Open SU Thanking Volunteers

Nominations Process

(Launch: 12 March 2026)

2. Who Can Nominate?

Nominations are open to:

- Open SU volunteers
- Open SU staff
- Self-nominations (volunteers only)

We strongly encourage teams to promote nominations internally and invite volunteers to recognise one another.

All nominations are submitted through the **nomination form.**

3. Eligibility

Nominees must:

- Be a current registered Open SU volunteer.
- Have participated within their volunteer role/s within the last 12 months.

4. How to Nominate

1. Visit the Recognition Hub and complete the nomination form.
2. You may **nominate more than one volunteer within a category**, but each nomination must be submitted separately.
3. Provide:
   a. Nominee name and volunteer role.
   b. A short description (250–500 words) explaining:

         i.   What they did
        ii.   The impact it had
      iii.   Which value/"Heart" they demonstrated

4. Submit before the deadline.

Accessible formats are available upon request, contact oustudents-volunteer@open.ac.uk.

• Volunteers may be nominated for **more than one category**.
• Multiple nominations for the same volunteer **will be considered together** during review.
• Volunteers who have previously received recognition **can be nominated again**, provided the nomination relates to activity within the last 12 months.

5. Review Process

To ensure fairness and equity:

- All nominations will be reviewed by a panel of Open SU Staff to confirm eligibility.
- Nominations will be assessed against the criteria of the selected award category, including impact, alignment with Open SU values, and evidence provided in the nomination.
- The Recognition Panel will be made up of:
    - Members of the Volunteering Strategy Steering Group
    - A volunteer representative
    - A staff representative

Where possible, nominations will be anonymised before review.

Panel members will declare any conflicts of interest and may step back from reviewing nominations where they have a close working relationship with the nominee.

6. Forms of Recognition

Recognition will include:

- Digital certificates
- Spotlight features across Open SU communications
- Digital badges
- Sustainable appreciation items

- All nominees will receive **acknowledgement of their nomination** as part of Open SU's commitment to celebrating volunteer contributions.

Volunteers may opt out of public recognition.

1. Recognition Categories

Our recognition framework reflects Open SU's values and celebrates the many ways volunteers contribute.

In the Nominations form you will be asked to select an award from the categories below.

Heart of Inclusion – *Welcoming*
For promoting equality, diversity, and inclusive practices. Awarded to volunteers who actively create safe, welcoming, and accessible spaces for all students.
Heart of Innovation – *Bold*
For showing creativity, trying new ideas, and embracing change. Recognises volunteers who test new approaches, solve problems creatively, or introduce improvements.
Heart of Collaboration – *Adaptable*
For teamwork, initiative, and adaptability in challenges. Celebrates volunteers who work effectively with others, step up when needed, and respond positively to change.
Heart of Ownership – Accountable
For taking responsibility, being reliable, and delivering on commitments. Recognises volunteers who demonstrate trustworthiness, follow-through, and

leadership through action.
Heart of Impact – Sustainability
For embedding sustainable thinking and practices in their volunteering. Awarded to volunteers who consider environmental, social, and long-term impact in their work.

You will be asked to provide a reason as to why you have chosen this person and this will be used by the judging panel later.

We do not tell the nominee who nominated them, only that they have been nominated for the award. We do not tell them how many nominations they received either.

Other Awards Available

Alongside the "Heart" awards, nominations can also be submitted for:

- **Positive Impact Award** – For creating meaningful outcomes for students or the wider Open SU community.
- **Personal Growth Award** – For demonstrating significant development, confidence-building, or skills growth through volunteering.
- **Making a Difference Award** – For contributions that have had a noticeable and lasting effect
- **Volunteer of the Year Award**

Tips for a Strong Nomination
When writing your nomination, try to include:

- • **Specific examples** of what the volunteer did
- • **Who benefited** from their actions (students, volunteers, staff, community)
- • **Evidence of impact** (feedback received, changes made, outcomes achieved) You may wish to include examples as evidence, such as events they delivered, activities they supported, or observations about the impact they have had."
- • **How their actions reflect Open SU values.**

Key Dates

- **Nominations open:** 12 March 2026.

- **Nominations close:** 30 March 2026.

- **Eligibility checks completed:** 1st April 2026.

- **Recognition Panel review:** Monday 6 April 2026.

- **Volunteers notified:** Thursday 9 April 2026.

- **Celebration event / announcement:** Thursday 16 April 2026 at 7-8pm.

Privacy

Information submitted in nominations will only be used for the purpose of the Open SU recognition process. Details will be shared only with the review panels and relevant Open SU staff and any nominations texts shared with volunteers will be anonymised.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact:

Oustudents-volunteer@open.ac.uk

Information and Guidance – March 2026