



**Guild of
Students**

Volunteering Policy

Manager Responsible for Review: **Student Groups Manager**

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Section 1: Volunteering with the Guild

This policy sets out the Guild's commitment to volunteers, and the structures we have in place to ensure that volunteers are appropriately recruited, trained, supported, recognised and consulted, across the range of volunteering opportunities available. This policy also sets out some general tips for volunteers, including signposting to get specialist advice.

The Guild's commitment to volunteering

At the Guild, we know that volunteering is an amazing way for students to acquire skills, knowledge and experience outside of their academic studies. We believe that extra-curricular activities such as volunteering are extremely important to some students' time at University.

As part of our commitment to providing a wide range of activities and opportunities, the Guild endeavours to engage students in a variety of volunteering experiences. We are passionate about providing students with opportunities that enable them to develop, learn, and have fun as well as engaging in a responsible way with the local community.

As part of this commitment, we support the development of numerous society and representation opportunities

Definition of Volunteering

The National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) defines volunteering as:

“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.”

The Guild's Commitment to Volunteers

For any volunteering you undertake with the Guild, we will:

- Make volunteering roles accessible and inclusive.
- Ensure any volunteering roles are valuable and beneficial to you.
- Ensure you have sufficient information about what the role will involve.
- Ensure you receive appropriate training.
- Provide support and advice relating to the project.
- Have ways for your volunteering to be rewarded and recognised.
- Work with you to resolve any problems that might arise.

Why Volunteer?

We know that students volunteer for a whole range of reasons. Some of these might be:

- Helping people, and feeling part of the community.
- Improving CV/employability, and developing skills and confidence.
- Meeting new people, and making new friends.
- Believing in what the organisation does.
- Making use of free time.
- Learning something new.
- Sense of personal achievement.
- Enjoy the experience.

Volunteering Opportunities at the Guild

Volunteering roles are available through a number of Guild departments, including but not limited to:

- Student Groups
- Student Voice and Representation

Recruitment

Volunteering opportunities at the Guild have different recruitment procedures in place, these include:

- Application forms.
- Face-to-face meetings. (e.g. informal chats for more formal interviews)
- Democratically elected by students.
- Drop-in sign-up.

Please refer to role description for specific details regarding the recruitment processes.

References, DBS checks and the recruitment of ex-offenders

Volunteers may be required to undergo a DBS check if the nature of their volunteering role requires it. This is especially likely where the role involves working with children or adults at risk. When DBS checks are required, volunteers will be made aware of this and training provided.

Having an unspent/spent conviction, caution, warning or reprimand will not automatically bar an applicant from volunteering, and this will be assessed on an individual basis. We ensure that all staff members at the Guild who are involved in DBS checks have been suitably trained to identify and assess the relevance and circumstances of offences.

Training and Support

We are committed to ensuring that our internal volunteers receive training and support. We want to make sure that whatever your volunteering role, you are suitably prepared and informed and know who to ask for help if you need it. We are also committed to providing ongoing development training for all our volunteers, and will deliver or signpost to sessions throughout the year.

While the induction and role-based training you receive will vary depending on what volunteering you are doing, we try to make sure it is useful. Examples of training we have provided for volunteers include; Safeguarding, GDPR, leadership, teamwork, project planning and specific course training.

The type and level of support available will depend on the kind of volunteering you're doing and the level of responsibility you have. Support might mean meetings with a project leader, check-ins with staff, volunteer peer-support meetings, or group support with the supervisors of your volunteering role.

Reward and recognition

The Guild values the incredible contribution of all its volunteers, and believes in recognising and rewarding this contribution. As part of the Guild Awards and Birmingham Volunteer Awards, we also recognise outstanding projects and volunteers that have been especially innovative or made a real difference. Volunteers who are working towards the University's Personal Skills Awards can also have their roles contributing to the award, in addition to a number of roles being accredited for Enhanced Transcripts.

Section 2: Volunteer Agreement

This outlines how we would hope Volunteers would conduct themselves when undertaking a volunteering role with the Guild (e.g. as a committee member, student rep or project volunteer).

Volunteers should:

- Honour commitments they make, including turning up on time and informing leaders in advance if they are unable to attend or continue with a volunteering role.
- Take the volunteering role seriously, and treat it as a valuable opportunity.
- Treat others with respect and dignity and not act in a way that is discriminatory.
- Be presentable and appropriately dressed for the role they are undertaking.
- Observe any specific policies or procedures that are necessary for their role and activities.
- Be responsible for their own health and safety in the course of their volunteering, as far as they are able.
- Attend any necessary training for their role.
- Claim back agreed expenses, such as materials.
- Be aware that they may be seen as representing The Guild and try to represent us and themselves in a positive way.
- Inform us (or the organisation they volunteer with) if their circumstances change substantially (for example, have a new conviction to disclose)
- Understand and follow the Confidentiality and Data Protection Policy.
- Be aware that they can refuse requests they consider unrealistic, beyond the scope of the role or that they do not have the skills to carry out.

For Volunteers who lead or supervise other volunteers e.g. Student Group Committee Members, we would also hope they would:

- Make their activity, group or project inclusive.
- Be supportive of other volunteers.
- Handle any allocated funds appropriately.
- Make the Guild aware of any project problems or issues they might need help with.

Section 3: Lead Departments of Volunteering Roles

The table below outlines the department responsible for each volunteering role and their contact details, the telephone number for the main Guild is 0121 415 9990.

Volunteer Role	Department Responsible	Contact Details
Decision Making Committee Members and Chair of All Student Meeting	Student Voice	studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk
Committee Members	Student Groups	studentgroups@guild.bham.ac.uk
Guild Campaign Volunteers	Student Voice	campaigns@guild.bham.ac.uk
Governances Committees e.g. trustees, HR and Finance	HR	hrteam@guild.bham.ac.uk
Part-time Officers	Student Voice	studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk
Student Reps	Student Voice	studentreps@guild.bham.ac.uk
Volunteer Group Members	Student Groups	studentgroups@guild.bham.ac.uk

For any other volunteer roles please contact Student Groups, studentgroups@guild.bham.ac.uk

Appendix 1: Policy and Procedure for Volunteers

1.1 Equal Opportunities Policy

In line with the Equalities Act, 2010, the Guild seeks to create and maintain an environment which makes proper provision of Equal Opportunities for all students, the delivery of Guild services, Guild Staff and Volunteers.

In doing so the Guild will endeavour to ensure that:

- No individual is subjected to any less favourable treatment on any discriminatory grounds such as colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origins, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, gender, civil partnership or marital status, disability, religion or beliefs, gender reassignment, age or trade union membership.
- No individual is subjected to harassment, whether on discriminatory grounds or otherwise.
- Formulate and implement a programme of positive action to promote equality of opportunity within the Guild and in our relations with other organisations.

Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation and maintenance of the policy rests with the Welfare Officer acting through the Officer Team, and with the advice and support of the Chief Executive, who shall be responsible for all staffing matters associated with this policy.

Day-to-day responsibility for the policy rests with Departmental Managers but all employees and officers in the Guild also have a responsibility to uphold the policy.

Service Delivery

The Guild will regularly review service delivery policies and procedures to assist in eliminating any unlawful or unfair discrimination and ensure that, as far as possible, we positively address the needs of all students.

Training

The Guild will provide training for staff, officers and volunteers to encourage greater understanding of the needs of all groups and of their responsibilities in relation to this policy.

Complaints

The Guild will seek to ensure that a satisfactory feedback and complaints procedure is in place for anyone who feels they have been subjected to unlawful discrimination and that mechanism exists which permit all student groups to make representations to the Guild about their needs.

Information

The Guild will endeavour to provide a range of information and advice on equal opportunities. The Guild will also endeavour to ensure that at all times it uses positive and inclusive images in its publications and publicity.

Representation

The Guild undertakes to monitor and review the policy and practice of the University in relation to equal opportunity issues, and make such representations concerning these issues should they fall short of standards which might be expected of such an organisation.

Contract Services

The Guild will ensure that, as far as possible, external service providers adhere to this policy. In particular all contractors will be required to provide satisfactory evidence of their commitment to equal opportunities before being engaged by the Guild.

1.2 Health and safety statement

We take the safety and wellbeing of volunteers seriously. We believe that volunteers should be able to enjoy their volunteering role, with the knowledge that there are procedures in place to help keep them safe. Within the scope of health and safety, volunteers are responsible for their own actions and everyone is responsible for the health and safety of themselves and others. In addition, we expect volunteers will follow reasonable instructions from leaders to help keep everyone safe.

Internal volunteering activities fall within the remit of the Guild Health and Safety policy, which details responsibilities and is compliant with relevant legislation. With regard to volunteering, we have the following specific measures in place:

- Student-led volunteering projects and societies activities should have a comprehensive risk assessment in place.
- We will have sufficient insurance to cover all internal volunteering activities.
- We will check as far as possible that external organisations have the relevant insurance in place to cover the activities of volunteers and that activities are suitable.
- A system for reporting and investigating accidents and near misses.
- Training for volunteers so they are aware of responsibilities and can undertake their role safely.

The Guild will update volunteering health and safety practice annually, or in event of a relevant issue to ensure all practice is in line with current legislation and guidance.

The Guild will ensure that external service providers are able to provide satisfactory evidence of their commitment to health and safety before being engaged with the Guild.

1.3 Safeguarding Statement

The University Of Birmingham Guild Of Students is committed to ensuring a safe and supportive environment exists for volunteers, staff, Officers and service users. For full details of safeguarding procedures, please see the Guild's Safeguarding Policy or contact safeguarding@guild.bham.ac.uk.

1.4 Complaints Procedure

We hope that most problems that arise can be dealt with informally through discussion with Project Leaders, coordinators, or Guild staff. However, in the interest of fairness, it is necessary to have a procedure for those occasions when problems, complaints or difficult issues cannot be resolved informally through discussion for formal complaints please contact complaints@guild.bham.ac.uk.

This could happen when:

- A volunteer makes a complaint about the project, partner organisation, another volunteer or member of staff.
- There is a problem with a volunteer's behaviour or ability to undertake their role.

If volunteers have a complaint relating to a partner organisation, they will be supported by appropriate Guild staff to follow that organisation's internal complaints procedure. In other circumstances, volunteers should follow the Guild's complaints procedure.

1.5 Data protection and confidentiality

The University of Birmingham Guild of Students is committed to maintaining a high level of confidentiality to ensure that our members and other organisations can trust us. This will also help to protect our members and everyone who works for us, including our volunteers, staff and Officers and it will help to protect the sensitive and critical information which is held in some areas of the Guild. This includes both personal data covered by the Data Protection Act 2018 and other information which we define as confidential.

We define confidential information as something that could cause harm to one or more people or to the Guild if made available publicly or if disclosed to one or more people who are not authorised to access such information.

Examples of information which we regard as confidential may include internal emails, personal information about students or others who may be accessing our services, or committee papers.

Through your volunteering you may come into contact with such confidential information. Keeping this information confidential is very important for our work. It's also an important legal responsibility for you and for us. Our legal responsibilities are set out in the Data Protection Act 2018. You will find more about how we comply with these responsibilities, including how we protect your own data, in the Guild's Student Privacy Notice (available at <https://www.guildofstudents.com/privacy-policy/studentprivacypolicynotice/>).

Statement of Policy

In order to safeguard the Guild and all of our stakeholders, we have to ensure that any confidential information and personal data we hold is protected at all times.

If you don't comply with this confidentiality and data protection policy, action may be taken against you and you may be asked not to volunteer for us.

For more information about the Guild's commitment to compliance with the Data Protection Act 2018, please refer to the Guild's Privacy Statement, referred to above.

The Guild's Principles of Handling Confidential Information and Personal Data

You should follow these Principles when handling confidential information and personal data:

- Never disclose information to others that has been shared with the Guild with you in confidence.
- Never leave confidential information in an unsecured state that could lead to it being disclosed to an unauthorised individual.
- Always maintain the classification of information, and where appropriate classify information when it becomes confidential.
- Never disclose confidential information outside the Guild unless the Guild President and/or Chief Executive has specifically told you that this is allowed.
- Always keep confidential information secure and in accordance with Data Protection Legislation. Protect electronic information with secure passwords which are changed regularly.
- Keep confidential information and personal data up to date and accurate.
- Remember that these rules apply both to written and digital data. You must also back up electronic data to prevent loss of data in case of damage or an outage.
- If you become aware of a breach of these rules, or if you accidentally disclose confidential information or personal data to someone who isn't authorised to see it, you must tell a manager or the Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotectionofficer@guild.bham.ac.uk, as the Guild may have a legal duty to report this to the Information Commissioner.
- Make sure you comply with these principles at all times.

We will give you appropriate training to make sure you understand your obligations regarding confidentiality and data protection. We request that you complete this training and any further training and development that we identify as required to make sure that we maintain the highest principles in maintaining confidentiality and data protection compliance.

If you have any questions or concerns about this policy or about data protection

please contact the Data Protection Officer by emailing dataprotectionofficer@guild.bham.ac.uk . Your full rights and details of how your personal data is processed are set out in the Guild's Privacy Notice.

1.6 Expenses

The Guild acknowledges that it is often good practice to reimburse out of pocket expenses for volunteers. Given the wide range of volunteering opportunities available through the Guild, we do not have a single policy for the provision of expenses or food for volunteers. Individual volunteering projects and roles will provide information on whether reasonable expenses will be reimbursed and how volunteers can claim expenses.