

Volunteer Policy

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1. Introduction

The University of Chichester Students' Union is a student-led organisation that offers a diverse range of volunteering opportunities for Chichester University staff and students.

Through these activities we:

- Make a positive contribution to Chichester
- Enhance students' personal development
- Forge strong links between the University of Chichester Students' Union and the local community

Our aims are:

- To offer a broad range of accessible voluntary projects and experiences
- To provide a supportive environment to give volunteers the opportunity for personal development
- To make sure our projects address a clear community need and make a difference to the local community
- To raise awareness of Chichester Volunteering and work in effective partnership with the Chichester University the local community sector and the national network

- To keep up to date with and raise awareness of good practice in volunteering
- To ensure that our activities are financially viable and sustainable

The values which underpin our aims and objectives are as follows.

The University of Chichester Students' Union:

- is committed to equality of opportunity and fair treatment and strives to make activities accessible to all
- believes volunteering and volunteers should be better valued and values the contribution students make to the local community
- will operate professionally at all times
- will be student-led and student-centred, empowering people and encouraging
- Initiatives
- values the diversity of student volunteers
- will provide an open, friendly and supportive non-judgemental environment

2. Recruitment and selection

2.1. Principles

The following principles apply to the University of Chichester Students' Union's recruitment and selection:

- The University of Chichester Students' Union is a membership organisation, and therefore members should be encouraged and enabled to undertake any activity they wish, as far as possible. If this cannot be achieved, alternative options should be considered.
- Recruitment and selection procedures are clear and transparent - the same rules apply to all.
- Recruitment and selection policies and procedures comply with the University of Chichester Students' Union's values and commitments to equality and diversity.
- Only University of Chichester students and staff may volunteer through the University of Chichester Students' Union.

2.2. Procedure

Staff allocate volunteers to projects; and seek to place as many volunteers as possible on their first choice. The University of Chichester Students' Union also tries to ensure that each project has a range of volunteers in terms of experience, year, and skills, and that each project has an adequate number of volunteers. Where activities are oversubscribed, priority is given to returning volunteers.

2.3. References

For certain voluntary activities two references may be requested for every volunteer. Volunteers can see their references at their request. If a volunteer's references are not satisfactory, the University of Chichester Students' Union will seek a third reference.

References are deemed unsatisfactory if they lack evidence that the referee has had a professional relationship with the applicant.

The University of Chichester Students' Union is unable to contact referees at addresses overseas.

References are seen as part of a screening procedure.

Where two references are unobtainable, the University of Chichester Students' Union will accept applicants if they have participated in other screening procedures, such as induction, training, and CRB checks (where relevant).

In rare circumstances where information from a reference places doubt on an applicant's ability to volunteer, it may result in an application being refused. This will be dependent on a final decision which will be made by the Union's Acting General Manager and the Students' Union.

2.4. Criminal record checks

Criminal record bureau checks will be carried out according to the University of Chichester Students' Union CRB Disclosure Policy & Procedure.

2.6. Activity leader selection

Usually an activity will have only one leader. If more than one person applies to be a leader, all the applicants will hold a group discussion with the Volunteering & Activities Co-ordinator to discuss the demands of the role and what they feel they can offer to it. The aim of the discussion is for the group to self-select a leader. Should this fail to reach a decision, a panel consisting of the University of Chichester Students' Union Volunteering & Activities Coordinator and a representative of the University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee will decide the project leader for that year.

2.7. Committee recruitment and selection

The University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee is a sub Committee of the University of Chichester Students' Union and is responsible for the delivery of voluntary activities.

The Activities Committee is chaired by the Students' Union President. The membership shall be as follows however, the Activities Committee can appoint additional members:

- Societies Federation President
- Sports Federation President
- Societies Fed Officers x 3
- Sports Fed Rep x 1
- RAG Officer

3. Induction and training

3.1. Induction

The Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator will provide an induction for every volunteer, which will include information about the following:

- volunteer rights and responsibilities
- health and safety
- safeguarding of children/young people/vulnerable adults (whichever is relevant)
- how to claim expenses
- how the University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee will communicate with them
- training opportunities
- where to find policies and procedures

3.2. Training

The Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator will provide a comprehensive training programme designed to equip volunteers with the skills to carry out their particular role. The University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee is committed to the personal development of volunteers and will provide training to contribute to this wherever possible. The University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee will make diversity training available to all volunteers.

4. Expenses

Expenses will be paid according to the University of Chichester Students' Union Expenses Policy and Procedure, which states that expenses are available to all volunteers who incur out of pocket costs in the course of their project work. Receipts are required in all cases. Expenses claim forms will be available from any member of staff. All expenses must be agreed in advance with a member of staff.

5. Supervision and support

5.1. Support from the Activity Leader

With the support of the University of Chichester Students' Union Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator, Activity leaders are encouraged to support their activity team through regular project meetings, training sessions and informal meetings and social events.

5.2. Support from staff

Every activity and team will have the University of Chichester Students' Union Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator to support and supervise them.

This support includes:

- initial briefing meetings to discuss activity development,
- identification of and communication with community partners and schools
- identification of training needs and provision of training opportunities,
- facilitation of financial processes and room booking,
- provision of resources and equipment,
- provision of references if requested
- ongoing informal support as required.

The University of Chichester Students' Union Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator will also ensure that all activities are carried out safely and within the guidelines of good practise.

5.3. Support from the Activities Committee

The Activities Committee is made up of the following elected posts:

- Societies Federation President
- Sports Federation President
- Societies Fed Officers x 3
- Sports Fed Rep x 1
- RAG Officer

The committee elect a chair, vice-chair and secretary from within the elected representatives/officers.

The Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator ensures that the Committee are aware of issues faced by volunteers, and endeavour to solve problems. They act as a communication stream between project volunteers and the Committee.

The Committee Officers offer a variety of support to all volunteering activities according to their particular role (together with their Sub Committees).

The Committee also makes strategic decisions about the University of Chichester Students' Union. The President also sits on the University of Chichester Students' Union Student Council, who raises awareness of volunteering to that Committee.

6. Insurance

Most volunteering activities and social events are covered by the University of Chichester Students' Union's insurance policies. Additional insurance may be required for some activities - staff should consult with the Acting General Manager to ensure all activities are adequately covered.

If volunteers wish to plan fundraising events off campus, then they must liaise with the Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator in the first instance.

If a volunteer wishes to use their own car for any volunteering activities, this car must be checked and registered with the University of Chichester Students' Union first, via the Acting General Manager.

Volunteers must be normally resident (this means resident for at least 14 days) in England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the Channel Isles or the Isle of Man, **and** be acting under the authority of the University of Chichester Students' Union, **and** be engaged in an official activity of the University of Chichester Students' Union in order to be covered by University of Chichester Students' Union's insurance. It is therefore vital to ensure all volunteers sign-up formally otherwise they may not be covered.

7. Equal opportunities and diversity

The University of Chichester Students' Union has a Welfare Committee whose role is to support the University of Chichester Students' Union to comply with the University of Chichester Students' Union's Equal Opportunities Policy. The Welfare Committee will do this through diversity training for volunteers, recruitment of underrepresented volunteers and promoting accessibility.

The University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee will also:

- ensure its written and electronic materials are as accessible as possible
- make all reasonable adjustments to ensure its activities are accessible
- ensure diversity training is available to all volunteers

The University of Chichester Students' Union Activities Committee places the safety and wellbeing of volunteers at the core of all its activities.

Any volunteer who feels they have been wrongly treated, harassed, discriminated against or intimidated whilst volunteering should immediately report the incident to the University of Chichester Students' Union Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator, or another member of the University of Chichester Students' Union staff.

If staff are not immediately available, the volunteer must take themselves out of harm's way and safely leave the environment, taking another volunteer with them. If the situation is deemed unsafe/intimidating for all volunteers they must immediately cancel and return to the University of Chichester Students' Union/home and report the incident to the Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator.

In response to any such complaint, staff will re-evaluate and reassess the appropriateness of the volunteering opportunity and where possible make

suitable adjustments, or re-place the volunteers ensuring the safety and security of volunteers is safeguarded.

8. Health and safety

The University of Chichester Students' Union makes all efforts to reduce risks and ensure the safety of all its volunteering activities, and complies with the University of Chichester Students' Union Health and Safety Policy and its associated policies.

In addition, it is the policy of The University of Chichester Students' Union that:

- all volunteers will receive any appropriate health and safety training before carrying out their activities
- a risk assessment will be carried out at least 2 weeks before an activity takes place, and signed off by the University of Chichester Students' Union Volunteering & Activities Co-Ordinator.
- the risk assessment must be kept and filed
- suitable provision for first aid treatment must be arranged for activities taking place away from the University of Chichester Students' Union.
- staff will notify the University of Chichester Students' Union and University of trips taking place overnight, and ensure that those on the trip have emergency numbers for the University of Chichester Students' Union, University, and are aware of the 999 number.
- all volunteers have the right to a safe environment in which to volunteer, and the responsibility not to endanger themselves or others

9. Grievance and complaints procedure

All complaints and grievances will be taken seriously. If a volunteer has any grievance or complaint regarding another volunteer, staff member or any other person or issue, he/she should report the incident to a member of University of Chichester Students' Union staff.

The staff member will then work with the volunteer to resolve the problem. If the issue concerns a staff member, then the volunteer should report the matter to the University of Chichester Students' Union Head of Student Engagement who will deal with the complaint in the first instance.

10. Confidentiality

Volunteers should keep what they learn about other volunteers in confidence. They should also keep what they learn about service users in confidence. Volunteers are not expected to retain any written records on volunteers or service users. Records should be stored by The University of Chichester Students' Union securely and in line with the Data Protection Act. There are some circumstances where volunteers would be expected to breach confidentiality in order to uphold the safety and welfare of service users.

These circumstances are:

- if he/she is told any information about terrorist activity (Prevention of Terrorism Act 1989)
- if he/she is told about anything that compromises a child or vulnerable adult's safety (such as any form of abuse)
- if he/she is told about any planned criminal activity
- if he/she is summoned to court with a legal obligation to provide evidence.
- In these circumstances the volunteer **must** report the information to their Volunteer Co-Ordinator who will inform the relevant authority. The volunteer **must not** disclose information to any other source.

11. Data protection

The University of Chichester Students' Union is fully committed to compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The following principles will apply when handling personal information:

- Personal information is only processed with the knowledge of the person to which it relates.
- Only information that University of Chichester Students' Union actually needs is collected and processed.
- Personal information is only seen by those who need it to do their job.
- Personal information is retained only for as long as it is required.
- Decisions affecting a person are made on the basis of reliable and up to date information.
- Information is protected from unauthorised or accidental disclosure.
- The University of Chichester Students' Union will provide a person with a copy of their personal information on request.
- Inaccurate or misleading data will be corrected as soon as possible.

12. Student leadership

The University of Chichester Students' Union is committed to being a student-led organisation. All significant decisions other than those of day-to-day management issues will be submitted to the University of Chichester Students' Union Head of Student Engagement for their input.