“Everything you need to know about Volunteering”
2014

Where will your volunteering take you?
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1. Welcome and support available

The aim of this pack is to provide you with all the information you need to know to complete your volunteering as part of the Manchester Leadership Programme (MLP). Some of the information is about what will and will not count towards the MLP and some is in relation to your and others’ safety and welfare. Therefore it is really important that you read it before you start your volunteering.

The Volunteering and Community Engagement Team exists to help you get the most out of your volunteering experience as possible. We:

- source volunteer opportunities locally and point you in the right direction regarding regional, national and international opportunities;
- run events to help you find out more about volunteering opportunities and to give you the chance to get essential training to support your volunteering;
- work in partnership with community organisations to run challenges and projects to give you the opportunity to try out different types of volunteering, and
- mentor students who run their own projects.

Further information including the opportunity to browse hundreds of volunteering opportunities is on the volunteering pages of the University website:

www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers

If you have any questions about volunteering, you can attend Office Hours. This is a chance for you to have a one-to-one chat with us to discuss your specific query. There is no need to book. The sessions run every Monday 12:00-13:00 and every Wednesday 13:00-14:00 during term time in the Careers Centre in the Atrium of University Place.

Alternatively you can contact a member of the team directly:

Volunteering & Community Engagement Team
Student Development & Community Engagement Division
The University of Manchester
3rd Floor, University Place
Oxford Road
Manchester M13 9PL

volunteers@manchester.ac.uk

Telephone: 0161 275 2851.

Enjoy your volunteering!
2. What counts for my volunteering?

For the purposes of the MLP, a 'suitable' volunteering opportunity is an unpaid activity with a charity or not-for-profit organisation that directly benefits the wider community.

Paid activity (excluding out of pocket expenses), activity that already forms part of an accredited module (such as Career Management Skills) or unpaid work with a company, business or private organisation does not count.

Timing and previous volunteering

You need to complete your MLP volunteering between 1st June 2014 and 8th June 2015. However if you have completed any suitable volunteering in the recent past (between 1st Jan 2013 and 31st May 2014) you can count up to a maximum of a quarter of your hours\(^1\) from this volunteering experience. Please note that evidence is still required to confirm the volunteering has taken place (see p10).

Location

MLP aims to give something back to the local community. Therefore at least 15 hours\(^2\) of volunteering must be carried out in the North West of England or benefit the NW of England. The remainder can be completed elsewhere (both in the UK and overseas) as long as it meets the other criteria and the appropriate evidence can be collected.

Benefiting the wider community and Society activities

MLP aims to bring you into contact with and to have a positive impact on the wider community beyond campus. Therefore a maximum of a quarter of your hours\(^3\) only can be counted from certain volunteering where the main beneficiaries are other students. The opportunities that we count are:

- Nightline and other welfare roles
- PASS and Peer Mentoring
- Representation on staff/student liaison committees.

The organisation of social and sports opportunities for other students does not count as MLP volunteering.

Membership of societies or Halls of Residence Committees does not count, even where a committee position is held. Exceptions to this are:

- Volunteering with Student Action

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\(^1\) This means 15 hours for Gold Award, 10 hours for Silver Award and 5 hours for Bronze Award.

\(^2\) Students are expected to do the minimum of 15 hours to directly benefit North West England whether they are working to 20, 40 or 60 hours volunteering.
• Some RAG fundraising activities (See the RAG handout)
• Activities where society/committee members undertake a specific voluntary activity to benefit another charity or community group.

Training

We recognise that some volunteering requires you to be trained in order to be able to do the role. For training to be counted the following must apply:

• A **maximum of a quarter of volunteering hours** from a particular placement can be counted from training.
• The training must be essential for the role. Optional or elective training does not count towards hours for MLP. This includes the optional training offered by the MLP team.

AND

• You must complete your commitment to the organisation for the training to count. If training is completed and for any reason the role is then not undertaken the training hours do not count towards MLP.

Travel

Some volunteers give up significant extra time to travel to placements that are not so close to home. In these cases we will allow reasonable travel to be included:

• The volunteering must be at least one hour away in order for it to be counted (travelling in the most efficient way). Short journeys to and from volunteering are not eligible.
• A maximum of one hour can be counted for each volunteering occasion (i.e. return journey).
• A **maximum of a quarter of volunteering hours** from a particular placement can come from travel.

MLP Challenges

The Volunteering and Community Engagement Team run MLP Challenges throughout the year. They usually last a full day, or half a day, and involve doing a one-off piece of work as part of a team. The staff member responsible for a challenge will identify how many hours will be credited for each challenge. The hours counted will be those from the time the placement is reached to the time the placement finishes, plus relevant travel in line with the guidance above.

Whilst proposed timings will be published beforehand, the hours given will be based on the actual length of the challenge, not on the proposed estimate. If a challenge is cancelled for any reason hours will not be given. Students should therefore be aware that they may need to plan for more challenges/volunteering than the exact number of hours in case the challenges are shorter than expected or have to be cancelled unexpectedly.
Eligible hours summary:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Bronze (20 hours)</th>
<th>Silver (40 hours)</th>
<th>Gold (60 hours)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Location</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours that must be</td>
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<td><strong>Beneficiaries</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Max hours from</td>
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<td>activities listed</td>
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<td>are beneficiaries</td>
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<td><strong>Travel</strong></td>
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<td>15</td>
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</table>
3. How to find a volunteering opportunity

Volunteering is available in arrange of sectors such as:

- Environment and conservation
- Health
- Working with children and young people
- Working with vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, people who are homeless or older people
- Sport and leisure
- Arts, culture and media

Within these you can take on all sorts of different roles.

Finding Opportunities

There are five main ways in which you can find an opportunity:

1. You can browse hundreds of volunteering opportunities on the volunteering pages of the University website. These are all with organisations that have been checked out by the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team:

   Go to: www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers, click on ‘Find Voluntary Work’ and then on ‘Browse volunteering opportunities’.

2. If you can’t find an ideal opportunity or want to work with a specific community or not-for-profit group that is not registered with the University, you can source your own placement. Think about the organisations that you are interested in, look at their websites and see whether they have volunteering opportunities. You MUST register the placement with us BEFORE you start so that we are able to do the checks to ensure it is safe and confirm that it meets the criteria and therefore counts towards your MLP.

If you already volunteer you may be able to count this. Register the volunteering to check whether it meets the MLP criteria.

If you are finding it difficult to organise a volunteering opportunity the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team can offer you some advice and support.

Useful resources for organising your own volunteering activity:

Do it  www.do-it.org.uk
A UK-based volunteering database which allows you to find suitable opportunities by entering your postcode, client type, time you have available and even which days you want to volunteer.

Timebank  www.timebank.org.uk
A searchable database of volunteering opportunities and some great links for those interested in a bit more detail!
3. You can **be part of a Student-Community Partnership Project**. A number of opportunities currently exist:

Go to: [www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/volunteers), click on ‘Find Voluntary Work’ and then on ‘Student-led volunteering’.

4. **Take part in an MLP Challenge or Challenge Lite.** If you have never volunteered before, are unsure what you want to do or want to volunteer on an ad-hoc basis, an **MLP Challenge** is for you. The challenges are usually for a day or half day and involve doing a one-off piece of work as part of a team. Previous challenges have included painting community centres, environment project and stewarding for events. All challenges are advertised at: [www.manchester.ac.uk/mlp/volunteering/challenges.php](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/mlp/volunteering/challenges.php).

**Challenge Lites** are similar to Challenges, providing a one-off taster. However they are run independently of the University by one of our partner organisations. These often run at evenings or weekends so are great if you have a full timetable. Challenge Lites are advertised through an RSS Feed on the MLP Challenges page.

5. **Take part in a Challenge Project.** These are short term projects, usually lasting between three and six weeks. You will work as part of a small team to work towards a specific goal identified by an organisation. This could for example be organising an activity for a group of service users, running a campaign or managing a fundraising event.

**Contacting an organisation**

Organisations have different procedures for recruiting their volunteers. Some will just ask you to fill in a form or go along to have an informal chat, while for others you will have an interview. When approaching an organisation a good starting point is the Volunteer Manager or Co-ordinator. Many organisations will want to take up references. See p18 for help in making that first contact.

**Police checks**

If you are going to be working with children or vulnerable adults on a regular basis the organisation may undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service Check (DBS). Be aware that these can delay you starting your volunteering as they can take several weeks to come through. If you are an international student you may have to provide proof of good conduct from your own country. In some circumstances this may limit your involvement in certain placements. There is information on the Government website for every country on how to do this: [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants)

If you do have a criminal record, don’t just assume automatically that you will not be able to volunteer for an organisation. The organisation will be looking for information specific to the voluntary role, not for every misdemeanour. The best thing to do is to be honest from the start with the organisation.
4. How to register your volunteering

There are two processes you need to complete to ensure your hours are counted towards your MLP. Before you start you have to REGISTER – which is telling us what you intend to do. You will then need to CONFIRM – which is telling us what you have done.

You need to register both prior volunteering and planned volunteering. Please do this in plenty of time so that the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team have enough time to check your plans and let you know whether or not they meet the criteria. This could take up to one week.

Go to www.manchester.ac.uk/mlp/mymlp, put in your university username and password and once your account comes up click on ‘My Volunteering’.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If the volunteering is new or you are currently doing it:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>→ Click on ‘Register Proposed Volunteering’</td>
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</table>

A list of common organisations is listed. If you are volunteering with one of them:
- Click on the name of the relevant organisation.
- *Please ensure that you have the name, telephone number, email and address of your placement organiser / supervisor to hand.*
- Fill out the online form as accurately as possible.
- Hit the ‘Register’ button to register your volunteering.

If you are volunteering with an organisation that is not listed:
- Enter the name of the organisation in the text box under the list and click on ‘search’.
- A list of matching names will come up. If the correct organisation is listed please click on it.
- *Please ensure that you have the name, telephone number, email and address of your placement organiser / supervisor to hand.*
- Fill out the online form as accurately as possible.
- Hit the ‘Register’ button to register your volunteering.

If the organisation is still not listed, please click on the ‘Register a new organisation’ link.
- *Please ensure that you have the name, telephone number, email and address of your placement organiser / supervisor to hand.*
- Add the details of the organisation and click on ‘Register this organisation’ at the bottom of the page.
- Please note that this only registers the organisation into our database. You must register your volunteering as well by then clicking on the ‘Register proposed volunteering’ button.
- Fill out the online form as accurately as possible.
- Hit the ‘Register’ button to register your volunteering.

If the volunteering has already taken place:
- Click on the ‘Register some volunteering you did before starting MLP’. You will then need to follow the same instructions as above. However the system will recognise that these volunteering hours have already been completed and automatically show the hours as recorded as well (see next section on confirming volunteering for an explanation on recording hours).

The Volunteering and Community Engagement Team will be automatically notified that you have registered volunteering. They will contact you within one week to confirm whether the opportunity meets the criteria. If you are working with more than one organisation you need to register each opportunity separately.
5. How to confirm your volunteering

Confirming your volunteering is what you do when you have completed it to make sure the hours are counted towards your award. **You need to have registered your volunteering before it can be confirmed** (see the previous page on “How to Register your Volunteering”).

→ The first thing you need to do is to go to My MLP [www.mlp.manchester.ac.uk/mymlp](http://www.mlp.manchester.ac.uk/mymlp) and click on My Volunteering to record the hours you have completed.
→ Click on the role title of the volunteering you would like to **record some hours** for.
→ Once the details of that volunteering opens, click on the button to record some new hours towards this volunteering.
→ Put in the relevant dates and the number of hours you completed on those dates.
→ The MLP team will be notified that you have recorded some hours.

If this is prior volunteering that you had registered, the recording of your hours was done automatically at the time you registered them. However you still need to send the evidence as detailed below.

You then need to send the evidence which **confirms the hours** you have recorded.

There are three ways to do this:

(1) Ask the organisation to send us an **email** to volunteers@manchester.ac.uk. The email has to be from the organisation’s official e-mail address (i.e. not a Hotmail/Yahoo/AOL account) and needs to include:
   - Your volunteering role and the organisation you volunteered for.
   - The dates that you volunteered.
   - The number of hours that you volunteered for.
   They should send the email direct to the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team at volunteers@manchester.ac.uk rather than the student forwarding it on.

OR

(2) Provide a **letter from the organisation** that you volunteer(ed) for, stating the following:
   - Your volunteering role.
   - The dates that you volunteered.
   - The number of hours that you volunteered for.

   The letter needs to be on the organisation’s headed paper, with the relevant contact details and signed by your supervisor at the organisation.

OR

(3) Fill out and provide us with a **confirmation form**. There is one on the following page or download one from the ‘Confirming Volunteering’ section of the MLP website.

Print out and complete the form and get it signed by your supervisor at the organisation. Then hand it in to the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team. We then contact the organisation to confirm your hours before updating your account.
You can hand letters and confirmation forms to a member of the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team at an MLP lecture, hand them into the Atrium in the first floor of University Place or post them to:

Volunteering and Community Engagement Team,
3.206, University Place,
Oxford Road,
Manchester, M13 9PL.

The evidence will then be processed and added to your account online. This will confirm the hours that you recorded and show how many hours you have been awarded towards your Manchester Leadership Award. Please note that not all recorded hours will automatically be counted towards your Award because of the MLP criteria. The Awarded hours on My Volunteering shows those which meet the criteria and therefore will be counted.

You can access your Volunteering account at any time to keep track of the number of volunteering hours you have registered and confirmed and have been awarded at: www.manchester.ac.uk/mlp/mymlp.
6. MLP Volunteering Confirmation Form

Please print this form off as it needs to be signed by the contact person at your volunteering organisation. We will contact the organisation once we have received the form to check the details.

Student Name: _______________________________ Registration Number: __________________

Name of Volunteer Organisation: ______________________________________________________

Address of Volunteer Organisation: ___________________________________________________
                                         ___________________________________________________
                                         ___________________________________________________

Start date for this volunteering activity (dd/mm/yyyy): _________________________________

End date for this volunteering activity (dd/mm/yyyy): _________________________________

Total number of hours that you volunteered: ___________________________________________

Name of Organisation’s Representative: _______________________________________________

Representative’s telephone no: _______________________________________________________

Representative’s Email address: _______________________________________________________

Representative’s Signature: _________________________________________________________

Forms must be sent to:

Volunteering and Community Engagement Team,
3.206, University Place,
Oxford Road,
Manchester, M13 9PL.

If you have any queries, please email: volunteers@manchester.ac.uk
# 7. Volunteering - Rights & Responsibilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Student</th>
<th>Rights</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To confirm all details relating to the voluntary activity, including expenses, training, supervision, etc. with the organisation prior to starting the volunteering.</td>
<td>• To a free and professional service from the University’s Volunteering and Community Engagement Team to help them source appropriate volunteering opportunities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To understand and respect the policies and procedures of the host organisation.</td>
<td>• To efficient and timely responses from the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team in response to queries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To follow Health &amp; Safety requirements and instructions, and not endanger themselves or others during their volunteering either intentionally or through negligence.</td>
<td>• To a discrimination-free environment where reasonable adjustment has been made to make the placement accessible to all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To be reliable, behave professionally and respect the organisation’s staff, volunteers and clients.</td>
<td>• To a safe and healthy working environment whilst they are volunteering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To treat all information about staff, clients and the organisation’s work with confidentiality.</td>
<td>• To an induction from the organisation at the start of the placement to explain: health &amp; safety issues relating to the tasks or the place of work; relevant information about the opportunity, the host organisation and brief introductions to relevant staff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To fulfil the agreed commitment to the organisation, including hours required by the organisation, over and above hours needed for a Manchester Leadership Award.</td>
<td>• To a person at the organisation responsible for their support and supervision, with regular access to and supervision from this person.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To ensure the organisation is contacted with as much notice as possible if they are unable to volunteer as agreed.</td>
<td>• To volunteering expenses if agreed at the start of the placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To ensure the organisation is informed with as much notice as possible if the student no longer wishes to volunteer with the organisation.</td>
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<tr>
<th>The Host Organisation:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>Rights</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To ensure a safe and healthy working environment and have a duty of care for the students whilst they are volunteering with the organisation.</td>
<td>• That the student will fulfil the agreed commitment to the organisation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To comply with the University’s Health &amp; Safety requirements and fulfil all requests for related information.</td>
<td>• To review the volunteering work of any student volunteer and take appropriate action if necessary, including terminating the placement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To notify the University in the event of a safety related incident involving a student.</td>
<td>• To efficient and timely responses from the University’s Volunteering and Community Engagement Team in response to queries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To provide up-to-date and accurate information to the University’s Volunteering and Community Engagement Team regarding opportunities and changes to the status of the organisation so that records can be updated.</td>
<td>• That organisational policies and procedures will be respected and followed by the student volunteer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• To provide an induction to volunteers to explain: health &amp; safety issues relating to the tasks or the</td>
<td>• That all information shared with the student volunteer about staff, volunteers and clients will be kept confidential.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• That the organisation will be contacted with as much notice as possible by a student volunteer if</td>
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</table>
place of work; relevant information about the opportunity, the host organisation and brief introductions to relevant staff.

- To inform the volunteer of the person responsible for their support and supervision within the organisation and ensure regular access to and support from this person.
- To cover volunteering expenses incurred in connection with the voluntary activity, if stated when submitting the opportunity.
- To organise a Disclosure and Barring Service check where relevant to the voluntary position.
- To ensure students do not suffer any discrimination and that reasonable adjustments are made to ensure the opportunity is accessible to all. Where there are genuine and justifiable limitations linked to the opportunity these must be stated when submitting the opportunity.

they are unable to volunteer as agreed.
- That the organisation is informed by any students no longer wishing to volunteer with the organisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The University of Manchester:</th>
<th>Rights</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Responsibilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>To expect organisations to provide a safe and healthy environment for students to volunteer in, including the provision of requested information relating to health and safety.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To offer a free and professional service to not-for-profit organisations, to help them promote and develop appropriate opportunities for our students.</td>
<td><strong>To receive up-to-date and accurate information from organisations regarding opportunities and changes to the status of the organisation so that records can be updated.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To offer a free and professional service to students to help them source appropriate volunteering opportunities.</td>
<td><strong>To be notified by the host organisation in the event of a safety related incident involving a student volunteer.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To ensure organisations have completed the necessary documentation (Health &amp; Safety questions and insurance form) before opportunities are promoted to students.</td>
<td><strong>To remove placements from the database where health and safety information does not fulfil minimum requirements or where concerns have arisen about a placement, for example where discrimination has taken place.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As far as reasonably practical, to assess the suitability and safety of opportunities submitted by organisations.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To contact the organisations prior to the expiry of their Insurance Form to request the completion of a new form.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To respond to organisation and student queries as soon as reasonably possible.</td>
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**Mediation**

Students and/or the host organisation should make attempts to reconcile any problems between themselves. If this fails, the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team at the University can be contacted and asked to mediate. The University reserves the right to terminate the promotion of the opportunity if no agreement is reached, or if it has concerns relating to safety.
8. How to keep yourself safe

Whilst undertaking volunteering during the MLP, you may come into contact with people and situations which will be different from your usual campus life. Generally speaking, it should be a very safe experience. However, there are a number of steps you can take to maximise your personal safety, and the safety of those you come into contact with, whilst engaged in volunteering.

The volunteering opportunities which are offered via University initiatives like Manchester Museum, Widening Participation and the Sports Volunteers Scheme have been checked by the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team to assess any risks involved. Similarly, external organisations that are registered on the University volunteering website have completed health and safety checks. If you find your own volunteering placement, it is important that you register what you are going to do BEFORE you start your volunteering (see page 9).

You also have a responsibility for your own safety and it is therefore important that you consider the safety of any activities you undertake relating to your volunteering. If during the volunteering you have any concerns about safety, it is important that you talk to your organisation about them. If you feel you are unable to do this please contact the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team for further advice.

More information on how to do a risk assessment is available in the appendix.

Induction Checklist

When you start volunteering the organisation should provide you with an induction. This should include:

- Introduction to your supervisor/contact person and other relevant staff
- Explanation of your role, tasks and responsibilities
- Explanation of health & safety procedures including where the first aid box is, accident reporting and fire procedures
- Tour of the premises (if appropriate)
- Explanation of any relevant paperwork and systems you are required to complete
- Dress code
- Opportunity for discussion and training
- Any relevant training required to carry out the task

General safety tips

Every volunteering opportunity is different. However there are some general things you should keep in mind:

- Try to assess the overall risks you might encounter on your project, and plan how you can reduce or avoid these.
- If undertaking fundraising think about how you are going to keep the money you raise safe, including how you are going to safely transport it afterwards. Don’t put anyone in the group at risk by asking them to carry large amounts of cash on their own.
• If you are conducting a street survey or similar work off the University campus, ensure you work in pairs and are in a busy, public, well lit area.

• When in public places, take care of any valuable items, such as laptops. Make sure they are security marked and do not display them openly or leave them unattended.

• When going to meetings, focus groups or interviews connected with your volunteering make sure you don’t go alone if at all possible, and make sure that someone you trust knows where you are and when you will be back. Make sure that they know what to do and who to contact if you do not get back at the agreed time. Neutral, public meeting places may be safest unless you need to visit a specific place, e.g. the host organisation’s premises.

• Your volunteering activity will, as a rule, not require you to visit people in their homes. Any exceptions to this are where we have previous agreement from the host organisation and a member of their staff should accompany you on the first visit. If you are asked to do this without being accompanied, you must notify the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team before doing so.

• When travelling to unfamiliar places in connection with your volunteering, ensure you plan your route in advance, have the bus times and print off maps if required. If you are still unsure, don’t be afraid to ask directions from your volunteer host or venue that you are going to.

• Avoid confrontational situations – it is better to focus on your safety if you are being provoked or hassled. Move to a public area, and if necessary ask for help.

Volunteering from an organisation’s premises

• When visiting or volunteering from an organisation’s premises, you must follow any safety instructions you are given by them.

• If you will be volunteering from the organisation’s premises, they should provide you with a health & safety induction when you first start. If this is not done get in touch with the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team. The health & safety induction should cover:
  o Their general safety policy and procedures
  o Procedures to be adopted in the event of a emergency
  o Emergency evacuation, location of fire exits
  o Procedures for accidents/first aid
  o General security at the premises

• Don’t be afraid to ask questions if the induction does not clearly explain all these areas.

• If any of your volunteer activities involve working with machinery, hazardous substances or similar, this must have been part of the original volunteer opportunity description, and the organisation must provide training. You must not undertake this activity unless they have provided this and you feel safe and competent to do this work.

• Always think about what you are doing and how safe it is. Make sure you consider the safety of others as well as yourself so that you don’t endanger the people you volunteer with, whether staff of the organisation, the public or other volunteers.
Issues and concerns

- What to do if...

You have general concerns about your safety during a volunteering activity

If you have concerns about your safety stop doing the activity. You must notify a member of the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team as soon as possible to discuss the concerns, so that appropriate action may be taken. Whilst the volunteering is an essential element of the MLP, you are not expected to volunteer in a dangerous environment and we take steps to assess the safety of each project.

An incident occurs whilst you are volunteering

If something serious happens whilst you are volunteering relating to your personal security/safety, you should notify one or more of the following people (as appropriate) immediately:

- In an emergency: The Police, Fire or Ambulance services (dial 999).

- University Security (0161 306 9966) if the incident is on the university campus.

You should also notify your supervisor within the organisation and the Volunteering and Community Engagement Team as soon as possible.

Further information

The following websites provide additional information about personal safety:

- British Council information for International Students:  

- Suzy Lamplugh Trust 
  [www.suzylamplugh.org](http://www.suzylamplugh.org)
Students often report that they find it difficult to know how to make the first contact with organisations. Below are some sample emails that you can use as a starting point for contacting organisations.

**Initial email to an organisation regarding an opportunity advertised on the University volunteering database:**

Dear

I am a student at The University of Manchester and have seen the *(insert opportunity name)* volunteering opportunity you have advertised on the University’s volunteering website. I would be interested in volunteering with your organisation in this role.

Would it therefore be possible to have some more information sent to me or to have a chat with someone about the role? My contact details are: *(insert name, email address, phone number etc).*

Best wishes

**Initial email to an organisation not advertised but that you are interested in volunteering for:**

Dear

I am a student at The University of Manchester and am looking for some volunteering to do within the local community. I am particularly interested in the work that *(insert organisation name)* does as this is an area I have a real interest in. *(Put any details of work you have done in this area, for example if it fits with your degree subject or information on why you are particularly interested in this area).* I have previously volunteered with *(insert details of any previous volunteering).*

I would be grateful if someone can contact me to discuss any opportunities that you currently have. My contact details are: *(insert name, email address, phone number etc).*

Best wishes
Whilst volunteers do not get paid for what they do, in many cases out of pocket expenses are covered. This may include items such as travel, food if the volunteering is over several hours, postage and phone calls or pieces of equipment that may need to be purchased.

There may be limits on the amount that can be spent so make sure you are aware of these. For example, the expenses policy of your organisation may identify that travel must be by the cheapest reasonable form of public transport or there may be a maximum amount they will pay for mileage.

It is likely that the organisation will only cover actual expenses and that you will have to provide the tickets and receipts in order to be reimbursed. Make sure you always get a receipt or keep the ticket so that you can claim. Out of pocket expenses should not affect any state benefits but any money over and above this will be regarded as income by HM Revenue and Customs and is therefore taxable. This affects benefits as well as affecting a person’s status as a volunteer.

When you start volunteering for an organisation find out what the volunteer expenses policy is including what you can claim for and how to claim. Some organisations will have a simple claim form and you will nearly always have to give them the receipts and tickets for their records. Don’t be embarrassed by asking – remember you are giving your time but it is not expected that volunteering will cost you money. Some organisations will be able to pay you in cash almost immediately. Others may give you a cheque and some may transfer the money directly into your bank account.

Some volunteers may feel that they do not need or even should not be offered expenses and they may make the personal choice to not claim or to return the expenses as a donation. However there should be no stigma attached to claiming expenses, as it is a way of making sure that volunteering is open and accessible to everyone, regardless of their financial circumstances.
Volunteering is a fantastic way for you to get something out of your university experience and give something back to the community that is your home as a student. However volunteering is more than just the ‘feel-good factor’ as it can open doors to future careers through the experiences it gives. It is therefore worth spending some time at the start thinking about what you want to gain from your volunteering.

Some careers rely on experience which can be directly sought through volunteering. This includes work in sectors such as youth work, charities, social care and the environment. For other possible future careers volunteering can give you experience of roles, albeit in a different sector. For example, volunteering opportunities exist in marketing, IT and administration.

For all future careers volunteering gives you a range of transferable key skills. These may include:

- Team work
- Event planning
- Experience of working with a variety of different people, communities and cultures
- Project management
- Use of initiative
- Time management
- People management

As well as enhancing your CV in this way volunteering demonstrates to potential employers that you are a socially responsible person who can show commitment (even without financial motivation). It also gives you something to talk about with confidence in an interview. The next two pages will help you think about those skills that you have gained in order to prepare for these discussions.

If you haven’t decided on a future career yet volunteering allows you to experience a range of different job roles. This can give you an insight into different professions and sectors to help you become more aware of what motivates you and which direction you want your career to take after University. It is also a great opportunity to expand your networks. Who you meet during your placement may open all sorts of doors in the future regarding your career.
12. Summary of Volunteering Achievement

This template will help you reflect on the volunteering you have done. Instead of just listing the activities you have taken part in it encourages you to think from the perspective of what knowledge you have gained and what skills you have developed. It is a useful document that helps you think how your volunteering has improved your employability which will then help you demonstrate your skills to potential employers.

What communication skills have I used during my volunteering and how have these developed?
(For example, writing letters, delivering a presentation, running a briefing or debriefing session)

How have I worked with others during my volunteering and how have my team work skills developed as a result?

What planning have I undertaken?
When have I undertaken problem solving and what skills did I use to resolve these issues? (For example, resolving technical issues, managing conflict or a dispute, balancing conflicting needs)

What leadership skills have I used during my volunteering and how have these developed? What qualities and attributes defined this leadership role?

What time management skills have I used during my volunteering?

What organisational skills have I used during my volunteering and how have these developed?
Appendix - How to do a Risk Assessment

Introduction

The organisation you are volunteering with should complete a risk assessment on the activity that you will be involved in. If you are organising an event or activity yourself on behalf of an organisation or as part of a student-led project you MUST complete a risk assessment as you have responsibility for ensuring your event is safe.

When to conduct a risk assessment

When you have some firm ideas about what kind of activity you will be running, you should start thinking about any potential risks that might go with it, and whether your event will be sensible and safe. When you have a clear plan about what your event/activity will be and where it will take place, you should start being more specific and conduct a risk assessment.

A risk assessment helps you to systematically think through the various hazards which might create an accident. It helps you to list which are more serious or more likely, and work out which ones, if any, you need to do something about.

How to complete a risk assessment

Enclosed are both an example and a blank template of a risk assessment form, with detailed notes. Please note this is an example only and your own risk assessment will differ as your event/activity and location will be different. You must make sure that you consider all the different aspects listed below and that you have a written record showing your risk assessment. Use a separate line for each hazard you identify.

Hazard Description
This is a description of the thing you think may be a problem. This could be a danger with the venue such as a trip hazard, injuries resulting from the activity or anything that could go wrong. There is no specific list for this so you need to think of what could happen when you run your event. Try to be as specific as possible as this will help you think of any solutions.

Who is affected
Think about which group of people might be affected by the hazard, e.g. your student group, people attending the event or involved in the activity, members of the public etc.

Existing controls
List what measures are currently in place for the hazard. At many venues they will have considered some of these risks already, as they are typical for what the venue is usually used for. For example, fire evacuation procedures will already have been set up for many venues – make sure you check what these are.

Probability
This is the likelihood of the hazard occurring. This can be rated as 1 (unlikely) to 3 (highly likely).
Severity
This is how serious the hazard would be if it happened. This can be rated 1 (insignificant) to 3 (very serious consequences). For example, fire would be rated as 3.

Risk Rating
Multiply the probability and the severity to obtain an overall risk factor, which will identify the hazards you need to address:

<table>
<thead>
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<tr>
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<td>High risk (6)</td>
<td>Very high risk (9)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Action Plan
If any hazards associated with your event or activity are high risk or very high risk, you MUST do something about reducing those risks. The event or activity must not go ahead until those risks are reduced. If you uncover any medium risks you should also put actions in place to reduce those risks.

Actions could include:
- Removing or blocking off the hazard (e.g. removing trailing cables, blocking access onto a stage).
- Minimising it in the best way possible, or highlighting the hazard to attendees (e.g. taping down trailing cables which can’t be moved, or a sign saying 'mind the step').

Dynamic risk assessments
During our everyday life we conduct dynamic risk assessments all the time, often without realising it. These are risks which change constantly and so are impossible to plan perfectly and document.

An example is crossing the road: by checking for traffic we assess the probability of a car hitting us, whilst also assessing the severity of a possible collision. These situations change every time we cross the road.
Everyone has the responsibility to use this type of assessment during their volunteering rather than always relying on someone else to check that an activity is safe. For example, before conducting a street survey you should assess the overall risk presented by the locality you are working in, the exact place, time of day and presence of members of the public.

**What to do after your risk assessment**

If serious risks emerge from your risk assessment you may have to consider changing your plans, either in the type of activity you are planning or the venue you use or even cancelling the event or activity altogether. If you are satisfied that you have addressed or minimised the risks involved and wish to continue with the activity, then you should also take the following steps:

- Communicate your findings to all relevant individuals, e.g. venue staff, host organisation.
- Agree with all relevant individuals what to do in the event that one of the risks happens, how you will manage attendees, liaise with venue staff etc. Remember also the information above on who to contact if an incident occurs.
- Keep a written copy of your risk assessment, and review it if any changes are made to your plans.
### Sample Risk Assessment Form

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date: (1)</th>
<th>5/6/13</th>
<th>Assessed by: (2)</th>
<th>Fred Bloggs</th>
<th>Checked / Validated* by: (3)</th>
<th>John Smith</th>
<th>Location: (4)</th>
<th>Red Lion pub, upstairs room</th>
<th>Review date: (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

#### Task / premises: (6)
Charity Fundraiser Event: Student Fashion Show, 6/6/13

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity (7)</th>
<th>Hazard (8)</th>
<th>Who might be harmed and how (9)</th>
<th>Existing measures to control risk (10)</th>
<th>Probability (A) (1-3) (11)</th>
<th>Severity (B) (1-3) (12)</th>
<th>AxB=Risk Rating (13)</th>
<th>Result (14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Tripping on light cables in front of catwalk area</td>
<td>Show attendees, volunteers</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Electric shock from lighting equipment we sourced for the show.</td>
<td>Attendees, student group, student models</td>
<td>Have been PAT tested</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>Fires</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Venue has fire extinguishers, clearly marked emergency exits and evacuation procedure</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catwalk show</td>
<td>Trips</td>
<td>Models and host</td>
<td>Using joined tables which are clear of debris, stable and not slippery underfoot</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>Broken glass in bar area</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Venue issues only plastic glasses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drinks</td>
<td>Drunken behaviour</td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Venue staff on hand and are trained to deal with threatening/violent behaviour of any attendees</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Watching show</td>
<td>Overcrowding</td>
<td>Attendees</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Result**: $T =$ trivial, $A =$ adequately controlled, $N =$ not adequately controlled, action required, $U =$ unknown risk
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref No</th>
<th>Further action required</th>
<th>Action by whom</th>
<th>Action by when</th>
<th>Done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Taping down of all cables before the show</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Before start of show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Double check equipment is all tested and in good condition when it is delivered</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Day before show</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Check emergency exits haven’t been blocked during show set up</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Before show starts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Ensure catwalk properly set up and stable</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Before show starts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monitor use of glasses. Speak to bar if necessary.</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>During show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Monitor behaviour of attendees. Act when necessary.</td>
<td>Bar staff</td>
<td>During show</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Discuss with venue staff what safe numbers are and ensure only appropriate number of tickets are available. Ensure no entry without ticket.</td>
<td>Fred</td>
<td>Before tickets go on sale.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Risk Assessment Form

### Table:

<table>
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<th>Activity (7)</th>
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</tbody>
</table>

### Result:

- **T**: trivial
- **A**: adequately controlled
- **N**: not adequately controlled, action required
- **U**: unknown risk
### Action plan (15)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ref No</th>
<th>Further action required</th>
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</table>
Detailed Notes to accompany Risk Assessment Form

(1) **Date**: Insert date that assessment form is completed. The assessment must be valid on that day, and subsequent days, unless circumstances change and amendments are necessary.

(2) **Assessed by**: Insert the name and signature of the assessor.

(3) **Checked by**: Insert the name and signature of someone in a position to check that the assessment has been carried out by a competent person who can identify hazards and assess risk, and that the control measures are reasonable and in place. The checker will normally be a line manager, supervisor, principal investigator, etc. Checking will be appropriate for most risk assessments.

(4) **Location**: Insert details of the exact location, i.e. building, floor, room etc.

(5) **Review date**: Insert details of when the assessment will be reviewed as a matter of routine. Note that any assessment must be reviewed if there are any significant changes – to the work activity, the vicinity, the people exposed to the risk etc.

(6) **Task / premises**: Insert a brief summary of the task, e.g. the fundraising activity, lifting and moving small objects, use of electrical equipment.

(7) **Activity**: Use the column to describe each separate activity covered by the assessment.

(8) **Hazard**: For each activity, list the hazards. Remember to look at hazards that are not immediately obvious. The same activity might well have several hazards associated with it.

(9) **Who might be harmed and how**: Insert everyone who might be affected by the activity and specify groups particularly at risk. Remember those who are not immediately involved in the activity, for example anyone else using the venue. Vulnerable groups could include children or those with known disabilities or health conditions (this is not a definitive list).

For each group, describe how harm might come about, e.g. an obstruction or wet patch on an exit route is a hazard that might cause a trip and fall; or use of electrical equipment might give rise to a risk of electric shock.

(10) **Existing measures to control the risk**: List all measures that already reduce the risk. Many of these will have been implemented for other reasons, but should nevertheless be recognised as means of controlling risk. Controls might also include use of qualified and/or experienced staff who are competent to carry out certain tasks; an action plan might include training requirements for other people who will be carrying out those tasks.

(11) **Probability**: This is the likelihood of the hazard occurring. This can be rated as 1 (unlikely) to 3 (highly likely).

(12) **Severity**: This is how serious the hazard would be if it happened. This can be rated 1 (insignificant) to 3 (very serious consequences). For example, fire would be rated as 3.
(13) **Risk Rating:** Multiply the probability and the severity to obtain an overall risk factor, which will give you an indication of the hazards you need to address.

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(14) **Result:** this stage of assessment is often overlooked, but is probably the most important. Assigning a number or rating to a risk does not mean that the risk is necessarily adequately controlled. The options for this column are:

- **T = trivial risk.** Use for very low risk activities to show that you have correctly identified a hazard, but that in the particular circumstances, the risk is insignificant.

- **A = adequately controlled, no further action necessary.** If your control measures lead you to conclude that the risk is low, then insert A in this column.

- **N = not adequately controlled, actions required.** Sometimes the risk assessment might identify that the risk is high or medium when it is capable of being reduced by methods that are reasonably practicable. In these cases, an action plan is required. The plan should list the actions necessary, who they are to be carried out by, a date for completing the actions, and a signature box for the assessor to sign off that the action(s) has been satisfactorily completed. Some action plans will be complex documents; others may be one or two actions that can be completed with a short timescale.

- **U = unable to decide. Further information required.** Use this designation if you are unable to complete any of the boxes, for any reason. Sometimes, additional information can be obtained readily but it is important to get support for example from your project mentor if you cannot determine the risk.

For T and A results, the assessment is complete. For N or U results, you need to take action.

(15) **Action Plan.** Include details of any actions necessary in order to meet the requirements of the information in Section 10 ‘Existing measures to control the risk’. Identify someone who will be responsible for ensuring the action is taken and the date by which this should be completed. Put the date when the action has been completed in the final column.