



Volunteer Policy

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Contents

Section 1: Volunteering with The Guild

The Guild's Commitment to Volunteering	3
-Definition of volunteering	3
The Guild's Commitment to Volunteers	3
Why Volunteer?	4
Volunteering Opportunities at the Guild	4
Recruitment	4
References, DBS checks and the recruitment of ex-offenders	4
Training and Support	5
Reward and Recognition	5
Non-student volunteers	5

Section 2: Volunteer Agreement

Section 3: Lead Departments of Volunteering Roles

Appendix 1: Policy and Procedure for Volunteers

1.1	Equal opportunities policy	8
1.2	Health and Safety Statement	9
1.3	Safeguarding Statement	10
1.4	Complaints Procedure	10
1.5	Data Protection and Confidentiality	10
1.6	Data Protection Policy	12
1.7	External Volunteering	16
1.8	Expenses	17

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 one off opportunities and projects along with 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:

- Guild Advice.
- Jobs, Skills and Volunteering.
- Student Groups.
- Student Voice.

Recruitment

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

- Application forms.
- Face-to-face meetings. (e.g. informal chats or 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 with care and support needs. When DBS checks are required, volunteers will be made aware of this at the recruitment stage.

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 those at the Guild who are involved in DBS

Checks they 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 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; child protection, confidentiality, 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.

Volunteers who are considering volunteering with an external organisation, you might want to ask them about the training and support they will provide for you as part of the volunteering opportunity.

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.

Non-Student Volunteers

GAVE – Guild Active Volunteering Experience

The Guild encourages core staff to actively participate in their communities and use volunteering as an additional development opportunity. To enable staff to do this the Guild has set up GAVE. The Guild will facilitate your access to volunteering opportunities. The Guild will allow the staff member to record up to the equivalent of 15 hours a year for a full time staff member, for volunteering purposes.

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), or when volunteering in an opportunity found through our website.

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 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 we would also hope they would try to:

- 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 251 2300.

Volunteer Role	Department Responsible	Contact Details
Assessment Group Members	Student Voice	studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk
Committee Members	Student Groups	studentgroups@guild.bham.ac.uk
External Organisations	Jobs, Skills and Volunteering	volunteering@guild.bham.ac.uk
Global Buddies	Guild Advice	globalbuddies@guild.bham.ac.uk
Governances Committees e.g. trustees. HR and Finance	HR	Contact Guild HR Office
Guild Staff Volunteers – GAVE	HR	Contact Guild HR Office
Guild-Led One-Off/Micro Volunteers	Jobs, Skills and Volunteering	volunteering@guild.bham.ac.uk
Part-time Officers	Student Voice	studentvoice@guild.bham.ac.uk
Resident Associations	Student Groups	RAWorker@guild.bham.ac.uk
Student Reps	Student Voice	studentreps@guild.bham.ac.uk
Volunteer Group Members	Jobs, Skills and Volunteering	volunteering@guild.bham.ac.uk

For any other volunteer roles please contact Jobs, Skills and Volunteering at volunteering@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 a programme of 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 project co-ordinators 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, co-ordinators, 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

Confidentiality Policy

The University of Birmingham Guild of Students is fully committed to maintaining a high level of confidentiality that helps to protect its members, volunteers, staff, Officers and areas of the organisation that holds sensitive/critical information not currently covered by legislation, under the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Guild will therefore follow procedures which aim to ensure that all members, elected officers, employees, contractors, agents, consultants, or other partners of the Guild of Students who have access to confidential information/data/material held by or on behalf of the Guild, are fully aware of and abide by their duties under this policy as well as the legal obligations of the Data Protection Act 1998 (see 'Data Protection Policy').

Statement of Policy

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

The Guild defines confidential information/data as something that could cause harm to a person/persons or the organisation if made available in the public domain or disclosed to person(s) who are not authorised to access such information/data.

Failure to comply with the responsibilities of this confidentiality policy may result in action taken against an offending individual or group of individuals.

For more information about the Guild's commitment to compliance of the Data Protection Act 1998, please refer to the Guild's Data Protection Policy.

The Guild's Principles of Confidentiality

The Guild, as set out in this policy, requires that all staff adhere to the following key principles of confidentiality:

- Never to disclose information/data that has been shared with the Guild (or individual) in confidence.
- Never to leave confidential information/data in an unsecured state that could lead to it being disclosed to an unauthorised individual.
- Always maintain the classification of information/data, and where appropriate classify information/data when it becomes confidential.
- Never to transfer confidential information/data outside of the organisation without the express permission of the Guild President and/or Chief Executive.
- At all times uphold the integrity of the Guild's Confidentiality Policy, by ensuring its full compliance in your area of work, and work with others.

The Guild takes these principles very seriously and will work to make sure all stakeholders are aware of, and trained in, their responsibilities within this policy.

Disclosure of Confidential Information/Data

Volunteers must at all times consider the nature of any information before disclosing it in order to consider whether it is confidential information/data. The responsibility of Guild members, volunteers, officers and staff to manage this process is of paramount importance.

When the Guild receives confidential information/data it must be immediately classified and stored in a secure manner appropriate to the nature of its classification.

Disclosure of confidential information may only happen with the express authorisation of the Chief Executive or relevant government bodies or as required by law or regulatory authority. This may at times include the University of Birmingham;

however clarification from the Chief Executive must be sought to ensure appropriateness of situation.

Security of Confidential Information

At all times confidential information/data must be kept secure and in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

Security levels and measures will vary from one case to another, but all must be fit for purpose.

Electronic data must also be backed-up to prevent loss of data in case of damage or an outage.

Confidential information/data, as with data covered by the Data Protection Act 1998, must be well maintained and kept up-to-date where appropriate.

1.6 Data Protection Policy

The Guild will process personal data in respect of its volunteers in accordance with the Data Protection Act. Volunteers consent to their personal data being shared with the University of Birmingham as is appropriate and proportionate.

The University of Birmingham Guild of Students is fully committed to compliance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 which came into force on 1st March 2000.

In the event that you are required to process and/or come across personal data during the course of your volunteering, you are required to follow the procedures set out below which aim to ensure that all members, elected officers, employees, contractors, agents, consultants, or other partners of the Guild of Students who have access to any personal data held by or on behalf of the Guild of Students, are fully aware of and abide by their duties under the Data Protection Act 1998 ("the Act").

Statement of Policy

In order to operate efficiently, volunteers of the Guild have to collect and use information about people with whom it works. These may include members of the Guild of Students, current, past and prospective employees, clients and customers, and suppliers. In addition it may be required by law to collect and use information in order to comply with the requirements of central government.

This personal information must be handled and dealt with properly, however it is collected, recorded and used, and whether it be on paper, in computer records or recorded by any other means, and there are safeguards within the Act to ensure this.

The lawful and correct treatment of personal information must be regarded by volunteers as very important to the Guild's successful operations and to maintaining confidence between the Guild and those with whom it carries out business. The Guild of Students will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and correctly.

To this end the Guild fully endorses and adheres to the principles of Data Protection as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

The Principles of Data Protection

The Act stipulates that anyone processing personal data must comply with **Eight Principles** of good practice. These Principles are legally enforceable.

The Principles require that personal information:

1. Shall be processed fairly and lawfully and in particular, shall not be processed unless specific conditions are met;
2. Shall be obtained only for one or more specified and lawful purposes and shall not be further processed in any manner incompatible with that purpose or those purposes;
3. Shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to the purpose or purposes for which it is processed;
4. Shall be accurate and where necessary, kept up to date;
5. Shall not be kept for longer than is necessary for that purpose or those purposes;
6. Shall be processed in accordance with the rights of data subjects under the Act;
7. Shall be kept secure i.e. protected by an appropriate degree of security;
8. Shall not be transferred to a country or territory outside the European Economic Area, unless that country or territory ensures an adequate level of data protection.

The Act provides conditions for the processing of any personal data. It also makes a distinction between **personal data** and **“sensitive” personal data**.

Personal data is defined as data relating to a living individual who can be identified from:

- That data;
- That data and other information which is in the possession of, or is likely to come into the possession of the data controller and includes an expression of opinion about the individual and any indication of the intentions of the data controller, or any other person in respect of the individual.

Sensitive personal data is defined as personal data consisting of information as to:

- Racial or ethnic origin;
- Political opinion;
- Religious or other beliefs;
- Trade union membership;

- Physical or mental health condition;
- Sexual life;
- Criminal proceedings or convictions.

Handling of Personal/Sensitive Information

The Guild will, through appropriate management and the use of strict criteria and controls:

- Observe fully conditions regarding the fair collection and use of personal information;
- Meet its legal obligations to specify the purpose for which information is used;
- Collect and process appropriate information and only to the extent that it is needed to fulfil operational needs or to comply with any legal requirements;
- Ensure the quality of information used;
- Apply strict checks to determine the length of time information is held;
- Take appropriate technical and organisational security measures to safeguard personal information;
- Ensure that personal information is not transferred abroad without suitable safeguards;
- Ensure that the rights of people about whom the information is held can be fully exercised under the Act.

These include:

- The right to be informed that processing is being undertaken;
- The right of access to one's personal information within the statutory 40 days;
- The right to prevent processing in certain circumstances;
- The right to correct, rectify, block or erase information regarded as wrong information.

In addition, the Guild will seek to ensure that:

- There is someone with specific responsibility for data protection in the organisation;
- Any Volunteer handling personal information understand that they are responsible for following good data protection practice;
- Any volunteers managing and handling personal information are appropriately trained to do so;
- Any volunteers managing and handling personal information are appropriately supervised;
- Anyone wanting to make enquiries about handling personal information, whether a volunteer or a member of the public, knows what to do;
- Queries about handling personal information are promptly and courteously dealt with;
- Methods of handling personal information are regularly assessed and evaluated;

- Performance with handling personal information is regularly assessed and evaluated;
- Data sharing is carried out under a written agreement, setting out the scope and limits of the sharing. Any disclosure of personal data will be in compliance with approved procedures.

Responsibilities of Volunteers

All volunteers within the Guild will take steps to ensure that personal data is kept secure at all times against unauthorised or unlawful loss or disclosure and in particular will ensure that:

- Paper files and other records or documents containing personal/sensitive data are kept in a secure environment;
- Personal data held on computers and computer systems is protected by the use of secure passwords, which where possible have forced changes periodically;
- Individual passwords should be such that they are not easily compromised.

All contractors, consultants, partners or other agents of the Guild must:

- Ensure that they and all of their staff who have access to personal data held or processed for or on behalf of the Guild, are aware of this policy and are fully trained in and are aware of their duties and responsibilities under the Act. Any breach of any provision of the Act will be deemed as being a breach of any contract between the Guild and that individual, company, partner or firm;
- Allow data protection audits by the Guild of data held on its behalf (if requested);
- Indemnify the Guild against any prosecutions, claims, proceedings, actions or payments of compensation or damages, without limitation.

All contractors who are users of personal information supplied by the Guild will be required to confirm that they will abide by the requirements of the Act with regard to information supplied by the Guild.

Implementation

The Guild has formed a Data Protection Working Group. This group will be responsible for ensuring that the Policy is implemented. Implementation will be led and monitored by the President and Chief Executive on behalf of the Trustee Board. The Data Protection Working Group will also have overall responsibility for:

- The provision of cascade data protection training, for staff within the Guild.
- For the development of best practice guidelines.
- For carrying out compliance checks to ensure adherence, throughout the Guild, with the Data Protection Act.

Notification to the Information Commissioner

The Information Commissioner maintains a public register of data controllers. The Guild is registered as such.

The Data Protection Act 1998 requires every data controller who is processing personal data, to notify and renew their notification, on an annual basis. Failure to do so is a criminal offence.

To this end, department/area heads will be responsible for notifying and updating the Data Protection Working Group of the processing of personal data, within their department/area.

The Data Protection Working Group will review the Data Protection Register with department/area heads annually, prior to notification to the Information Commissioner.

Any changes to the register must be notified to the Information Commissioner within 28 days.

To this end, any changes made between reviews will be brought to the attention of the Data Protection Working Group immediately.

1.7 External Volunteering

As part of the Volunteering service offered by the Guild, we work with external organisations to put a selection of opportunities on an online system for students to browse and register interest with organisations.

To ensure that the opportunities organisations advertise to students are safe, reasonable and appropriate, we try to undertake specific checks on the organisation and on the proposed opportunity. These may include:

- That there is a specific volunteer role description outlining tasks, personal qualities required and support available.
- That the volunteering activity or role is appropriate and does not make unreasonable requests of the volunteer in terms of time commitment, task, or level of responsibility.
- That the proposed role will be valuable to the volunteer.
- That the organisation has appropriate insurance to cover the activities of volunteers.
- That appropriate training or support is in place for volunteers.
- That the organisation has specific policies in place where applicable to support volunteering.
- That the organisation has appropriate insurance to cover the volunteering role.

If there are concerns about a volunteering role or organisation, the Guild may try to address these directly with the organisation and seek further information. The

organisation may be given the opportunity to explain or clarify any issues before a decision is reached about approving or rejecting an opportunity.

1.8 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. We will usually reimburse expenses for community project materials, equipment and other resources, but not for travel – although we will consider individual circumstances where necessary.

External organisations will also have their own policy about volunteering expenses, and volunteers are encouraged to ask organisations about this if they begin volunteering with them.