Student Voice Researcher

Overview of role:
The Association’s Student Voice Team wishes to recruit volunteers to offer a student perspective to our research work. Here at the OU Students Association, engaging students, listening to student feedback and representing their collective interests are some of our key strategic objectives. Our research work explores different aspects of the student experience, with the aim of improving the support we offer our student membership and taking their views forward within the University.

As we enter a unique time of development, we want to ensure students are involved at every stage of the research process, from developing new projects to evaluating the impact of our work. The Student Voice Researcher role offers students the opportunity to volunteer with us for short periods of time and work on themed projects.

The November round runs for two weeks from Friday 16 November to Sunday 2 December:

- During the first week (16-22 November), volunteers will access online training materials and attend the face-to-face induction event in Milton Keynes.
- During the second week (23 November – 2 December), volunteers will work on their projects.

The online training and project work will be undertaken from home, with online contact and support available from the Student Voice and Student Volunteering Teams. However, attending the face-to-face Induction in Milton Keynes on 21-22 November is mandatory. All reasonable travel expenses will be covered and accommodation will be provided.

The final output is expected to be a written submission of 1500 words (minimum) received by the office on Monday, 3 December 2018.

If you are a student with a genuine interest in the Association’s work and looking to get more involved whilst developing some research skills, then this is the opportunity for you. You won’t be expected to know about everything we do, but some knowledge of life as a distance learner and experience of studying with the Open University is essential.

As you contribute to the busy research strand in the Student Voice Team, you will gain valuable experience of working on a project, have lots of opportunities during the week to speak to your elected student representatives and the Association staff team, and hopefully have lots of fun along the way!
Essential for the role:
Please note that the Student Voice Researcher role is specific to our research work, and the criteria/skills listed below are key to undertaking this role effectively. Please refer to these criteria in your application and give examples where possible.

- You must be a full member of the Association to apply (all current students are automatically members, if unsure, please ask).
- Enthusiasm for learning about the Association’s work and contributing to it.
- Prepared to commit the required time to work on your project, including the Induction in Milton Keynes.
- Enthusiasm for learning new skills, including completing the online training.
- Good understanding of the output expected from your project, and delivering this in a timely way to the specified standard.
- Experience of using data (whether quantitative or qualitative), for example in a report or presentation.
- Good communication and writing skills.
- Prepared to work in collaboration with fellow Student Voice researchers where relevant.

Time Commitment:
This role has three essential stages, accessing online training, attending the Induction days in Milton Keynes, and working on your project. The online training and project work will be undertaken from home, with online contact and support available from the Student Voice and Volunteering Teams.

- Online training will be provided during the week of 16-20 November. All participants are required to undertake this training. During this time, you will also have the opportunity to familiarise yourself with the topic and undertake any pre-reading. You will be able to access this training throughout your time with us.

- The Induction will take place at the OU campus in Milton Keynes on Wednesday, 21 and Thursday, 22 November, offering you the opportunity to meet with your student representatives and the Association staff team. Attending the Induction is mandatory. We will provide accommodation and reimburse reasonable travel expenses.

- During the period of 23- 2 December, you are expected to commit 35 hours of your time to the project you will be working on. You will be working from home and will have flexibility in terms of when you choose to work on this project (such as opting for regular office hours or working in the evenings or weekends).
Supported by:
- Research and Information Officer
- Research Assistant
- The Student Volunteering Team

Don’t forget you can talk to the Student Volunteering team at any point during your time as a volunteer, whether you want to find out more about other roles, find ways to get more involved or to write an article for our newsletter or website.

**Application Process:**
Please complete the online application form. Alternative formats are available on request, please contact us on outstudents-volunteer@open.ac.uk.

Please note that interest for this role is high, but we have a limited number of places. The application process involves blind shortlisting of applicants, after which an informal phone or online chat is requested. Successful applicants will be notified and given further details about their project by Friday, 16 November 2018.

**What the OU Students Association expect from you in this role:**
- Act in the interests of the wider community of OU Students Association members, showing appropriate respect and consideration when communicating with fellow students and others, both inside and outside of meetings.
- Act with moral integrity and honesty, and in an ethical and honourable manner.
- Act in an open and responsible manner and be prepared to be accountable for your actions.
- Conduct yourself with objectivity, and in a calm and professional manner, not allowing yourself to be influenced by personal prejudices.
- Respect confidentiality in any information which has been imparted to you in confidence, recognising the importance of this. If this information relates to a safeguarding matter, it is important that you do not keep it to yourself. Speak to a member of the Volunteering team should you have concerns.
- When appropriate to your role, engage with students wherever possible, e.g. forums, social media and face to face, to gain an insight to your fellow students’ experiences. It is important that volunteers reflect our values by helping to create a sense of community and support wherever possible.
- Share our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
• Discriminatory behaviour, harassment or online abuse directed towards others will not be tolerated.

• All volunteers are expected to follow the volunteer agreement given to them upon taking on a role with the Association.

_Due to the nature of this work, you may be asked to complete a confidentiality agreement._

**What you can expect from the OU Students Association:**

• Support from the Volunteer team and Association staff team throughout your time with us.

• We will endeavour that all roles will be of real benefit to the student community and will make a difference to all those you engage with.

• Your volunteering will be appreciated and recognised for the value it brings.

• You will be kept informed of any training or accreditation opportunities offered by the Association, either by a dedicated monthly e-newsletter or via the volunteering section of the website.

• We aim to give you all the necessary information and training that you require to complete your role. If you feel you need additional support in your role please let us know and we will be happy to help.

• You will be volunteering for a non-discriminatory organisation that strives for equality and celebrates difference.

• You do not have to carry out any tasks you deem to be inappropriate or unrealistic, please speak to a staff member if this is the case.

• You are free to stop volunteering at any time. We simply ask that you let us know so that we can tell the appropriate people, we are happy for you to return to volunteering should your circumstances change.

• We will give you any information related to your role in a timely manner.