**MDXSU Volunteering Policy**

**1. Introduction**

**Policy Aims**

This policy aims to demonstrate Middlesex University 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.

**Scope**

This policy applies to all Middlesex University Students’ Union student volunteers who are volunteering for the organisation. Most volunteer projects are student-led with support from Students’ Union staff. This includes:

* Student Voice Leaders
* Society Committee Members
* Liberation Committee Members
* Student Group Executive Committee Members
* Student Media Leaders
* Union Council Representatives
* NUS Delegates

This policy does not apply to students who are volunteering with charities and community groups, where responsibility over these volunteering opportunities resides with the organisation themselves.

This policy should be available to all student volunteers engaging in the activities described above.

**Objectives**

The objectives set out in this policy are:

* 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 all Students’ Union staff, officers and volunteers fully understand why volunteers are involved and what role they play in the organisation

**Definition**

Volunteering is defined as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives ([NCVO](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/policy-and-research/volunteering-policy)).

Volunteering provides students with valuable skills, knowledge and experience which cannot be achieved from an academic degree alone, which in turn increases employability prospects. Middlesex University Students’ Union provides students with volunteering opportunities to allow them to:

* Meet new people
* Follow their interests
* Increase their employability
* Support causes and campaigns they care about
* Enhance their student experience
* Make a difference to the community at Middlesex
* Gain new experiences and develop their skills
* Represent their peers and provide feedback to the University

**Middlesex University Students’ Union Mission Statement**

Middlesex University Students’ Union will facilitate a world class partnership between staff and students, to develop a strong, vibrant democracy, to represent every student on every course in every school and to champion equality and diversity across our community ([MDXSU 2020 Vision](https://www.mdxsu.com/resources/mdxsu-2020-vision)).

To achieve this mission, we are committed to providing students with opportunities to lead, develop and collaborate, as well as cultivating safe social spaces and fun activities. Volunteering is one such way that we are actively working to achieve this mission.

**Expectations of the Students’ Union and Volunteers**

*Volunteer expectations:*

Volunteers will not be expected to undertake any tasks they do not feel comfortable with, or be asked to give more time than they feel they are able to. If they feel pressure is being placed on them to undertake tasks they do not feel comfortable with, then they should approach the appropriate member of support staff within the Students’ Union. Volunteers are expected to act responsibly and take reasonable care to ensure that their own safety and the safety of others are not at risk whilst undertaking any voluntary duties.

*Students’ Union expectations:*

Volunteers will be expected to undertake the relevant training needed for their role; work within the Union’s [values and visions](https://www.mdxsu.com/about); be polite, professional and inclusive to those who work within and receive a service from the Students’ Union; complete the relevant registration, feedback and monitoring forms; and comply with the relevant policies and procedures highlighted to them in their training. If a volunteer is unable to continue their volunteering or will be absent from volunteering for a specific time, they should make the appropriate member of support staff within the Union aware of this as soon as possible. If a student doesn’t engage with their volunteer role for a prolonged period of time, without informing the Students’ Union, they may be removed from their role.

**Equal Opportunities**

The Students’ Union aims to ensure that no less favourable treatment is given to any group or individual on the grounds of age, ability or disability, ethnic origin, caring or parental responsibilities, gender or gender identity, HIV status, marital status, nationality, opinions or beliefs on matters such as religion and politics, physical appearance, race, sexual orientation, spent or irrelevant criminal convictions, trade union affiliation, employment status, socio-economic background, medical condition, student status, mental health status, campus or mode of academic study, or any other irrelevant distinction ([MDXSU Equal Opportunities Policy](https://www.mdxsu.com/resources/equal-opportunities-policy-2100)).

**2. Recruitment and selection**

All Students’ Union members will be encouraged to participate in volunteering with MDXSU through democratic elections. All of our volunteer roles will be elected through the MDXSU website. These roles will be widely advertised for students to apply for, and include clear instructions on how to do so. There may be specific processes in place for certain volunteer roles (e.g. for Society Committee Member elections, only members of a society can apply and vote in the elections).

**3) Induction and training**

The Students’ Union believes that training is a very important aspect of our work and recognises that volunteers are more confident and effective when given appropriate training. As such, volunteers will be expected to attend any training specifically for their role, which may include specific processes and how to access support in their role. Students’ Union staff will seek to ensure that, either through the Students’ Union or the group(s) with whom volunteers are working with, students receive adequate training for the specific tasks they have been asked to perform.

All volunteers will be offered ongoing training as appropriate for their role, which may include topics such as public speaking or an introduction to democracy at Middlesex University Students’ Union. All volunteers will also be encouraged to join added leadership training (e.g. Student Leaders Development Week or Student Leaders Residential)

**4) Recognition**

Middlesex University Students’ Union values and recognises the commitment our volunteers give through their participation in all our volunteering opportunities. We celebrate their achievements through our annual awards ceremony, the MDXSU Awards, where nominated volunteers are rewarded and recognised for their efforts.

**5) Supervision and support**

Should a volunteer have any issues within their role, they should contact the appropriate Students’ Union staff member who can offer them support. The contact details for a volunteer’s appropriate staff member should be given to them when they start in their role. Volunteers can also find contact details for various Students’ Union departments [here](https://www.mdxsu.com/contactus).

The wellbeing of our volunteers is a priority for the Students’ Union and therefore it’s important that students’ studies/degree come first and foremost. The hours that volunteers dedicate to their role are flexible and if managed appropriately should not impact on their University studies. If a volunteer is concerned about managing their volunteering role along with their studies, they should reach out to the appropriate Students’ Union staff member.

Attempts will be made to gain feedback and evaluation from all volunteers involved in Students’ Union volunteering roles. This feedback will be used to draw conclusions and recommendations for future volunteering opportunities.

Middlesex University has a variety of support services for students to access, which can be found [here](https://unihub.mdx.ac.uk/support).

**6) Insurance**

All volunteers taking part in Middlesex University Students’ Union activities are covered by our Public Liability insurance. Where volunteers have organised their own activity these volunteers should consult with the appropriate Students’ Union staff member when planning the activity, to gain agreement and ensure the correct paperwork (e.g. Risk Assessments) is completed where appropriate.

**7) Health and safety**

Middlesex University Students’ Union views the health and safety as a core function within the organisation for our staff, students, volunteers and others who may be affected by its activities. Volunteers have the responsibility to do all they can to prevent injury to themselves and others and report any incidents or near misses as outlined within our Health and Safety Policy. We will make every effort to reduce the risks and ensure the safety of all our volunteering activities.

**8) Complaints & grievance process**

All complaints and grievances will be taken seriously. Any volunteer who has a grievance or complaint is encouraged to raise the issue initially with the appropriate member of Students’ Union staff. The purpose of frontline resolution is to attempt to resolve any issues as quickly as possible. Depending on the service area in which the issue arose, there may be a specific complaints procedure (e.g. Student Groups complaints) which will be followed.

If this course of action does not resolve the problem, or any volunteer is not satisfied with the outcome then they should follow the Middlesex University Students’ Union Complaints Procedure [here](https://www.mdxsu.com/complaints).

**9) Confidentiality**

Middlesex University Students’ Union is committed to meeting its obligations under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and will strive to observe the law in all collection and processing of subject data for volunteers. We will only use data in ways relevant to carrying out its legitimate purposes and functions as a charity and in a way that is not prejudicial to the interest of individuals/volunteers. Middlesex University Students’ Union will take due care in the collection and storage of any sensitive data including training volunteers to use data sensitively. Middlesex University Students’ Union staff will do their utmost to keep all data accurate, up-to-date and secure. Further information about how Middlesex University Students’ Union collects and uses students’ data can be found in our Privacy Policy [here](https://www.mdxsu.com/privacy-policy).

**10) Policy review**

The Students’ Union Chief Executive and/or Head of Membership Services will ensure that this policy is reviewed every two years or where there are changes in relevant legislation. The Trustee Board will approve any changes to this policy.