

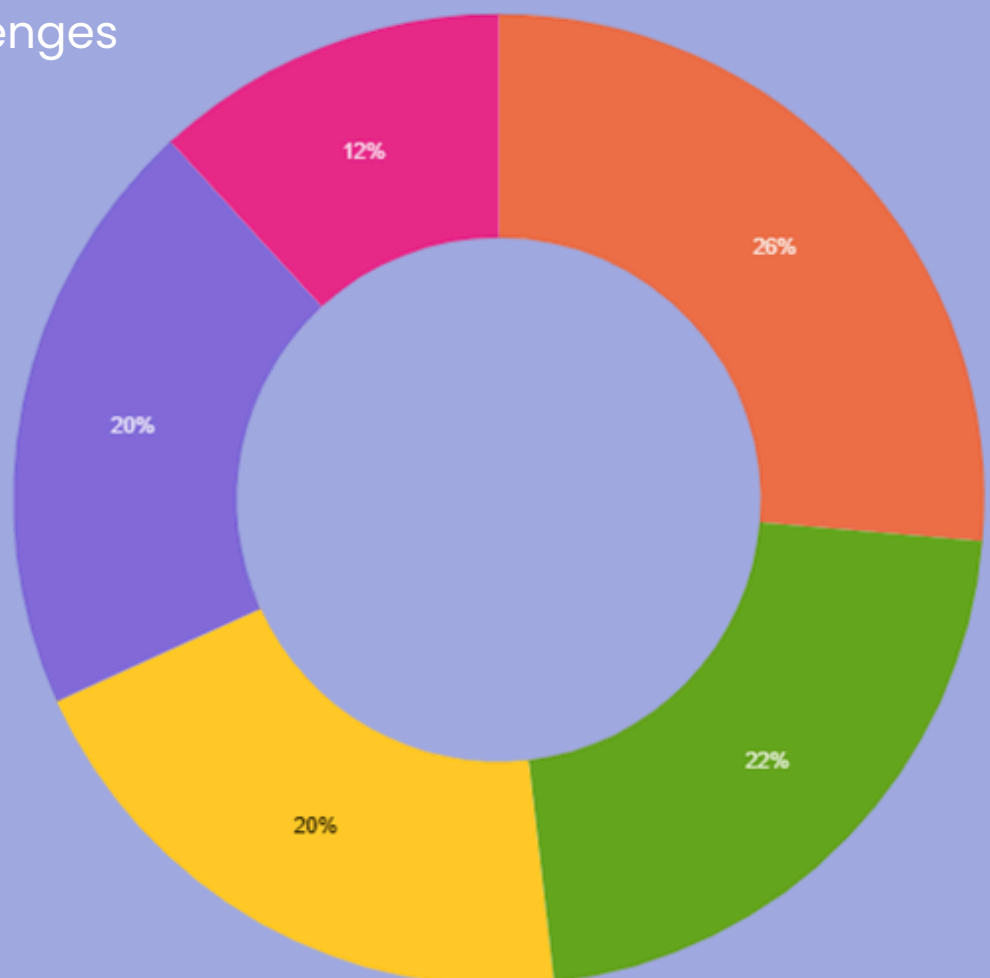
Volunteering Welcome Guide

Here are some top tips from fellow students of how to overcome challenges whilst volunteering. Treat this document as a 'go to' when you're feeling a little unsure and need some reassurance or before or during your volunteering journey. Of course, if you have any queries please don't hesitate to get in touch with the City St George's Volunteering, either send us an email at volunteering@citystgeorges.ac.uk or book a 1:1 on the Student Hub.

Here are some challenges that previous students faced while volunteering. This guide will address the top three; time management, confidence and on-the-job challenges

Challenges in Volunteering

- Time management
- Confidence
- On-the-job challenges
- Other
- No challenges



Time Management SOLUTIONS



Some students reported that time management was a challenge whilst volunteering. Balancing academic studies, social life, hobbies, paid work and caring responsibilities alongside volunteering can be tough but there are techniques that can help.

Communication

Talk to colleagues and your manager to see whether there are alternative shifts or working patterns if you're struggling to commit to your slot or hours. For example, you might be able to do more shifts out of term time and less during.

Make sure you let your manager know about your schedule, whether that's academic, caring or paid work.

Realistic expectations/ goals

It's okay if you aren't able to volunteer on a long term basis, we also host one-off volunteering opportunities that don't require quite as much commitment.

Planning

Planning your week ahead is a really helpful tool to make sure you know what's to come and minimise any surprises. Setting priorities/tasks that cannot be changed or are not flexible, like university commitments and deadlines (lectures, seminars, assessments and exams), paid work, caring responsibilities etc in your diary first, is a great way to see what time you have available outside of those arrangements and how you can best use your time to volunteer. Below is an example of how you could schedule your week.

Don't forget that you need to rest and have fun too!

WEEKLY PLANNER

APRIL

23

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
Work 10:00-15:00	Lecture 9:00-10:00	Studying 9:00-11:00	Lecture 10:00-12:00	Studying 9:00-11:00	Studying 9:00-11:00	Socialising / Resting
Socialising / Resting	Seminar 11:00-12:00	Lecture 11:00-13:00	Lunch	Seminar 12:00-12:00	Lecture 11:00-12:00	
	Lunch	Lunch	Work 15:00-20:00	Lunch	Lunch	
	Volunteering 14:00-17:00	Studying 15:00-16:00		Volunteering 15:00-17:00	Seminar 14:00-15:00	
	Socialising / Resting	Seminar 16:00-17:00		Socialising / Resting	Studying 15:00-17:00	
		Socialising / Resting			Socialising / Resting	

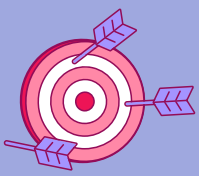
Commitments

Work

Socialising /
Resting

University

Volunteering



On-the-Job Challenges

SOLUTIONS

Sometimes, unpredictable things can pop up whilst volunteering but don't worry, you're not alone and they can be resolved.

Boundaries

Boundaries are essential in all spaces. Often the safe guarding policy will establish many of the organisation's boundaries but if you're unsure, speak to your manager.

Communication

There really is no point in struggling by yourself. Peers and managers should and will want to help you in any way they can. Asking if you can have a conversation is a great place to start, from there, you can talk through the issues you are facing and find a way to resolve it together.

It is likely that the people around you will have a heap of experience and there's no better way to learn.

Research

You can't know everything and you can only be so prepared going into a new role. As things arise during your experience volunteering, take 5 or 10 minutes to do a little bit of research and get to know and understand the people you're working with.

University Help

Due to the nature of some of the volunteering opportunities, you may find some content upsetting and need a little extra support. You can always get in touch with the Wellbeing team on campus and their details are on the final page.

Alternative Approaches

It's so easy for us all to get stuck in our ways. Sometimes approaching a problem or a situation from a different angle can help both you and the people you're volunteering with to find solutions.

Often it's a matter of trial and error but with clear communication, patience and sensitivity, you'll be sure to discover new approaches

Hear it from your peers

"My initial challenge with mentoring was establishing boundaries while building trust with mentees. I often worried about overstepping or not providing enough guidance. I overcame this by clearly defining expectations at our first meeting and regularly checking in about our mentoring relationship."

"Cultural differences occasionally created communication barriers. I addressed this by educating myself about different backgrounds and asking open questions to better understand my mentees' perspectives and needs."

Confidence SOLUTIONS

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'this!

Many students said that they felt shy and nervous going into volunteering roles, either with skills they lacked confidence in or with people they did not know. It can feel scary initially but this is a feeling that will soon wear off, especially once starting.

Communication

Students have previously found that talking to their peers about their volunteering experiences has been a great way to open up about their own struggles and experience. People are often very willing to talk and answer questions. Getting to know your peers whilst volunteering can help alleviate feeling anxious around them and help build deeper connections.

It is always better to speak up if you're unsure or don't feel particularly comfortable in a certain area. If anything, it is an important life skill and employers will really appreciate it.

Peers

Looking at volunteering opportunities with a friend and applying together, can be a good way to not only strengthen your relationship through finding further similar interests but it can also make the experience a little less daunting.

Patience

Things can feel a little tough at first and you may not feel like much progress is being made but with time and effort, it will get easier.

Practicing

Some volunteering roles might test skills that you haven't used before or don't feel particularly confident in. Practicing skills such as public speaking with someone you know or by yourself, can be a great way to ease nerves and feel more confident when volunteering.

Other

Just putting yourself out there is sometimes the best way to tackle nerves and anxiety. Volunteering is not forever and you can stop at any point, but proving to yourself that you can do it and giving it a good go will help improve your confidence.

These volunteering roles don't require previous experience. The organisations know that you're a student and that this might be your first role.

Always be yourself! You're an asset and the organisations are grateful to have you.



Just a few more things

INFORMATION

References

Some volunteering opportunities require you to have at least one reference, sometimes even two – don't let this put you off however!

If you have any previous work and/or volunteering experience, you can use those as your references. If you don't have any experience yet, fear not, your academic supervisor can be your reference as well as your tutor at your previous educational institution (school or college).

Just make sure you reach out to the person you're using, you need to have their permission first. A simple friendly email asking them is all it takes!

Keeping Up To Date

To keep up to date with new opportunities and volunteering events, sign up to our [newsletter](#) and follow our [Instagram](#).

To make an account and start applying, follow the [link](#) or scan the QR code.

DBS

A DBS check is a Disclosure and Barring Service which is sometimes required to enhance the safety of employees, clients and customers. It ensures that vulnerable people are protected. Some organisations might require this of you, for example a charity that works with children. We will only ever partner with organisations that pay for this check, so you won't be out of pocket!

Take Aways

As you will have seen, there is always a solution to a problem you may be facing. You do not have to manage it alone and help is always there. Some of the key solutions students found were communicating issues with organisations so that they were aware and able to help.

Scan the QR codes below



Instagram



Website



Newsletter

If you feel that you need further support, beyond this document and the volunteering team, you can contact the advice and wellbeing hub on the Student Hub. Alternatively email them at wellbeing@city.ac.uk or give them a call on +44 (0)20 7040 0246.