Volunteer Guide

2017 – 2018
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What is volunteering?

Being a volunteer, for whatever purpose, is commendable, rewarding and worthwhile. It is an act of service towards one’s community or the environment.

What can you do?

At DCU we have a wide variety of volunteer opportunities on and off campus. Whatever your interests, skills or abilities – there is something for you!

Volunteering is the practice of giving your time and energy for the benefit of other people without being motivated by financial or material gain.
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.

MARGARET MEAD

Why volunteer?

The benefits of volunteering are enormous to you, and your local and international communities. It is a give and gain relationship that can benefit you just as much as the organisation, cause & people you choose to help. Volunteering is an opportunity to build your own personal skills and knowledge while contributing to the capacity of community.

You can Give:
– Something back to your local, student & international communities.
– Your free time to do something you care about and enjoy.
– Your skills, enthusiasm and expertise to help other people or the environment.
– Your energy to make a positive contribution to society.
– Inspiration to others with your enthusiasm and commitment.

You can Gain:
– A platform for meeting new people and developing long lasting friendships.
– An opportunity to do something you love and enjoy.
– Self-confidence and a sense of fulfilment by doing something worthwhile.
– Key transferable skills such as communication, leadership, initiative taking, teamwork, creativity and time management to name but a few.
– Work experience, training and skills which will improve your CV and future career perspectives.
– Satisfaction from giving back to your community and making a real difference to people’s lives.
– Academic credits by way of the Uaneen Module.

See: www.dcu.ie/uanee
The best way to volunteer is to select a not-for-profit organisation, society or cause whose mission complements your interests.

Getting involved

Who can Volunteer?
Absolutely Everyone!

Volunteer recruitment and selection
Volunteers are recruited proactively through the medium of DCU Clubs & Socs, DCU Volunteering website Student Volunteer -www.studentvolunteer.ie/dcu, the Volunteer Fair, posters, leaflets, internal emails and other targeted means.

Other alternatives include flexible volunteer opportunities, once off or group volunteering events that all are welcome to! Stay up to date by linking with us on social media;

- www.facebook.com/dcuvolunteer
- @DCUVolunteer
- dcvolunteer
- www.linkedin.com/company/dcu-volunteer
- volunteercdu

The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment is the suitability to perform a specified task or role outlined by the organisation and satisfactory references/background check, if necessary.

What to consider before you start Volunteering?
Your Motivation: Think about why you want to volunteer, what you would like to do and what causes you are passionate about that you wish to support.

Ask yourself if there is something specific you want to do.
For example, do I want...
- to improve the quality of life in the community where I live
- to meet people from different cultures and backgrounds
- to try something new
- to do something with my spare time
- to see a different way of life and new places
- to gain experience in the profession that I seek to enter upon graduation
- to expand my knowledge and experience within my hobbies and interests
- to further develop my talents and gifts in certain areas

The best way to volunteer is to select a not-for-profit organisation, society or cause whose mission complements your interests. Having answers to these questions will help you narrow down your search.

**Your Time**

This is important! You need to think about how much time you want to spend volunteering and how long you are able to commit for, as some organisations require a minimum time commitment for specific roles. However, volunteers are always in demand and there are multiple routes available to you – do what you can!

**Garda Vetting**

If your role will involve regular contact with children (under 18) or vulnerable adults (e.g. older persons or people with disabilities) you will need to be Garda Vetted before you start. Garda Vetting, now an online e-vetting process by An Garda Síochána Vetting Office, gives a statement on whether a person has had any convictions – pending or completed – recorded against their name.

Your volunteering organisation will arrange your Garda Vetting for you, contact them directly to confirm if your role requires vetting or not.
As a volunteer, you will be given meaningful and important work to do.

**Volunteer rights and responsibilities**

As a Volunteer you have the following rights:

- To know if, & how, you are being selected for a volunteering role.
- To be provided with a volunteering role and performance expectations.
- To be given meaningful work to do.
- To be offered appropriate training.
- To be thanked and recognised for your contributions.
- To receive supervision and support.
- To get something out of the work for yourself as per your own aims and objectives.
- To be given reasonable notice if there is a change in schedule.
- To know who to go to should a problem arise.
- To make mistakes and learn from them.
- To be made aware of complaint and grievance procedures.
- To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred when volunteering, if possible.
- To be treated fairly and not to experience any form of discrimination.
- To have safe working conditions.
- To be made aware of how issues or difficulties will be dealt with.
- To be informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in the organisation as a whole.
- To be able to say ‘no’ and to leave without feeling guilty.
As a Volunteer you are responsible for the following:

- To respect the values and aims of the organisation.
- To be committed and honest in all your dealings with the organisation you serve.
- To be reliable and punctual, and give the organisation sufficient warning if unable to honour your commitment.
- To carry out the prescribed volunteer duties to the best of your ability.
- To comply with the relevant policies and procedures as laid out by the organisation you work for e.g. Code of Conduct, Health and Safety, etc.
- To respect the confidentiality of the organisation and associated persons/clients.
- To attend essential training and support sessions.
- To undertake the work to a high standard.
- To inform the volunteer project manager if any difficulties should arise.
- To give advanced notice to the volunteer project if you intend to leave.

This information has been adapted from the Volunteer Ireland’s Charter for Effective Volunteering.
Volunteering is an opportunity to build your own personal skills and knowledge while contributing to the capacity of community.
Volunteering is an opportunity to build personal skills while contributing to the community.
Where to start: Selected DCU societies

1  St Vincent de Paul  
St Vincent de Paul (SVP) society at DCU organises various activities on campus throughout the year, including weekly soup runs for the homeless, youth projects, tuition programs in the local area, societal events including SVP Jailbreak and 24Hour Sleep Out. Contact: dcusvp@gmail.com

2  Suas  
Suas Society is a youth and education – focused organisation, which facilitates young people to address educational disadvantage at home and overseas. Their main objective is to raise awareness, fundraise and give its members a chance to volunteer in Ireland and overseas. Contact: dcu.suassoc@gmail.com

3  Amnesty International  
DCU Amnesty International society is part of global movement of more than 3.2 million people working in more than 150 countries around the world for the protection of fundamental human rights. Contact: dcuamnesty@gmail.com

4  Enactus  
Enactus works with leaders in business and higher education to mobilise university students to make a positive difference with their communities while developing the skills to become socially responsible business leaders. Contact: enactusdcu@gmail.com

5  Raising and Giving (RAG)  
RAG helps students get out there and volunteer doing something they enjoy – if you like GAA, get out and volunteer to teach kids hurling and football, if you love arts and crafts, help out at afterschool programmes for local kids or come paint the community hall, if you enjoy food, volunteer at our cooking lessons in the nearby schools. Contact: dcurag@gmail.com

6  Global Brigades  
Global Brigades DCU is part of the world’s largest student-led global health and sustainable development organization. They have a list of programmes from which you can choose. Contact: dcu@globalbrigades.org
The benefits of volunteering are enormous to you, and your local and international communities.
Being a volunteer, for whatever purpose, is commendable, rewarding and worthwhile.
DCU volunteering resources

1 DCU Volunteer Website and Network
   The DCU Volunteer web page is packed with useful tips and volunteer opportunities: www.dcu.ie/volunteer. Also see our Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat accounts for further information.
   If you find something you like, you can contact the organisation directly about a specific role and wait for them to contact you. Alternatively, you can email the DCU Volunteering team who will help you find an opportunity that interests you.

2 DCU in the Community
   The function of DCU in the Community is to provide a central co-ordinating point for DCU Students and community organisations. The Student Volunteer Coordinator acts as a bridge between the student population and the local community as well as voluntary organisations and charities seeking volunteers.
   Contact: Ruth Lynam
   Student Volunteer Coordinator
   ruth.lynam@dcu.ie

3 DCU Volunteer Fair 2017
   DCU is offering a unique opportunity for staff & students to meet with local, national & international volunteer organisations to learn first-hand how they can make a difference through volunteering.
   Features of the day include an opportunity to:
   – Meet face to face with representatives from over 50 voluntary organisations.
   – Learn from current volunteers how rewarding life as a volunteer can be.
   – Gain valuable tips on how volunteering can help you develop the confidence & skills which are increasingly in demand by employers.

   The Volunteer Fair will take place on Thursday the 28th of September from 11:00am – 4:00pm in DCU Sports Hall
National and international volunteering resources

1 StudentVolunteer.ie
StudentVolunteer.ie is a brand new national volunteering database, created specifically for higher education students by Campus Engage. This new initiative is an easy and hassle-free way to connect students with volunteering organisations and their opportunities. This initiative acknowledges and celebrates the contribution that student volunteers make to society.
To get started, you can register on the Campus Engage – Student Volunteer website: www.studentvolunteer.ie using your mobile, laptop or tablet.
Once registered you can:
– browse & apply for one-off & long-term volunteering opportunities near you
– track your volunteering hours and receive certificates

showcasing your work
– get updates on volunteering opportunities that might interest you
– connect with local and national community based organisations
– access useful resources on student volunteering

2 Volunteer Ireland
The focus of Volunteer Ireland is to create an enabling environment for volunteering, to develop an ethos of volunteerism across all sectors of society and to be an independent and legitimate voice for volunteering. There are currently 23 centres across the country all with fantastic volunteering opportunities in need of the right person – it could be you!
3 Comhlámh

Comhlámh is a member and supporter organisation open to anyone interested in social justice, human rights and global development issues. It provides advice and support for people interested in volunteering overseas.

For further information, visit their website: comhlamh.org or find a placement on Facebook or Twitter using #VolOps

4 VSO Ireland – Voluntary Service Overseas

VSO’s work revolves around four development areas; health, HIV and AIDS, participation and governance, secure livelihoods and education. As a VSO volunteer, you’ll live and work alongside local professionals, helping improve the quality of life for people who need it most. “You’ll change lives – including your own.” Take the first steps towards volunteering with VSO today. For further information, visit their website: www.vso.ie
Tips on how to be a great volunteer

- Be open, non-judgemental and respectful to others.
- Be committed to your programme and those you are serving.
- Be discreet and well-informed.
- Be reliable and honest.
- Be personable and courteous.
- Be a good communicator. Listen. You must first be a good listener before you can be a good communicator.
- Do not hesitate to ask if you have any questions or seek support if you have any difficulties.
- Don’t be shy. You are doing a great thing and people will respect you for it!