Team Uganda – Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Am I eligible?
Please check your eligibility for Team Member and Assistant Project Leader positions against the criteria listed here.

Why are eligibility criteria in place?
Some of the eligibility criteria are in place for insurance reasons. For example, Team Members must be students at the time of the trip in order to be covered by the insurance (there is an exception for the Assistant Project Leaders role, i.e. they can have graduated by the time of the trip). The Team Member places are available to students in receipt of the Manchester Bursary because the trip is funded with donations that are to be used to support students who are less likely to have the opportunities to volunteer overseas (again an exception has been made for the Assistant Project Leader). For students that are not in receipt of the bursary we advertise opportunities with our Trusted Partners, which have less specific eligibility criteria.

I am taking a ‘sandwich’ / gap year, will I be eligible?
For the Team Member positions you need to check with your School whether you will still be registered as a student at the time of the trip. If you are and you meet the rest of the eligibility criteria then yes you will be eligible. If you do apply please let us know by noting it on your application form.

I want to apply for the Assistant Project Leader position, what if I am employed at the time of the trip (e.g. on a summer job / internship etc.) – can I take a month’s leave for the project?
Assistant Project Leaders must not be on the payroll of an employer at the time of the trip. If you think you might be employed, you would need to be off the books of the employer during the trip (rather than taking it as annual leave for example). If you think this may affect you please let us know.

What can I do if I am not eligible?
Please take a look at our Trusted Partners and information on ‘finding your own’ overseas volunteering opportunity. Some Schools are also running their own overseas volunteering projects, for example the School of Computer Science and the School of Materials. Please contact the Schools directly for more information.

Timescale and dates

What are the dates?
Please see here for a list of the key dates.

What if I am interested but can’t make all the key dates?
All the dates are compulsory. If you are interested but can’t make some of the training dates then please contact us before applying. The dates of the trip are non-negotiable. All student volunteers must be available for the whole trip and must travel to and from Uganda on the pre-booked flights. Interviews for Assistant Project Leader will be at flexible times on the date listed.

What is the time commitment?
Before the trip you will be asked to attend all the training dates, and undertake some pre-departure preparation in your own time including for example fundraising and arranging your vaccinations and getting a DBS check (which we will help you to do), which will take on average a couple of hours per week. The Assistant Project Leader will have some extra time commitments; we expect this to take up a few hours per week and will be flexible around your studies.
How much planning will I have to do?
Most of the planning will take place during the training dates. You may be asked to plan some activities as a team outside of this time, for example coming up with games and activities for the holiday camp, or sourcing resources for the project. You will be supported to do this and it will be flexible around your studies.

Can I stay after the trip or make my own way to / from Uganda?
No - all student volunteers must travel to and from Uganda on the pre-booked flights. The flights are pre-booked and it is compulsory that the team travel as a group. The flights are to and from Manchester Airport.

What if I am on holiday / travelling on the day before / the day after?
We ask that you are in Manchester at least 24 hours before departure. This is because we will meet with you on the day of the trip and you will be required to be here for last minute preparations etc. On return we cannot guarantee you will be back at the stated time as there may be flight delays. If you have travel plans that are close to the departure or return date speak to us before applying.

What if I might have re-sits?
The project is scheduled to take place in the month before the usual re-sit period. If you are worried that you might have re-sits please speak to us.

Costs

How much will it cost me?
This project is fully funded by the University. A breakdown of costs covered on the project can be found here. All Team Members have to raise £500 for S.A.L.V.E. International. You will need spending money for the duration of the trip, including money for the meals that are not included (some are) and leisure time activities. It is possible to spend very little in country as costs for food, travel and internet are relatively low. However, it will depend entirely on what you do in your spare time. For example whilst eating out is relatively cheap compared to in the UK, it can be even cheaper to cook at the guest house or eat local food. If you plan to use mobile phone communication to your home country and the internet, or would like to do some activities in your leisure time, then you will need more spending money.

Will I have to fundraise and if so how much and what will it be spent on? Yes, all Team Members are required to raise £500.00 before the project which will contribute towards the development of one of S.A.L.V.E.’s projects, for example a classroom building, and other important aspects of their work such as helping to resettle children. Training and support will be given to help you achieve this goal, and you will have plenty of time to do so. The Assistant Project Leader is not required to fundraise unless they wish to do so, as it is their responsibility to support Team Members to raise their funds.

How much does it cost the University and how is it funded?
The project is kindly funded by alumni and friends of the University of Manchester and costs less than £2,500 per student. We work hard with our partner organization S.A.L.V.E. International to keep the costs down and ensure that the money spent goes directly on project costs including flights, vaccinations, accommodation, food, staff support in the UK and Uganda, and project activity costs (for example the resources required to complete the projects). The project is also planned to take into account the impact that the project will have and the value for money in terms of investing this money into the volunteering project and the long term impact for S.A.L.V.E.. Some of the costs also pay for local staff to be employed for the project.

Skills and experience

Do I need specific skills for this project?
We are looking for students that meet the Team Member Skills and Attributes (see yellow box) and the Assistant Project Leader skills and attributes (see yellow box). Many of these skills are transferable so can be from a mix of experiences including studying, volunteering, sports, roles with responsibility, hobbies etc.
Does it matter if I have never been overseas before?
For Team Members - no. We are looking for students that meet the required skills and attributes (see links above). Your skills knowledge and experience do not have to have come from volunteering overseas, there may be other examples you can use to demonstrate how you meet these criteria. You may have developed these skills through project work on your course, volunteering or other extra-curricular activity, or simply from life experience! For the Assistant Project Leader we are looking for a student that does have some experience overseas, for example travelling, volunteering or studying etc.

Support

What support will there be?
Prior to the trip we will provide training on staying safe and well whilst abroad, volunteering in another country and culture, child protection, the work of S.A.L.V.E. and project preparation. We also provide fundraising support, help to get your vaccinations organised and DBS check completed and other practical pre-departure preparations.

Once in-country you will be supported by the S.A.L.V.E. project coordinator (Laura) and the Assistant Project Leader. You will have an in-country orientation where you will learn more about the local culture and customs, meet your Ugandan counterpart volunteers, and prepare to put your projects into action. Laura will provide project logistical and day to day support and the Assistant Project Leader will provide extra pastoral support – so you will have people to turn to with your questions and if you have any support needs whilst in-country. We will also have staff in the UK who are on call during the trip, and who you will keep in touch with via Skype and the Team Uganda blog and email (the Assistant Project Leader and Laura will facilitate this).

What if I have additional support needs?
Please contact Emma on volunteers@manchester.ac.uk to discuss your support needs in confidence. We will assess whether any reasonable adjustments can be made during the project to accommodate your needs. We will always do everything we can to ensure this is possible, in line with Equal Opportunities legislation. Due to the nature of the opportunity there may be some limits to the adjustments that can be made and if this is the case we will discuss this with you individually and confidentially.

Is there anything I need to be aware of?
Yes – Uganda is a country with different attitudes and laws to what we might be used to in the UK, in particular in relation to sexuality. Please see the ‘Equal Opportunities’ pages and contact us if you have any concerns. All communication will remain confidential.

Practicalities

What do I do about getting a visa?
You will need to check that you are eligible for a visa for Uganda (most UK and EU nationals will be). Selected students will apply for a visa with our support as part of the pre-departure admin.

When would I need to get a passport if I don’t already have one / how long does my passport need to be valid for?
You will need a passport that is valid for six months after the date of entry. If you do not yet have a passport and are unsure whether to apply for one, we suggest you apply for one once you have found out whether you have been selected (as you will still have time to get this on time if you then do so straight away).

Will I need vaccinations?
Yes. You will need up to date vaccinations for those recommend for the trip (for example Diphtheria, Tetanus and Polio, and Hepatitis A, Typhoid, and Meningitis ACWY – what you need will depend on health advice at the time). We will organize appointments for all volunteers with the University’s occupational health and the costs will be covered.
Will I need to get travel insurance?
No. All volunteers will be covered under the University’s travel Insurance policy. All volunteers will be fully briefed on the policy prior to the trip.

In Uganda

Is it safe?
The University takes the health and safety of students travelling overseas on University projects very seriously. This project has been planned with careful consideration of the health and safety of student volunteers and the safety and security situation is closely monitored. At the time of writing the UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office considers it safe to travel to Uganda. Thorough project risk assessments are made and are kept under regular review, travel advice is monitored, and should any situation occur that might impact on the safety during the project this will be seriously considered and any necessary changes made.

Selected student volunteers are responsible for their health and safety whilst on the project, and are required to make their own risk assessment and bear in mind the risks posed when travelling generally and in particular in Uganda. The University has emergency procedures in place should an emergency occur whilst the volunteer team are travelling to / from Uganda or in-country.

Will we have leisure time?
Yes, you will have some time off in the evenings and two days off each week (either at weekends or during the week). The project will be demanding, but is located in a popular tourist area with things to do during your leisure time.

Application process

How do I apply?
Please see ‘how to apply’.

How competitive is it to get a place on the project?
We expect to get a decent number of applications, but don’t let this put you off from applying as each year almost every applicant has a 50/50 chance of getting a place – pretty good odds! If you are eligible and you think you have got what it takes we will welcome an application from you.

Can I apply with a friend?
If you and friends would like to take part in this project you are welcome to apply. We cannot guarantee that you will both/all be shortlisted or selected, and you need to be committed to taking part in this project whether your friends make it onto the team or not. If you would like to volunteer in friendship groups many our Trusted Partners may be of interest to you.

How do you select who is going?
For the Assistant Project Leader position we take applications and then will run interviews. For Team Members we take applications and then shortlist to a selection day. The selection day will involve interactive activities and short interviews. This will help us to establish who best meets the skills and attributes that we are looking for.

Any other questions?
If you have any more queries please contact us on volunteers@manchester.ac.uk

We hope this was useful and if you do apply then good luck! 😊