

BUDDY VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed for current students who are giving up their time as Buddy Volunteers. If you are NOT a Volunteer but are a new student, please refer to the 'Buddy information' handbook instead.

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Introduction

The Buddy Scheme is run by ENSA (Edinburgh Napier Student's Association) and helps new students settle into life at Edinburgh Napier University by pairing them with current students who provide support through regular meet ups and sharing their experiences. We believe that interaction with new students can greatly improve their experience at the University and that the Buddy Volunteer's role can help the transition to life at Edinburgh Napier.

We have created this handbook to help you understand your role as a buddy volunteer and provide you with essential information on how to interact with your buddy while also keeping yourself safe. Please read it all and keep it at hand in case you ever need to refer to it again.

We are really glad that you have chosen to be a Buddy and hope that you enjoy your experience. By becoming a buddy, you will be helping people, gaining some valuable skills and maybe also making new friends! We are here to help you in any way that we can, so please feel free to contact us with any questions or ideas at buddies@napierstudents.com

The aim of the buddy scheme is to

- Welcome new students to Edinburgh Napier University and helping them feel a sense of belonging.
- Help students settle into their new life in Edinburgh and include them in the community.
- Support students in navigating the city and what it has to offer.
- Improve student interaction and integration: strengthen the Napier community feeling.
- Increase access to practical information for students.
- Give students the opportunity to meet people from all walks of life and make new friends while at University.
- Generate tips and ideas on how to enjoy one's studies at Edinburgh Napier.

- Help students challenge themselves and make the most of their University experience by engaging with ENSA's sports & societies, events and representation.

Being a buddy

Most students looking for a Buddy are new to Edinburgh Napier University (for example 1st years, direct entrants from college and international students). However, any student who wants to get involved in the scheme may apply and be matched with a Buddy Volunteer.

As a Buddy Volunteer, you will help students settle into life at University. You will be matched with your Buddy and expected to interact with them during the time they feel they need a Buddy (this can be a few weeks to about a year). After being matched you will make email contact with your Buddy, and continue with regular communication and meet-ups (either virtual or socially distanced- whichever you are both comfortable with and in compliance with Covid-19 regulations).

As an Edinburgh Napier student, you are full of great tips and information for new students, but we don't expect you to know everything. We are here to help and point you in the direction of more information; the scheme is here to support you and your Buddy throughout.

Remember: You don't need to know everything! It's important to remember that you're there to be a friendly face **not** an info hub, expert, or life coach!

This is an informal scheme, but we do ask that Buddy Volunteers meet or communicate with their Buddies for a **minimum of one hour a week** for as long as your Buddy needs it. If you have any questions you can contact us at buddies@napierstudents.com

Your role - do's and don'ts

What we DO expect from you as a Buddy Volunteer:

- Welcome your Buddy to the University.
- Make regular contact with your Buddy (via your preferred method of communication) and be available for a minimum of an hour a week.
- Offer support and encouragement to your buddy.
- Offer tips about the University (the campuses, services and student culture) and the local area (accommodation, places to visit, things to do) to help your Buddy settle in and make the most of their time at Edinburgh Napier.
- Help your Buddy find activities they may be interested in, such as sports, societies and community action groups through ENSA or other organisations.
- Share your lived experience of life at Edinburgh Napier (if you feel comfortable).
- Respect confidentiality, unless you feel that your Buddy is a risk to themselves or others.
- Answer questions and signpost new students to relevant support services if necessary.
- Attend events with your Buddies to help them integrate into the Edinburgh Napier community and meet others (in compliance with Covid-19 regulations).
- Contact us at buddies@napierstudents.com if you or your Buddy are having any issues, such as not being able to contact each other.

What we DON'T expect from you:

- To pick up your Buddy from the airport/help them move in.
- Solve their personal/social problems.
- Put yourself in a situation where you feel uncomfortable.

- Proofread their University coursework or offer any kind of academic support.
- Offer money, skills, or an uncomfortable amount of your own personal time.

Supporting your buddy

Being an experienced student, you will know how hard it can be coming to a new city, not knowing anyone, and how difficult it can be making new friends. You know yourself that the first year (and sometimes afterwards too) is a rollercoaster when it comes to developing friendships and social circles and finding ‘your place’ at university.

Reflecting on your own experience will help you to understand how your Buddy may be feeling and will enable you to share some valuable tips with them. Encourage them to join societies, sports teams, community actions groups; attend socials, and be open and confident when approaching new people.

Part of your role is helping your Buddy know about the range of activities and services they can interact with, it’s important to offer and explain different options so that your Buddy can choose what is right for them. Some of your recommendations might not be what your Buddy likes or what suits them best so please keep this in mind when suggesting things to them.

Let your Buddy know that being proactive is a good way to make friends. Obviously, don’t force them into any situation they might feel uncomfortable, but encourage them to step outside of their comfort zone a little and make the most of their time here. Be kind and understanding, and someone they can trust. Let them know of all the ways they can join student groups on campus and help them where necessary to find information and support services.

Concerning Covid-19 guidelines, remember that you must follow the rules and advice set out by the Scottish Government as well as the University. There can be serious repercussions for you and your Buddy if you don’t follow the regulations.

Confidentiality

Confidentiality is the keeping of another person's information private. As a Buddy Volunteer you are placed in a position of trust. Your Buddy may confide personal information with you which we ask you not to share with other people.

However, there are limits to confidentiality, and you might need to speak up in order to protect your buddy. If your buddy mentions that they might be a risk of themselves or others - you must contact us at buddies@napierstudents.com.

If you are worried about your Buddy's immediate health please phone emergency services at 999.

Examples:

Your buddy mentions that they are living in an unsafe home environment - contact us at buddies@napierstudents.com and we will report the issue to the University's safeguarding manager.

Your buddy tells you that they have immediate plans and means to complete suicide - phone 999 immediately.

Of course, we hope that these situations don't occur, but we need you to know this information just in case.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding means protecting someone else's health, wellbeing and human rights.

There is a level of guidance and signposting we expect you will need to provide to new students, for example: *Which supermarkets offer good value?* However, you are not expected to provide any mental health counselling or deal with social or personal problems.

If a situation arises that you feel you cannot handle or should not handle, please contact us at buddies@napierstudents.com.

Signposting

A big part of your role will be signposting your Buddy to places they can get support or find activities that interest them. The University and ENSA websites have a wealth of information which will prove useful if you are looking for help and advice to signpost your new student to:

- **My Napier:** <https://my.napier.ac.uk/>
- **ENSA:** <https://www.napierstudents.com/>

Health, Wellbeing and Support

- **ENSA Advice**

Here to support any student with any problem: academic, financial, housing, welfare, visa, employment, and consumer. <https://www.napierstudents.com/advice/>
Email: ensa.advice@napier.ac.uk

- **University Wellbeing**

Free support to all enrolled students experiencing distress arising from psychological, emotional or mental health issues. <https://my.napier.ac.uk/wellbeing-support-and-inclusion/counselling-and-mental-wellbeing>

Email: counselling@napier.ac.uk

- **Report + Support**

Report and Support allows anyone who has experienced sexual violence, harassment, misconduct or any form of hate crime to report or disclose incidents to the University. The University has a zero-tolerance approach to any of these forms of misconduct and encourages reporting them. If you've been subjected to any form of misconduct, you can tell us either anonymously or by reporting to an adviser through Report and Support. You can also report on behalf of another student if you witness any form of misconduct. <https://reportandsupport.napier.ac.uk/>

- **Chaplaincy**

The Chaplains lead worship and run social and educational events. The Team is both ecumenical and multi-faith, serving various Christian traditions as well as the Muslim, Jewish and Buddhist communities:

<https://my.napier.ac.uk/wellbeing-support-and-inclusion/faith-spirituality-and-chaplaincy>

- **Campus Security**

Security staff are on campus 24 hours a day, every day, to ensure the safety of all students and staff: <https://my.napier.ac.uk/life-on-campus/lost-property-safety-and-security>

Tel: 0131 455 6119 (0131 455 4444 in emergencies)

Email: SecurityControl@napier.ac.uk

- **Edinburgh Nightline**

Confidential and non-judgmental listening service run by students for students. You can call about everything and anything: <https://ednightline.com/>

- **Samaritans**

Confidential service for anyone needing someone to talk to, available all day year round: www.samaritans.org

- **Registering with a Doctor**

If you haven't registered with a general medical practice yet: <https://www.nhsin-form.scot/care-support-and-rights/nhs-services/doctors/registering-with-a-gp-practice>

Academic Support

- **Programme Reps**

Reps act as the link between the student body, ENSA, and the University. Each position is there to represent you, and they are the first point of call for any suggestions,

comments or queries you have about your course: <https://www.napierstudents.com/studentrepresentation/programmereps/>

- **Personal Development Tutor (PDT):** <https://my.napier.ac.uk/your-studies/your-personal-development-tutor>
- **Academic issues:** <https://my.napier.ac.uk/your-studies/academic-issues>

Activities and things to do

- **ENSA:** <https://www.napierstudents.com>

ENSA supports a wide range of opportunities for students to get involved with including sports, societies, events and campaigns.

- **Things to do in Edinburgh:** <https://www.timeout.com/edinburgh>
- **Events In Edinburgh:** <https://www.theskinny.co.uk/whats-on/edinburgh>
- **Visit Scotland:** <https://www.visitscotland.com/>

Data protection

Data protection is a serious business and guidelines must be strictly followed. Under the Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (2018) individuals are as responsible for the information they collect and store as organisations. As a Buddy Volunteer you have a personal responsibility to ensure you are compliant.

This means all the contact information you receive from your Buddy should always remain confidential. You should not share any of their contact details of any kind (including Facebook name and mobile number) unless you have their consent. You will also need to let them know that you will not be sharing any information.

With regards to personal information, we do not expect you to share any more information with your Buddy other than your contact details. Please do not share bank details, passwords, personal account details etc. and do not allow your Buddy to disclose this information to you.

If you believe that there has been a data breach, you must let ENSA know straight away at dataprotection@napierstudents.com