

Reasonable Adjustments for Volunteers Policy

Purpose

At Open SU, we are committed to ensuring that all volunteers, regardless of disability, health condition, or access needs, have equal and meaningful opportunities to get involved. This policy sets out how we support volunteers by making reasonable adjustments that enable everyone to contribute safely, confidently, and inclusively.

Scope

This policy applies to all Open SU volunteers, whether participating remotely, in hybrid roles, or in person. It covers the full volunteer journey, from recruitment and onboarding, through active involvement, to the conclusion of a volunteer role.

Legal Framework

This policy is underpinned by the Equality Act 2010, which requires organisations to make reasonable adjustments to ensure disabled individuals are not placed at a substantial disadvantage compared to others.

Defining Reasonable Adjustments

Reasonable adjustments are changes that help remove or reduce barriers faced by disabled people. These may include:

- Adapting tasks or responsibilities
- Adjusting usual practices or expectations
- Offering flexibility in how or when tasks are completed
- Changing communication methods
- Providing assistive technology or accessible formats

Adjustments must be **proportionate**, **practical**, and **effective** in addressing the identified need.

Accessibility by Design

At Open SU, we take an accessibility-by-design approach. This means we aim to build inclusion into our systems, platforms, and processes from the start, reducing the need for reactive changes. We prioritise accessible digital tools, clear communication, and flexible ways of working to ensure volunteering is welcoming and inclusive for all.

Proportionality and Resources

When considering adjustments, Open SU will take into account:

- The nature of the volunteer role
- The needs of the individual volunteer
- The resources and capacity available to Open SU
- The impact on other volunteers, staff, and services
- Any contextual circumstances that may affect the need of the volunteer

We aim to be flexible and accommodating, while ensuring adjustments are fair and sustainable.

Identifying the Need for Adjustments

Volunteers are encouraged to share any access needs at any stage—during recruitment, onboarding, or while active in their role. Adjustments may be identified through:

- Self-disclosure
- Observations by staff
- Feedback from peers or team members

Volunteers will be proactively asked about support needs during onboarding. They can also request a confidential conversation with a staff member at any time. We understand that needs can change and encourage volunteers to reach out if their circumstances shift.

Requesting and Implementing Adjustments

Volunteer Managers are responsible for considering and implementing reasonable adjustments. When reviewing a request, they will consider:

- The effectiveness of the adjustment in removing the barrier
- The practicality and cost of implementation
- The proportionality of the adjustment to the role
- Consistent application of the policy

Where needed, alternative solutions may be suggested to achieve the same outcome. All requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis, recognising that each person's experience is unique.

There may be occasions where Open SU cannot make an adequate reasonable adjustment. If this does occur, the decision and the reason will be clearly communicated to the volunteer, and Open SU will work with the volunteer to try to establish how they can still meaningfully participate in the activities of Open SU.

Examples of Reasonable Adjustments

Examples of adjustments Open SU may offer include:

- Providing printed materials in accessible formats (e.g. large print, coloured paper)
- Allowing extra time or regular breaks for tasks and meetings
- Offering hybrid options for meetings and events
- Using captions, transcripts, or recordings for online sessions
- Supporting alternative travel arrangements for in-person events
- Ensuring accessibility is considered in event planning and venue selection

We also signpost volunteers to external support services where appropriate. One example of this is [‘My Computer, My Way’ by AbilityNet](#).

Confidentiality and Data Protection

All personal information shared about a disability or health condition will be handled confidentially and in line with UK GDPR. Only those who need to know in order to support the volunteer will be informed.

Support and Training

Open SU provides training for staff and volunteers on disability awareness and inclusive practices. Volunteers will be clearly informed about how to request adjustments and where to go for support.

Policy Oversight and Review

This policy is overseen by the Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging team and approved by the Board of Trustees. It will be reviewed every two years, or sooner if legislation or guidance changes. We will also gather ongoing feedback from volunteers, and this will contribute to any review.