

# **VOLUNTEERING HANDBOOK**

September 2021

  
**BUCKS**  
STUDENTS' UNION

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## COVID guidance amendments

- When visiting external opportunities, students will be adhering to their Covid - 19 protocols.
- These protocols will be sent in advance
- Volunteers should adhere to the current government guidelines. When volunteering antibacterial wipes will be provided. Students are expected to use these on all equipment e.g. litter picks before and after the volunteering project.
- Beauty Bank and Bra Bank donations are still greatly appreciated however you will now be asked to be put these in the donation box directly to reduce risk.
- Registers as normal but with time stamps will be taken at every volunteering opportunity

## Bucks Students' Union

Queen Alexandra Road, High Wycombe, Bucks HP11 2JZ

Tel: **01494 601 600** Email: **union@bucks.ac.uk** Website: **bucksstudentsunion.org**

Bucks Students' Union is a registered charity – no. 1144820

# Welcome

Here at Bucks, we pride ourselves in broadening participation levels both in and around the community. We offer a range of opportunities to our members and even allow them to take the lead on some. Our Union

is passionate about volunteering our time towards our community, a passion that you can share with us while gaining some invaluable experience.

The experience I have gained from the Volunteering I have participated in while at uni has been vital to my personal and professional development. Whether this is helping to improve my leadership and organisational skills or helping me improve my confidence and personal relation skills. These are skills that I think are very beneficial to students professionally and personally.

**Conor Wysner**

Volunteer of the year 2018

I've been involved in the volunteering opportunities and RAG events since my very first Freshers' Fair but it was over this last year that I managed to log over 400 volunteering hours in the volunteering portal. Even though it's been a difficult year this past year, I was really happy to be nominated for the 'Volunteer of the Year' award at the 2020-21 Union Awards. I even went on to win the award this year which was an incredible honour and a great way for me to end my final year at Bucks.

**Tomasz Siemieniuch**

Volunteer of the Year 2020-21

Here at Bucks, we pride ourselves on broadening participation levels both in and around the community. As we offer a range of opportunities for our members, you are able to get involved with an array of different projects, or even take up the opportunity to take the lead in some. Our union is very passionate about volunteering our time towards the community, a passion that you can share with us while gaining some invaluable experience.

Whether you are looking to meet and inspire new people, develop new skills or shape your CV, volunteering helps you make the most of your student experience to its highest potential, all of which, will boost your employability profile. Above all, our staff is happy to support all of our members through their volunteering journeys, offering guidance and advice on how to further develop their experience into transferable employable skills.

We can never have too many volunteers, so this year be sure to try something new and get involved with our volunteering community!

**Tom Featherstone**

Vice President Student Involvement  
Bucks Students' Union





# What we do

Every year our students volunteer their time in the local community, internationally and within our institution. Students are engaged with a variety of community organisations and charities including; Child Bereavement, Rye View Manor, Chiltern Rangers and Wycombe Homeless Connections. Students have got stuck in with projects including; litter picks, befriender roles, teaching and organising fundraising events. Many students organise these events themselves and are really able to give back to the community and gain valuable experience. Within the Students' Union our members volunteer by writing for the Bucks Student newspaper, by being a

society/club committee member and taking part in our annual Smile campaign.

We also have many students who volunteer internationally, previously in Thailand, Cambodia and Uganda. They have helped out in elephant sanctuaries and built playgrounds for children. These opportunities are once in a life time and offer a real insight into other cultures and communities.

We work hard to find voluntary positions to suit individual courses, so if you have any ideas then please send them over on: **[volunteering@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:volunteering@bucks.ac.uk)**.



# Opportunities

## Long Term Volunteering

Long term volunteering is committing to a regular role on a weekly or monthly basis. This could be with an external organisation, working with the Events team or writing for the Bucks Student Newspaper. Long term volunteering is an excellent addition to your CV as it typically involves working in a specific role that will help you in your chosen career.

Check out the long term placements on our website at [\*\*bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteering\*\*](https://bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteering).

## Short Term Volunteering

Short term volunteering comes in the form of one day projects. These one day projects happen on a weekly basis on various days and include conservation work, working with the elderly, fundraising and much more! Short term volunteering is great to put on your CV, it's quick and easy to do and there is a wide variety of activities. If you are trying to gain specific skills or want to see what skills a project can give you, have a look at our opportunity profiles online.

Opportunity profiles can be found for each of our one day projects at [\*\*bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteering\*\*](https://bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteering).

## International Volunteering

Each year we work with a number of third-party organisation's to develop opportunities most suited to students, giving you the chance to help others overseas, develop your skills and experience a new culture. To check out our International volunteering opportunities for this year, head over to the website and have a look on the volunteering portal.

[\*\*bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteeringportal\*\*](https://bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteeringportal)

## Micro Projects

Throughout the year there will be a number of micro-volunteering events planned on campus. These events are drop-in and non-commitment. Previous activities include; Homeless Hampers and letter writing for Post Pals.

## Committee Positions

Sports teams and societies within Bucks Students' Union are run democratically and are student led. Consequently, each year student members can put themselves forward for committee positions and are voted in by their peers. Alongside the fundamental roles of each position, you will help to sculpt and develop your society or team and raise money to generate income for projects and events.





# How do I register?

Registering to be a volunteer with the Students' Union is quick and easy. All you have to do is register online at [bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteeringportal](https://bucksstudentsunion.org/volunteeringportal).

Once you've made yourself a profile, you can sign up to one off and long term volunteering opportunities, as well as log all your hours.

## If you can't find what you're looking for, you can start your own project!

If you can't find a project that suits you, why not start your own project? Whether it be organising regular trips to an elderly residence, or getting a group of your mates together to tackle green issues, we're here to help and may even be able to give you a start-up fund! Just pop into the Students' Union office and have a chat with the Activities Coordinator (Volunteering and Charity Fundraising).



# Why Volunteer?

## Transferable skills

You will pick up transferable skills during the course of being a Bucks volunteer that can be applied to many different situations throughout your career. Being aware of the skills you have gained and how you can talk about them during interviews may be key to getting you a job.

## Volunteering on a conservation project

### Community Awareness



By volunteering on a conservation project you will be learning about the wider community and will be having a positive impact on it.

### Team Work



One day projects are always undertaken by a group of students; you must work together to achieve your end goal. You will learn to communicate effectively with your team and listen with an open mind to solutions that are put forward.

### Physical Fitness



Conservation projects are opportunities to get your hands dirty and learn how to use different tools to create something. This lets potential employers know that you are not afraid to roll your sleeves up and pitch in when required.

## Volunteering to collect money for RAG

### Citizenship



Collecting money for charities will allow you to learn how to become an active and engaged citizen, and be aware of issues such as ethics, politics, human rights and equality.

### Verbal Communication



In order to collect money, you will have to approach many different people. This opportunity will develop your verbal communication skills on a variety of levels, and will give you practice in addressing people in a suitable way.

### Cultural Awareness



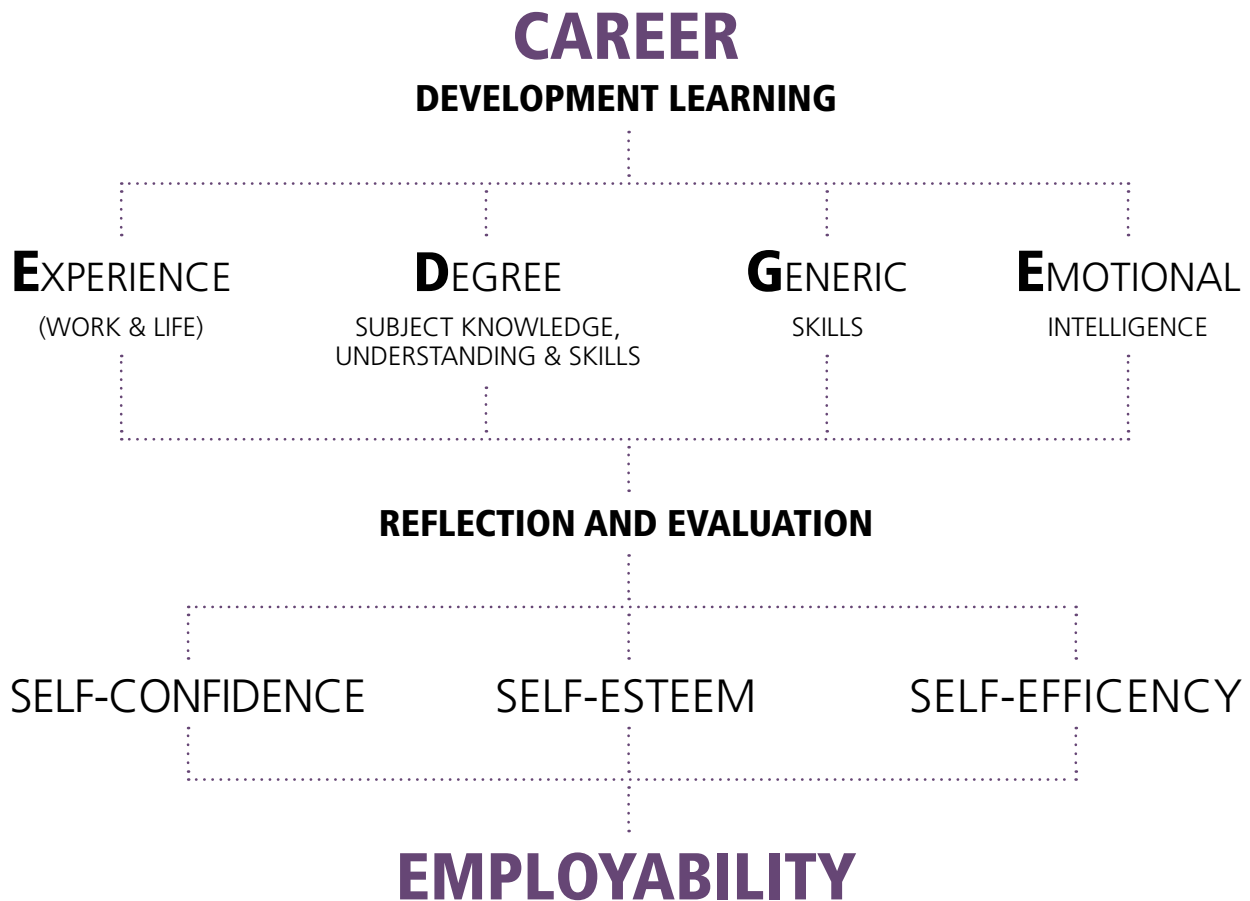
This opportunity will bring you into contact with many different groups of people, so you can develop a greater understanding of a number of cultures.



# Why volunteer?

## Employability

Volunteering allows you to develop skills which will help you in kick-starting your career. It is important when writing applications and attending interviews that you understand what skills you have acquired through your work and volunteering.



Career **EDGE** - The Key to Employability

## A framework of employability for Bucks students

This simple model illustrates the different components of employability that you should focus on throughout your time at university. This is not just about getting a job, this is about developing a successful career in whichever field you decide to enter after graduating.

Within your own subject area, consider which component may be more important than others, talk to your tutors and people working in your sector to see which they believe to be most important and then identify ways in which you can develop and gain experience in them.

Volunteering provides you with an exciting opportunity to address a number of these areas and the Students' Union own 'transferable skills scheme' makes it clear what specific skills they have gained.



# Support

## Find a project that appeals to you

When making an enquiry into volunteering you will be asked to attend a meeting with the Activities Coordinator (Volunteering & Charity Fundraising). This meeting will enable us to ensure the opportunities you have shown interest are perfect for you.

When committing to a volunteer project, we expect you to treat the position as you would a job. As volunteers, you are invaluable to the people you are helping. Please make sure that you turn up on time, or inform someone if you can no longer attend. Please read emails carefully, and listen to instructions so you know what to expect and are aware of any health and safety regulations.

## Logging your volunteer hours

When volunteering, it's important that you log your hours so you can keep track of all the work you have done. It's easy to do and that way you can have an accurate account of the volunteering you've done.

You can receive four certificates:

**Bronze:** 50 hours voluntary work

**Silver:** 100 hours voluntary work

**Gold:** 200 hours voluntary work

**Platinum:** 400 hours voluntary work

Students who reach the platinum award will be invited to our prestigious annual Union Awards evening, here you will be presented with your award.

Logging volunteering hours couldn't be easier, if unsure how to log your hours please come in and speak to the Activities Coordinator (Volunteering and Charitable Fundraiser). Remember any activity where you are giving up your time not for profit can be counted as volunteering. Students on compulsory placements modules can not log their activities as volunteering due to it supporting your course.

## Volunteering rewards

To reward students for the work they are doing within the local community, we offer our volunteering bundles, within this bundle is a t-shirt, jumper, backpack, portable charger, water bottle and much more! You will be fully kitted out to volunteer at any activity you like while representing the union. If you would like to receive this bundle we are asking students to log 30 hours of community volunteering. Once you have logged this many community hours, pop down to the students office and speak to a member of the Student Activities team on how to get your kit! Be quick, we only have 50 bundles, so first come first serve!

## Volunteer Advice

We support volunteers through offering appointments with the Volunteer Coordinator at the Students' Union. These meetings will be arranged at a convenient time that suits you and can be booked in via email. By doing this volunteers will be able to access necessary support to make the most of the opportunities we offer and improving their graduate prospects. Get in touch by emailing: [volunteering@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:volunteering@bucks.ac.uk).



# Policies and guidance notes

## Executive summary

This policy will highlight the importance of volunteers to our organisation, the opportunities available and the rights you have as a volunteer. It can be used as a form of guidance for both students and staff, in their capacity as volunteers, when taking part in, or leading, voluntary activity. This largely covers information for student volunteers. External volunteers, in the shape of trustees, are largely covered in the Constitution.

## Policy

Central to our mission is the importance of being student led and having a positive impact for our members. We provide a range of services such as student activities, advice, events, representation and volunteering. We believe that fostering a culture of volunteerism is vital to securing those aims. Student volunteers enhance their graduate prospects through their involvement with us and the Students' Union itself is enhanced as a result of the credible voices that student volunteers provide for our Union and our objectives.

In addition to the benefits outlined above, as students, you can also:

- meet new people
- network with local organisations
- relieve stress
- develop personal skills
- improve relations with the community.

At Bucks Students' Union there are a number of voluntary roles. These include (but are not limited to);

- Community Volunteers
- Events (Ents) Volunteers
- Newsgroup
- Union Council
- Sports and Societies Committee Members
- Trustees.





# Policies and guidance notes

## Staff

The Activities Coordinator (Volunteering & Charity Fundraising) will provide information and guidance on all volunteer roles, maintain records of volunteers and projects and deliver over-arching administrative support for volunteers and staff. In addition to the Activities Coordinator (Volunteering & Charity Fundraising) a range of other Union staff are responsible for managing and overseeing the volunteers working in their own departments. These staff members are available to support students and attend to any concerns or problems that volunteers may experience.

## Induction and training

All volunteers will be asked to register on the volunteer portal when they undertake a new volunteering opportunity. Students' Union staff will then, depending on the role, give either a group training session or a one to one session, where a checklist is used to guarantee the volunteer is shown everything they need to know. This will include going over health and safety measures, meeting other staff and students, and a description of the role or task and its respective boundaries.

## Recruitment

Volunteers are recruited through a number of different mechanisms, with help from the Communications Team. Bucks Students' Union use posters, flyers, social media, the Bucks Students' Union website, the Bucks Student Newspaper and verbal presentations to recruit volunteers. Specific student groups are selected to receive presentations about certain volunteering opportunities. For example, Events management students will be given presentation on events specific volunteering opportunities.

The Students' Union rarely limits the number of volunteers it recruits for any one opportunity. In this instance the selection criteria will be made clear in advance and all unsuccessful candidates will be entitled to feedback in order to aid their personal development.

## Equality and diversity

Our aim is to create an environment that is welcoming and ensures no student is disadvantaged because of race, class, age, gender, religious belief, disability or sexual orientation. Volunteers will be recruited and selected without reference to any distinction that may be seen as discriminatory. For more information, please see the Students' Union Equality and Diversity Policy available on the Bucks Students' Union website.



# Policies and guidance notes

## Expenses

**Travel** - You can claim travel expenses for any journeys that are incurred as a result of your volunteering. For example, travel to and from the place you volunteer and any travel that is for the purpose of attending meetings or training with the Students' Union Volunteering team or the placement agency.

Please note that our funding is for projects and activities within our local area. Therefore, in most cases, we can only pay expenses for local travel within a 15 mile radius of the Bucks New University campuses. If this causes a problem please contact the Activities Coordinator (Volunteering & Charity Fundraising) before committing to a project.

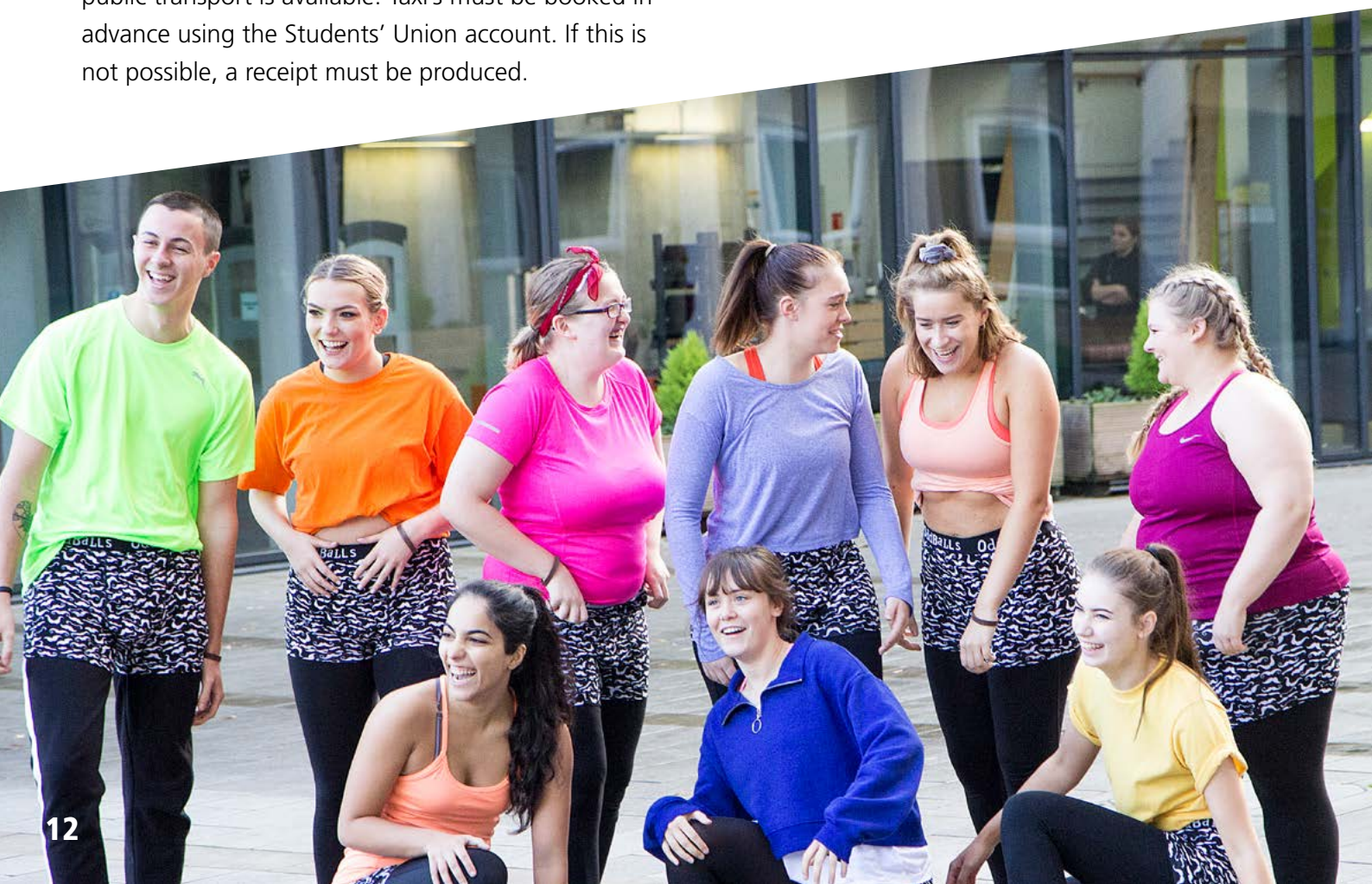
**Public Transport** - you must produce a receipt for the outbound and return journeys on public transport.

**Taxis** - Wheelchair users can claim for travel by taxi. Non-wheelchair users will be reimbursed for taxi fares when it is the only option of transport e.g. the volunteer is travelling alone late at night or no public transport is available. Taxi's must be booked in advance using the Students' Union account. If this is not possible, a receipt must be produced.

**Private car** - At the discretion of the students activities team, students may be allowed to claim back their mileage on their own cars paid back at 30p per mile. We have a duty of care to all our students, therefore you must provide a copy of your driving license, your insurance documents and your MOT certificate to the Students' Union before reimbursement can be issued. Distances will be calculated using Google maps.

**Mini-Bus** - Subject to availability the Students' Union minibuses can be used for volunteering activities. A minibus request form should be completed at least two weeks prior to the date of travel although we recommend you complete your form as soon as possible. The Students' Union will allocate buses on the basis of greatest need. Please be aware that on Wednesdays minibuses are in highest demand.

**Parking** - The Union will pay all reasonable parking charges but not fines. You need to produce a receipt for the expenses you claim and fill in an Expenses Claim form. These are available from the Students Union Offices.





# Policies and guidance notes

## Community Volunteering

Here at Bucks Students' Union, we offer both community volunteering opportunities and fundraising opportunities. These can be long or short term. Long term is usually a weekly position that the volunteer is expected to attend regularly and short term takes the form of a one day project with another organisation or with the Students' Union.

Examples of activities that can be undertaken:

- Short term - conservation work, regeneration project
- Long term - school liaison, mentoring, admin asst.
- Fundraising - collections, sports events, cake sales.

When working with an external organisation or the Student' Union, Volunteers have the right to;

- a safe environment
- receive proper induction from the organisation they are working with
- be covered by appropriate insurance
- have what is expected of them clearly explained
- know who they are working with and who is 'in charge' of their role, and to receive support and supervision from that person
- confidentiality
- be treated with respect
- have problems and difficulties listened to and have action taken
- say 'no' if they feel they have been asked to do something that isn't part of their role or that they feel is unacceptable for other reasons.

## International Volunteering

You will experience a true sense of community as a volunteer abroad while providing the opportunity to meet new people and accumulate life and career enhancing experiences and skills. Volunteering abroad can be one of the most rewarding, memorable experiences of your life. Here at Bucks Students' Union we also offer the unique option of an international volunteering grant to help you raise the funds for your trip. You will have the opportunity to travel and make a difference.

## Complaints and Procedures

The Students' Union take any complaint, whether small or large, very seriously. And have a complaints procedure in place. If you would like to make a formal complaint please go to **[bucksstudentsunion.org/constitution](https://bucksstudentsunion.org/constitution)** and fill out the form at the bottom of the page.

### Informal Complaints

An informal complaint must be received within 10 working days of the incident or event giving rise to the complaint. After this time the Students' Union will not consider the complaint unless there are special circumstances present. The complaint will be acknowledged within two working days of receipt. This confirmation should include deadlines by which an outcome will be communicated to the complainant, which should not exceed 15 working days.

### Formal Complaints

If it is a formal complaint the form will need to be submitted to: **[sucomplaints@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:sucomplaints@bucks.ac.uk)**

Receipt of formal complaint must be acknowledged with two working days of complaint. If the complaint is in relation to any staff member of the Union then the matter will be referred to the CEO.

If the complaint relates to the CEO and or the President, then the complaint will be handled by the longest serving external member of the trustee board.

For further information head to the Students' Union website under 'complaints and appeals Bye Laws'. You can also find information on this page about all the students Union Bye Laws and should be attentive to these when a member of Bucks Students' Union.

# Important information

## Further information

In addition to this Volunteer Policy the Union has a number of other policies that are relevant for volunteers. The summary below highlights these policies and where they can be found:

### Safeguarding Policy

Bucks Students' Union is committed to promoting the well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. This is detailed in our Safeguarding policy available on the Students' Union website [bucksstudentsunion.org/pageassets/union/policiesandresources/safeguarding\\_policy\(7\).pdf](https://bucksstudentsunion.org/pageassets/union/policiesandresources/safeguarding_policy(7).pdf).

### Health and Safety

The safety of our students is very important to us. This is detailed in our Health and Safety policy, available on the Students' Union website.

### Feedback

Bucks Students' Union strives for continuous improvement throughout all of its service departments, including volunteering. Volunteers will be encouraged to provide feedback at the end of every volunteer opportunity. The feedback form is also available on the Bucks Students' Union website volunteering page or pop in the office and ask for a form.

### Confidentiality

In supporting volunteers, we need to collect personal data so that we can contact them throughout the year. The access to this data is restricted to the Volunteering Department and senior managers of Bucks Students' Union, who will not pass on personal details without the volunteer's express consent.

### Risk Assessments

A risk assessment is written for every event or project organised by us. This enables the team to assess any hazards that could put the student at risk. Risk Assessments can be requested by email.

### References

Whilst volunteering with Bucks Students' Union, we encourage the volunteers to recognise and develop their transferable skills, in order to assist them when writing applications and going through an interview process. Volunteers are encouraged to discuss career options with staff from the Students' Union and through organised reflection sessions with the University Careers Service. Please contact our employability team [sujobs@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:sujobs@bucks.ac.uk) for a reference.

### Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) have merged into the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). CRB checks are now called DBS checks. If you are taking part in an activity that involves working with children and young people you will be expected to have a DBS. The DBS check searches your details against criminal records and other sources including the Police National Computer. The Union and its partners will make volunteer recruitment decisions on a case by case basis and in line with relevant policies and procedures.

When the project is external, the charity or organisation will be responsible for providing the application and covering the cost. These applications can take between ten days and four weeks to go through. When working with the Students' Union or the University, the Human Resources Department (HR) will provide the application and the department you are volunteering with will provide the payment.

For more information or details of other policies, please email [volunteering@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:volunteering@bucks.ac.uk).



# RAG (Raise and Give)

## What is RAG?

RAG stands for Raise and Give, and is the part of the Students' Union that helps students raise as much money as possible for charity while they're at university.

We focus on two local charities each year and our members pick them, so it is up to you who you fundraise for. Last year saw us bring in just over £4,700 which was split between The Julius Little Foundation and The Florence Nightingale Hospice. Although we concentrate greatly on these two charities, we also raise money for other local, national and international charities. Last year Bucks Students raised just over £18,500 overall.

RAG cannot succeed without the commitment of its volunteers and a team of students is needed every year to manage out fundraising events. These events allow students to raise money whilst having fun.

## Upcoming RAG events include:

RAG week Monday 25 - Friday 29 October

Dodgeball for RAG - Wednesday 27 October

Bucks Dance Competition - Saturday 19 February

RAG week part two Monday 21 - Friday 25 February

Bucks Cup - Wednesday 11 May

If you have an event you would like to run to raise money for another charity please email [surag@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:surag@bucks.ac.uk) or pop into the Students' Union and speak with a member of the student activities team. We will support you through the preparation, organisation, recruitment and marketing of the event.



# Contact details



## Tom Featherstone

Vice President Student Involvement

As Vice President of Student Involvement, Tom provides a voice for students around sports, societies, volunteering and Raise and Give, ensuring a better university experience.

**[tom.featherstone@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:tom.featherstone@bucks.ac.uk)**



## Jade Collis

Activities Coordinator (Volunteering & Charity Fundraising)

Jade is responsible for planning, managing and monitoring the organisation programme of student volunteering and charity fundraising, helping students build up the skills they are looking to gain, through giving back to the community.

**[jade.collis@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:jade.collis@bucks.ac.uk)**



## Catherine Lymer

Student Activities Manager

Catherine manages all aspects of student activities including organisation of sports, societies, volunteering and charity fundraising. The activities department also administer the use of the Minibuses.

**[catherine.lymer@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:catherine.lymer@bucks.ac.uk)**



## Matthew Kitching

Deputy CEO

Matthew is the senior member of staff with responsibility for volunteering, sports, societies, representation and advice. He also takes the lead on Students' Union retention initiatives such as the Freshers' Helper and Buddy schemes.

**[matthew.kitching@bucks.ac.uk](mailto:matthew.kitching@bucks.ac.uk)**



