

Completing an application form – guidance notes

1. All our current volunteering opportunities are listed on our website, and we only accept applications for those we have listed – we don't accept speculative applications. Please state which **role you are applying for** in the box at the top of the application form. If you are not sure which role would be most suitable for you, do contact a member of the volunteering team to discuss your options before completing your form. You can find their contact details on the website.
2. Write (or type) your **contact details** as clearly as possible to avoid delays in your application being processed. We send out most of our information via email, so please let us know your email address. If you don't have one, please tick the appropriate box to indicate your preferred method of communication.
3. Do let us know **how you heard about volunteering with WWT**. It helps us to know which advertising routes work best so that we can focus on the methods that are most effective.
4. Please tell us, in a sentence or two, **what you hope to get from your volunteering role**. Our volunteers come to us for a variety of reasons. Are you looking to gain skills for a new career? Do you want to make new friends? Do you work in an office all week and want to be more active at the weekend? Knowing what has motivated you can help us to ensure your volunteering experience is a positive one.
5. Tell us, in a couple of paragraphs, **why you think you are suited to the role you have chosen**. Our volunteer role descriptions are set out in a standard format that tells you, among other things:
 - What you will be doing (the activities you will carry out)
 - Who we are looking for (the skills or experience you will need to do the role)

When you come to complete this part of the form, think about things you have done in the past, or things you are good at, that match those in the role description. They don't have to be things you have done in a working environment. The examples you use could come from clubs and societies you have joined, study at school, university or evening classes; holiday or part-time jobs; holidays and travel, or personal and family experiences.

We want to encourage as many people as possible to volunteer with us so (with the exception of a few technical roles) we don't ask for formal qualifications or specific experience. Most of our roles can be carried out by anyone with an interest in our work and some good **people skills**.

What do we mean by 'people skills'? First and foremost, you need to like people, of all ages! We spend a lot of our time explaining our work to our visitors, including lots of children. For this, you need to be sociable; good at listening to people, and able to get your point across clearly and quickly. You also need to be good at noticing the

effect on your audience of what you say – and how you say it – and be able to adjust the way you communicate to ensure you are understood.

6. We only need to know **your qualifications** if we have asked for specific qualifications in the role description. For example, some of our online roles ask for a good working knowledge of certain software; or our research roles will need you to have carried out academic work in the past.
7. For many of our roles, volunteers participate in a rota to provide cover throughout the week. Please indicate your **availability** so that we can match you to any open time slots. Let us know all the times you could be available on a regular basis, but be realistic about the *total* amount of time you want to commit. (We recognise that life gets in the way of volunteering at times, and if you need to take the occasional day off for family or holiday commitments, that's fine, but as a rule we would expect you to honour any regular volunteering commitment you make).
8. Let us know when you are **available to start** volunteering. If there are no restrictions to when you start, just put 'as soon as possible'.
9. Can you volunteer on your own, or would you need someone to volunteer alongside you? If you feel you would need **additional support to carry out your volunteering role**, please use this space to describe what you would need. We regret that we can't provide a staff member to work alongside you on a day-to-day basis, but if you have a companion you can bring with you every time you volunteer, we will be happy to look at whether we have a role that would be suitable for you. Your companion would need to register with us as a volunteer too.
10. To ensure you will be volunteering safely, we need to know about any **health conditions** you have. Any information you provide will be treated in confidence, but if necessary it will be used in risk assessing the role you wish to be considered for. If you would prefer to discuss health conditions in person, please note this in the space provided on the form.
11. Having a **criminal record** will not necessarily bar you from volunteering with WWT, although it may restrict the roles we ask you to carry out. Some of the volunteering roles we offer are subject to a criminal records disclosure (a DBS check). Please use the space provided to tell us about any unspent criminal convictions and when they occurred. If you would prefer to discuss this in person, please note this in the space provided on the form. Any information you provide will be treated in strictest confidence.

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with WWT. We look forward to receiving your application. Once we have received it, we will send you a quick message to let you know that it's reached us. We will be in touch again within two weeks to let you know the progress of your application.

If you have any questions in the meantime, or want to find out about the progress of your application, please email us in the first instance.