



Birmingham  
Newman  
University



# **Newman Volunteering Award (Handbook)**

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## 1. What is Newman University's Volunteering Award?

### Introduction

Newman University's Volunteering Award supports students to successfully manage volunteering independently; to develop their knowledge, skills and experiences which will contribute to their future employability and success upon graduation.

Volunteering carried out by students can be logged, verified and then included in their Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) on graduation. Students can receive a Newman Volunteering award for each separate volunteering placement they carry out during their time at Newman, if it meets the criteria. Students can receive a Newman Bronze Volunteering Award for 20 hours, Newman Silver Volunteering Award for 50 hours, Newman Gold Volunteering Award for 100 hours or a Newman Platinum Volunteering Award for 200 hours. Students can achieve more than one award per academic year with more than one organisation. The hours must be logged and verified separately.

### Definition

From the many definitions of volunteering available Newman University recognises volunteering as follows: "Volunteering is when someone spends unpaid time doing something to benefit others. Helping your close friends or relatives isn't volunteering. But doing something to benefit the environment (and through that, other people) is. Volunteering can be formal and organised by organisations, or informal within communities. It should always be a free choice made by the person giving up their time."

[\(NCVO 2023\)](#).

In addition, volunteering in this context will also aim to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities of the student taking part to contribute to their employability and success upon graduation. Unpaid work placements already receiving academic accreditation, or undertaken to address course requirements or targets, will not be valid for counting towards a volunteering award.

The aim of the programme is also to make a positive contribution to individuals and communities in line with our status as a Catholic University with strong values of service.

### Criteria

Students can apply for an award that will appear on the [HEAR](#) for each volunteering opportunity they carry out, but must meet the following criteria:

- Unpaid and carried out in the UK.
- Must be separate to their course or any other extra-curricular activity that is included on their HEAR. For students undertaking mandatory work placements, if they accumulate additional hours above what their course dictates, those additional hours can count towards a Volunteering Award. Some student volunteering is already accredited on the HEAR and therefore not eligible for a Newman Volunteering Award, examples are listed in the next section.
- It can be carried out in any place as long as the role involves contributing to an environment, an individual or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives for the greater good and will in part improve the knowledge, skills and

abilities of the student taking part to contribute to their employability and success upon graduation.

- It is usual practice to validate one award for each different volunteering organisation. If, however, you accumulate a substantial number of hours of volunteering at one organisation and **you can evidence that you had more than one role there**, the HEAR Validation panel will consider offering multiple awards for a single placement up to a maximum limit of 4 awards.
- All the relevant forms must be completed fully by the students and confirmed by the volunteering organisation.
- Any questions or for clarification please contact the Careers & Volunteering Adviser, Newman University, Birmingham B32 3NT
- Email: [careers@newman.ac.uk](mailto:careers@newman.ac.uk).

### **Examples of activities NOT eligible for validation:**

If you take part in the following voluntary activities at Newman University and they are **already accredited** through your course or on your HEAR they **would not be eligible** to count towards a Newman Volunteering Award. If you are in any doubt, please check with the Careers & Volunteering Adviser:

- Captain of a Sports Team
- Chair of a Society or Club
- Clinical hours elements to courses
- Compulsory field work
- Course Representative
- Guardian Angel
- Peer mentor
- Dissertation Research
- Student Academic Representative
- Student Union Executive
- Writing Mentor

## **How to enrol on the award**

The Volunteering award is hosted on the [My Career](#) portal under 'Pathways.' No application process is needed to start the Award. You need to self-enrol on the portal, read through the instructions and upload your three completed documents before the final deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> May each academic year. Hours cannot be carried over into the next academic year.

You can access the award by accessing the pathways section of My Career. Under "Available" pathways hover over "Newman Volunteering Award 2023/24". You should now be able to select "Start" at the top of the page.

You will see the first level of volunteering. If you complete one volunteering role and submit all three documents, you will then unlock a second level of the award which will allow you to submit documents for a second volunteering role. Once you have submitted the documents for this role a third level will unlock. You can submit hours from up to four different volunteering roles this academic year.

## **2. Why should you volunteer?**

### **Benefits for the student**

In a competitive labour market, volunteering is a great way to increase your employability, whatever career path you want to pursue.

### **Volunteering to enhance your employability**

Definition of Employability:

'A set of achievements – skills, understandings and personal attributes – that makes graduates more likely to gain employment and be successful in their chosen occupations, which benefits themselves, the workforce, the community and the economy.' (ESECT: 2006).

**Volunteering can offer the opportunity to develop existing skills and/or learn new ones highly valued by employers:**

### ***Self-reliance skills***

**You will research and organise your own volunteering opportunity:**

- Self-awareness
- Proactivity
- Willingness to learn
- Networking
- Planning action

### ***People skills***

**You will work with others in a volunteering opportunity of your choice:**

- Team working
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication
- Leadership
- Customer orientation

### ***General skills***

**You will experience real life situations in which you will need to demonstrate the following skills:**

- Problem Solving
- Flexibility
- Business acumen
- IT/computer literacy
- Numeracy
- Commitment
- Specialist skills

If a student meets the criteria, they can gain an award(s) for their volunteering, which will appear on their HEAR and be formally recognised. This will help you to stand out when applying for opportunities after graduation.

### **Benefits for the community/society**

Volunteering aims to benefit the environment or individuals or groups other than (or in addition to) close relatives. The work a student carries out makes a positive contribution to the society in which they are living and/or studying and reinforces values of community service.

## **3. Searching for a volunteering position**

It is the student's own responsibility to find a volunteering position, however the careers service can support in a number of ways to secure a volunteering position. We give information, advice, and guidance on where to volunteer, how to approach organisations and things to think about once you've secured a position.

### **Careers and volunteering sessions**

You can sign up for a 1:1 interview, workshop, or event to explore volunteering opportunities. As a current student you can log into your My Career Account (using your Newman Username and Password) at:

<https://mycareer.newman.ac.uk/home.html>. Full details of our service can be found at: <https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/my-career/>. Any questions please email us at: [careers@newman.ac.uk](mailto:careers@newman.ac.uk)

### **Advertised Volunteering Opportunities**

You will find a list of volunteering opportunities for students on the Newman Careers jobs board which is accessible via your [My Career](#) account.

Once on My Career, click on the Opportunities tab to access and to receive email alerts if you wish.

Other useful websites include:

- Birmingham Voluntary Service Council Noticeboard  
<https://www.bvsc.org/become-a-volunteer>
- Do it life <https://doit.life/>

### **Website lists**

As well as specific vacancies advertised there are many valuable volunteering databases and tools online, available for students to use to find an opportunity. The Careers Service recommend the following:

- Impact pathways <https://www.ipwm.org.uk/Find-Support/>
- Charity Choice <https://www.charitychoice.co.uk>
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) for helpful advice – <https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering>.

Some organisations have their own accreditation schemes to acknowledge the work of volunteers, check with them when you start as this would be something extra to go onto your CV.

### **Networking**

Try to talk to as many people as possible about volunteering opportunities for ideas and for first-hand experience about what to expect. Network with friends and family as they may know someone who works in an organisation you would like to volunteer in. Attend Careers Fairs virtually and on campus. Ask the careers team about the next event.

### **Volunteering Overseas**

Unfortunately, we are no longer able to validate volunteering that is undertaken outside of the UK as we are unable to do the necessary checks for validation. Volunteering overseas though is still a valuable experience to undertake, so if you are interested, we recommend you speak to our International Office in Student Support on campus. You can email them at: [international@newman.ac.uk](mailto:international@newman.ac.uk)

### **Still looking for inspiration ...**

In the past students have volunteered in a wide range of areas and organisations, they have volunteered as:

- Assistants in the Pen Museum.
- Childline helpline volunteers.
- Education assistants for Safeside, run by West Midlands Fire Service
- Leaders for Guides or Scouts.
- Mentoring/Tutoring in local schools to raise attainment.
- Residential activity mentors for disadvantaged children.
- Retail assistants in charity shops.
- Volunteers in Birmingham & Solihull Women's Aid
- Mentors with Change Grow Live.
- Responders for the NHS
- Advocates for CASBA

## **4. Preparing for your volunteering position**

### **What to expect as a volunteer**

To ensure your volunteering opportunity goes smoothly it is the student's responsibility to find out as much information as possible beforehand. As a minimum the student should check that the following are in place for their arrival:

- An induction to include the information about the organisation and its policies e.g., health and safety, what to do if you have a problem and an introduction to other staff and volunteers.
- A named supervisor or person you can go to if you have a problem/question and details how to contact them. This person should also regularly check on you and your progress.
- Adequate training to carry out your role.
- Supervision - someone who is regularly checking on you and to make sure you are happy in your role.

### **Questions to ask**

It is important to ask as many questions as possible before you begin volunteering.

- As a volunteer you are sometimes allowed reimbursement of some expenses e.g., travel, so check with your voluntary organisation.
- Is there any training available? It has to be directly related to your voluntary role otherwise it is seen as offering a gift which can have significant implications for the legal relationship between an individual and organisation.
- What will be my role? What will I be doing?
- What support or supervision will be available?
- Who will I be working with?

### **DBS Checks and Safeguarding Letters**

Settings that involve working with children and/or vulnerable people require you to have undergone a criminal records check. Carried out by the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), it is the responsibility of the employer/organisation to ensure you have this in place. Some volunteering hosts will pay and organise a DBS check whereas others will expect you to have a new DBS done so check with them before you start as they can sometimes take a few weeks to be processed.

For more information on DBS please see the following website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service>.

Each individual organisation will work differently so please check directly with your host volunteering organisation for clarification.

### **Safety in the workplace**

Although it is the responsibility of the organisation where you are volunteering to look after your health and safety, as a volunteer the student should also check the following are in place:

- What are the emergency procedures?
- What happens if there is a fire? Where are the fire extinguishers located?
- What are the First Aid arrangements?
- How do you report an accident and where is the accident report book?
- What are the procedures around use of display screen equipment (if applicable)?
- What are the Manual Handling procedures?
- Will you be dealing with any hazardous materials regulated under Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH) legislation?
- Do you need to wear protective clothing; will this be supplied?
- Have you been trained on any special equipment you will be using?

### **Information for students with additional needs**

Volunteering is open to all students. If you have support needs or issues relating to diversity either discuss them with the Careers team or talk directly to the organisation that you would like to volunteer with. Volunteering organisations should be able to provide the support you need in order to perform a particular role, or they may be able to adapt the role if required.

## **5. Monitoring your volunteering**

### **Keeping track of your hours**

It is your responsibility to accurately record your volunteering hours that you wish to be included under this scheme. This can be done using volunteering form 1. Use it as a time sheet to record your hours as you complete them. The form can be downloaded from Pathways.

### **Keeping track of your roles and responsibilities**

It is your responsibility to organise an appropriate volunteering opportunity and work with your organisation to get the best out of the opportunity.

## **6. Applying for and receiving validation**

### **Process for applying for validation and entry on your Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR):**

#### **Forms**

If students wish to apply for validation, they must complete **ALL** the relevant forms alongside the organisation they are working in. An award cannot be given without these **3** forms being completed and presented:

#### **Volunteering Form 1**

This volunteering form is to be used to log information on the hours completed and the duties undertaken. This is a crucial part of the assessment process as it determines the level of Award you achieve so you need to be very accurate with the timings as they will be checked with your host organisation. Once completed it needs to be sent to the careers team, the easiest way of doing this is for it to be uploaded to the relevant section under Pathways on My Career.

#### **Volunteering Form 2**

This volunteering form needs to be completed by the organisation you have carried out volunteering at in order to verify and validate your volunteering experience. Once completed it needs to be sent to the careers team, the easiest way of doing this is for it to be uploaded to the relevant section under Pathways on My Career.

#### **Volunteering Form 3**

This volunteering form needs to be completed by the student. This aims to help the student to identify the skills they have developed and reflect on what they have learnt and how they can utilise this experience in the future. Once completed it needs to be sent to the careers team, the easiest way of doing this is for it to be uploaded to the relevant section under Pathways on My Career.

All documents can be accessed on the Newman Volunteering web page here:  
<https://www.newman.ac.uk/knowledge-base/newman-volunteering-award/>.

### Student Responsibilities

- A. You will organise a volunteering placement and check the opportunity meets the criteria as set out in the Volunteering Handbook.
- B. You will accurately record the volunteering hours you undertake on **Volunteering Form 1** and sign that they are accurate and true. As a guideline we will validate your actual hours of volunteering, **not your lunch breaks, travel time or training before you start**. If you feel there are special circumstances with regard to this, please clarify with the Careers & Volunteering Adviser before submitting your form.
- C. You will have these hours confirmed by your host organisation by getting your supervisor to sign and complete **Volunteering Form 2**.
- D. You will then complete **Volunteering Form 3**. You will tick the relevant employability skills that you have used during your placement and then write a short reflective account on what you have learnt and how it will help you in the future (about 100 words) and sign that they are accurate and true.
- E. You will send submit the **three** completed and signed forms to the Careers & Volunteering Adviser the easiest way of doing this is by uploading them to the pathways section on My Career. See instructions below:
- F. The Volunteering Award is hosted on the [My Career](#) portal under Pathways. No application process is needed to start the award. You need to self-enrol on the portal and can complete documents before the final deadline of 31<sup>st</sup> May each academic year.

First click on the Pathways icon on the homepage or select Pathways from the “Search” dropdown menu.

Under the Pathways section and “Available” pathways hover over “The Volunteering Award 2023/24” and then click “Preview”. This should take you to the preview page, scroll down on this page and select “Start now” on the left-hand side. You will then be enrolled on the Pathway. The documents which you need to complete and submit in order to achieve the award are hosted under each activity. You need to download these complete them and upload them under each activity. Forms should be submitted for validation as you complete each volunteering opportunity.

You must be enrolled as a Newman student before starting volunteering for the hours to be validated. **The final deadline for submission will be 31<sup>st</sup> May each year by which time all completed forms must have been submitted.**

Remember you can apply for more than one award if you have completed volunteering in more than one place. You will need to submit all three forms for each role you complete. If you complete any volunteering between June and August, this can be validated in the following academic year.

The Careers & Volunteering Adviser at Newman University will then check the uploaded forms for any omissions or inconsistencies with you and the volunteering organisation. Selected forms will then undertake a validation process whereby independent corroborative information will be sought to confirm the details contained therein.

Student volunteering forms will then be presented to the HEAR Validation Panel in line with Newman University procedures.

You will then be notified of your Newman Award and how your Certificate will be presented to you.

### **Organisations responsibilities**

The Careers Team at Newman University will provide support and information to all students about volunteering opportunities available. Specifically, the Careers & Volunteering Adviser will be a focal point for guidance in this area and collect and record completed forms for students working towards a Newman Volunteering Award. All enquiries should be directed here in the first instance.

Email: [careers@newman.ac.uk](mailto:careers@newman.ac.uk).

## **7. Privacy Notices**

### **Privacy Notice for Students**

The lawful basis for processing your personal data is legitimate interests. Your personal data and information provided on the form is processed by the Careers and Volunteering Adviser in order to validate your volunteering award. All personal data submitted in this form is processed to:

- Confirm that the voluntary work took place
- Confirm the hours of volunteering completed
- To present the information at the Validation Panel in order to get your award included on your HEAR
- To send you an evaluation to give us feedback on your experience
- To produce anonymised reports for statistical purposes.

All forms are submitted through My Career on the Newman Volunteering Award Pathway on the year you are submitting. Your data is saved in accordance with the '[Privacy Notice for Students – Careers Service – My Career Students](#)'. Copies of the form are found on the [Newman Volunteering Award](#) webpage, you can print paper copies if you prefer to fill them out this way and then upload.

The personal information you provide on the three forms is stored on our secure IT network whose servers are located within the EU. The information is accessible to the careers team and shared with relevant staff including the Assessment and Graduation team. We will also contact the employer to verify the hours that you have submitted.

Information on these forms is stored in a database which is active for three years after completion of your course, so that you can continue to access the information in line with your right to access the Careers Service for 3 years after graduation. After this time, your personal data is securely disposed of. Your HEAR information is kept by student records for 7 years, but this is only your award title. See full up to date [Privacy Notice for Students](#).

### **Privacy Notice for Employers**

The lawful basis for processing your personal data is legitimate interests. Your personal data and information provided on the form is processed by the Careers and Volunteering Adviser to validate the students volunteering award. All personal data submitted in this form is processed to:

- Confirm that the voluntary work took place
- Confirm the hours of volunteering completed
- To present the information at the HEAR validation panel in order for students to get their award and for it to be entered on their HEAR
- To request feedback
- To contact you with further information about how Newman University could work with you.

The personal information you provide on the form is stored on our secure IT network whose servers are located within the EU. Hard copies of personal information are kept in a secure location. The personal information is accessible to the careers team and only shared with relevant staff.

Information on these forms is stored in a database, which is active for three years after students graduate so that they can continue to access to the personalised careers service and for our administrative and reporting purposes. After this time, your personal data is securely disposed of.

To read more about how our university works with professional contact's personal information please use this [link](#).

Thank you for reading this handbook, if you have any further questions, please contact carers [carerers@newman.ac.uk](mailto:carerers@newman.ac.uk)