

STUDENT.VOLUNTEERING.CHARTER

EVERY STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

The overall vision of the University of Exeter Students' Guild is that volunteering is for everyone, and everyone can volunteer. We hope to create the possibility for every student, at some point in their time at the university, to engage in some form of volunteering.

WHAT IS VOLUNTEERING?

The definition of volunteering used in the National Survey of Volunteering is: 'any activity which involves spending time, unpaid, doing something which aims to benefit someone (individuals or groups) other than or in addition to close relatives, or to benefit the environment'.

Volunteering England: 'Volunteering is an important expression of citizenship and fundamental to democracy. It is the commitment of time and energy for the benefit of society and the community, and can take many forms. It is freely undertaken and not for financial gain'.

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At Exeter we define volunteering in the broadest sense, and students can volunteer by engaging in a wide range of activities including:

- RAG
- Community Action
- Student Societies
- Welcome Team
- Student Media
- Student Representation
- Sport

Students volunteer for a range of reasons:

- To give something back to the community and to make a difference
- To enhance their CV
- To develop skills and to gain experience
- To have a go at something that they've never been able to do before
- To follow their passions, hobbies, interests
- Because of a personal experience, experience within their family or their friendship group that has inspired them to volunteer

The Students' Guild has committed to developing more and more ways to engage students in volunteering, accepting that one size doesn't fit all. In doing this, the Guild is committed to ensuring the highest possible standards of volunteering and to developing an excellent student experience.

VOLUNTEERS RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

We commit to a range of volunteering rights, and acknowledge that alongside rights volunteers also have responsibilities. These are set out below.

ALL VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

Equality & Diversity – engage in volunteering that is open to all and in which they are treated with dignity and fairness

Expenses – reimbursement of travel and agreed out of pocket expenses

Organisational Involvement – have a voice which has significant influence on organisational issues

Personal Development – access to training and development opportunities that meet identified needs

Recruitment Process – be recruited through a process which is fair, efficient and consistent

Resolving Difficulties – be able to raise concerns and know how they will be handled on a case by case basis

Reward & Recognition – be recognised and rewarded for volunteering input

Safe Volunteering Environment – volunteer in an environment in which physical and emotional risks are identified, minimised and covered by adequate insurance, and which is supportive, inclusive and welcoming

Support – have a named staff member who ensures ongoing appropriate support, and someone else to go to if that staff member is unavailable or not the right person to consult with

Diverse Volunteering Experience – access a wide range of volunteering opportunities and suggest new ways and new projects in which students might engage in volunteering. The Guild commits to continuously reviewing and building the portfolio of volunteering opportunities

Be taken seriously and treated with respect and consideration – the Guild will endeavour to ensure that volunteers are given due courtesy and respect in their volunteering roles. External agencies are required to engage with volunteers in a respectful and professional manner, in much the same way as they would engage with staff

Have fun! – volunteering should be an enjoyable experience for the volunteers and the Guild seeks to ensure that the fun never goes out of volunteering at Exeter!

ALL VOLUNTEERS HAVE RESPONSIBILITY FOR:

Equality & Diversity –ensuring that all volunteering is undertaken with regard to the Guild’s Equal Opportunities Policy and that any issues are reported as quickly as possible to the designated staff support member

Commitment – being clear about the levels of volunteering commitment which are possible and desirable, and communicating in good time when these levels of commitment change

Training & Development – attending relevant training and development opportunities and communicating if there are outstanding needs which have not been met

Support – asking for support from their designated staff support member and from their volunteering peers, and in turn offering support to other volunteers

Communication – making sure that they communicate with volunteering leaders and project co-ordinators if they have any concerns, if they feel their rights are not being respected or if they have any questions

Service users – making sure that service users are treated with dignity and respect and are given the best possible experience

