

Lothians Equal Access Programme for Schools



Volunteer Handbook 2019-2020



#leapsvols

Part I: Introduction and background



What is LEAPS?

LEAPS is a widening participation programme which aims to encourage and advise students who are traditionally underrepresented in higher education (HE). We support young people from state secondary schools in South East Scotland, raising aspirations and providing impartial information and advice about HE. We organise events and activities - both in and out of school - to inform and encourage students who are considering studying at university or college (HNC/D level). We also prepare young people for the HE application process and for the step up to HE study.

We work in partnership with all of the organisations listed below.

- City of Edinburgh Council
- East Lothian Council
- Edinburgh Napier University
- Heriot-Watt University
- Midlothian Council
- Queen Margaret University
- Scotland's Rural College
- Scottish Borders Council
- Scottish Funding Council
- Skills Development Scotland

Part I: Introduction and background



The role of a LEAPS volunteer

You will help to:

- make young people aware of the opportunities within higher education.
- challenge inaccurate stereotypes of students and student life.
- encourage academically able pupils to consider higher education.
- share your own experience of the challenges university students may face (both academic and social).

Who will you be working with?

Most of our activities are targeted at pupils from S3 to S6 (13-17 year olds) at 17 local high schools where the number of pupils who typically progress to higher education is lower than average. These schools are located in Edinburgh, the Lothians, Scottish Borders and Forth Valley. In these schools, many pupils will have had little or no direct experience of higher education and their knowledge of what it involves may be limited. In all of our events, volunteers typically work with small groups of five to eight pupils.

Part 2: Events and audience



S3 On-Campus Activity

Basic overview

This half-day event provides an early introduction to university and student life. Pupils visit a university and, in a group, explore the university campus with a LEAPS Student Volunteer. Working in a team, they complete fieldwork on a particular topic, collecting research and images, which they will later use to create a report ‘film’ on Adobe Spark. We share this ‘film’ with the participating school after the event.

Throughout the event the pupils are assisted by student volunteers.

Audience

For the majority of the pupils attending this event (13-14 year olds), the university environment will be unfamiliar to them and it is unlikely that they will have explored a campus or spent time chatting with students. The volunteer’s role is to give an insight into university study and student life.

Duration and location

It normally lasts a morning and takes place at the University of Edinburgh between February and early April. Volunteers from all universities are encouraged to take part. No knowledge of the host university is required, as each group is assisted by a member of LEAPS staff.

S4 Workshop



Basic overview

In small groups, pupils explore different aspects of higher education and student life with the help of a LEAPS Student Volunteer. You might chat with pupils about key themes such as social opportunities, learning and teaching and independence at university.

Audience

This workshop targets a broad range of pupils. Some of the S4 pupils (14-15 year olds) attending this workshop will already know they want to go to university whilst others may be more unsure. They may be contemplating college or have no real plans post-school at this stage.

Duration and location

This workshop will take place in school and will last for one period (circa 50 minutes) from November to February.



Part 2: Events and audience



S5 Workshop

Basic overview

In small groups, volunteers work with pupils to explore a range of reasons to consider studying at university. Pupils then ‘interview’ you about your typical student week (we recommend a typical week in year 1 or 2), constructing your timetable and comparing it to their own.



Audience

Pupils in S5 (15-16 year olds), who will have made a positive decision to stay on at school. They might not be completely convinced about the idea of going to university, but they can use the workshop as a chance to get a clearer picture of student life.

Duration and location

This workshop will take place in school and will last for one period (circa 50 minutes) from November to December.

Part 2: Events and audience



S6 Workshop: Uni Café

Basic overview

Our Uni Café is an informal, relaxed session where pupils can chat to Student Volunteers about any aspect of their transition from school to university. This could include academic studies, social opportunities, moving away from home. To help with this, there will be a 'menu' of possible conversation topics they can select from, or they can choose their own conversation topic. Hot drinks and treats are provided for both pupils and volunteers.

Audience

S6 Pupils (16-17 year olds) who will have already applied to university and should have more focused questions about all aspects of student life.

Duration and location

The majority of these sessions will take place in school and will last for one period (circa 50 minutes) from January to March. There will also be a small number of these events taking place on university campus and will involve several local schools.

Part 2: Events and audience



Digital Volunteering

Basic overview

As well as physically attending workshops in school and events on campus, you also have the opportunity to make a digital contribution as a volunteer. This could involve recording a short film clip, using your own phone or a LEAPS mobile, which we may then use on our S5 or S6 blogs to provide additional online information for pupils.

Duration, Location and Audience

We will let you know via the online Volunteer Noticeboard when we are seeking digital contributions from volunteers but you can take part in digital volunteering from November to April. It's a very flexible way to contribute as a volunteer as you can choose when and where you do it!



Part 3: Volunteering Information



Registering as a LEAPS student volunteer

If you decide, after attending one of our training sessions, that you would like to become a LEAPS student volunteer the next step is to complete our online registration form. LEAPS will email you a link to the online registration form after you have attended one of our Volunteer Information and Training Sessions. You can also contact leapsvolunteers@ed.ac.uk for information on how to access the online registration form.

The form is easy to complete, however you will need to provide:

An academic referee

Someone in your institution who can comment on your suitability to be an ambassador for higher education.

A character referee

Someone other than a friend or family member who knows you well.

A photograph

Of yourself, obviously! This is to help our team recognise you when you arrive for school workshops and university based events.

Once your form is submitted you can start signing up for workshops.

Part 3: Volunteering Information



Signing up for Events

The main way that you will be able to find out about forthcoming LEAPS events – and to sign up for these sessions – is on our online Volunteer Noticeboard, which you can find here:

www.leapsonline.org/volunteernoticeboard

Our events run from November until early April and details are posted on a monthly basis. To sign up for an event please follow these steps:

1. Once you have seen an event(s) you want to take part in, email the basic details of the session(s) to **leapvolunteers@ed.ac.uk**
2. If there is space at that event we will send you an email confirmation and also add your name to the relevant online notice. We will also advise you if the event is full.
3. A few days before the event we will send you another email to remind you of the times and travel arrangements.

You can take part in as many or as few events as you choose to suit your timetable, but please only put yourself forward for events you definitely plan to participate in. If you are no longer able to attend an event, please email us at **leapvolunteers@ed.ac.uk** as soon as possible so that we can allocate your place to a fellow volunteer.

Part 3: Volunteering Information



Travelling to Events

We want to make travelling to events as hassle-free as possible for you, so that you can focus on the event itself, therefore we arrange free transport for volunteers by car or taxi. You will be notified of travel arrangements via the online Volunteer Noticeboard.



School-based events

Before each school workshop we will always pick up volunteers from a central location at the University of Edinburgh. The exact location will be posted on our online Volunteer Noticeboard. However where demand justifies, we can also often pick up from other locations, for example Heriot-Watt University for schools in West Lothian, Queen Margaret University for schools in East Lothian and the Scottish Borders and the University of Stirling for schools in Stirling and Alloa.

Part 3: Volunteering Information



Prefer to make your own way there?

If you prefer, you can make your own way to school-based events. If you choose to do this please tell us when you sign up. We will then arrange for you to meet up with staff and other volunteers at the school reception at a designated time. Please note, however, that we cannot reimburse petrol, travel or parking expenses.

Campus-based events

For the events on campus you will in most cases be making your way to your own campus and therefore we won't coordinate travel, although we will notify you of a meeting point. We will also provide you with a map and directions to the campus, as required.



Part 4: Helpful Tips and Advice



Volunteering

In light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), **please be especially mindful of any pupils' personal data you may encounter in any form in school.**

Speak clearly and listen to what pupils have to say. Please don't swear or use inappropriate language.

Introduce yourself as a student who has chosen to talk to pupils about university. Don't play the role of the teacher.

Go in with an open frame of mind and a positive and enthusiastic attitude. Don't prejudge a school or group of pupils.

If pupils ask about entry requirements or specific course details please refer them to LEAPS staff. **Don't offer educational or careers advice.**

Don't give out specific personal information about yourself but feel free to talk about what 'students typically do'.

Take time to break the ice by introducing yourself, your course and university. Don't rush into it.

Try and avoid: a) Putting yourself in a 1:1 situation with a pupil.
b) Putting yourself in an unsupervised environment or giving the impression that pupils can confide personal information to you.

Part 4: Helpful Tips and Advice



What to do if a pupil discloses abuse

We work hard to create a volunteering environment where it would be highly unlikely that a pupil would disclose information to you of a personal or distressing nature. In the unlikely event that this happens, here is how to respond, in the best interests of yourself and the pupil.

Do	Don't
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stay calm & listen carefully.• Reassure the pupil they were right to tell. Tell them you believe them, take them seriously and understand it's not their fault.• Tell the pupil what you're going to do next - pass it onto LEAPS staff who will then pass it onto dedicated staff in their school who are trained to help.• After reassuring the pupil act promptly and immediately report the incident to LEAPS staff who will pass it onto dedicated staff in school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask too many questions.• Express shock or disbelief at what is being said to you.• Express your own views on the matter.• Delay referring matter onto LEAPS and school staff. Report as soon as possible so details are still fresh in your mind.

Adapted from: <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-you-can-do/report-abuse/what-to-do-child-speaks-out-about-abuse/>

The Pledge



You have an important role as a student volunteer with LEAPS. If you choose to become a LEAPS Volunteer we ask you to complete a volunteer registration form and read and sign 'the Pledge' which outlines what we expect from you, and what you can expect from us.

LEAPS will:

- Always value volunteer contributions, treating you with respect/dignity.
- Ensure volunteers have appropriate training and access to support from LEAPS staff including feedback opportunities where appropriate.
- Endeavour to create a community of volunteers.
- Provide development opportunities for volunteers as detailed in the LEAPS Volunteer Information & Training Session.
- Provide character references for student volunteers who have contributed regularly to LEAPS events with schools. Reference request guidelines for volunteers can be found on our website.

As a LEAPS volunteer, you will:

- Have already attended a LEAPS Volunteer Information & Training Session and understand the level of conduct expected of volunteers.
- Speak positively and enthusiastically about higher education, but avoid giving educational or careers advice.
- Talk about your own experiences at your university, focusing on the student experience.
- Give as much notice as possible if you cannot attend a session for which you have signed up.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries when working with school pupils.
- Be mindful of any form of personal data you may encounter in this role, in light of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

Contact us:

t: 0131 650 4676 **e:** leapsvolunteers@ed.ac.uk

w: www.leapsonline.org/volunteernoticeboard

twitter: @leaps1996 #leapsvols