

QMSU Volunteering and Community Outreach Policy

1. Scope

This policy sets out the principles for students who volunteer or deliver community outreach through QMSU.

The policy contains information for students who participate in QMSU's volunteering and community outreach opportunities, and for students who do so through our community partners.

We value the contributions of all students involved in these activities and the impact they have on individuals and communities. We endeavour to provide the best possible experience for students and to recognise and reward their contributions.

2. Definitions

We define **volunteering** as any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the community or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Choosing to participate in volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

We define **community outreach** as any activity involving engaging with or offering a service to a specific community. This may include volunteering but can also include activities which students complete for a course module.

When referring to QMSU, we primarily refer to the Volunteering Team, except when referring to QMSU organisational policies.

'QMSU Volunteering' is used to refer to the QMSU Volunteering and Community Outreach service for simplicity. We acknowledge some of the opportunities advertised via the service are community outreach activities rather than volunteering.

3. General Expectations

Volunteering and community outreach are an exchange relationship, of benefit to both the student and the organisation offering an opportunity. It is binding only in honour, trust and mutual understanding. No enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, can be imposed on students to attend, give, or be set a minimum amount of time or to carry out the tasks provided. Although students offer time freely and willingly, and without binding obligation, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability.

Students can expect:

- Varied and meaningful roles to be provided by QMSU
- A clear written role description, and not to be expected to carry out tasks they are not skilled or supported/ trained to do
- To be provided with accurate information and policies

- To be integrated within the organisation they engage with
- Appropriate support, induction and training
- Fair and equitable treatment
- To feel respected and valued, to be listened to and consulted about issues affecting them
- To work in a safe, healthy environment and be insured
- Not to replace the roles of paid staff

QMSU expects students to:

- Be punctual and reliable
- Notify the named contact person as soon as possible if they are going to be unavailable or late
- Respect the confidentiality of information they receive whilst engaged in activities
- Have a non-judgmental approach and treat others with respect and fairness
- Raise any problems or difficulties at the earliest opportunity with the QMSU staff team by emailing su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk
- Ask for help and support when necessary
- Submit claims for reimbursement of expenses to an authorised member of Students' Union staff, as agreed, providing relevant receipts to support these claims
- Take responsibility for their personal belongings while on or off site

4. QMSU Opportunities

QMSU provides opportunities through the Give Volunteering a Go programme, and through student-led volunteer groups.

For student-led volunteer groups, volunteer group committees take responsibility for providing role descriptions and supporting students during their activities. QMSU takes responsibility for offering DBS check and safeguarding training (where applicable), and for reimbursing student [expenses](#).

For Give Volunteering a Go Opportunities, QMSU will provide a volunteer briefing and designate a point of contact who students can go to for support during an activity. This section addresses what students who participate in a QMSU opportunity can expect. Students who engage with a community partner organisation should refer to the [partner organisations section](#).

Recruitment

- Students who apply for a QMSU-led opportunity will be asked to complete an online application, after which they will receive an email to confirm if they have been accepted for the opportunity
- Students applying for opportunities with student-led volunteer groups should refer to the student group committee for information on the recruitment process
- All students who will be working with children, young people and adults at risk will have to undergo a DBS check

Expenses

Students will be reimbursed for food and travel expenses incurred while volunteering or participating in community outreach:

- Traveling to and from the site of an opportunity, and any travel required during the opportunity, within zones 1-4 up to the value of the daily cap of £12.80.
- Food for opportunities exceeding 4 hours, for which they are eligible for up to £6.
- To claim back all expenses, students must provide a receipt or proof of their journey. Please refer to the Expense Policy for more information.

Insurance, Health and Safety

QMSU's insurance and [Queen Mary's Health and Safety Policy](#) cover students activities and our liabilities towards them whilst they are on the premises or engaged in work on our behalf.

Students will receive Health and Safety information before beginning their role, either in the form of a written or verbal briefing.

At QMSU, we follow thorough safeguarding policies and procedures:

- [Safeguarding Adults at Risk Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedure](#)

Resolving problems

We aim to treat all student fairly, equitably and consistently. Students are encouraged to raise any problems at the earliest opportunity by emailing su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk, so that they may be resolved promptly. The SU is initially responsible for handling problems regarding student conduct or complaints. They will seek to ensure that the student's views are heard, noted, and acted upon swiftly.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Students will be bound by the requirements for confidentiality, the same as paid staff.

Personal information recorded about students is stored and maintained with appropriate safeguards for confidentiality. Printed records will be disposed of after use, and any electronic records are only accessible to limited SU staff. More information can be found in [QMSU's Privacy and Data Policies](#).

Reward and Recognition

We will seek to recognise students' achievements and contributions to volunteering and community outreach in a variety of ways:

- Volunteers are eligible for QMSU Volunteer Hours Awards which go onto their HEAR Transcript (25 Volunteering Hours: Bronze Award, 50 Hours: Silver Award, 100: Gold Award). The Students' Union will communicate the deadline for hours to be logged to all volunteers and will verify their hours.
- Volunteers may be mentioned in newsletter communications (with their consent), in documents such as impact reports, and at events and award ceremonies.

5. Opportunities provided by QMSU Community Partner Organisations

Students engaging in opportunities provided with one of our community partners should refer to the organisations' volunteer policy. QMSU expects our partner organisations to cover the relevant expenses so please also refer to the organisation's expense policy.

If students encounter any issues with a partner organisation, they should initially report these to their supervisor in the organisation, and then to su-volunteering@qmul.ac.uk if necessary.

Students participating in activities with community partner organisations are eligible for the same rewards and recognition as mentioned above.

Policy written: August 2025

Date of next review: August 2030