OU STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

STUDENT LED PROJECTS

A BASIC GUIDE
what's inside...

02 What are Student-led Projects? How can the Association support me?

03 Frequently Asked Questions.

04 Check whether your project is eligible to become our next Student-led Project.

05 How do I apply?

06 Who is here to support me? How to get in touch with the Volunteer team.
What are Student-led Projects?

Welcome to the OU Students Association’s new Student-led Projects scheme, which has been set up to support you to mobilise fellow students to take action for a good cause. This scheme could be for you if:

- You have an idea for a new volunteering project (this could be a one off project or a regular thing).
- You already volunteer or have a volunteer project but want support from a team of fellow students and from your Students Association.

This is a Pilot which the Association are funding in order to offer students the opportunity to have an impact on their local community, using the skills they are gaining through studies. It is a fantastic opportunity to get the most out of your time with the Open University, and we hope that our year pilot will lead to the Association being able to offer this to all OU students long term.

What support can we provide?

- Support throughout the Application process.
- Support building a business case, including helping you plan your project and recruitment plan to increase the success of your idea reaching completion.
- Provide micro-grants of up to £250 per project.
- Support from the Students Association in spreading the word about your project using both our website and social media.
Frequently Asked Questions...

What sorts of projects do you support?
We are open to ideas and so we have a student panel (referred to as the 'Approval Panel') who will be making decisions about the suitability of projects. We would love to see projects which encourage students to come together for a good cause. You may choose to hold a social event at an assisted living home, a litter pick at your local beach or park or collect and create survival packs for homeless people. The list is endless and we want to hear your ideas. At this time in the pilot, the Association do not support projects which will be crowd or match funded, we are also unable to support fundraising events due to tax implications.

Who can apply?
You must be a member of the Students Association and currently studying to apply.

When should I apply?
The Association has three application windows in this initial pilot and the dates can be found here. Your project or event may be a one off or could last for several weeks but it should take place within three months of a successful application.

Where should it take place?
As we’re sure you are aware, OU students are everywhere and so we would encourage projects all over the UK and further afield! The Volunteer team can offer support via skype, email and phone so location is not an issue. It is worth thinking about how fellow students will get to your location if you want to recruit student volunteers to help you, e.g. is the location easy to reach by bus or train?
All Project Leaders must complete an Idea Creation Form. This should be carefully thought out and be able to clearly identify the Risks and Benefits of your project, as well as why OU students should want to get involved.

Your project must benefit a defined community, whether this is the OU student community, your local community or a charity. At this time we are unable to support fundraising events.

Projects should be looking to offer at least five fellow OU students the opportunity to get involved.

Your project cannot be a for-profit endeavour so we will not fund start-up businesses.
How do I apply and what does the process look like?

1. Take a look at all of our resources to ensure that you know what is expected of you. Make a draft plan using our **Idea Creation form: stage 1**. This will help you to think about your project in a bit more detail before completing sending your idea into the Volunteer team to check for eligibility.

2. Once you have scoped out your idea, complete the Student-led Projects Leader application found on the volunteer opportunities page. We can offer support if you would like to talk about your project and feel some guidance would benefit your project at this early stage. Your Idea will be reviewed and you will get a decision about whether or not the Association can progress your application to stage 2. The Volunteer team are committed to responding to idea submissions within seven working days.

3. If you are approved to stage 2, you will be sent an application pack to submit within the application window. Your application will be reviewed by a student panel who will notify whether your project has been approved.

4. Decisions will be made by the dates advertised on our website. If your project is successful we will be in touch to discuss the next steps. If it is not successful you will be told why. If it is appropriate, you may be able to make amendments and re-enter your project in the next application window. There may also be times when your project is approved subject to more information, at which point we may require more details from you.
How do I apply and what does the process look like?

6. You will be invited to discuss your project with the Volunteer team to establish what support you will need.

7. All Project Leaders will be required to attend training. Please be aware that funding for successful projects is dependent on the Project Leader attending training.

8. Your project starts! We would love to hear how it is going and to keep in touch. We also like to visit projects where we can!

9. When your project ends, we would love to receive a blog from you telling us how it went. You will also complete a project evaluation and can book to chat through your experience with the Volunteer team.

10. Spread the news! Encourage others to get involved, and if you have another idea - why not submit a new project plan!

"No matter what people tell you; words and ideas can change the world!"

Robin Williams
Support for my project...

Who will be on the panel reviewing my application?

Applications are reviewed in two stages. Stage one is the submission of an 'Idea Creation form' which will be reviewed by the Association’s Deputy President and the Volunteer team. At this stage we will be ensuring that your project is viable and in line with our values. This preliminary stage is intended to support you to ensure you have thought about your idea before submitting a more detailed application to the Approval Panel. We are committed to letting you know whether or not your project can proceed to the next stage within seven working days.

Once you have received approval, you will be sent the full application pack by the Volunteer team. Three members of the Central Executive Committee will review your final application and this will take place during the window advertised on our website. Members of Panel: Deputy President, the Area Representative for your Nation, one more member of Central Executive Committee or Board of Trustees appointed by the Deputy President.

What do I do now?

Why not download our quick one page Idea Creation form now and start thinking about your idea? Chatting to other students or looking at what students in other unions are doing can help you to plan your activity.

The Volunteer team are here to support you throughout, so if you have a question, want some advice or need helping completing one of our forms, then we are happy to help at OUstudents-volunteer@open.ac.uk. Alternatively, if you would like to talk to a current student about your idea, why not contact Stephanie.stubbins@open.ac.uk who is our Deputy President elect, and has been part of this new initiative.

Download Idea Creation Form now!