

Buddy Scheme Volunteer

Your exclusive guide to becoming a Buddy Scheme volunteer, expectations and advice!



What is the Buddy Scheme?

Starting a 'new life' at university can be scary: whether it is moving to a different city or making new friends. In some cases, it means moving country altogether. This is precisely why the Sussex Student Union created the Buddy Scheme back in 2013.

The Buddy Scheme has been great! Not just because they have made it easy and affordable to visit nice places and do cool stuff! It is easy to end up with people from other cultures
Alfred (Gothenburg exchange programme)



The Scheme is open to all students at Sussex has consistently been a support base for new students and a great way to get involved and get volunteering!

Why be a part of the Buddy Scheme?

By being a part of the Buddy scheme, you will be able to:

- Gain excellent employability skills, such as mentoring, verbal communication and cross cultural communication (we have a lot of international members).
- Improve your communication and interpersonal skills.
- Meet new students who all kinds of cultural backgrounds.
- Find out the how the University runs and what services are on offer to students. This is great for both sides of the Buddy Scheme!
- Plenty of social opportunities, which means you can try an array of new things with your buddy!
- Find out more about how our Union runs. This could lead to you getting involved with various areas such as campaigns and societies.
- Access to references for your volunteering, as well as certificates of recognition.

Who are Buddy Scheme volunteers?

Buddy Scheme Volunteers are students who have spent a minimum of one term at Sussex University.

They have chosen to volunteer their time to help a new student (buddies) make the most of their time here at Sussex. You will be expected to make email contact with your assign buddy and organise to them person or communicate online as appropriate.

We also offer plenty of events that you can come to along with your buddy which will help them meet new people. This includes place like the Kew Gardens or sport events with Sussex's Active US project, which offers buddies affordable events including paddle boarding and badminton.

The scheme is **CURRENTLY** open to all students at Sussex has consistently been a support base for new students and a great way to get involved and get volunteering! Complete the application form on www.buddyscheme.com/apply



"I've reapplied for my second year of working with the buddy scheme because I love sharing this experience with other new students. It's also a great way to meet new people and have new experiences!"
Megan (third year student)



Who are Buddy Scheme Buddies?

” I like the Buddy Scheme because it helped me make new friends and made me feel less lonely being so far from my family in Canada. And it helped me make some lasting friendships with people of different backgrounds like me”

Emily (Anthropology exchange student)

Buddies are students who have signed up to be in contact with a Buddy Scheme Volunteer whilst at university. These can be new students or students who have not been able to make the most of their time here on campus and in Brighton.

Our Buddies include international students, students undertaking postgraduate degrees and even mature students! It is an invaluable way of socialising and attending exciting events. Don't worry – the Buddy Scheme Volunteers will provide support and friendship to their buddies!



Steps to become a Buddy Scheme volunteer

1

Read the volunteer role description, the [expectations](#) and the [advantages](#) of being part of the scheme to make sure it is right for you!

2

If you are happy with what to expect (and what not to), complete the application form at www.buddyscheme.com/apply. **Applications are currently open now!**

3

Look out for an email from us to subscribe to our newsletter (please also check your junk mail as it might be reverted it there). Also follow us on Facebook and Instagram– details can be viewed [here](#)

4

Receive an email notifying who are Buddy/Buddies are! Matching will commence from A-levels results there and throughout the Autumn and Spring terms. Click here to find out how our we match!

5

Contact your Buddy/Buddies via email as soon as possible. Introduce yourself, exchange contact details (it can be through Facebook, Whatsapp or anything you are both/all comfortable with). Start getting to know each other.

6

If you have opted to meet your buddies in person, we recommend you meet in a public place on campus for the first meet. If you have a group of buddies: discuss with them whether they would like to meet in a group of individually first and choose a location that suits everyone!

7

Prior to going for the meeting, put yourself in their situations. Try to recall how you first felt when you came to Sussex? They could be experiencing a bit of a culture shock or homesickness so think about:

- 1. What helped you to settle and what did you enjoy doing?**
- 2. What do you love about Sussex university about Brighton? What are some of the activities you could recommend?**
- 3. Questions you would want to ask them and potential answers to questions they might ask you?**

Steps to become a Buddy Scheme volunteer continued

8

Your Buddy/Buddies should acknowledge that you are studying and other commitments too! Make it clear when you are available to meet and communicate and when you are not

9

Attend our events with your Buddy/Buddies. Keep an eye on your emails/ website/ Instagram/ Facebook to get more information on our upcoming events.

10

Continue to support your buddy for a minimum of 1 hour per week (per buddy) for at least the first month. This means that you will get to know your Buddy and give them something to do on a weekly basis as they settle in. Again, this can be through meeting up, chatting online or anything that suits you!

11

We want to know how things are going. Is there any way we can help and mentor you? Feedback and suggestions? Find our contact details below to chat to us about any worries, doubts or awesome things you have experienced. We are here for you!

Find out about the Student Union [rewards](#) attached to being a Buddy Scheme Volunteer as we truly appreciate both your time and effort on the bottom of page 9!

Contact us



We are there for you! Please contact us at buddyscheme@sussexstudent.com

Alternatively, visit us at the Students' Union in Falmer House.

What to expect and what not to as a BUDDY SCHEME VOLUNTEER?

What we expect you to do	What we do not expect you to do
We expect you to do your best to welcome your buddy (or buddies) to the University of Sussex.	To pick up your buddy from the airport if they are international – the University provides support to international students in getting from airports to our campus.
Signpost any services they may require and ask us if you're not sure.	Become best friends – you won't be expected to be in each other's pockets.
Offer support and encouragement.	Solve their social and personal problems – there are services at the university for this. All we ask for you is to support your buddy in finding the ones to fit their needs.
Maintain regular contact with your buddies.	Put yourself in a position where you feel uncomfortable. Remember we are always here to help if you feel this is the case.
Help them find activities they may be interested in, such as Union sports and societies.	Proofread their work or offer any kind of academic support. There are services at the University can help with this!
Respect confidentiality, unless you feel that your buddy is at risk to themselves or to others.	Be 'on call' for them – whilst it's great to keep a rapport going, there are no worries if you can't make it to the phone straight away!
Get involved in events such as trips and activities that are offered to you and encourage your buddy/buddies to join in with.	Offer money, skills or an uncomfortable amount of time. We understand that being a Buddy is voluntary and isn't about eclipsing paid work and more importantly, your degree.

How do we match our volunteers and buddies

We match based on preferences chosen by you. So, you could be matched with someone who enjoys theatre or sport, or with someone who is similar in age or on the same course as you. This means that you'll get plenty of chances to find similar interests and stuff in common with your Buddy.

If you feel it isn't going well with your buddy, please do not be a stranger! Let us know and we'll sort the situation out for you. We understand that the Buddy Scheme is not for everyone. Although students have an amazing time though!

Awards and recognition

The Students' Union wouldn't be the same without all of you who make it so special so this is all about saying a big Thank You! Here are some of the ways the Students' Union rewards and recognises you for volunteering your time:

- Subsidised/Free volunteer social events
- Certificates of Achievement and References available on request.
- The chance to win an Award at our annual Student Awards ceremony.
- Raising the profile of volunteering across campus, e.g. photos of volunteers and articles about projects.
- Celebrating volunteer achievements through the Union newsletter and Social Media.



Get involved

Be sure to get involved with the Students' Union whilst you are here. You can find out more about the opportunities that we have on: <https://www.sussexstudent.com/get-involved>

Instagram

Follow our page to view the photographs of our latest events, learn about the team:

ID: USSUBUDDYScheme

Active US

Active US run regular a variety of non-competitive, low cost, drop in activities throughout term time. It is a great way of keeping active, and certainly something that you book yourself a place on if you get the chance.

<https://www.sussexstudent.com/organisation/activeus/>

Contact us

We are always happy to chat with students about how they're getting on. If you need any guidance, advice or inspiration then email us on:

buddyscheme@sussexstudent.com

Keep up to date

Visit our website to find out more about us and our upcoming events:

<https://www.buddyscheme.com>

Facebook

We publish events and news as well as volunteering information on our Facebook page, so give us a like to keep up to date:

<https://www.facebook.com/sussexbuddyscheme>

Language Café

The Language Café is another great way of getting involved with the Students' Union and meeting new people as well as building skills in another language. Join us on Tuesdays in Dine Central at 6 to be part of the event! Like

<https://www.facebook.com/sussexlanguagecafe>

Activities Officer

Your activities officer is involved with the Buddy Scheme due to their commitment to community engagement. If you have any ideas, why not get in touch with them?

Email: activites@sussexstudent.com

SUPPORT SERVICES AT SUSSEX

[Student Life centre](#)

The student life centre is the first place to go with questions, queries, worries or concerns. They have an information desk that is open from 0900hrs to 1700hrs Monday- Friday and also offer email and phone advice in addition to face to face appointments and drop-ins.

[Campus and Residential services](#)

The CRS runs the residential life scheme on campus. It responds to critical incidents across the university and offers 'out of hours' welfare and emergency support when the student life centre is not open, after 5pm Monday to Friday and during the holidays evenings and the weekends.

[Counselling service](#)

The university counselling service offers free, confidential therapy to students at the University of Sussex

[Students' Union's support and advocacy service](#)

All students are members of the Students' Union which can offer advocacy and support which is independent of the university.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

['I need help' button](#)

This page gives information for Sussex students, or friends of Sussex students, who are looking for urgent help.

[Health and wellbeing web pages](#)

These pages contain information about a wide range of wellbeing issues, including the local sources of support for a wide range of issues and concerns.

[Support for students web page](#)

This page gives links to all sources of support at Sussex, covering a wide range of issues and concerns.