



University of Lincoln Students' Union Volunteering Policy

The University of Lincoln Students' Union (ULSU) is a student-led charity which works to support, empower and represent every student. Volunteering has always been a core element of ULSU's work and without the work of thousands of volunteers, we wouldn't be where we are today. There are a variety of different ways to volunteer within the organisation, such as being a student rep or acting as a committee member for a sport or society, as well as many external opportunities; there is something for everyone.

The Students' Union always strives to increase its number of volunteers and ensures that it recognises the time and effort that have been put into volunteering. We encourage and celebrate our volunteers to ensure we give them the credit they deserve.

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision is to be a Students' Union where every Lincoln student has a great experience and is encouraged and assisted to fulfil their potential both at University and in life.

Our mission is to help all students have a successful, enjoyable and memorable time at Lincoln. We will work with our students to be an important part of their social, academic and working life by providing support and representation to all that need it.

Our values in achieving our vision and mission are:

Quality - We will make sure that everything we do is to a high standard. In everything we do, we will always aim to be the best.

Strong - We will be a strong sustainable Union that our members can trust to make their experience at Lincoln the best it can be.

Approachable - We will make sure that every student knows who we are, where we are and what we can do for them at any time of the day.

Nurturing - We will make sure we offer our members opportunities and support, so they can grow to be the best they can be while they are at Lincoln and beyond.

Honest - We will always be honest with our members. Everything we tell them will be the truth – you can trust us.

Dynamic - We will always respond and act quickly to any issues that affect our members, on campus, in the local community or nationally.

Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is any student or member of staff who performs 'any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Central to this definition is the fact that volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.' (NCVO, 2018). Volunteers are not considered employees of ULSU or the organisations with which they have contact through the brokerage service.



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The Value of Volunteering

The contribution of each volunteer is recognised and valued by ULSU, which is built upon volunteers.

Rewards and Recognition

Anyone who is involved in volunteering is overseen by the Students' Union Employability and Campaigns Department. The Employability and Campaigns team are keen to ensure that all volunteers receive recognition for the time and effort they have devoted.

Volunteer hours can be recorded via the Skills Log, along with the skills attributed to the specific volunteer role.

SU Awards

One of the ways we celebrate our volunteers is to ask students to nominate one another for awards at the annual Students' Union Awards; this prestigious event celebrates the achievements of students in various areas. Students and University staff can nominate and be nominated for these awards.

The Lincoln Award

In addition to recognising and rewarding our student volunteers, there is also the opportunity to complete The Lincoln Award. This is a University of Lincoln initiative, but many of the Students' Union volunteer opportunities can be used towards this award. Volunteer hours accumulated through Students' Union activities can be used towards some sections of the Lincoln Award. ULSU Staff members can sign this off for students involved in Students' Union roles, and volunteer organisations can do the same for brokerage roles.

Recruitment

Volunteers shall be recruited through the Students' Union website, social media, posters, leaflets, events and other means. Volunteers are recruited without regard to nationality, gender, disability, race, age, employment status or other irrelevant distinction that may be viewed as discriminatory. Recruitment shall be based on the suitability to perform a specified task or role on behalf of ULSU or other organisations. Guidance will be offered to help potential volunteers find the organisation or project that will best meet their skills, knowledge and interests.

Roles

Volunteers are entitled to understand the tasks and responsibilities associated with the role. As such a volunteer role description will be available for each role advertised on behalf of the Students' Union, University or external organisation.

Brokerage

On receipt of a request from an external organisation to recruit volunteers, the Employability and Campaigns Manager or nominated person will review the organisation to ensure they are suitable for our students to volunteer with – this may include using local knowledge and looking at their website and making sure they are registered with the Charity Commission. An Organisation's Information Sheet will then be sent to them for completion and returned to ensure that they have appropriate policies in place to ensure our students have a safe and fulfilling volunteer experience.

These steps are in support of ULSU's Safe Space Policy and to ensure that we comply with the University's Prevent guidance as required under the Higher Education Guidance Document Paragraph 29.



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The Students' Union reserves the right to withdraw a volunteer opportunity from our website, or volunteers from an organisation if it is felt that with the organisation or opportunity are no longer suitable. In addition, a Data Sharing Agreement will be put in place to ensure student information can be shared between the Students' Union and volunteer organisation.

Online Volunteering

In light of recent events, the Students' Union has introduced a category within the brokerage system offering online volunteering opportunities for students.

Such opportunities will be managed differently to face-to-face local opportunities with the students being signposted to the organisation directly, avoiding the need for the Students' Union to store student data, or create Data Sharing Agreements. Students will be contacted as part of the usual follow up process to ensure volunteering statistics are up to date.

The Students' Union reserves the right to withdraw a volunteer opportunity from our website if it is felt that the organisation or opportunity is no longer suitable.

Students will be able to record hours on their Skills Log for any online volunteering they undertake.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will need to complete a training and induction specific to their chosen role as provided by the Students' Union, University or external organisation. Volunteers may be required to undertake additional training as they progress through their role. Any training requirement will be detailed on the volunteer role description.

Health and Safety

The University of Lincoln Students' Union strives to ensure that all staff and students remain free from harm.

We recommend that anyone volunteering with an external organisation refers to the organisation's Health & Safety policies before starting to volunteer.

For anyone volunteering in a Students' Union role it is recommended to refer to the advice and guidance on our website. This can be found at www.lincolnsu.com/healthandsafety

Insurance

All ULSU volunteers are covered by our own insurance policy. This remains the case as long as recommended induction and training sessions are attended and our policies and procedures are followed.

Anyone volunteering with an external organisation will be covered by the host organisation's insurance as checked by our Employability and Campaigns department.

For further information please refer to the ULSU website at www.lincolnsu.com/insurance

References and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)



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Volunteers may be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before being placed within certain organisations; failure to do so will result in that placement being refused.

The DBS definition of a volunteer is defined in the Police Act 1997 (criminal records) Regulations 2002 as "Any person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit some third party and not a close relative."

Roles eligible for DBS are generally those which would involve contact with children or vulnerable adults. A negative outcome from a check may again result in a position being refused but each case will be considered individually.

If a DBS check is required it will be processed free of charge, in line with current Government definitions of volunteers. If it is for a Students' Union role the Employability and Campaigns Manager can assist with completing the forms for these checks for students. If a DBS check is required for a brokerage role, then this will be arranged by the volunteer organisation.

Safeguarding

All volunteers and volunteer activities comply with the ULSU Safeguarding of Children and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

Equality and Diversity

We are committed to offering equal opportunities for all ULSU staff and volunteers. We strive to ensure that everyone we work with, including our staff, volunteers and partner organisations share this commitment. We expect our volunteers to be treated fairly and with respect and to feel free from discrimination. For further information please refer to the Students' Union website at <http://lincolnsu.com/your-union/about-us>

Confidentiality

Volunteer's details are held in line with Lincoln Students' Union procedures and current Data Protection Legislation. Volunteers must treat all information about service users as confidential except in circumstances which conflict with ULSU's Safeguarding Policy.

External organisations have their own guidelines on confidentiality, which students volunteering within these organisations must adhere to; it is the responsibility of the volunteer to be aware of the organisation's policies and procedures whilst they are volunteering.

Supervision and Support

Some volunteer roles may require a regular supervision with a staff member from the external organisation. For Students' Union or University roles any volunteer can notify the Employability Opportunities Co-ordinator if they feel they need support to carry out their role.

Complaints Procedure

If you wish to raise a concern about your volunteering placement informally, please contact the Employability and Campaigns Manager in the first instance, who will then progress this accordingly. A possible outcome of this may be that a volunteer is requested to submit a formal complaint.



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However, if you wish to raise a formal complaint regarding a volunteer placement then this should be conducted in line with the Complaints Procedure which can be found on ULSU's website.

Forms

Applications for the various volunteering opportunities can be completed online at www.lincolnsu.com

Staff Volunteering

The Students' Union encourages staff volunteering through the Give Back Days Scheme. More information can be found on ULSU's website.

Online

Website - www.lincolnsu.com

Email – employability@lincolnsu.com

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