

Student Volunteering Policy

Section 1 - Purpose / Objectives

(1) Victoria University encourages and supports student volunteering as an important aspect of the University's plan to be 'excellent, engaged and accessible'. Volunteering provides valuable opportunities for students to develop their skills and capabilities and to engage positively with their peers, the university and the community.

(2) This Policy's purpose is to:

- a. Define 'volunteering' as distinct from work which should be paid.
- b. Set out the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, and Victoria University's responsibilities to volunteers.

Section 2 - Scope / Application

(3) This Policy applies to:

- a. All students, enrolled in any program on any campus of the University, who undertake volunteer work for the University, via a VU-affiliated student club, or as part of a volunteer program within the broader community and facilitated by Victoria University.

(4) This Policy does not apply to:

- a. Placements that students undertake as part of Work Integrated Learning and for course credit such as internships and vocational placements.
- b. Staff undertaking volunteer work at VU.

Section 3 - Definitions

(5) Volunteering: The following definition uses Volunteering Australia's Definition of Formal Volunteering.

(6) Formal volunteering is an activity which takes place through not for profit organisations or projects and is undertaken:

- a. to be of benefit to the community and the volunteer;
- b. of the volunteer's own free will and without coercion;
- c. for no direct financial payment; and
- d. in designated volunteer positions only

(7) This does not preclude the provision to volunteers of meals, travel and expense reimbursement and other agreed out of pocket expenses in a manner in accordance with the University's [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Policy](#) and [Gifts, Benefits and Hospitality Procedure](#).

Section 4 - Policy Statement

(8) Victoria University encourages students to undertake volunteering via a number of mechanisms including leadership and volunteering programs such as the 'Vollies', involvement in clubs and societies, and community volunteering opportunities advertised via Career Hub.

(9) The intent of this Policy is to ensure that student volunteering for, or facilitated by, VU is genuine volunteer work, upholds volunteer rights and makes clear their responsibilities.

Part A - Volunteer Programs, Recruitment and Selection

(10) Volunteer work will not be used as a substitute for paid employment nor threaten the availability of paid work for any University employee.

(11) Volunteers are not employees of the University and are therefore not subject to staff award and industrial conditions.

(12) All volunteer programs will have a designated Volunteer Coordinator for volunteers to report to and seek guidance from.

(13) All volunteer positions will have a clear statement of the duties of the role.

(14) Volunteer recruitment and selection will occur in accordance with the University's equal opportunity and anti-discrimination principles, and relevant state and federal equal opportunity legislation.

(15) The University may undertake pre-placement checks of potential volunteers, to determine suitability for specific roles. In particular, this includes:

(16) Where volunteer work includes anticipated one on one contact with people under 18 years of age, the volunteer must apply for a Working With Children check.

(17) A Police Check, if the Volunteer Coordinator determines it is required for the particular role.

(18) Volunteers will be provided with access to this and all other relevant policies.

(19) Volunteers are required to sign a Volunteer Agreement to clarify expectations and formalise their status as a volunteer.

Part B - Management of Volunteers

(20) Volunteers will be provided with adequate information, induction, training, support, supervision and resources to undertake their designated tasks.

(21) Volunteers will be reimbursed for agreed out of pocket expenses. Expenses, including, if relevant, a ceiling amount, must be agreed in advance with the Volunteer Co-ordinator.

(22) The Volunteer Coordinator will ensure that all volunteer work takes place in a healthy, safe environment and that all relevant risk assessments have taken place and risk management procedures adhered to. Volunteer work must take place within a framework that complies with the University's [Health and Safety Policy](#) and [Risk Management Policy](#).

(23) Volunteers will notify the Volunteer Coordinator of any illness, medical condition or injury which may affect their volunteering capabilities. If injury / illness occurred as a result of volunteer activities, the Volunteer Co-ordinator must

complete an incident report form, a copy of which must be forwarded to the OHS team.

(24) Volunteers' personal information will be kept confidential, in accordance with the [Privacy Policy](#). Where a volunteer has access to confidential material as part of their work, they will be asked to abide by the [Privacy Policy](#) and sign a Confidentiality Agreement as part of their Volunteer Agreement.

(25) Volunteers will undertake their tasks in accordance with the reasonable instructions of the Volunteer Coordinator, and in accordance with all relevant University [policies and procedures](#).

(26) Any grievances either raised by a Volunteer, or against a Volunteer, which cannot be dealt with by the immediate supervisor or Volunteer Coordinator, will be dealt with according to the [Student Complaints Policy](#) and [Student Complaints Procedure](#), or, if relevant, the [Student Misconduct Regulations 2014](#) and [Student Misconduct Procedure](#).

(27) VU may terminate a Volunteer program, or engagement of an individual volunteer, at its discretion and/or if a volunteer fails to comply with this Policy or other related policies or legislation.

Part C - Volunteer Rewards and recognition

(28) Volunteer Coordinators will ensure that Volunteer contributions are recorded and recognized. Recognition and rewards are not a substitute for wages but are intended to express thanks and respect for the work of Volunteers.

(29) VU will provide all volunteers with a written statement of their participation as a volunteer on request.

Part D - Insurance

(30) Student Volunteers are covered by the University's Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance policies for volunteering activities organised by, approved by or under the direction of VU.

(31) Intentional, wilful or illegal acts on the part of a Volunteer that cause damage are excluded from Public Liability insurance cover.

(32) Other exclusions may apply to insurance coverage. The Volunteer Co-ordinator will obtain advice from the University's Insurance Manager as appropriate regarding coverage of particular activities.

Part E - Students volunteering for external organisations

(33) Where students undertake volunteer work for an external organisation under the auspices of a VU program, or advertised via VU tools such as the Vollies program or Career Hub, the relevant VU staff members will take reasonable steps to determine that:

- a. the organisation fulfills the above conditions in relation to volunteer recruitment, management, health and safety before involving VU students; and
- b. the opportunity is a genuine volunteer arrangement and not simply unpaid work.

(34) External volunteering bodies may advertise volunteering opportunities to VU students only with prior approval from VU staff. VU reserves the right to refuse to advertise opportunities that do not fulfil the above conditions.

(35) Students independently undertaking volunteer work at a community organisation without formal links to any VU program are responsible for checking whether the organisation has adequate volunteer management and support practices in place before deciding to take on a volunteer role.

(36) Where volunteer placements involve financially onerous obligations, students are advised to make their own enquiries in order to decide if this type of placement is suitable for them.

(37) The Vollies Program and Career Development and Employment Services can advise staff and students on the suitability of opportunities.

Section 5 - Procedures

(38) Nil

Section 6 - Guidelines

(39) Nil

Status and Details

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