

# Global Voices: Alumni Volunteer Information

## What is Global Voices?

Global Voices is designed to connect students moving to a new country with a University of Bristol alum (graduate) living in that region. Alumni can offer local advice, guidance and encouragement as students prepare to travel abroad.

This will primarily be through pre-travel conversations, either over video call or email/messages. You can help a student feel confident about settling into life in a new place, offering guidance and sharing experiences of living in the city/region they are heading to.

Where geography allows, and the students want to, we encourage students to meet up with their alumni buddy once they arrive in their new city.

Moving to a new country and culture can be daunting. You can provide extra social connection to help with getting to know the city and navigating new or different cultural and social norms.

**We are not asking you to provide academic support, formal mentoring, careers advice or support for wellbeing or mental health concerns.**

'I was feeling quite nervous about my year abroad. Global Voices was a really fantastic opportunity to meet some great people and find out more about the city or town you are going to! I had two alumni matches who were extremely helpful to me. I had two email exchanges, finding out information on accommodation (areas to live), cultural and social activities, and things going on in Toulouse.'

Student participant, 2025

## How it works

The programme is flexible and we don't want to take up too much of your time. Therefore, we are suggesting a minimum commitment, and if you would like to do more than this then you are very welcome to do so.

We encourage the students to own the relationship and initiate conversations, but they may need some encouragement or prompting.

- After you have been introduced to your match we expect that you will:
  - **Send a more detailed email to introduce yourself in your own words.** You may want to tell your student buddy more about who you are, where you live and a provide more information about your time at Bristol.

- **Arrange a mutually convenient time to have a conversation** over the phone or video call. We recommend that the students prepare questions for this meeting, but you could speak to them about your city/region, food and drink, things to see and do, public transport, local holidays or celebrations, the weather....
- If your student buddy seems unsure, you may want to offer the option of another conversation or future messages if they might have other questions.
  - Your match may contact you ad-hoc with questions. If you are unable to help them or don't have the time to respond to repeated contact, feel free to direct them to another source of information or support where appropriate (see below). If your match would like more contact than you are able to offer, please let us know as we may be able to find them an additional match.
- Your student buddy may ask if they can arrange to meet up in-person with you, once they have arrived in their new city. However, this will be dependent on lots of things, not least geography, so don't be disappointed if your buddy doesn't suggest this.

'We corresponded early on, with an email exchange or two, and then the exchange dropped. I can only assume she is doing well. If she wants to reach out, she knows where to find me.'

Alumni volunteer, 2025

You are welcome to offer that your student can get back in touch with you if they have questions or decide they would like to meet up

- Let us have your feedback on your experience in the programme.

## Expenses

We are unable to cover expenses for programme participants, so if you do decide to meet up, any paid activities should be agreed and covered by individuals. We do not expect alumni volunteers to cover costs for their match. It is therefore a good idea to chat about budgets and expectations around any costs of meeting up before arranging anything. Can your match afford transport costs if you want to meet up outside of walking distance from their accommodation? Would they feel happy if you decided to stop for a drink or some food?

## Feedback

We're always keen to hear whether matches have been successful and if the programme has had an impact. We'll check in by email during the programme to see how things are going and ask you for your feedback at the end. We love hearing your stories and seeing your photos!

If things aren't working, then the sooner you can let us know the better – please don't wait for the end of the programme to let us know that no-one ever replied to your messages. We will do our best to address any issues and get things back on track. You can email us at [alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk).

'I think my student buddy was a great match! We shared interest in Translation and I was able to help her with administrative processes and give her advice on what courses to take. She is very friendly and easy to hang out with. I am pleased to call her a new international friend of mine.

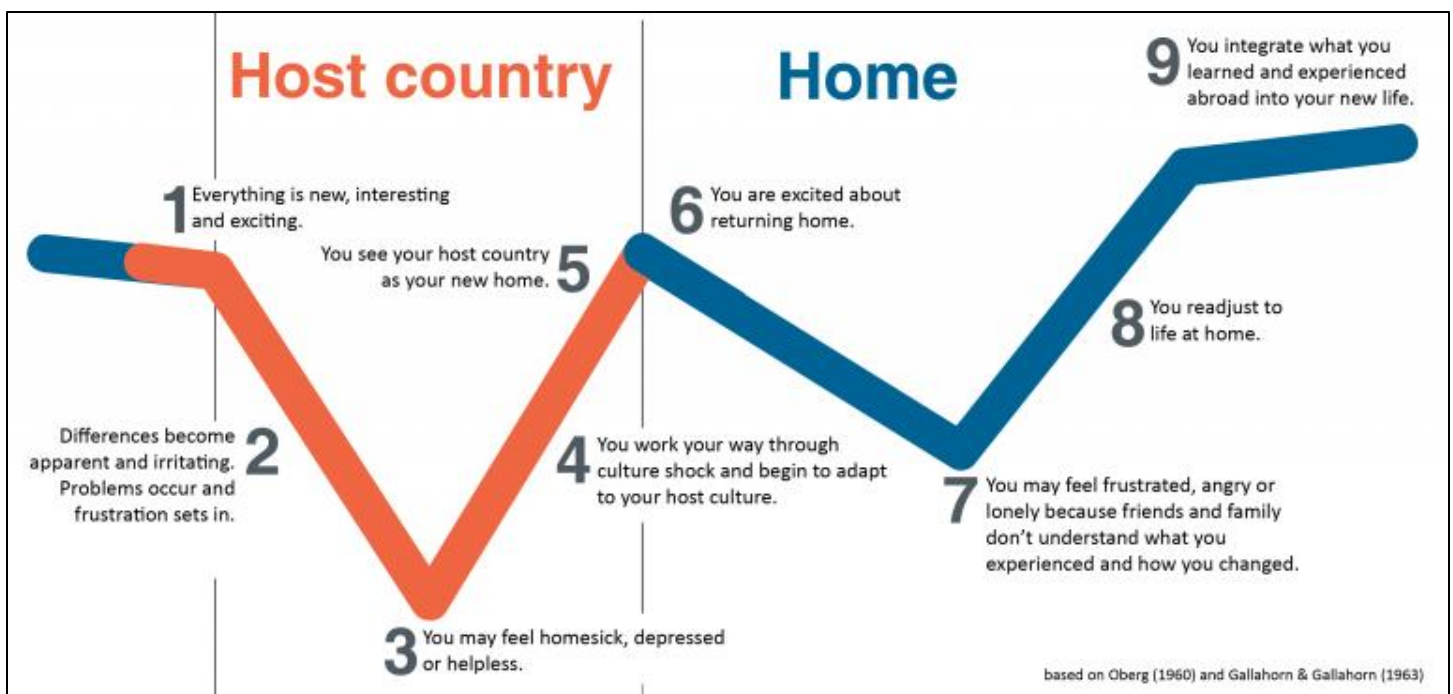
I am also very grateful for these kinds of programmes because they keep me in touch with my time at the University of Bristol which, even though it was short, I remember very dearly and will do my entire life. Thank you!

Alumni volunteer, 2025

## Culture Shock

You might find this short video helpful: the [Cultural Adaptation Cycle](#) (4 mins 43 secs).

Feelings of culture shock are very common, even for people who have lived away from home before; indeed you may have experienced this yourself. In your conversations you can reassure them that their feelings are normal! It's helpful to be aware of what is sometimes referred to as the W curve of adjustment:



## Confidentiality

- The information you provided on your application form will be used and stored in line with our [privacy policy](#).
- The relationship between alumni volunteers and their match is intended to be friendly, informal, and social. The relationship relies on trust between participants. This means treating all personal details shared with you confidentially, and not sharing this information with anyone else.
- However, if you believe that your match is at risk, or they tell you anything that concerns you, you must share this information with us so that we can ensure they get the right support. You should not promise that you can keep concerns secret and you should let them know wherever possible if you are discussing any concerns with us.

## Handling issues and concerns

The programme is run by the alumni team. Please keep in touch with any feedback, questions or advice using [alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk) in the first instance. If you need a response more quickly, the following information may be useful.

### **I am concerned about a current student:**

You should not be providing any emotional or wellbeing support for your match. If you have concerns about a student, you must get in touch with the Bristol Abroad team directly as soon as possible.

The Bristol Abroad team can be reached at:

E-mail: [bristol-abroad@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:bristol-abroad@bristol.ac.uk)

Tel: +44 (0)117 455 0244

If the student you are paired with needs assistance, please ask them to refer to the Bristol Abroad Blackboard site which has links to all available academic and pastoral support from Bristol as well as a plethora of practical information. If the concern is about an issue at their local university, they may also want to contact the Study Abroad/Exchange team there.

If the emergency is not life-threatening but is serious and needs attention quickly, find out where to get help on our [emergency help pages](#), including a link to crisis phone lines around the world.

### **I am unwell or can no longer volunteer:**

If during this programme you become unwell, please let us know. We can let your match know and, if necessary, find a replacement match. Please let us know if at any point you can no longer volunteer for any reason.

**My match is not behaving appropriately:**

All participants have agreed to abide by a code of conduct which you can find at the end of this document. If you feel they are not behaving appropriately and you feel comfortable to do so, speak to them directly about this and remind them of the terms of the agreement. If you have further concerns, please get in touch with us, [alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:alumni-volunteers@bristol.ac.uk).

**My match has raised concerns about me:**

We want volunteering for the University to be safe and productive for all involved. If concerns are raised about you, we will follow our [problem solving process](#). The University has a duty of care for its students and reserves the right to remove volunteers from the programme for any reason.

**My match is not responding to contact:**

Bristol Voices is an extra resource for students. If your match no longer communicates with you there could be any number of reasons and it doesn't mean you have done anything wrong. All parties can withdraw at any point without giving reason – the most important thing is to let us know so that we can check in on them.

**Code of conduct**

As a participant in the University of Bristol 'Global Bristol Voices' programme, I understand and agree to observe the following principles:

1. I am involved freely and voluntarily and will respect the contribution and time of all participants.
2. I will treat conversations with programme participants confidentially and will treat personal details shared with me confidentially; unless there is reason to believe that a participant is at risk to themselves or others. I understand that in this case, information may be shared with appropriate University of Bristol staff and/or external agencies. I agree to contact University of Bristol staff if I have concerns of this nature.
3. I understand that once I am matched, I will work with my new contact(s) to discuss and agree our expectations for each being part of the programme.
4. Whilst the purpose of the programme is social, it is expected that the relationships between contacts made in the programme are platonic.
5. I will respect the views and opinions of others and will not discriminate against any other participant. I agree to contribute to a community free from discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.

6. As a member of the University community, I will maintain the highest standard of behaviour and conduct.

7. I can cease contact with my match(es) at any time, without giving a reason. In this case, I will inform a member of staff as soon as possible. If I choose to stay in touch with my contact(s) beyond the duration of the programme, this will be considered a personal choice and will not be under the arrangement of the University.

8. I will refer to University of Bristol staff should any problems arise.

9. I understand that no expenses can be provided for participation in the programme; any costs for expenses incurred when meeting with my match should be agreed with them and would normally be covered by the individual. To communicate with my match I should use free platforms such as Skype, Zoom or WhatsApp or calls that are included in an existing package.

10. I confirm that I have read, and agree to abide by Alumni Code of Conduct ([www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/contact-us/code-of-conduct/](http://www.bristol.ac.uk/alumni/contact-us/code-of-conduct/)).