

## International Volunteering - Frequently Asked Questions

**Our international volunteering programme is back for summer 2022!**

After being paused for two years many of our opportunities are opening up again. If you wish to volunteer abroad this year there are a number of issues to consider and we encourage you to read these FAQ's before applying.

**The heightened risks associated with travel during the pandemic, both to individuals and the wider global community, continue. Whilst international travel is open again, it is still very much in flux and could change at short notice.**

We closely monitor the situation and provide updates on our [web pages](#) and via social media as and when we have them. You should also undertake research relevant to your chosen destination in order to make an informed choice about whether to volunteer abroad, and if you do choose to go ahead you should continue to monitor the situation in the run up to your trip and whilst overseas.

### 1. What volunteering opportunities will be available with international organisations this academic year?

#### Overseas opportunities summer 2022:

- Many of our partners have resumed volunteering projects for summer 2022. Team Rwanda is also going ahead. All projects are listed on the [website](#).

#### Remote opportunities:

- Some of our partners are continuing to run remote volunteering [opportunities](#). These are a sustainable way to make a difference globally. They are also a great way to gain experience with an international organisation and can be a useful stepping stone to volunteering overseas.

### 2. What can I do if I'm not ready to travel abroad yet or the projects I am interested in are paused?

- **Get involved remotely** - We are advertising remote opportunities with our international partners a great way to get experience with an international charity from home.
- **Find out more in readiness for when international volunteering begins again** - We suggest having a think about what kind of thing you would like to do, where in the world you would like to go, and the projects available. Also how you might need to prepare. International volunteering often requires some prior experience of volunteering and lots of research, preparation and fundraising, so you could use this time to your advantage.
- **Ask questions** - We are providing advice and information to any student interested in volunteering overseas. We know it's an uncertain time, and there are many complications to international volunteering at the best of times, so we are here to answer your questions and help you - [volunteers@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:volunteers@manchester.ac.uk).

- **Volunteer in the UK** - Lots of UK organisations will be in need of volunteers after such a challenging year, and you could gain valuable skills and experience with [international](#) or local organisations in readiness for volunteering abroad. Search [Volunteer Hub](#).

### 3. How can I prepare if I do want to volunteer abroad this year?

- **Think about your options** – Start with where in the world you do you want to go? What you would like to do there? And what motivates you to volunteer abroad? What is your comfort zone - do you prefer to stay somewhere comfortable with WiFi or are you ready to rough it sleeping in the rainforest?! Once you know what you would like to do you can work from there.
- **Consider your timeline and availability for the project as well as the preparation** – Volunteering overseas requires a lot of preparation! For a project taking place in the summer we advise signing up at least a few months in advance, to give yourself enough time to organise flights, vaccines, insurance etc. and to undertake any fundraising required. Think about the time it will take to complete all the tasks you need to prepare for your trip, and balance that against the time you have available, your studies and exams and other commitments.
- **Do your research** – Find out about the country and how it has been affected by the pandemic, for example if there are any restrictions on travelling there and the effect on healthcare infrastructure, safety and security. What is the impact on the opportunity you are interested in? Organisations should be able to provide you with up to date and transparent information about the effect of the pandemic on their projects and things to consider. Social and cultural activities may be affected by lockdowns, which could affect what you are able to do in your spare time. Other issues may still be at play, such as the potential for natural disasters, political instability etc., the risks of which can be further impacted in a pandemic.
- **Be prepared for a new way of travelling** - Check the pre-departure and entry requirements for the country you will be flying from, and the one you will be travelling into. If you would need to transit via another country you should check the situation and entry requirements there too. Check what local restrictions and rules are in place in-country. Bear in mind that things can change!
- **Be prepared for changes or cancellations** - Bear in mind that you will be travelling in the summer and things may change between signing up to a project and it taking place. Whether projects are able to go ahead depends on a whole host of factors, in the country you will be travelling from, your host-country and globally. And that's not just in relation to the pandemic (extreme weather events and other risks may still be present). All reputable organisations should have a 'what if things change?' policy that is easily available. Could you defer if you can't go this year, what happens to any fees paid or due?
- **Always get comprehensive travel insurance before booking anything**- It is important to have insurance in place prior to booking your place on a project or booking a flight. As boring as it might sound you should read the terms carefully (!) and be clear on what is and

isn't covered. This can help you being stung with losing your money if something changes or goes wrong.

- **Check the airline policies for flight changes and cancellations** - if you are booking flights make sure your ticket has flexibility and that you understand the policies for making changes or if the pandemic impacts on travel before you book.
- **Sign up to [FCDO](#) and other relevant (e.g. insurance company) alerts for your destination country** – this will help you to keep up to speed with any changes, pandemic related or otherwise in that country.
- **Meet other volunteers** - a good way to prepare for volunteering abroad is to meet others who have volunteered for the organisation previously. Many projects also run group projects so you could meet fellow volunteers who you could be volunteering alongside in-country.
- **Be prepared to postpone if you don't feel ready** - International volunteering *will* eventually get back to normal again and is likely to be a more exciting experience without the challenges that the pandemic poses. Volunteering remotely, or in the UK or your home country, is a great way to gain skills and experience before travelling many miles away to volunteer.

#### **In summary:**

- **Use this time wisely** - you can use the extra time while things are paused to your advantage and look into your options for when international volunteering is possible again. You can have conversations with the organisation and previous volunteers, researching the logistics, and the country and culture of your destination.
- **Embrace remote or UK volunteering opportunities** - this is a unique time and remote volunteering is a great way to make a difference overseas, gain valuable skills and experience and to learn about a different culture, without leaving home. It's a great way to engage and experience the benefits of volunteering internationally without the costs or challenges of travelling.
- **If you do want to travel abroad to volunteer** - do your research and prepare carefully using our points above. Seek the support and advice of the organisation and the University Volunteering Team.
- **Be flexible** - Be aware that things might change, and keep an open mind and back up options for if things do!

#### **Any other questions?**

Contact us on [volunteers@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:volunteers@manchester.ac.uk)

\*Please note that this information is likely to change throughout the year so keep an eye on [www.manchester.ac.uk/internationalvolunteering](http://www.manchester.ac.uk/internationalvolunteering) and follow us on social media @uomvolunteering