



Ollscoil Chathair  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City University



# Volunteer Guide 2021 - 2022



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## What is volunteering?

Volunteering impacts positively on society, on communities and on the people who live in those communities. Whether formal or informal, organised or spontaneous, volunteering is about civic engagement and active participation in shaping the society we want to be part of.

### 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 and the environment. To put it simply volunteering is doing more than you have to, because you want to, because you care.

It is about being an active citizen, a change-maker and innovative individual whose aim is to make the world a better place in any way they can.

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.

### You can Give:

- Your free time to do something you care about and enjoy
- Something back to your local, student and international communities
- 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
- 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 in assignments and modules e.g. Uaneen
- Contributions towards the DCU Engage Award which recognises students extra-curricular activities

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?

Everyone!

### How do you get involved?

At DCU, there are a number of ways in which you can start volunteering, depending on **your own interests, time and talents**. Working with civic clubs and societies of DCU, selecting a community organisation you'd like to work with or just helping out wherever you can are all options. Other alternatives include flexible volunteer opportunities, once off volunteering events and virtual volunteering.

Take a look at our social media and website to see what's on offer:

[f /dcuvolunteer](#)  
[t @DCUVolunteer](#)  
[i dcuvolunteer](#)  
[dcu.ie/volunteer](http://dcu.ie/volunteer)  
[StudentVolunteer.ie/dcu](http://StudentVolunteer.ie/dcu)

### 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.

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 worthwhile 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 skills and talents 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 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.

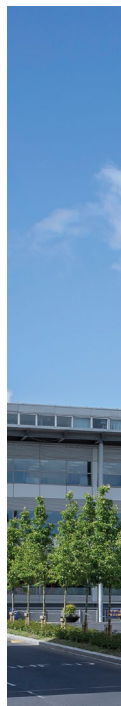


# As a volunteer, you will be given meaningful and important work to do.

## Volunteer rights and responsibilities

As a Volunteer you have the following **rights**:

- To be provided with a role description and performance expectations
- To be given meaningful work to do
- To be offered appropriate training
- To make mistakes and learn from them
- To have safe working conditions
- To be treated fairly by those you are working with, including community partners
- To receive support and supervision
- To know who to go to should a problem arise
- To be recognised for your contributions
- To get something out of the work for yourself as per your own aims and objectives







As a Volunteer you are **responsible** for the following:

- To understand the values and aims of the organisation
- To be reliable and punctual
- To carry out the prescribed duties to the best of your ability
- To attend essential training and support sessions
- To be committed and honest in all of your dealings with the organisation
- To inform the volunteer project manager if any difficulties should arise
- To comply with the relevant policies and procedures as laid out by the organisation(s) you are working with

This information has been adapted from Volunteer Ireland's Charter for Effective Volunteering.

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# Where to start:

## DCU Charitable and Civic Societies

### 1 Raising and Giving (RAG)

The DCU Raising & Giving Society empowers students to volunteer in their local community and get stuck in! Throughout the year, RAG aim to raise as much funds as possible through a variety of fun events for our social projects which include GoGaGa, Ballymunch, School of RAG, RAG Rec and Special Olympics football. We want to show students that they can do great things to help society and have a blast while doing it. DCU RAG has something to offer everyone. Time again, we have seen that giving a portion of your time to others can have a significant and positive impact on their life! [dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/raising-giving](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/raising-giving)

### 2 DCU SVP

St Vincent de Paul gives DCU students the opportunity to volunteer & make a change in the local community. Through fundraisers we raise money for Irish charities with events such as sleep outs on DCU's campus, coffee mornings and Jailbreak: a treasure hunt around Europe to find a secret location. SVP volunteers can also help at street outreaches that provide food for people experiencing homelessness, volunteer at homework clubs and take part in hospital visits. Training is provided for all these opportunities! Getting involved with the St Vincent de Paul society is a great way to meet other students while making a real difference to people's lives! [dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/svp](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/svp)

### 3 FLAC

The DCU FLAC Society is a student branch of the independent human rights FLAC organisation that is dedicated to the realisation of equal access to justice for all. We aim to provide a service akin to that of national FLAC, by providing the student body as well as the wider public with free legal advice on the DCU campus. The ability to provide people with legal advice is admired and the DCU FLAC Society is aimed at equipping our members with this ability in order to promote free equal access to justice. [dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/flac](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/flac)

### 4 Enactus

At Enactus DCU, we aim to tackle the problems of today whilst creating the leaders of tomorrow. We create, and implement, social entrepreneurial projects which empower the project beneficiaries to change their own lives' for the better. We have weekly meetings, where we work on developing our projects further, we have a variety of projects in areas such as the environment, public speaking and dyslexia. [dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/enactus](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/enactus)

### 5 Amnesty International

The Amnesty International society promotes activism and campaigns on a variety of human rights issues. As members of Amnesty-Ireland, we are part of a global movement of activists in more than

150 countries around the world. We take action for the victims of human rights injustices worldwide. Our events include talks from guest speakers, student led campaigns, society trips, activism workshops and going to protests. You don't need any previous experience or knowledge to join, just a desire to learn and make a change!  
[dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/amnesty-international](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/amnesty-international)

## 6 Mental Health Society

DCU's Mental Health Society works towards promoting positive attitudes and removing negative stereotypes and stigmas around Mental Health. We aim to provide students of all backgrounds and ages with a welcoming and encouraging environment. We organize events to raise money for various mental health charities and also run campaigns and projects to encourage the discussion on the topic of mental health. We try to make a difference in the area of mental health one conversation and one cup of tea at a time.  
[dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/mental-health](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/mental-health)

## 7 HeadstARTS

HeadstARTS is a student run society, providing dance, drama, music and art classes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. We have a dedicated team at DCU who run two hour classes every week during the academic year. The classes give our members the opportunity to relax in a peaceful and guided art or music environment, or engage in an interactive dance and drama class. Over the past eight years, HeadstARTS has grown both in

volunteers and members and we are still growing today! We would love for you to join the HeadstARTS team, we can guarantee it will be the most wholesome and rewarding time of the week!  
[dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/headstarts](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/headstarts)

## 8 DCU Volunteer Overseas

DCU Volunteer Overseas is a society set up to provide the opportunity for students to volunteer and make a difference on an international level. This year, we plan to partner with a local Irish charity The Light of Maasai to volunteer in Kenya, in the summer. While there, our group will be participating in a number of projects, for example, completing needed restoration work on a school, talking to children in local schools and working with Light of Maasai on their projects. We are also planning to have a variety of different events and fundraisers throughout the year.  
[dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/volunteer-overseas](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/volunteer-overseas)

## 9 STAND

STAND is a not-for-profit organization that focuses on global issues and social justice. The DCU STAND society is the first STAND society in Ireland and we're very proud of that. We run a news site, awareness campaigns, projects in our community, events for members and an annual film & photography festival - all of which centre on social justice issues and the power of people.  
[dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/stand](https://dcuclubsandsocs.ie/society/stand)



Being a volunteer,  
for whatever purpose,  
rewarding and  
worthwhile.

# DCU volunteering resources

## 1 DCU Volunteer Strategy and Network

The DCU Volunteer webpage is packed with useful tips and materials including our very own DCU Volunteer Strategy, which is the first of its kind in Ireland. For further information and all the latest updates follow us on social media @DCU Volunteer.

 /dcuvolunteer  
 @DCUVolunteer  
 dcuvolunteer  
[dcu.ie/volunteer](https://dcu.ie/volunteer)

## 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.

**Student Volunteer Coordinator**  
Ruth Lynam  
[ruth.lynam@dcu.ie](mailto:ruth.lynam@dcu.ie)

## 3 Charity Partnerships

DCU has many established relationships with a multitude of exceptional civic organisations who offer an abundance of opportunities to students.

Some examples include;

### Barretstown:

Barretstown offers free, specially designed camps and programmes for children and their families living with a serious illness – supported behind the scenes by 24 hour on site medical and nursing care. DCU Have a three year charity partnership with Barretstown to support their remarkable work.

The services provided to all the children and families who come to Barretstown are entirely free of charge, so volunteering and fundraising efforts are vital to help more seriously ill children to experience the magic of Barretstown each year. DCU Volunteer offers volunteering and fundraising activities for all students to engage with Barretstown.  
[dcu.ie/barretstown](https://dcu.ie/barretstown)

### Gaisce:

Gaisce or 'great achievement' is a self-development programme for young people between the ages of 15-25 and has been in existence since 1985, carried by the President of Ireland. Students wishing to start or progress further in their Gaisce President's Awards are encouraged to contact DCU Volunteer who have numerous resources to kickstart your journey.  
[gaisce.ie](https://gaisce.ie)





# National and international volunteering resources

## 1 StudentVolunteer.ie

StudentVolunteer.ie is Ireland's national volunteering database, created specifically for higher education students. This new initiative is an easy and hassle free way to connect students with volunteering organisations and their opportunities.

To get started, you can register on the website: [studentvolunteer.ie](http://studentvolunteer.ie)

Once registered you can:

- Browse and apply for one-off and long-term volunteering
- Track your volunteering hours and receive certificates showcasing your work and dedication
- Get updates on volunteering opportunities that might interest you
- Connect with local and national community based organisations
- Access useful resources on student volunteering

## 2 Comhlámh

Comhlámh supports and promotes responsible, responsive overseas volunteering and provides support to volunteers in a long-term, ongoing commitment to development. We work to enlist good practice standards among volunteer sending agencies through our Code of Good Practice to ensure overseas volunteering has a positive impact on all involved. For a full list of our partnered organisations see:

[comhlamh.org](http://comhlamh.org)

The benefits of  
volunteering are  
enormous to you,  
and your local  
and international  
communities.







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