



John Moores Students' Union

Opportunities & Development

Volunteering Policy

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1. General Statement of Policy

Volunteering is an essential part of the activities at John Moores Students' Union (JMSU). JMSU is committed to providing opportunities for students to increase and develop skills, build confidence by taking on roles of responsibility and increase employability.

This policy aims to demonstrate the John Moores Students' Union's commitment to our volunteers and volunteering opportunities by setting out how volunteers should be treated, what they can expect from the Students' Union and what we expect from them.

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to volunteers and staff engaged in activities involving volunteers and volunteer management. Our Volunteer Policy, is designed to ensure the time and enthusiasm given by volunteers is impactful, recognised, supported and valued.

2. Scope

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:-

1. To ensure volunteers are properly integrated into the organisation
2. To expect that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers
3. To ensure volunteers are given every opportunity to develop through volunteering both personally and professionally

3. JMSU Values

JMSU recognises that engagement with volunteers is essential to the realisation of the organisation's vision, mission and strategic plan, together with the delivery of many of the organisation's activities which are recognisable by members, the University and the wider world.

Volunteer opportunities at the Union are diverse and substantial. These opportunities can allow an individual to personally develop, pursue specific or general interests, contribute to representation of the University, engage with other organisations, forge links with community groups, advocate on behalf of others, raise awareness of situations or causes, meet likeminded individuals or have a rewarding and enjoyable time while a member of JMSU.

JMSU strives to create a diverse and inclusive organisation that represents all students of Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU). 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.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 Volunteer activity is defined as: "Any person engaged in an activity which involves spending time, unpaid (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses), doing something which aims to benefit the environment and or some third party that is not a close relative" (NCVO, 2018).
- 4.2 Volunteers are not considered employees of JMSU or the organisations with which they have contact through the brokerage service.
- 4.3 To qualify as a volunteer with JMSU, the individual must not benefit directly from the position e.g. a student who owns a business cannot volunteer to benefit their own business.
- 4.4 The volunteer must not receive any payment (except for travel and other approved out-of-pocket expenses).

4.5 This policy applies to all those undertaking a volunteer role with JMSU.

5. Responsibilities & Expectations

5.1 John Moores Students' Union commits to:

- 5.1.1 Value volunteers, treat them with respect and provide equal access to opportunities.
- 5.1.2 Give volunteers a thorough welcome to the Students' Union, appropriate to the role, via appropriate induction methods.
- 5.1.3 Give volunteers a clear description of the role and understanding of its scope.
- 5.1.4 Provide internal volunteers with all the resources and training they need to carry out the role along with opportunities to develop and enhance skills.
- 5.1.5 Recognise volunteer achievements in line with the quality of the volunteering.
- 5.1.6 Give volunteers an identified line manager and regular opportunity for support.
- 5.1.7 Maintain data protection of the information we hold about volunteers.
- 5.1.8 Keep volunteers safe and provide appropriate insurance to cover in the approved role.
- 5.1.9 Give volunteers the opportunity to express their views about how JMSU can improve and develop.

5.2 JMSU Student Volunteers commit to:

- 5.2.1 Uphold JMSU values and help deliver our charitable mission.
- 5.2.2 Meet and deliver commitments to colleagues and stakeholders.
- 5.2.3 Show compassion and respect to members of the public, colleagues and service users.
- 5.2.4 Undertake the training required for the role, including revalidation (in order to maintain the skills to carry out the volunteer role).
- 5.2.5 Value and respect others who help JMSU to provide services.
- 5.2.6 Communicate effectively with JMSU: inform JMSU in plenty of time if unable to deliver a task or no longer want to volunteer.
- 5.2.7 Understand and comply with JMSU and LJMU policies and procedures.
- 5.2.8 Safeguard and promote the reputation of JMSU.

5.3 There is no obligation for JMSU to offer a volunteer any task, and there is no obligation for a volunteer to take on a task for JMSU.

- 5.4 A volunteer can cease their association with JMSU Volunteering Scheme at any time. Misconduct or poor performance by a volunteer will result in the opportunity to volunteer ceasing and may trigger disciplinary procedures in accordance to policies and procedures of JMSU and LJMU.

6. Recruitment & Selection

- 6.1 JMSU will strive to provide a diverse range of volunteering opportunities, available to all its members.
- 6.2 The number of volunteering opportunities available will be subject to the capacity of staff to manage said opportunities.
- 6.3 Without exception all volunteering promotional material, messages and on campus briefings must be authorised by a JMSU.
- 6.4 Under the guidance of the Student Opportunities & Development Team, all volunteering roles registered through the online systems will be promoted through the most suitable avenues e.g. Students' Union website, social media, posters, leaflets and events.
- 6.5 All applications will, without exception, be processed through the JMSU Volunteering page of the JMSU website.
- 6.6 Potential volunteers will be made aware of recruitment procedures prior to applying for positions.
- 6.7 **INTERNAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**
- 6.7.1 All volunteering roles promoted by JMSU, both internal and external, will be outlined by a role description provided by a nominated contact for the parent Volunteering Organisation or Project.
- 6.7.2 Where a selection process is applied to an internal volunteering role, a person specification will be made available in addition to the role description. These documents will be produced under the guidance and provisions of JMSU.
- 6.7.3 In certain cases volunteering roles reflect the democratic nature of JMSU and as such may be subject to election by and from a certain constituency of members.
- 6.8 **EXTERNAL VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES**
- 6.8.1 Volunteering opportunities will only be considered from the following types of organisations:
- i. Charity
 - ii. Not-for-profit organisation
 - iii. Social enterprise
 - iv. Public sector organisation
 - v. Community group
- 6.8.2 From now on, these groups will be referred to as 'External Volunteering Partners'.
- 6.8.3 For roles promoted but not managed by JMSU, equivalent information to that required for a Union managed role will be required before any promotion is authorised.

- 6.8.4 JMSU holds no responsibility for the recruitment of a volunteer into opportunities offered by an External Volunteering Partner, nor for selection processing following an expression of interest.
- 6.8.5 JMSU reserves the right to refuse to promote an opportunity where it is felt that effective use will not be made of volunteers' skills and abilities, or where it appears the placement may be unsafe, unsuitable or does not align with JMSU values.

6.9 UNSUITABLE VOLUNTEERS

- 6.9.1 To the best of the JMSU's abilities a suitable project will be found for a volunteer. Occasionally JMSU may be unable to find a suitable voluntary role or position due to lack of opportunities available, individual requirements associated with the project/opportunity that do not align with the volunteer, or other eligibility criteria. Where JMSU are unable to place a member into a voluntary role, JMSU will invite the student to discuss the rationale behind this decision. JMSU are committed to offering accessible opportunities that meet the specific needs of all LJMU students.

7. Restrictions

- 7.1 Some volunteers will be subject to visa restrictions. Volunteers should indicate this to their volunteer supervisor and remember in some cases working and volunteering activity both count towards restricted hours e.g. (Tier 4).
- 7.2 Volunteers agree that it is their responsibility to ensure they do not exceed any Visa restrictions and that they abide by their immigration permissions at all times.
- 7.3 UK Law places certain restrictions on foreign nationals and refugees and asylum seekers volunteering in the UK. To confirm your eligibility to volunteer in the UK some additional checks may need to be undertaken.
- 7.4 The UK government places some limited restrictions on people volunteering while receiving state benefits. For the unemployed these restrictions tend to involve you being allowed to volunteer as much as you like providing your volunteering does not prevent you being available to attend job interviews. If you are receiving state benefits, you must discuss your volunteering with your benefits adviser.

8. Disclosure and Barring System (DBS)

- 8.1 Volunteering Organisations will be expected to provide relevant Disclosure and Barring Service checks for volunteers, where risk assessment of the prescribed volunteering activity suggests that DBS checks are required.
- 8.2 Where volunteers will be working with vulnerable adults and/or with young people under the age of 18, references may be requested from applicants. They are required to have known these referees for two years or more and they must not be a friend or relative of the applicant. In some circumstances volunteers may not be able to participate in their desired activity until references are processed.
- 8.3 Volunteers working with vulnerable service users will be required to complete a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check. In some circumstances volunteers may not be able to participate in their desired activity until this form has been processed.

- 8.4 Volunteers with a criminal conviction will not be considered automatically unsuitable for the role they are applying for. As only a small number of convictions would prevent a volunteer from being unsuitable for volunteering and this will be considered on an individual basis.

9. Health & Safety

- 9.1 Volunteering should be a fun and enjoyable experience, JMSU will take all reasonable steps to ensure that volunteers are safe during their volunteering experience. In return JMSU will expect that volunteers also take responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and those around them.
- 9.2 JMSU will do everything that is 'reasonably practicable' to ensure the health & safety of individuals while participating in volunteering activities/projects organised by the Students' Union.
- 9.3 It is important to recognise that Health, Safety and Security are the shared concern and responsibility of everyone and is a legal requirement of the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974.
- 9.4 Staff and volunteers will be informed of and responsive to their rights and responsibilities through the provision of appropriate information and literature, induction packs, training and information bulletins. Where applicable, the volunteer will be given a specific Health & Safety training briefing before participating in any project/activity or prior to the use of unfamiliar equipment.
- 9.5 All volunteers will be required to register their details on the JMSU Volunteering system online, declare details of any medical conditions they may have, and provide emergency contact details prior to volunteering. Volunteers are encouraged to not undertake any tasks they are unsure of, and to make the volunteering organisation aware of any relevant medical conditions on arrival at the project.
- 9.6 Should a staff member or volunteer assess a situation or location to involve a perceived risk then it is part of their legal and moral responsibility to report the risk clearly and record such reports in writing.
- 9.7 Volunteers in roles offered by JMSU can find more information on Health and Safety by consulting the relevant Health and Safety Policy.
- 9.8 Volunteers in community roles, not managed by JMSU, will be able to seek further guidance from their Volunteering Organisation.
- 9.9 JMSU does not endorse, or partner with any organisation for the provision of overseas volunteering opportunities.
- 9.10 **INSURANCE**
- 9.10.1 JMSU has Employers' Liability and Public Liability Insurance which covers normal activities carried out by volunteers. For any unusual activities further insurance maybe required and arrangements will be made if reasonable. Any exceptions to this should be communicated to all involved in those activities prior to the activity taking place.
- 9.10.2 The responsibility for providing insurance for volunteers operating away from University premises is held by the organisation/s managing the volunteer. Without exception, JMSU does not hold any responsibility for the maintenance of insurance on behalf of an External Volunteering Partner.

- 9.10.3 Under no circumstance does JMSU accept any liability for loss of or damage to any personal belongings, including motor-vehicles, bicycles, personal technology or other premium items.
- 9.10.4 Upon registration, volunteering organisations are required to confirm that their organisation does hold valid Public Liability and Employers Liability Insurance. Any organisation being found not to hold the appropriate insurance or failing to provide confirmation documents upon request will be immediately de-registered and volunteers withdrawn until documentation provided.

9.11 SAFEGUARDING

- 9.11.1 JMSU has a duty of care to protect its volunteers. This duty is upheld in the use of role descriptions, selection criteria and in following the JMSU Safeguarding Policy.
- 9.11.2 Safeguarding Policy can be provided on request and details the SU procedures in relation to reporting safeguarding concerns.
- 9.11.3 All volunteers will have a Safeguarding briefing prior to any engagement with children or vulnerable adults by the External Volunteering Partner.
- 9.11.4 JMSU will be provided with the Safeguarding Policy/Protocol of External Volunteering Partners prior to approval.

10. Media Relations

- 10.1 Volunteers managed by JMSU must direct all media queries to the Student Opportunities & Development Team and must not respond themselves
- 10.2 Volunteers managed by External Volunteering Partners are expected to follow the relevant organisational policy covering media relations for their chosen volunteering role.

11. Training & Development

- 11.1 In applying for a voluntary role advertised through the JMSU Volunteering Website, users are agreeing to complete any necessary training or development for the role. Failure to complete the required training will delay access to volunteering activities and prevent continued interaction with a volunteering group or organisation as a volunteer.
- 11.2 Where a role requires an individual to possess a certain skill set or level, then it is expected that training and development will be offered by the organisation, unless otherwise stated in the advertisement.
- 11.3 Ongoing training will often be available and is sometimes required by volunteering opportunities. JMSU will make the requirements clear before volunteers commit to a project.
- 11.4 JMSU may facilitate complimentary volunteer training on an ad-hoc basis but reserves the right to withdraw this service at any time.

12. Volunteer Expenses

- 12.1 An expense is defined as any cost that a volunteer must pay that they would not have incurred if they had not been volunteering.

- 12.2 JMSU is committed to ensuring that volunteering is accessible to everybody. A key element of this commitment is that no volunteer should face any unnecessary cost as a direct consequence of a volunteering activity. It is the policy of JMSU for volunteers to recover expenses from the volunteering partner directly.
- 12.3 JMSU volunteering will only work with External Volunteering Partners that are able to cover out-of-pocket expenses e.g. Transport/Food/Accommodation/Meals. External Volunteering Partners will inform the volunteers of the expenses that will be covered before the student accepts the volunteering opportunity.
- 12.4 An exception to this rule will be made for volunteering opportunities with external partners that take place on campus during the hours in which a student would normally be on campus.

13. External Volunteering Partner

- 13.1 Should an organisation wish to recruit student volunteers via a student-led project on campus or approach the University, they will be directed to register with the JMSU Volunteering Scheme through the online registration pages. This is compulsory for all volunteering partners, regardless of the format of the activities they may offer.
- 13.2 Without exception, all volunteering providers must provide a copy of their public liability insurance, health and safety policy, equal opportunities policy and duty of care statement before their registration will be approved.
- 13.3 JMSU will request a Risk Assessment from the provider for all volunteering activities and reserve the right to decline a registration should this document not be readily available.
- 13.4 If requested, or deemed appropriate by the JMSU Volunteering Scheme, a development meeting may be required to scope the potential of the volunteering project and to discuss details of volunteering roles. These meetings are subject to demand and availability.

13.5 ACCESS TO UNIVERSITY CAMPUS/EVENTS

- 13.5.1 Registration with the JMSU Volunteering Scheme does not give automatic permission for an organisation to access the LJMU Campus.
- 13.5.2 All promotional materials for use on Campus must, without exception, be authorised by the JMSU Volunteering Scheme.
- 13.5.3 JMSU may host promotional events, meetings or lectures to support student recruitment. This service is subject to demand and availability.

13.6 DE-REGISTRATION

- 13.6.1 Should a Volunteering Provider wish to terminate their partnership with JMSU and to de-register from our website, they are invited to email the Senior Development Manager (Opportunities & Development) to begin the de-registration process.
- 13.6.2 To support the continued development of the services we offer, all voluntary de-registration's will be invited to meet with the Student Opportunities & Development Team to complete a de-registration interview. This is for the purpose of evaluation and conflict resolution purposes.

13.7 BLACKLISTING

- 13.7.1 In exceptional circumstances an organisation may be blacklisted by JMSU. Situations that may require such intervention might include, but are not limited to:
- i) An organisation failing to meet basic Health and Safety, Equality and Diversity or other legal standards.
 - ii) An organisation failing to provide sufficient information to demonstrate their holding sufficient insurance or failing to provide risk assessments upon request.
 - iii) Where Volunteering Activities do not meet the vision and values of JMSU.
- 13.7.2 JMSU will make every effort to work with potential volunteering organisations to develop a network of volunteering partners but reserves the right to de-register current providers and decline applications to register.
- 13.7.3 A blacklisting restricts interaction between JMSU and a volunteering organisation. The length of such a blacklisting is not prescribed and JMSU reserve the right to extend or retract this period as is deemed necessary.

14. International Volunteering

- 14.1 JMSU recognises that students may be interested in donating time to support international projects. This may be through local fundraising efforts or through fundraising with the objective of travelling to the host area of the charity's international target area.
- 14.2 While students and staff are commended for their interest in supporting international causes, JMSU does not promote, endorse or encourage international volunteering activities.
- 14.3 Student groups wishing to support international causes are permitted to do so through the promotion of localised fundraising, which must be planned, arranged and activated through a recognised international charity.

15. Data Protection

- 15.1 Volunteers should understand the meaning and importance of maintaining confidentiality. A volunteer may be in a position where they have access to confidential records and personally sensitive information. It is important to respect these confidences.
- 15.2 Confidentiality means not discussing information outside a specific placement/project/group. Should a volunteer have concerns about the information they receive they should discuss this with the manager/supervisor of their work at the earliest opportunity. This is not a breach of confidentiality; this is to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all concerned.
- 15.3 JMSU will hold and process personal data relating to its' volunteers for the purpose of administering volunteering activities. This data will be maintained in accordance with the General Data protection Regulations. Refer to the JMSU Data Protection Policy.
- 15.4 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.

16. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- 16.1 JMSU is committed to serving and representing the whole student population and wishes to see all sections of the student community represented amongst our volunteers.
- 16.2 Volunteer opportunities are widely promoted throughout and we will endeavour to make volunteer materials available in a format accessible to any individual or group, upon request. Furthermore, JMSU regularly reviews the make-up of the volunteer team to identify and target any under-represented group(s). Ultimately JMSU aims to recruit volunteers from a diverse range of backgrounds and age groups upwards of 18 years of age.
- 16.3 JMSU believes in the importance of operating an Equal Opportunities policy and inbuilt in this is the appreciation of an individual's right to a safe environment. Therefore, to make the existing policy of Equal Opportunities more explicit in relation to an individual's environment JMSU operates the following Safe Space policy which applies to anyone on Union premises or representing the Students' Union through activities.
- 16.4 JMSU 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.

17. Volunteering Hours

- 17.1 JMSU student volunteers deserve recognition for all the time and effort that is given up to benefit fellow students, the community and/or the environment.
- 17.2 All volunteers and students will have access to record volunteering hours.
- 17.3 Only the registered External Volunteering Partner or organisation can approve students volunteering hours.
- 17.4 Volunteering hours from students volunteering for JMSU will be approved by the respective line manager or department e.g. course reps, committee members and part time officers.

18. Volunteer Recognition

- 18.1 JMSU recognises the work of its volunteers as extremely valuable and offers volunteers the chance to apply to the Volunteer Recognition Scheme which rewards volunteers at different levels.

19. Monitoring and Supervision

- 19.1 It is the role of the External Volunteering Partner and JMSU to monitor the welfare of their volunteers, either through face to face meetings or via regular emails. Should there be any issues, volunteers have the options to contact the Opportunities & Development Team.

20. Complaints

- 20.1 While it is hoped that volunteers will be happy in their placements, inevitably problems can arise. A complaint may be made against a volunteer, organisation, staff member or member of the general public. All complaints will be considered carefully and investigated fully.
- 20.2 This policy clarifies the procedure concerning complaints and grievances. If a satisfactory outcome cannot be reached then the complainant can take action, as he/she feels fit, in accordance with the Disciplinary Policy.

21. Harassment

- 21.1 JMSU recognises that harassment is a serious issue should it occur when volunteering and can affect the confidence of volunteers and enjoyment of the volunteering opportunity.
- 21.2 Any volunteer who feels they are being harassed should not accept the situation and should make it clear from the outset that this behaviour is unwelcome.
- 21.3 The volunteer may elect to have the complaint investigated in the full knowledge that the matter will be dealt with seriously, promptly and with the strictest of confidence. More details can be found in the Union Volunteer policies on grievance, harassment and misconduct.

22. Breaches of Policy

- 22.1 JMSU expects all LJMU students to behave responsibly, abide by this Policy and follow good practice in the procedure under this Policy.
- 22.2 In taking up a voluntary position through the Union, volunteers accept that they are representing JMSU. As such they should conduct themselves so as not to breach the policies, aims and objectives of JMSU and University or otherwise bring us into disrepute.
- 22.3 Failure to uphold good practice will be considered a breach of this policy.
- 22.4 Any breaches may result in serious consequences. For students this may include referral to Liverpool John Moores University for disciplinary action.

23. Inspection & Audit Review

- 23.1 An annual report on volunteering activity and incidents will be produced by JMSU for consideration by the Board of Trustees. This report will include information to help the Trustee Board to compare the Students' Union decision making over time.

24. Related Policy

- 24.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- JMSU Safe Space Policy
 - JMSU Safeguarding Policy
 - JMSU Data Protection
 - JMSU Byelaw & Complaints Procedure
 - JMSU Disciplinary Procedure
 - LJMU Student Code of Behaviour & Student Disciplinary Procedures
 - LJMU Whistleblowing Policy
- 24.2 JMSU Policies can be found at <https://www.jmsu.co.uk/what-we-do-how-we-work/our-policies>
- 24.3 It is the responsibility of all volunteers to familiarise themselves with these policies and others which may be relevant to their individual circumstances.

25. References

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations (2018), <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering> (Accessed June 2020)