

FAQs – COVID-19 VOLUNTEERING

Why is the university doing this volunteering?

De Montfort University is committed to the public good and making a difference in the community. Last year, its students and staff volunteered for a total of more than 20,000 hours in the community – at a time of national crisis it is only appropriate that we now get involved and help the city and its people.

How does the university know this is the right thing to do at this time?

The university is not acting alone. This effort is part of a city-wide initiative that is being coordinated by Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL) and through the City Mayor's Office. Anyone volunteering will be part of a major city-wide effort with DMU Local being responsible for certain projects - and that is where you can help.

Will I really be making a difference?

Yes, VAL works with several hundred charities across the city of Leicester and will only be asking for volunteers for those most in need at this difficult time. It already has a network of 920 volunteers, but it is suspected that many more people will be needed to help in the coming weeks.

If I volunteer, how will this all work?

Firstly, you need to register your interest with DMU Local using [this form on MyGateway](#).

You will then log on to MyGateway in the usual way and register your interest. As volunteering opportunities come in which match your skills and availability, you will be contacted by DMU Local, who will manage all opportunities involving staff and students. After initially registering your interest, there may be a bit of a short time delay waiting for opportunities to come in, matching people with those opportunities and then starting volunteering. Please bear with us.

What sort of volunteering will I be doing?

This is difficult to gauge at the moment with the crisis constantly changing. But obviously examples will include helping those suffering with social isolation, the elderly and people living alone, with a telephone call and a friendly voice. Or possibly delivering food to those self-isolating or being 'shielded' because they have an underlying health condition. It will really depend on what the city needs.

How do I know if I have the right skills?

Don't worry about that – you will have. Just tell us about any particular or different skills that may be relevant. If you have a telephone, or can drive then you will be of value. It may also be virtual volunteering such as business support or coaching later in the year as the country gets back to normal.

Will I get safety equipment to carry out any volunteering duties?

Some work, which can be done from your home, will not require safety equipment and you will NOT be asked to do any volunteering in high-risk situations. Where any low-level precautionary equipment is needed, such as disposal gloves or surgical masks, they will be provided at the volunteering opportunity.

What if I feel unsafe or feel the right safety equipment is not provided?

DMU Local will make every effort to ensure that this is not the case. However, if you feel in anyway uncertain about your safety and that of others at the volunteering opportunity or that you don't have the right equipment, you should politely refuse to take part and inform DMU Local immediately. **No-one must take any risks with their safety.**

Will I get identification as we are only supposed to be making 'essential' journeys?

No new identification will be needed. Leicestershire Police are aware that DMU volunteers will be taking part in this major city effort and you should simply carry your university pass with you at all times.

I have already decided to volunteer elsewhere, so this does not apply to me?

That is marvelous. However, we would still like you to get in touch with us at local@dmu.ac.uk

The university wants to make sure that all its staff and students are supported at this difficult time and wants you to keep in touch in case it can help in any way. We also want to build a picture of the way in which our staff and students are helping the wider community during this crisis.

Will I get travel expenses to help with my volunteering?

No-one is going to be asked to travel huge distances or get involved in anything that will incur them in major expenditure. However, there is an established reimbursement scheme for students using public transport in Leicester. Students should save any bus tickets and when the university reopens they will be able to claim those costs back through DMU Local.

What if I have any more questions that are not answered here?

You may have other questions that we have not covered. If you do, please email local@dmu.ac.uk and we will get back to you as soon as possible.