

# **Leeds Trinity Students' Union Volunteer Policy**

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*The below pending Student Council and Trustees approval:*

Approved: October 2017

Next time to be reviewed: October 2019

## **1. Values**

Leeds Trinity Students' Union values the involvement of volunteers in our work because they help reflect the interests, needs and resources of the student community we aim to serve and bring a unique perspective on all our work.

The Union recognises volunteers as a core part of our team, with a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff. The Union benefits from the skills, experience and enthusiasm of volunteers; we believe that volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits from the experience too. We are committed to managing volunteers in a way that ensures that the needs of both parties are met.

The Union strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation that represents the students of Leeds Trinity. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring equality of access to high quality volunteer opportunities and equality of treatment for our volunteers in all our policies and practices.

## **2. Types and Roles of Volunteers**

Volunteer activity is defined as:

‘an 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.’

Source: Compact ‘Volunteering, a code of practice.’

The Union is a student-led organisation. Most volunteer projects and groups are student-led with support from Union staff. Below is a list of the Students' Union areas which incorporate volunteering\*:

- Course Reps
- Society or Sports Committee role
- Student Activities Committee role
- Students' Council
- Trustee
- Welcome Helper

The Union identifies roles for volunteers which extend the work of the organisation. Volunteers are involved at every level of the organisation in roles which complement, but never substitute, the work of paid staff.

\*The range of volunteering roles within the Union is fluid and this list will be regularly reviewed by the Union to reflect any changes in volunteering roles.

## **3. Recruitment**

A variety of methods are used to recruit volunteers, these include:

- *Freshers' Fair*

At the start of every academic year the Union currently hold an activity fair where students can join Sports Clubs and Societies. This activity is typically repeated each January as part of a 'Refreshers' programme. Each group/club/society will be given the opportunity to be represented by a stall where students can sign up and register their interest.

- *Website; [www.ltsu.co.uk](http://www.ltsu.co.uk)*

Volunteer opportunities are advertised and promoted on the Union's website. Elections for certain roles will take place through our website through a clearly advertised process.

- *Posters/Flyers*

Posters will be distributed in targeted areas across the Union and the wider campus.

- *Presentations*

Union officers and staff delivers talks and presentations to 1<sup>st</sup> year students at the beginning of each year with the aim of recruiting a wide range of students. These talks promote the variety of activities that students can get involved with.

- *Word of mouth*

Volunteering is often recommended through the previous experience of volunteers.

- *Emails*

Leeds Trinity SU email students promoting various volunteering projects and events. Publicity notices will be put on the Student Intranet.

- *Students' Union Guide*

A Fresher's guide is published annually which highlights some of the key volunteering opportunities available

- *Social network sites*

*A number of Facebook and Twitter sites are set up to promote volunteering opportunities*

- *Elections*

Many volunteering opportunities are promoted through elections. Where the role is viewed as a leadership role it will be chosen through a democratic election through our website.

### Selection and Screening

Many of our volunteering roles are appointed through an election process.

For those that are not, the selection and screening method will depend on what level of responsibility the role will entail. All volunteers will be informed on what the particular process of selection will be.

### Application Procedure

Prospective volunteers are expected to follow the advertised application process which differs across Union services and this will include the selection procedure. Many of our voluntary positions are elected from either the whole membership or a selection of the membership. The Union will publicise the rules for these elections in many formats and will actively seek candidates from underrepresented groups. Our other positions are through selection procedures which seek to match skills to positions. Feedback to unsuccessful candidates is offered for all roles that go through a selection process.

### Interviews/Selection

Some projects will require volunteers to go through an informal interview process to assess whether they are suitable for the role. This will especially be the case if the project involves young people or vulnerable adults.

### Safeguarding

We are committed to the safety of our volunteers and service users. All projects and activities organised by the union will be referred to a General Manager of the Union who will consider the safeguarding implications after seeking advice from appropriate agencies.

### References

References will usually be requested for roles that require a selection process. They are required to have known these referees for two years or more. The referees must not be family members or personal friends.

### Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

All volunteers working with vulnerable service users in roles recruited through a selection process will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) form. This will be highlighted at the start of any selection process.

### Prospective volunteers with a criminal conviction

Volunteers with a criminal conviction are not automatically unsuitable to become a volunteer as only a small number of convictions would prevent a volunteer from involvement. The decision of taking on a volunteer with a criminal record is made on the basis of the law and risk by the member of staff responsible for the recruitment of volunteers in that specific activity with the guidance of the General Manager. Should you wish to appeal an outcome of this process you should write to the Union President within 7 working days.

### Role Descriptions

Volunteers are entitled to a clear explanation of the responsibilities and tasks they will be undertaking during a project or activity. Volunteers will not be expected to commit to an activity until they are clear about their obligations. All core volunteer roles will have a role description with an associated 'skills' list. The role descriptions will explicitly state if a DBS check is needed.

### Equality and Diversity

The Union is committed to serving and representing the whole student population and wishes to see all sections of the student community represented among our volunteers. Volunteer opportunities are widely promoted throughout Leeds Trinity and we will endeavour to make volunteer materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group, upon request.

Furthermore, the Union regularly reviews the make-up of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s). Ultimately the Union aims to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and age groups upwards of 18 years of age.

The Union is firmly committed to diversity in all areas of its work. The Union recognises that there is much to gain from diverse cultures and perspectives and that diversity will make the organisation more effective in meeting the needs of its stakeholders. The Union is committed to developing and maintaining an organisation in which differing ideas, abilities, backgrounds and needs are fostered and valued, and where those with diverse backgrounds and experiences are able to participate and contribute. The Union will regularly evaluate and monitor towards diversity.

The Union's Equality and Diversity policy will be adhered to at all times during interactions with volunteers and service users.

The Equality and Diversity Policy can be viewed at [www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation](http://www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation)

## **4. Induction and Training**

Volunteers will be asked to follow the induction and/or training programme for their specific activity. This may include information on health and safety and other policies or procedures and support on specific issues applicable to the role/project/activity. The Union also offers appropriate training and skill sessions to support volunteers in their roles.

Union staff will seek to ensure that, either through the Students' Union or the group(s) with whom they are volunteering, volunteers receive adequate training for the specific tasks they have been asked to perform. On-going training will often be available and is sometimes required by volunteering opportunities. The Union will make the requirements clear before volunteers commit to a project.

## **5. Monitoring and Supervision**

The Union endeavours to provide adequate and appropriate facilities, equipment and resources to enable volunteers to fulfil their roles.

It is the role of the Sabbatical Officer or member of staff to monitor the welfare of their volunteers, either face to face or via regular emails. All staff required to undertake such duties are provided with training in the management, supervision, support and training of volunteers. Should there be any issues; volunteers have the options to contact their coordinator, Sabbatical Officer, Chair of Committee or staff member.

At the end of each academic year evaluation questionnaires will be given to all volunteers involved in Student Union volunteering. These are completed anonymously and returned to a designated staff member who has no involvement in the given volunteering group. Once evaluations have been received then project reports will be compiled with conclusions and recommendations for the future.

## **6. Expenses**

Where a member of the Union is engaged in an activity e.g. playing football, reimbursement will be in line with the current policy of the Students' Union.

On occasions volunteers may be asked to attend events away from Horsforth in their capacity as a volunteer e.g. BUCS meetings, National Course Rep Conference. On these occasions volunteers will be entitled to be reimbursed in line with the current Union Financial Procedures Policy. All such requests will have to be approved in advance by the relevant staff member and then returned within 3 months.

## **7. Volunteer Recognition**

Recognition comes in the form of structured events - mainly the annual awards events linked to each volunteering role. Furthermore, articles on key successes will be written in partnership with volunteers and posted on our website and social media channels.

Volunteers who serve in any capacity are respected and appreciated throughout the Union.

Volunteer managers will use positive reinforcement in supporting you and you should be told who your key contact is.

## **8. Health and Safety**

Volunteers with the Union are protected by the organisation's public liability and personal accident insurance providing you adhere to agreed healthy and safety assessments and regulations. However, drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.

Leeds Trinity Students' Union has a Health and Safety policy which can be viewed at [www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation](http://www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation)

Leeds Trinity Students' Union also provide health and safety training to all volunteer groups as appropriate.

## **9. Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure**

While it is hoped that volunteers will be happy working in their placements, inevitably problems can arise. A complaint (including harassment) may be made against a volunteer, staff member, Sabbatical Officer or a member of the general public. All complaints will be considered carefully and investigated fully.

In taking up a voluntary position through the Union the volunteer accepts that they are representing the Union. As such they should conduct themselves so as not to breach the policies, aims and objectives of the Union, or otherwise bring us into disrepute. Volunteers who breach this undertaking may find themselves having restrictions placed upon their membership as specified in Bye Law 3 Code of Conduct of the Union's Constitution. This can be found at [www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation](http://www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation)

## 10. Confidentiality

As a volunteer you may be in a position where you have access to confidential records and personally sensitive information. It is important to respect these confidences.

Confidentiality means not discussing information outside your placement/project/group. During your time as a volunteer you may have concerns about the information you receive. This should be discussed with a member of staff who supervises your work. This is not a breach of confidentiality and as a volunteer you should feel happy doing this.

Any information, which an individual provides in respect of signing up with the volunteer group, will be treated with the strictest confidence and kept in a secure environment.

## 11. Contacts

If you have any questions or would like to know more about a particular role within the Students' Union please feel free to contact the relevant Union staff members below:

Volunteer role	Email contact
Course Reps	<a href="mailto:CourseReps@Ltsu.co.uk">CourseReps@Ltsu.co.uk</a>
Student Activities Committee Member	<a href="mailto:Student.Union@leedstrinity.ac.uk">Student.Union@leedstrinity.ac.uk</a>
Society Committee Members	<a href="mailto:LTSUSocieties@leedstrinity.ac.uk">LTSUSocieties@leedstrinity.ac.uk</a>
Student Council	<a href="mailto:Student.Union@leedstrinity.ac.uk">Student.Union@leedstrinity.ac.uk</a>
Sport Club Committee Members	<a href="mailto:LTSUSport@leedstrinity.ac.uk">LTSUSport@leedstrinity.ac.uk</a>
Trustee	<a href="mailto:LTUPresident@leedstrinity.ac.uk">LTUPresident@leedstrinity.ac.uk</a>
Welcome Helper	<a href="mailto:Student.Union@leedstrinity.ac.uk">Student.Union@leedstrinity.ac.uk</a>

## 12. Further Documentation

All referenced documents that can be read alongside the Volunteer Policy that can be accessed [www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation](http://www.ltsu.co.uk/furtherinformation) or by emailing [student.union@leedstrinity.ac.uk](mailto:student.union@leedstrinity.ac.uk) are: