safeguarding training which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

### **Induction and training**

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken. Where relevant, further specific training will be provided to undertake the role.

Further development opportunities will be provided over the course of the year for volunteers, these may include residentials, conferences and workshops. These will be promoted via the supervisors and fellow volunteers.

Where relevant, safeguarding training will also be provided to specific roles.

### **Support and supervision**

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken, and may include online support, group meetings or one to one review. They will also be provided with written resources to undertake their role.

A designated member/s of staff trained in the supporting of volunteers will be highlighted to any volunteer to seek support, should a volunteer feel uncomfortable to speak to their supervisor their line manager should be sought.

Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation's wider staff, at staff meetings and student forums.

### **Dealing with problems**

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. It seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly.

We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty.

Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation. This behaviour will be outlined by the union code of conduct which covers all volunteers as members of the union.

### **GDPR**

Where relevant and handling data, UEASU will provide GDPR training, and all volunteers must abide by UEASU data policies

### **Expenses**

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim. This can be done via the expenses 365 app and expenses form.

### **Recognition**

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed in a variety of way, this will list is not exhaustive but includes annual reports, website articles, social media and in the STAR (Student Transformation and Recognition Awards).

### **References**

The SU will not provide a detail reference for those volunteering in positions. We will only provide confirmation of the role being undertaken subject to accurate records. UEASU will however provide a mechanism for you to clearly log your volunteering activity.

### Moving on

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us, they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They should they wish would be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully.

### Appendices

1. Volunteer role creation checklist
2. Template Volunteer Induction checklist

### Appendices 1

#### Volunteering role creation checklist

What is the volunteer role name?	
Number of volunteers required?	
Department?	
Primary supervisor?	
Task description written?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Duration of the role?	
Method of recruitment?	
Expected commitment?	
Risk assessment completed for the role?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Training requirements and safety instructions defined?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Role specific training requirements and instructions defined and prepared for delivery	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Authorised by which manager or senior manager?	
Are there any safeguarding measures to be completed?	
DBS required?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendices 2

### Volunteering Induction Sheet

Below is the outlined required information all volunteers within UEASU must receive as part of the induction. Required role specific information should be in addition to the below.

Induction	Who?	When & Where?	How	Completion / Signature
Organisation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aims and objectives of the organisation</li> <li>• Context on what the role is trying to achieve and why it's important to the organisation</li> </ul>	Volunteer coordinator	Induction session & shared volunteer policy		
Safety, Location and Duty of Care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Office layout, toilets, parking, break space, water</li> <li>• Emergency Procedures – Fire Evacuation, First Aid, Accident or Incident</li> </ul>				
Induction	Who?	When & Where?	How	Completion / Signature
The role: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline of volunteer role, tasks involved, confirm agreed commitment day, time etc</li> <li>• Staff &amp; Volunteers you will volunteer with</li> <li>• Boundaries of role, Expected Conduct, Confidentiality</li> <li>• Insurance cover</li> </ul>				

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk areas. – Key role specific safety information (this may require separate training for high risk roles)</li> <li>• Equipment or resources provided</li> </ul>				
<p>Support available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Key contact and their details</li> <li>• Other contacts available is key contact in unavailable</li> <li>• Other support available e.g. resource hubs, newsletter</li> </ul>				
<p>Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further training provided</li> </ul>				
<p>Finances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are expenses reimbursed</li> </ul>				

Volunteer: I confirm that I have completed all items in the induction checklist and where indicated understand the policies and procedures.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer Supervisor: I confirm that all items in the induction checklist, including policies and procedures have been explained.

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_