

The University of Melbourne

Volunteer Policy

28 April 2010

1. Overview

The University appreciates the contribution of its volunteers.

The University seeks to ensure that all volunteers are well-supported and safe in their dealings with the University. Volunteer management at the University aims to comply with the national standards for involving volunteers in not-for-profit organisations produced by [Volunteering Australia](#).

2. Scope

The University Volunteer Policy applies to all Volunteers who contribute to the University and its activities.

3. Definitions

The University means The University of Melbourne.

Volunteer: someone recruited by the University in a volunteer capacity and who gives his or her time and expertise, freely and without monetary compensation, in order to contribute to an aspect of the University community. Volunteers may include staff members, students, alumni and members of the public.

Volunteer Coordinators: staff members who manage volunteer programs, including the recruitment, training, supervision and support of Volunteers.

Volunteer Position Description: either a generic or specific statement of the duties and responsibilities of a Volunteer.

Volunteer Agreement: an Agreement signed by the Volunteer intended to formalise the relationship between the University and the Volunteer. A Volunteer Agreement must be signed if a Volunteer requires access to confidential material.

4. Policy Principles/Procedure

4.1 Establishment of Volunteer Programs

- a) Volunteers will not be used to substitute for the work of paid employees nor threaten the livelihood of any University employee.
- b) Volunteers are not employees of the University and are not subject to award and industrial conditions.
- c) All volunteer programs will have an identified Volunteer Coordinator and Volunteer Position Description.

4.2 Recruitment of Volunteers

- (a) The recruitment and selection of Volunteers will be in accordance with the University's commitment to equal opportunity and relevant legislation.
- (b) The University recognises that Volunteers offer their services in response to a wide variety of motivations and therefore have varying requirements in terms of the type of volunteer role and the support required to undertake that role.
- (c) The University will undertake assessment of the suitability of potential Volunteers including pre-placement checks.
 - Where volunteer work will involve contact with children under the age of 18 years the volunteer will need to apply for a *Working with Children (WWC) Check*. The WWC Check is a mandatory minimum checking standard across Victoria. For further information visit www.justice.vic.gov.au/workingwithchildren
 - A [Police Check](#) may be required for some roles, as determined by the organisational unit responsible for the relevant volunteer program or placement.
- (d) Volunteers may be required to sign a Volunteer Agreement to formalise their volunteer status.
- (e) Volunteers will provide personal information to their respective Volunteer Coordinator to identify themselves, provide emergency contact details and inform the University of any health conditions which may have consequences for their particular role as volunteer. All information gathered from individual Volunteers will be handled in accordance with the [University's Privacy Policy](#).

4.3 Management of Volunteers

- (a) The University will ensure that Volunteers have adequate information, training and resources to undertake their tasks, including undertaking an induction program.
- (b) Administrative and academic areas with volunteer programs will ensure adequate financial resources are provided to support volunteer programs and placements with necessary training, material and the reimbursement of agreed out of pocket expenses.
- (c) Volunteers will undertake their duties in accordance with all reasonable and lawful instructions of the relevant Volunteer Coordinator or other supervising staff member, and with respect to all relevant University policies and procedures.
- (d) Volunteers who, in the course of their duties, have access to personal information must abide by the University Privacy Policy.
- (e) Volunteers will be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement each time they are given access to confidential material (volunteers who are given access to confidential material must also have signed a Volunteer Agreement).
- (f) The University will be responsible for resolving any grievances that arise in relation to a Volunteer. Grievances that cannot be resolved with the assistance of the Volunteer Coordinator should involve the relevant faculty or administrative department manager.
- (g) Volunteer Coordinators will ensure that the contributions of Volunteers are documented. Consolidated records of Volunteer work should be reported to the relevant senior manager of the relevant organisational unit responsible for the volunteer program or placement.
- (h) If a Volunteer becomes aware that they will be unable to undertake their volunteering duties because of any reason, they are requested to inform the appropriate Volunteer Coordinator or other supervisor of their absence as soon as possible.

- (i) The University may terminate a volunteer placement or program at any time. The University would appreciate being advised as soon as possible of a Volunteer's intention to conclude his or her volunteering arrangements with the University.

4.4 Occupational Health and Safety

- (a) Volunteers are covered by the Victorian *Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2004* even though they are not employees. Section 23: *Duties of employers to other persons, states:*
 - (1) *An employer must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that persons other than employees of the employer are not exposed to risks to their health or safety arising from the conduct of the undertaking of the employer.*
- (b) The head of the organisational unit responsible for the volunteer program or placement is responsible for ensuring that all Volunteers receive adequate induction on Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) responsibilities and local rules, First Aid and Emergency/Evacuation information as well as clear instructions of the need to comply with the Organisational Unit's relevant EH&S policy and procedures commensurate with the hazards and risks to which Volunteers may be exposed.
- (c) Volunteers shall report any EHS incident and/or hazard to their Volunteer Coordinator or the manager of the work area as soon as reasonably practicable.

4.5 Insurance

All Volunteers engaged in approved activities are covered by the University of Melbourne's Insurance Program under the following classes of insurance:

- a) **Public Liability**
Where the Volunteer is held to be legally liable for causing personal injury and property damage in connection with their University of Melbourne approved volunteer activities;
- b) **Personal Accident**
All Volunteers (Aged 16 years up to 85 years) are automatically covered for "non-Medicare" medical expenses and ancillary benefits, under this no-fault policy, for an "injury" sustained during and in the course of undertaking their approved University of Melbourne voluntary work. This insurance provides similar cover to private health funds, such as hospital and ancillary benefits.

Due to government legislation, direct medical expenses which involve a Medicare "item no" cannot be insured by this policy. This is due to Australian Federal Government Legislation, specifically section 67 of the *National Health Act 1953*, as amended, which does not permit "Insurers" to rebate these expenses. Therefore, if a Volunteer is not treated by a medical practitioner who 'bulk-bills' for their services, they will be "out of pocket" for any shortfall that arises between the medical service charge and Medicare's "schedule fee", commonly referred to as the "Medicare Gap".

- c) **Professional Indemnity**
All Volunteers engaged in approved activities are covered by University of Melbourne's Professional Indemnity Insurance, where they are held to be legally liable arising out of any negligent act, error or omission in the conduct of University of Melbourne's professional business.

4.6 Recognition of Volunteers

- (a) Volunteer Coordinators should undertake a range of activities to ensure that Volunteers are recognised for their contribution to the University community.
- (b) Volunteer service will be recorded on the Volunteer's individual record on the University's Advance database

5. Responsibilities

- (a) Volunteer Coordinators are responsible for ensuring new Volunteers receive a copy of this Policy and have access to other applicable Policies of the University.
- (b) The Advancement Office is responsible for ensuring that this Policy is placed on the University Policies site.
- (c) All staff members and volunteers are responsible for adhering to the provisions of this Policy.

Any person who requires assistance in understanding any aspect of this document should contact the Advancement Office on + 61 3 8344 1751.