

OPEN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

Central Executive Committee (CEC)

25 – 27 October 2019

NATION VOLUNTEERS

The CEC is asked to:-

- i) **consider** the key areas discussed by working group (Part 1)
- ii) **discuss** key areas for additional feedback (Part 2)
- iii) **approve** the recommendations (Part 3)

1. Background

1.1 A working group was constructed and led by Lucy Richardson, Area Association Representative (AAR) for Wales and Stephanie Stubbins, Deputy President; which consisted of:-

- Billy Docherty (Faculty Area Representative for FASS)
- Wendy Reid (AAR for Northern Ireland)
- Mark Cameron (AAR for Scotland)
- Michail Kasoutas (AAR for Continental Europe)
- Anca Seaton (Vice President Community)
- Peter Turner (Head of Community)
- Beth Metcalf (Head of Volunteering)

1.2 The aim of this working group was to scope out a volunteer role to enable and support the work of the Nation AAR, through engagement with the wider student body and involvement in related Nation specific opportunities. Key areas were discussed over 5 weeks which have been summarised in this paper:-

- Objective of the Role
- Role Outline
- Recruitment and Training
- Resources and External Engagement
- Pilot and Timeline

1.3 We ask the CEC to discuss some key areas and approve the recommendations listed at the end of this paper.

2. Part 1 – Findings

2.1 *Building the Objective*

2.2.1 supporting the work of the Nation AAR by:-

- connect with OU students in the Nation, helping to build Nation specific communities
- build awareness of and share information about the OU Students Association
- attend AAR planned events (when possible) in the Nation e.g. freshers, meet-ups, online activities and face-to-face events
- gather and feedback wider opinion on national issues e.g. funding, education, finance, policies and legislation
- attend external affairs meetings or events (when possible) on behalf of the AAR
- provide Nation specific advice and voice in relation to specific context

2.2.2 supporting the OU Students Association Strategy through external engagement work and student engagement

2.3 *Shaping the Role*

2.3.1 Aim:-

- pool of volunteers who can help build better relationships with the OU, external bodies, Higher education in the Nation and with their devolved Government
- ensuring committees, workshops and meetings are covered when the AAR cannot attend
- boost engagement in the Nation while helping at planned events

2.3.2 Purpose of this role:-

- inform and advise the AAR of matters affecting students in the Nation
- attend external engagement events for the AAR when needed
- listen to and talk with OU students in the Nation (e.g. forums, adobe connect sessions, social media, tutor group, other events etc)
- signposting to other specific areas when needed (e.g. to Faculty Rep, VP Equality and Diversity, Library services etc)

2.3.3 Role Involves

- primarily an online based role with opportunities to attend face to face events
- monitoring and contributing in the Nation forum
- attending a quarterly adobe connect meeting with AAR
- regular contact with AAR and other Nation volunteers to build a working relationship (e.g. update and support each-other)
- could involve attending conferences, meetings or events in place of the AAR

2.3.4 Desired Skills

- good communication skills
- willingness to engage with students
- ability to work independently and as part of a team

2.3.5 Expectations

- act professionally in your role

- do required training

2.3.6 *This needs to be further scoped out by the Volunteering Team*

2.4 Recruitment and Training

2.4.1 Recruitment

- 4 - 6 volunteers to start with to connect with Nation students, build awareness and gather feedback to inform and support the work of the AAR etc
- recruitment twice a year or keep recruitment open for a rolling intake in case volunteers aren't recruited
- keep in mind number of volunteers needed may depend on what is happening in the Nation (e.g. projects, events, committees) so could increase?
- recruitment panel co-lead by the Nation AAR and Head of volunteering (maybe a couple of other members from the CEC)

2.4.2 Training

- general information about the Association
- understanding the role of the AAR, the Nation Volunteer remit and Nation specific information
- related training needs (reading papers, attending committees, public speaking)
- Prevent
- GDPR
- Safeguarding

2.4.3 Support

- Nation AAR is first point of contact
- volunteer team and other staff teams (community/voice?)

2.4.4 Term Length

- Yearly or length of AAR term
- this could be project based

2.4.5 *This needs to be further scoped out by the Volunteering Team*

2.5 Resources and External Engagement

2.5.1 Volunteer Time

- depends on the time the volunteer can give, be open and welcome to the time they can offer
- certain projects or events may need more commitment (committee, events)
- this should be made clear when recruited
- communicating with AAR to raise concerns and share ideas/issues (e.g. forum, email, adobe connect sessions)

2.5.2 Staff Time

- this needs to be discussed with Heads of Departments (e.g. volunteering, community, student voice)

2.5.3 Budget

- reasonable expenses should be covered for travel and sustenance
- costs of events and projects need to be planned for (e.g. Freshers)

- training/recruitment (if there are any costs incurred)
- other costs (e.g. advertisement, documentation, leaflets)

2.5.4 External Engagement

- impact of external engagement and support needed will differ depending on events and projects
- clear expectations of the volunteers in terms of both internal and external engagement

2.6 *Shaping the Pilot*

2.6.1 Size of Pilot

- Start with Wales for the Pilot, to test and learn
- Or all Nations involved?
- 4-6 volunteers initially, increase if needed

2.6.2 Implementation

- assess risks and ways of mitigating them (all Nations are different, with different needs, expectations and levels of engagement) before implementation
- decide what the measurement of success would look like (e.g. does the pilot meet its objectives)
- work with volunteering team to assess timing to launch the pilot
- pilot should be 12 months in length, then reassessed (to allow other nations to get involved when ready)
- evaluate halfway 3-monthly in a test and learn process

3. **Part 2 – Key Areas**

3.1 Please discuss the following: -

- a) Are the role objectives appropriate in '*A. Building the Objective*'?
- b) Does anything need to be added/removed from the role outline '*B. Shaping the Role*'?
- c) Have we missed anything within '*C. Recruitment and Training*'?
- d) What other considerations need to be taken on board within '*D. Resources and External Engagement*'?
- e) Please share any concerns and Ideas for a Nation Volunteer Pilot in Wales or All Nations mentioned in '*E. Shaping the Pilot*'.

4. **Part 4 - Recommendations**

3.1 Nation Volunteer Role goes forward for further scoping with the volunteer team, Deputy President and AARs:-

- a. role description and application process
- b. recruitment, training and support provision
- c. resources and timeline of pilot
- d. risks, mitigation and evaluation plan

- 3.2 Update in January CEC for approval for implementation of the Pilot
- 3.3 A smaller working group to assist in advising test and learn evaluation phases.
- 3.4 Regular updates of the Pilot at quarterly CEC meetings

Lucy Richardson
AAR for Wales

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