

Staff Volunteering Policy

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1. Introduction

We understand the importance of community engagement in making a positive impact beyond our workplace. Volunteering provides a valuable opportunity to support the work of charities and organisations within the community. We recognise the many benefits of staff volunteering, which can include:

- Sharing of expertise and knowledge
- Supporting the University Values
- Positive role modelling for young people
- Development of the skills of our staff
- Improving community relations
- Demonstrating the University's commitment as a socially progressive employer

This policy outlines the different types of volunteering that are supported by the University and time off arrangements. It also sets out the application and approval process that should be followed.

Please note, if this policy refers to additional guidance, FAQs, online forms, or training, these are accessible to University colleagues on our [People Hub](#).

2. Who is Covered by This Policy?

This policy applies to all members of University staff.

3. What Time Off is Available?

- You can take a total of 2 days (14 hours) paid volunteering leave per annual leave year. We're flexible in how you use volunteering leave; it can be taken as one continuous block or as several blocks spread across the annual leave year.
- If you're part time, the amount of leave you can take is pro-rated and will be rounded to the nearest hour. For example, if you work 20 hours (0.6 FTE) then you'll be entitled to 9 hours volunteering leave.
- If you want to do a volunteering activity with a commitment of more than 14 hours, then unpaid leave, annual leave or working back the time are options which can be used to cover the additional time, subject to approval by your Head of Department/ School or manager.

- This policy applies to volunteering activities which take place during normal working hours. Any volunteering that is outside of your normal working hours isn't covered by this policy.
- This policy doesn't cover volunteering for public duties such as participating in school governing bodies, membership of Children's panel and so on. This is covered by our [Time Off for Public Duties Policy](#).

4. Types of Volunteering

Staff volunteering is usually organised by an individual staff member as a personal volunteering opportunity. However, sometimes the University may coordinate a volunteering activity and offer teams or individuals the opportunity to take part.

Some examples of activities that can be undertaken are:

- Community care work
- Environmental work and conservation projects
- Team based projects such as community gardening or decorating a community area.

Any activities which cannot be shown to benefit the community or don't align with our Values will not qualify under this scheme. Please see our [Staff Volunteering FAQs](#) (staff login required) for more information.

5. How Do I Apply for Volunteering Leave?

If you're interested in volunteering, speak to your manager to discuss what's involved and what time off you might need.

You should do this as soon as possible but ideally at least 4 weeks before the start of the volunteering activity. Leave must be agreed with your manager before you take it.

You'll also need to complete a [Volunteering Leave Application Form](#) (staff login required) and, in certain circumstances, a risk assessment too.

6. Health and Safety

The organisation hosting the volunteering is responsible for ensuring appropriate health and safety standards are met and should carry out a risk assessment which covers the volunteering activities to be undertaken. The organisation can either complete its own risk assessment template or use the [HSE template](#).

If you've organised your own personal volunteering opportunity, please ensure that these requirements have been met before undertaking the activity.

Where you have organised a volunteering activity on behalf of staff, you should ensure that a copy of the risk assessment is provided and reviewed properly.

7. Insurance

To ensure our staff are properly looked after, it is essential that the organisation where you're volunteering has appropriate public/employers' liability insurance in place. For both University and individually organised volunteering, the organiser of the activity should ensure that this is in place prior to the start of the volunteering activity.

8. Expenses

We wouldn't normally expect you to incur any additional expenses during volunteering activities. However, if there are out of pocket expenses then please speak to the organisation hosting the volunteering who may be able to provide reimbursement.

9. Further Information and Support

If you have any queries about the staff volunteering policy, you may find our FAQs helpful. You can also talk to your manager or contact [Human Resources](#).

10. Policy Review

This policy is reviewed by Human Resources on a regular basis. To see when the next review is due, please see our [Policy Review Schedule](#) (staff login required) on our People Hub.