

Student Volunteering and Outreach Volunteer Policy

(Updated August 2011)

Aston University

Volunteer Policy

August 2011

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1 Policy Aims

1.1 Policy Aims

This policy aims to demonstrate Aston University's commitment to our volunteers and volunteering opportunities by setting out how volunteers should be treated, what they can expect from the Student Volunteering and Outreach Office and what we expect from them.

1.2 Policy Objectives

- To adopt a consistent and cohesive approach in all services and support the Student Volunteering and Outreach Office provides to volunteers
- To ensure all volunteers are treated on an equal and fair basis
- · To ensure all volunteers are properly supported in a safe and inclusive way
- · To ensure all volunteers contributions are recognised and rewarded
- To provide volunteers with high quality service and support to make sure they get the most out of their volunteering experience
- To ensure staff and students fully understand why volunteers are involved and what role they play in the organisation
- To collect monitoring information to ensure the objectives are being met.

1.3 Value of Volunteering

The SVO provides students with volunteering opportunities to allow them to make a difference to the local community, to gain new experiences and develop their skills, to meet others, to follow their interests and support causes they care about, to increase their employability, to gain accreditation and recognition and to enhance the student experience.

1.4 The role of Volunteers

There are many activities that volunteers can participate in through the SVO office. A role description for each volunteer role will be made available to students.

1.5 Statement of Intent

Volunteers will only be used where it is appropriate and where roles have been designed for volunteers. They will not be used to replace paid staff.

2. Advertising, recruitment and selection of volunteers

2.1 Advertising of volunteering roles

Volunteer roles are advertised through the website, all student emails and advertising campaigns throughout the university. All role descriptions for volunteering opportunities are made accessible to all students, in a variety of formats. All projects and opportunities are advertised on an equal basis and the SVO office will strive to ensure that the advertisement process is accessible to all Aston University students and complies with the University's Equal and Diversity Statement/policy.

(Appendix 1)

2.2 Recruitment of Volunteers

Students may be required to complete an application form, attend an interview, provide references, attend a selection meeting and attend project specific training before being recruited. This will be decided upon on an individual project basis, dependent upon the nature of the project and the role of the volunteer. The recruitment procedure will be made clear to students and they will be advised on the steps that will need to be taken.

All information and application are made available in an accessible format.

The SVO office will strive to give feedback to all unsuccessful volunteers stating, if possible, the reason why they were unsuccessful. If the reason for the unsuccessful volunteer was not made by the SVO office, the SVO office will strive, wherever possible, to assist the volunteer in a self assessment process.

Volunteers will be guided on the aims of the project or organisation, the volunteer role and the level of skills, experience and commitment expected for the role. The academic commitments of students should be taken in to consideration within the recruitment procedure. If a volunteer finds a role is, or becomes unsuitable, they will be supported to find an alternative opportunity if possible.

2.3 Accessibility

Recruitment materials and information are presented in an accessible way and relevant to a diversity of students. This process includes:

- Positive images of volunteering that reflect the ethos of the organisation used in advertisements and resources.
- Photos do not stereotype volunteers
- · Clear texts is used at all times
- Jargon, acronyms or excessively complicated words are avoided.

2.4 Induction and Training

All volunteers are required to attend a Volunteer Induction or an equivalent training session which aims to equip students with the necessary knowledge and skills to help them get the most out of their volunteering experience. It includes an introduction to the opportunities, support, resources and recognition available. Students will be encouraged to think about their expectations as a volunteer, what makes a good volunteer and what they can expect from the SVO office. It will also include basic health and safety training.

Information collected through the induction process will be used to ensure it is as diverse and accessible as possible.

(Appendix 2)

3. Volunteer Expenses

Volunteers will not be out of pocket due to their volunteering activities and all reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Refer to the Volunteer Expenses guidelines

(Appendix 3)

4. Support and Supervision

All volunteers will be provided with support before, during and after their volunteering activity from designated SVO staff members. Volunteers will know how and where to access this support by referring to the volunteer resource pack.

Volunteers on broker led opportunities will be supported by members of staff in the individual organisations but will also have access to support from the SVO office on how they can make the most from their volunteering opportunity.

5. Insurance

The SVO office will ensure that all external organisations using Aston student volunteers have appropriate and adequate insurance cover in place. The University also has public liability insurance cover.

6. Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The SVO Office undertakes to:

- Ensure no favourable treatment is given to any individual or group
- Formulate and implement a programme of positive action to promote equality of opportunity within the University and in our relations with external organisations.

The SVO office aims to do this through:

- Monitoring recruitment and selection procedures
- Ensuring volunteering opportunities are accessible to as many students as possible
- Provide appropriate training to staff and volunteers

7. Health and safety

Aston University and the SVO office is committed to providing and maintaining a healthy and safe working environment for all its volunteers. The SVO office expects volunteers to co-operate with those responsible to ensure a healthy and safe working environment.

8 Grievance procedure

The SVO office will ensure that all volunteers have a clear and impartial forum to discuss and raise any grievances. The Volunteer Grievance policy ensure students are aware of the steps to take if the grievance is against:

- · The organisation they are volunteering with
- · A member of staff in the SVO office
- · If a grievance is made against the student

(Appendix 4)

9 Data Protection

9.1 Data Protection

In order to operate efficiently and constantly evaluate and improve our services, the SVO Office has to collect and use information about people with whom it works, including volunteers. The SVO Office will ensure that it treats personal information lawfully and correctly and adhere to the principles of Data Protection as set out in the Data Protection Act 1998.

9.2 Confidentiality

The SVO Office is fully committed to maintaining a high level of confidentiality that helps to protect its volunteers and staff.

We will ensure that all student records are kept in a safe and secure manor and only the SVO office will have access to this. Please see the SVO office Statement of confidentiality

(Appendix 5)

10. Exit interviews

Exit interviews will be held with all volunteers, wherever possible, to receive feedback on their personal development through their volunteering role and how well they feel they were supported by the SVO Office. This will help to inform the SVO Office as to how they can improve the support they offer volunteers.

11. Recognition

The SVO Office realises the role volunteers play within the University and its community engagement objectives. The SVO office is committed to officially recognising this contribution students make through their volunteering by dedicating budget funds towards volunteer recognition and developing projects and programmes.

12. Child protection

In compliance with legislation such as the Protection of Children Act 1999 and the Care Standards Act 2000, all those wishing to volunteer with children must apply for an enhanced CRB check as laid out within the SCL Child protection policy.

(Appendix 6)

All individuals who intend to volunteer with children must attend Child Protection training, or it's equivalent, run by the SVO Office. Students are asked to sign and adhere to a specific Volunteer code of conduct relating to their understanding and behaviour around children.

(Appendix 7)

This will ensure, as far as is possible, that all volunteers are fit to be in contact with children, and that all volunteers know how to respond if a child protection issue arises.

The SCL department has designated Child Protection Officers named within the SCL Child Protection Policy who should be approached with any child protection queries or concerns.

13. Policy Implementation

This policy will be incorporated into the Student volunteer handbook and all staff working and supporting student volunteers will have access to and be made aware of how the SVO Office supports volunteers and what role they are expected to play.

All staff with responsibilities for supporting volunteers will be given the relevant guidance and training as part of their induction. Staff should approach their line manager if they feel they need additional training to carry out this part of their role.

14. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by SVO Office and the SCL team.

Appendix 1 – Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The Universities Equal Opportunities and Diversity Statement are designed to show the Universities intent to ensure no person or group is discriminated against. The link below sets out the Universities commitment to staff and students in the Equality and Diversity Policy Statement.

http://www1.aston.ac.uk/staff/equalops/policies/equalitydiversitypolicy--0/

Appendix 2 – Induction Checklist

Induction check lists are designed to ensure Volunteers and organisation set out eh boundaries of volunteering. They enable students to feel they have a clear understanding of their role, expectations and health and safety as well as ensuring the organisation feels the volunteer is fully trained and inducted to begin their volunteering.

Below is the Induction Checklist for organisations as well as a check list given to students before the go for the pre-visit.



Aston University Induction Checklist

Please complete this form on the first day that a volunteer joins your organisation.

Please return it:

Baljinder Rana, Volunteering Activities Officer, Aston University, Student Volunteering and Outreach Office, Schools Colleges and Liaison, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET

Fax: 0121 204 4783

Name of Placement:	_
Name of volunteer:	
When you have discussed the induction points b information to the volunteer please tick the box.	elow and passed on any necessary
Role of organisation	
Role of volunteer	
Volunteering hours	
First aider and location of first aid boxes	
Fire/emergency procedures	
Health and Safety policy and procedure	
Child protection policy and procedure	
Risk assessments	
Any appropriate codes of practice	
Any training required or offered	
Sign	
Representative of placement:	
Volunteer:	
Date:	



Introductory Visit Checklist

- ✓ Introduction to the Organisation
- ✓ Meet key contacts in the organisation and where they are located
- ✓ Role of the volunteer
- ✓ Site map and tour if possible
- ✓ Procedure for signing in and out of premises
- ✓ Confirmation of volunteer hours/times and days
- ✓ Outline of health and safety policy
- ✓ What to do and where to go in case of fire or emergency.
- ✓ Location of First Aid boxes and First Aid procedure
- ✓ Child protection policy/procedure if relevant
- ✓ Identify potential risks and ways to avoid these
- ✓ How volunteers should report if they are going to be late or absent.
- √ Check appropriate dress code
- ✓ Extra training/support available

Appendix 3 – Induction Checklist

VOLUNTEER TRAVEL EXPENSES CLAIM FORM SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES LIAISON

Please read guidance notes overleaf before completing this form.

Stil	dent Name					
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rt	C OI EVOINT C	nod of Addivid				
Date	Mode of Transport	From	То	Total No Of Miles	Ticket Cost	Amount Claimed
			+	+		
			Total:			
			L			
Sig	nature of Clai	mant:			Date:	
Sig	nature of Out	reach Staff:			Date:	
Part	: 3 Do	not complete.	For University u	se only		
	Job Code:	Acc	ount code		nount claimed	
				£		
				l c		
				£		

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLETION OF THE TRAVEL EXPENSES CLAIM FORM

Part 1

- To claim travel expenses please attach **all** receipts with your **name** on the back of each one.
- Please complete your name and the project your are claiming for eg: Student Tutoring Numeracy in Nechells.
- Complete the name of the school or organisation where the activity took place.
- For one off events, write the name of the activity eg: Go Green

Part 2

- For each journey fill in the date, mode of transport, location from where and to where you are travelling and either the cost of the ticket or the number of miles (if travelling by car).
- The travel expenses can only be claimed back if you have receipts with your name on the back of each receipt
- For those of you who have a car you need to keep a record of your mileage and your outward and return journey
- For any journey a mileage allowance of 40p per mile is allowed for the first
 85 miles of any journey, thereafter the rate is 21p per mile
- Remember. If the car is used purely on the grounds of personal preference the reimbursement will be at the public transport cost if this is cheaper than mileage (if you would like to claim mileage you must speak to a member of the outreach staff first)
- Complete the total cost of all tickets or total number of miles (if travelling by car) and sign and date the form.
- Travel expenses are to be claimed from the University to the place of volunteering
- Please note: You must ensure that your expenses claim form is accompanied with a signed and dated timesheet before returning it to the Student Volunteering and Outreach office.

Part 3

• Do not complete this section. For University use only.

Please return this form to the Outreach SW105, Schools and Colleges Liaison, Aston University, Aston Triangle, Birmingham B4 7ET. Tel: 0121 204 4776

Appendix 4 – Complaints and Grievances

Complaints and Grievance Guidance Note for Aston University Volunteers

While it is hoped that volunteers will be happy volunteering in their placements, inevitably problems can arise. A complaint may be made against a volunteer, The Student Volunteering and Outreach Office, placement supervisor or a member of the general public. All complaints will be considered carefully and investigated fully. This policy clarifies the procedure concerning complaints and grievances.

- 1) Aston University Volunteer has a complaint against the placement/placement staff in external charity/organisation
- 2) A complaint is made against an Aston Volunteer by placement/organisation
- 3) A Complaint is made against a member of the Student Volunteering and Outreach Office

Aston Volunteer has a complaint against the placement/placement staff in external charity/organisation

- 1. If the complaint is not serious the volunteer should try and resolve the matter with the person concerned.
- 2. If the complaint cannot be resolved or is serious it should be addressed to the volunteer's supervisor at the organisation. If the complaint is related to the abuse of the organisations clients by the organisation's staff it should be taken directly to that staff member's line manager.
- 3. The complaint should then be taken in writing to the Volunteering Activities Officer at Aston University to resolve the matter.
- 4. The Volunteering Activities Officer will then contact the placement supervisor and discuss the complaint. A response will be given to the volunteer within 10 working days. During this time the volunteer may not volunteer on placement.
- 5. If the volunteer considers the response to be satisfactory then they can choose to continue at the placement (if the Volunteering Activities Officer agrees) or can be transferred to a different placement.

A complaint is made against an Aston University volunteer by placement supervisor

- 1. The placement supervisor or Aston volunteer should try to resolve the matter by talking to each other.
- 2. If the matter cannot be resolved, or is of a serious nature, then the placement supervisor or Aston volunteer should contact the Volunteering Activities Officer to explain the situation.

- 3. The Volunteering Activities Officer will arrange a meeting between all individuals concerned to discuss the complaint.
- 4. The volunteer will be asked not to attend the placement for 10 working days until a response has been provided to all parties involved.
- 5. If the matter is resolved, the volunteer, placement supervisor and Volunteering Activities Officer will decide whether the volunteer should return to the placement or be transferred to an alternative placement.
- 6. If the matter cannot be resolved then the Student Volunteering and Activities Officer will meet with the students and look at their opportunities moving forward.

A Complaint is made against a member of the Student Volunteering and Outreach Office

1 Follow Aston Universities student complaints procedure which can be found in the Student Handbook.

http://www1.aston.ac.uk/registry/for-staff/regsandpolicies/complaints-procedure/

Appendix 5 – Confidentiality

Statement of Confidentiality

Please be assured that all our work with you is confidential. Records relating to Student volunteering placements are only accessible by members of the SVO team and are kept secure.

You can request a copy of your record at any time.

Information is not passed on to a third party without your informed consent.

To ensure our services address your needs we collate statistical data about our users. At no stage in this process will the data identify individuals.

Appendix 6 – Schools and Colleges Liaison Child protection Policy

A full copy of the Child protection policy can be found in the Student Volunteering and Outreach office SW105 open Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4.30pm The Policy Outlines is below:

The Aston University Schools and Colleges Liaison Department (SCL) has a duty of care to safeguard all children involved in events organised by SCL from harm. All children have a right to protection and the needs of children with disabilities and others who may be particularly vulnerable must be taken into account. SCL wishes to ensure it maintains the highest possible standards to fulfil its duty to protect and safeguard those children for whom it has responsibility. It will achieve this by adhering to the Child Protection guidelines as outlined in this policy.

This policy details procedures to follow when there is concern about a child's welfare and when an allegation is made whilst involved in SCL activities (see Appendix 1 for definition). The Child Protection Policy provides information to ensure that staff (see Appendix 1 for definition) do not put children at risk. It is designed to protect any person in a position of trust and all those who participate in SCL activities.

The key statements of this policy are:

- A child is defined as a person up to the age of 19 who is in full time education.
 For the purposes of this policy and associated documents a child may also be termed as a student or young person.
- The safety and welfare of the child is paramount and it is the responsibility of all staff to help prevent abuse.
- An acknowledgement that children can be the victims of physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.
- All children have the right to live in safety and be protected from abuse.
- All allegations or suspicion of abuse or ill treatment will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff working on SCL events have a responsibility to report concerns to the event organiser (See appendix 2 for procedures). Staff are not trained to deal with situations of abuse nor make a judgement on whether abuse has occurred.

The above statements apply to all children irrespective of their race, culture, religion or belief, language, gender, age, disability or sexual orientation.

SCL will endeavour to uphold these statements by:

- Following appropriate and careful recruiting and selection procedures to ensure the suitability of staff who will be working directly with children.
- All staff involved in SCL events will be made aware of child protection issues as appropriate. Children will be treated with respect, dignity and an understanding of their needs, without any advantage being taken of their weaker position.
- Establishing procedures which will minimise any opportunity for abuse. This will include staff avoiding private or unobserved situations with children.

- Establishing procedures for reporting any suspected abuse. This could include physical
 or verbal evidence that a child has been abused, either before arrival at SCL events or
 during their stay, or allegations made by a child about abuse.
- Following all procedures in reporting cases of injury. In the case of a child being injured, the incident will also be reported to the Department Child Protection Officer(s) (see Appendix 1 for definition).

Ensuring up-to-date records of appointment to the posts of Department Child Protection Officer(s) and University Child Protection Officer (see Appendix 1 for definition) are kept within this document.



Appendix 7 – Code of Conduct

All student Volunteers are required to read, sign and adhere to the SVL code of conduct. This sets out the expectations of volunteers working with children or vulnerable adults.

Schools and Colleges Liaison (SCL) Code of Conduct for Student Volunteers

Thank you for supporting the Student Volunteering and Outreach Office. I hope that you will enjoy being part of the SVO volunteering programme and the opportunity to promote your University and Higher Education to prospective students and young people.

For your own safety, as well as the safety of all young people you will be working with, it is important to highlight the boundaries of appropriate behaviour which Aston University expects from all staff and visitors involved in SCL Activities and Events.

This document accompanies the Schools and Colleges Liaison Child Protection Policy that all Student Volunteers are obliged to adhere to.

The University encourages positive role modelling and has appropriate sanctions for breaches of the code of conduct.

We ask you to read this document carefully and sign the declaration confirming your agreement to abide and be bound by these statements:

- I agree to contact the SCL Event Organiser or the Schools Liaison Office if my arrival has been delayed or if I am unable to attend an event that I have committed myself to.
- I agree to contact the SCL Event Organiser or the Schools Liaison Office on the telephone numbers listed in the SCL Child Protection Policy Document in the case of any suspicions, allegations or incidents occurring during the course of an event.
- I agree to treat everyone equally with fairness and respect and will challenge any unacceptable behaviour.
- I agree to act as a good role model this includes not smoking or drinking alcohol in the presence of young people.
- I agree to always put the welfare of the young person first.
- I agree to give enthusiastic and constructive feedback rather than negative criticism.
- I will avoid being left alone with a young person at any time during an activity or event and that if speaking to an individual young person, that I do so in sight or hearing of other adults.
 - Leave the door open if you find yourself alone in a room. Do not use lifts to escort individual students around the University. If visiting students ask you to escort them to the nearest toilets, ensure you are escorting a group of

students and not just an individual student. Do not enter the toilets when escorting the students but wait outside in the corridor for the students. Wherever possible, please ask a member of the school's staff to accompany the group when escorting them to the toilets and ensure that you inform the relevant Aston University staff member about where you are going.

N.B. If you do not hold a current (completed in the last 3 years) and satisfactory enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) police check countersigned by Aston University you should not be alone with any participant at any stage.

- I will not permit abusive activities amongst and/or directed towards young people (e.g. bullying, ridiculing, name calling, exclusion, racism).
- I agree to respect a participant's background, culture and traditions and be mindful of any behaviour that may offend his/her beliefs.
- I agree not to engage in any intimate relationships with any young person either during or after the event ends, or to engage in any relationships arising from my involvement with the event.
- I agree to avoid unnecessary physical contact with any young person.
- I agree not to show favouritism to an individual.
- I agree not to collude with other colleagues' inappropriate behaviour.
- I will report any inappropriate behaviour to the SCL Event Organiser.
- I agree not to give my personal e-mail, home or mobile number to any student or interact with any students on social networking sites during or after the visit has taken place.
- I agree to report any suspicions that I may have about a child who is being abused to the SCL Event Organiser in charge of the specific event.
- I agree to contact the Schools Liaison Office if I have any queries or concerns regarding any aspect of the SCL Child Protection Policy or the SCL Code of Conduct for Student Volunteers.
- If working overnight for a residential visit, I agree not to enter any student's residential bedroom on my own.
 - Student Ambassadors should not enter the room of a young person. If you are concerned about a student who is in their bedroom, ensure you inform the SCL Event Organiser and that another adult is present.

Student Volunteers will be unable to take part in SVO activities unless the Declaration has been signed and returned.

I have read and understand the information presented in this document.		
I confirm I do not have any criminal convictions (including cautions, reprimands and final warnings) that would prevent me from working with young people.		
I also agree to abide by and be bound by the SCL Code of Conduct for Student Volunteers.		
I understand that I will face disciplinary action if I falsify information, knowingly mislead or break the SCL Code of Conduct.		
PRINT NAME:		
SIGNATURE:		
DATE:		

Please complete this form and return it to: Baljinder Rana, Student volunteering and Outreach, South Wing 105, Aston University, Birmingham, B4 7ET