**DSU’s Mission**

Empowering DMU students to create an unforgettable journey by looking out for DMU student wellbeing, creating a sense of belonging and providing opportunities to get actively involved.

**Why do we include volunteers?**

Our role as a union is to represent student voices and deliver student-led activity within DMU, therefore we want to empower students to take on leading roles within our organisation to help us to strive towards our mission.

We need students from all walks of life and all communities, who can bring their different skills and experiences to our work. Volunteers bring a unique perspective to the organisation, often reflecting the views of their peers.

By empowering students to take on voluntary roles, we can also extend the work we do to the wider DMU student community.

**Who are our student volunteers?**

A student volunteer is any individual who undertakes unpaid activities on behalf of our organisation of their own free choice.

Student volunteers may be involved in short or long-term activities, on an ongoing annual basis, or as a one off. Our typical voluntary activity includes roles such as:

* Mentors
* Student Group Committee Members
* Zone Members
* Course Representatives
* Liberation Officers
* Student Trustees

**How do we recruit volunteers?**

There are two main methods we use for recruiting volunteers, these are either through an election process, application and/or informal interview.

Roles that involve acting as a representative for a student community are elected by their peers, typically through an online platform.

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to for all volunteer recruitment. These principles give all students the right to be treated without discrimination. In instances where a voluntary role is recruited via application and interview, we will use an additional form to record monitoring information for our Equal Opportunities Policy.

Where applicants are not able to be placed into their preferred role, they will be given feedback and the opportunity to discuss other voluntary opportunities within our organisation or the wider community.

Any new roles for volunteers must be agreed with the Head of Membership Services before they are advertised.

**Roles and Responsibilities**

Each volunteer student will be supported and supervised by a designated member of staff within the organisation. The designated staff member will provide guidance, support, and supervision to the volunteer to ensure that the volunteering experience is a positive and valuable one.

The volunteer role is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no contractual obligation for the volunteer to attend or to undertake set tasks. However, there is a presumption of mutual support, accountability, reliability, and a reciprocal set of expectations:

Student volunteers can expect:

* To have clear information about what is and is not expected of them
* To receive adequate support and training
* To be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment
* To be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner
* To receive reimbursement for reasonable expenses
* To have opportunities for personal development
* To be recognised and appreciated
* To be able to say ‘no’ to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable
* To know what to do if something goes wrong

The organisation expects student volunteers:

* To be reliable, open, and honest
* To uphold the organisation’s values and comply with organisational policies
* To make the most of opportunities given, e.g., for training
* To contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute
* To carry out tasks within agreed guidelines

Where it is reasonable to do so we will be flexible with the tasks within role descriptions – e.g., where some tasks may be difficult for a person with anxiety, or to better fit the motivations of the individual.

We will also strive to increase the accessibility of our voluntary roles, for both in-person and digital roles. If a student volunteer has ideas on how their role could be further improved, the designated member of staff supervising their activity will be contactable and open to feedback. All ideas and feedback will receive a timely response from the designated member of staff.

**Induction and Training**

All volunteers will be offered tailored training and an introduction within a month of being recruited into their role. The training and introduction will be provided by the designated member of staff supervising the role alongside supporting colleagues within DSU.

Typically, the training will include:

* An introduction to other volunteers and staff members
* An introduction to DSU
* A copy of a Volunteer Handbook, containing copies of DSU policies and information regarding Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Boundaries and Safeguarding, and the DSU organisational chart
* A tour of the online resources available to support their roles
* A verbal explanation of expenses forms (where applicable)
* An explanation of the personal development opportunities available while in post

Some roles may require formal training which could be provided by an external provider e.g. First Aid training. The Head of Membership Services will help advise on what additional training may be needed.

**Support and Supervision**

The designated member of staff will be contactable for volunteers to give and receive feedback, and to answer general queries. The designated member of staff will also plan work for the volunteer.

Volunteers and supervisors will agree on appropriate arrangements for catch-up sessions. This will vary according to the nature of the role and how often the student volunteers. We recommend that each project involving volunteers, holds volunteer meetings at least twice per academic year to allow volunteers the opportunity to speak with staff and other volunteers, as well as to raise any queries or concerns informally.

**Recognition**

We are committed to celebrating our students’ volunteering efforts and encourage volunteers to let us know about their achievements and successes. Their contributions will be recognised through Student Volunteering Week, HEAR, certificates, social events, annual awards and by saying thank you.

**Health and Safety**

We appreciate that all volunteers have the right to work in a safe environment. Therefore, all volunteers must carry out their duties in line with DSU’s Health and Safety Policy whilst engaged in their volunteering activity. Volunteers will be made aware of the procedure during their induction period.

Volunteers are covered by DSU’s Public Liability Insurance but if they wish to use their own vehicle to carry out any aspect of their voluntary role, the responsibility will be on the volunteer to notify their insurance company to ensure they are covered on their vehicle insurance.

**Data Protection and Confidentiality**

All volunteers are bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as staff, as laid down in any DSU policy or by verbal instruction from their designated supervisor. Volunteers who will have access to confidential information will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. Breach of confidentiality is taken very seriously and may result in us asking the volunteer to leave their role.

We are bound by the Data Protection Act to ensure that we treat volunteer information with respect. Only staff who need to see information for purposes related to volunteer involvement will be able to access it. We will not pass information on without permission.

Equally, volunteers should treat personal information about other students or staff with the same respect and adhere to all relevant data protection guidelines outlined within training.

**Diversity**

All volunteers will be expected to have an understanding and commitment to equal opportunities and diversity and should therefore ensure that they have read DSU’s Equal Opportunities Policy. Volunteers are expected to always comply with this policy. Volunteers may also request training in respect of diversity issues if they feel this would assist them in their volunteering role.

DSU is sensitive to diverse cultures, lifestyles, backgrounds, and languages and strives to ensure equality of opportunity to ensure that individuals are given equal access to information, services etc. and requires all staff and volunteers to follow these principles. We will strive to provide extra support and make reasonable adjustments, if needed, for volunteers with additional needs including disability, language, or mental health.

**Problem Solving Procedures**

DSU acknowledges that sometimes problems do arise. In the first instance, any volunteer with a complaint or concern should bring it up with their designated supervisor. If the issue cannot be resolved by informal discussion, then it can be taken up formally through DSU’s Complaints Procedure. Volunteers will be made aware of the procedure during the induction period.

**Monitoring and Review**

Application of this policy will be monitored by the Head of Membership Services and reviewed on an annual basis.

If you have any queries about this policy, please contact dsuopportunities@dmu.ac.uk.