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Student Life
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The ! Team Volunteer Handbook



Student Volunteering Swansea

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Introduction and Welcome

Congratulations on being accepted as a member of the GO!Team

Hopefully, this Handbook will give you all the information you need to find this a successful volunteer opportunity. As part of this Handbook we have included the GO! Team job description (page 3) on which your role is based. This job description will be useful to you when thinking about the employability experience you have gained during your time on the project and when writing up the skills and abilities you have developed.

After your first meeting with the VISA Advice staff you will be asked to read through this handbook which contains everything you need to know about the GO! Team project, your role, training and all other core elements when volunteering for VISA Advice and, wider, Swansea University.

We would like to take this opportunity to welcome you as a GO! Team member and we look forward very much to working with you.

Emma, Fiona, Nick, Kayleigh, Mike, Beth and Nicola

VISA Advice Team



What is the GO! Team?

The GO! Team are volunteers that help VISA Advice staff (and wider!) to promote and encourage the integration of home and international students, to develop and provide social and engagement opportunities to all students, and help to garner a sense of community within our student body. All students, home or international, are encouraged to apply to become GO! Team members.

What are the GO!Team expected to do?

Activities you may be asked participate in:

- GO! Trips to locations in and around Wales/England
- Monthly GO! Eat events at different restaurants in Swansea
- Ad-hoc or one-off events during the term to celebrate different festivals/national days/holidays

Proposed GO! Team activities will include:

- Promoting and attending social activities aimed at engaging international students
- Welcoming new international students to the University on a year round basis
- Helping to deliver the International Welcome Day and on-going induction activities
- Developing and producing a regular GO! News newsletter (which is promoted to all students digitally)
- Helping to run the social activities either online or in-person
- Participating in and promoting the DISCOVERY Student Volunteering Swansea
- Making webcasts and videos about the GO! Team project
- Maintaining and engaging with University wide social networking activities
- Working with other GO! Team members in developing and organising new cultural events and activities either online or in-person
- Writing short reports about activities undertaken under the GO! Team Project
- Helping to collect statistics/ feedback about our activities
- Building interest and momentum in the GO! Team Project to ensure on-going success
- Other tasks as designated by the VISA Advice team

Proposed GO! Team activities could include:

- Conducting campus tours or tours of the University campuses and surrounding area
- Improving international student engagement with the Students' Union
- Answering visitor enquiries about the University and the local area
- Meeting agents and visitors from overseas
- Assisting new students with filling in various forms
- Helping to integrate international students who may be experiencing difficulties
- Other tasks as suggested by additional Swansea University departments

Your ideas

You will see that GO! Team members are actively encouraged to devise their own activities and events and we hope that this will be both successful and enjoyable for you. However, if you have any other suggestions, or want to help out in other areas, we are more than happy to accommodate. We welcome any new suggestions, anytime, just email gosocial@swansea.ac.uk.

GO! Team Member Benefits

- The opportunity to develop employability skills and enhance their CV (resume)
- Making a real difference to the experience of other Swansea University students
- Access to free or reduced entry to many international and other social events on and off campus
- The opportunity to develop skills in areas such as Cultural Awareness and Event Planning
- Be actively involved in the wider university community
- Meet new friends and people from all over the world
- Try something new!



Email: gosocial@swansea.ac.uk (please quote GO! Team in the email subject)

Your responsibilities as part of the GO! Team

Being a GO! Team member is an important responsibility and we expect you to take the role seriously. Below are some expectations we have of you when fulfilling your role.

What we expect from you:

- To represent Swansea University in a positive light
- To listen carefully and follow instructions
- To endeavour to communicate with the VISA Advice team, staff, students and others calmly and effectively
- To be reliable; if you agree to volunteer at a particular event, or agree to do a piece of work for us, please follow through on it. If something happens which means you cannot meet a responsibility you have, please let staff know as soon as possible
- To have good timekeeping skills; please arrive on time to events and keep to given deadlines for written reports, articles or social media posts
- To be flexible and adapt to new situations.
- To have a good understanding of issues facing new students.
- To be approachable and have an understanding that some new students will be shy and apprehensive.
- To be able to take the initiative and be able to think on your feet.

However we also expect to give a lot back to you! We want to make this experience as enjoyable and useful to you as possible. Below is what you will hopefully gain from your time as a GO! Team member.

What you can expect from us:

- Training opportunities from VISA Advice, DISCOVERY and other University sources. If you want training in any specific areas, feel free to speak to us and we will see what can be arranged for you.
- Help and support in managing individual Projects and activities
- If you have any questions or worries, the VISA Advice staff will always be happy to have a chat with you.
- Help in assessing what employability skills you have gained
- Provide a reference letter for future employers
- Discounted tickets to events sometimes!



Once you have been selected

Once you have been successful in being offered a place as a GO! Team member we recommend you undertake some of the activities outlined below. This will ensure that you are having the most valuable and mindful experience that you can.

First Meeting

The team in VISA Advice will arrange to meet you and talk through the volunteer scheme. There may be other new GO! Team members that are just starting as well. It will be an informal chat and is an excellent opportunity for you to get to know each other and the projects you will be working on. It's also a great way for you to discuss what skills you would like to develop and how we can help you progress.

VISA Advice staff will also be in touch at various points in the year to invite you to special GO!Team social events to encourage friendship and build a closer working bond within the team. We advise that you attend as many fun social events as possible – these could be a great way to meet new people and develop your own ideas for an event or activity for our students!

Facebook

We have a closed GO! Team Facebook group that we would like you to join (if possible). It is a good way to interact with other GO! Team members and for us all to connect with each other. Staff will regularly post updates in this group about upcoming trips and events and if we need volunteers.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/goteamvol>



Getting Ready for the GO! Team

Below is a table of activities that will guide you through the initial preparation process!

Task	Completed?
You should undertake a personal skills assessment prior to starting the Project and set goals for what you hope to get out of it. This is an excellent way for you find out more of what you want and we can see if we can tailor your experience to what you want to get out of it. You can contact Swansea Employability Academy for more information: https://myuni.swan.ac.uk/sea/	
Visit the Resources section of the Swansea Employability Academy site	
Join the Open University and undertake some FREE Open Learn modules. We recommend the following as a helpful start: • Difference and challenge in teams • The importance of interpersonal skills • Facilitating group discussions • Planning a project You can find there are 100's of amazing free modules available via the Open University. Each one gives you a certificate of completion once you have finished- which are a great addition to your CV! https://www.open.edu/openlearn/free-courses/full-catalogue	
Complete a 'Meet the GO! TEAM' profile for our monthly newsletter so to introduce you to our students. A template can be found in Appendix A at the back of the handbook.	
Find and interview a home student for the newsletter for the section called 'My hometown.' A template can be found in Appendix B at the back of the Handbook	
Read the supplementary GO! Trips: A Complete Guide to Leading Trips to learn about how to successfully run one of our many day trips which is a big part of what we do in the GO! Team	

Promotion of events

Good promotion of events is key to their success.

You may be asked to help promote events by using Facebook, email, Twitter, Instagram or by creating news items and posters. You will be given examples of each type of promotion from previous events and asked to design new materials for circulation. When looking for graphics or pictures, it is important to remember that some images are copyrighted and cannot be used in university literature. Staff can help you deal with these sorts of issues so please ask if you need further assistance.

Reflective Journal

We encourage you to use a Reflective Journal to chart your progress during your time as a GO! Team member. This will help you to measure (and remember) your skills development. This will be useful for you when you need examples of your skills when applying for jobs in the future. You will find several free Reflective Journal templates available online or you can create your learning journal as a word document or even have a handwritten one in a notebook if that is what you prefer.

Think about some events and situations that have taken place and how you felt at the time, e.g. confident, tense, frustrated, certain, doubtful etc. Use these reactions to identify strengths and areas that need development.

Think of the following questions below when writing your journal:

- What have I done today (duties and responsibilities)?
- What did I contribute to the team I worked with?
- What ideas have I had for improving things?
- In what areas/situations have I made progress?
- What skills have I been using or developing?
- What strengths can I identify?
- What achievements have I had?
- What have I found most challenging?
- What might I have done differently?
- Have I identified any areas of weakness and are there potential situations where I can work on these? How will I go about it? Is more support needed (i.e. from the university) to assist development?
- What would I do differently next time? What other options were there in that situation? What would have been the consequences of another action?
- What have I learned about the way I learn?

Catch-ups and meetings

As a GO! Team member, we will have a few bigger meetings with the whole GO! Team each term, so that we can discuss how things are going, share ideas and get some feedback. This is a brilliant way for you to generate some ideas. You will be informed of these meetings via email and on the GO! Team Facebook page. We expect our GO! Team to attend these meetings as often as possible (though we do understand that you have busy timetables and external responsibilities as well).

Final words...

We aim to make this experience as pleasurable for you as possible so just relax and have fun! As well as developing yourself and earning experience and new skills, this is a fantastic way for you to just let your hair down and enjoy yourself.

We look forward to growing with you.

So, GO! Team GO!



Appendices

As a GO! Team member, you will be asked to contribute to the project in a variety of ways including providing written articles for use in newsletters and other promotional materials:

This can seem daunting if you haven't done it before so we have provided these useful templates to help get you started! Please refer to these if you ever need some inspiration:

Appendix A: Meet the GO! Team Profile

This is simply answering some questions so that students can get to know the great volunteers looking out for them at events and trips. You may not be able to answer all of these questions yet so don't worry! Just write a response for the ones you can:

- Your name:
- Your course:
- Your nationality:
- What's your favourite thing to do?
- What's your favourite food and why?
- Why did you choose to study at Swansea University?
- Why did you decide to volunteer as a GO! Team member?
- What do you see as your main job as a GO! Team member?
- What makes a good GO! Team member?
- What has been the best part of being a GO! Team member so far?
- Why do you think other students should apply to be on the GO! Team?

Appendix B: My Hometown - interviewing a home student

Find a home student who you may know quite well and ask them all about their home town (you can also use this to write about your own home):

- Their name:
- Their course:
- The name of their home town/city:
- Do they know the population size?
- Where in the UK is the their home town/city located?
- What's their favourite thing to do in their home town?
- Is there anything their home town is famous for? Anything for visitors/sightseers?
- What is one food someone should try if they visit their home town?
- Why did they choose to study at Swansea University?
- How is Swansea different to their own home town?

Appendix C: Taking photos on a Trip

Taking a good photo is really important for us because it demonstrates the remarkable work that our GO! Team does! We will use these photos for publicity such as newsletters, for our website and to put on social media. This is a good way to not only demonstrate what our GO! Team do but to encourage other students to get involved in our activities and develop their own social life while at university. It also encourages other students to volunteer with the GO! Team in the future.

Here are some tips on how to take a great photo

- Make sure the photo isn't blurred and has a clear focus.
- Action shots are always good which demonstrates people getting involved in fun activities.
- We would like group shots of as many students as possible.
- We want smiling faces in the photo! :D

Appendix D: How to write a trip newsletter article

It should be around 300 words and you can have the freedom to write what you want, but here is some basic guidelines below if you need ideas.

You can write about:

- Where you went
- What you did
- What the scenery was like
- What you enjoyed the most
- Why other students should get involved in our trips

Do not worry about your level of English if you are not a native English speaker. Your article will be checked and proofread before going into the newsletter.

Below is an example of a good article:

On the occasion of Saint David's Day, the feast day of the patron saint of Wales, the VISA Advice team organized a trip to Saint David's, the smallest city in the UK. After a bus ride through beautiful – though rainy – landscape of Wales, we arrived in Saint David's. Even though the weather was not ideal, the small city enchanted us with its art galleries, shops, coffee places, and of course its famous cathedral. We spent an hour in that remarkable building, dating from 1176, discovering every corner including the cathedral shop which offers a range of original souvenirs related to Wales and to the city. After strolling around the surroundings of the cathedral with the impressive ruins of the Bishops Palace, we decided, despite the weather, to head to the beach. Although we got wet, the walk was worth it, as we arrived at the coast to enjoy a remarkable view on the ocean. Back in the city, we experienced the full Welsh experience by having lunch and a hot drink in a local pub. Coincidentally, Wales was playing a rugby match at that moment, which meant the pub was crowded with enthusiastic rugby fans! After leaving the pub, we walked through the tiny streets of Saint David's, to get back on the bus and return home. In summary, the trip was a great success, local people in Saint David were very welcoming and helpful and all students enjoyed the journey a lot. That is why more students, including local ones, should take the opportunity to get involved in the great variety of trips that the VISA Advice team offers.