

Volunteering Guidance for International Students

As an international student on a visa you can undertake volunteering whilst you are studying, but it may count towards your work allowance.

Please see the UWE Visa and Immigration advice on Working During Your Studies for further information.

Roles that are classed as 'Voluntary/Unpaid work' will count towards your work allowance.

Voluntary/Unpaid Work:

- Voluntary workers will usually have contractual obligations to perform the work (e.g. to attend at particular times and carry out specific tasks)
- The employer is typically contractually required to provide the work (contract does not have to be written)
- The worker may be remunerated in kind (given something of monetary value in exchange for the work they are doing e.g. working for nothing but getting free room and board).

Roles that are classed as 'Volunteering' will not count towards your work allowance. You can volunteer without limitation, inside or outside term time.

Volunteering:

- Volunteers usually help a charity or public sector organisation
- Volunteers do not have a contract (written or otherwise)
- Volunteers can be reimbursed reasonable travel or food (subsistence expenses) but should not receive any financial reward or benefits in kind with a monetary value
- Volunteers are not obliged to turn up for work (even if they generally work to a regular pattern)
- Organisations cannot impose sanctions for failure of a volunteer to do agreed work.

You should always check with the organisation which offers you a volunteering opportunity whether it could be regarded as voluntary/unpaid work.

If you have further queries about volunteering during your studies or any other aspect of immigration, Immigration Advisers can be contacted for appointments and advice by email immigrationadvice@uwe.ac.uk or by telephone: +44 (0)117 328 3871 (Monday/Wednesday/Friday 09:00–12:00). You can also book an appointment through InfoHub at [Appointments](#).