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# Volunteer Coordinators Handbook

March 2025

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history.**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION TO VOLUNTEER COORDINATION

## 1.1 Aim

This handbook presents a practical and logical approach to implementing the university's volunteer management procedures and underpins the principles of the [University's Volunteer Policy](#).

Volunteer coordination at the university aims to comply with the [national standards](#) for Involving Volunteers in Not-for-profit Organisations produced by Volunteering Australia.

## 1.2 Volunteer Group Support

The Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator works within the Division of External Engagement and is responsible for developing, maintaining and realising the benefits of effective University-wide coordination of volunteering and providing advice and assistance to volunteer coordinators across the University. The Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator provides ongoing support in volunteer management for best practice, as well as training and support with the centralised volunteer register.

## 1.3 Volunteer Coordinators Committee

The committee was set up in 2002 to produce a policy on volunteering at the University and develop guidelines for areas wishing to establish a volunteer group. All new local area volunteer programs must be registered with the university's volunteer program through the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator and have an identified volunteer coordinator. All volunteer coordinators are invited to attend regular committee meetings to discuss volunteer management in accordance with the University volunteer policy.

## 1.4 Volunteer policy

The recent [volunteer policy](#) was approved by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and President (External Engagement) on 6 October 2023, and provides an approved framework for the coordination and involvement of volunteers throughout the university community. The university will provide insurance for volunteers in accordance with university's volunteer [insurance guide](#).

## 1.5 Scope of the policy

The policy applies to all volunteers, volunteer coordinators and university staff and students who contribute to the university's volunteer program. However, each area, faculty or division using volunteers has the responsibility for:

- developing a volunteer program specific to their need
- adopting guidelines and practices consistent with the policy to maximise the potential of their volunteers
- creating and maintaining records to document procedures and providing periodic reports on activities
- identifying a Volunteer Coordinator who is a university staff member
- that the work undertaken by the volunteers is on behalf of the university and is not taking place of a paid employee of the university
- responsibility for recruitment and selection of volunteers in accordance with the approved volunteer role description
- collecting personal information from their volunteers that identifies them, provide emergency contact details and informs the university of any health conditions which may impact upon their role as a volunteer
- maintain accurate volunteer information in the central volunteer register
- ensure that volunteers sign an agreement with the university to document their volunteer role

- ensure that the volunteers have adequate information, training and resources to undertake their tasks
- provide a safe working environment and systems of work for the volunteers including a Health Safety and Wellbeing induction
- provide an annual report of volunteer hours to the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator
- ensure there is adequate financial resources provided to support the volunteers for necessary training materials and the reimbursement of agreed out of pocket expenses as per the Financial Expenditure Authorities.
- ensure that payment of an honorary reward for voluntary services does not exceed \$300 and should be paid as a lump sum payment only. Please refer to the [University Volunteer Policy](#) regarding honorarium procedures.
- undertake a range of local activities to ensure that volunteers are recognised for their valuable contribution to the university community.
- and the volunteer group signs an agreement with the External Engagement Division to adhere to the above responsibilities.

## 2. ESTABLISHING A VOLUNTEER GROUP

### 2.1 First steps

Local areas who are thinking about setting up a volunteer group should contact the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator on x33354 or [volunteer@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:volunteer@adelaide.edu.au) in the first instance.

The local area is responsible for the development and implementation of their specific volunteer group and should therefore identify a staff member to take on the role of Volunteer Coordinator. We recommend reading the responsibilities of a Volunteer Coordinator below (refer to point 2.2).

Once a Volunteer Coordinator has been identified they should complete a [Volunteer Group Registration Form](#) that outlines the volunteer group's mission and must be signed by their Branch/Division Management. When developing a volunteer group the [rights of the volunteer](#) and a [volunteer role description](#) (refer to point 3.1) and [volunteer risk assessment](#) (refer to point 5.4) should be included.

### 2.2 Volunteer Coordinators Role

The Volunteer Coordinator is the staff member responsible for maintaining and implementing an area's volunteer group and ensuring;

- volunteer role descriptions are approved by the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator
- volunteers are registered with External Engagement Division
- volunteers under their program have adequate information, training and resources to undertake their tasks
- volunteers are informed of all relevant health, safety and wellbeing (HSW) issues surrounding their work including induction, training, hazard management and all other relevant processes outlined in the HSW policy & handbook
- volunteers are aware of and have access to all relevant University policies and an awareness of where their area fits within the University's organisational structure
- attendance times of each volunteer are recorded
- provide annual volunteer statistics to the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator for the annual report
- new program details, role descriptions or changes to volunteer numbers are provided to the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator.

### 3. VOLUNTEER ROLES & RECRUITMENT

#### 3.1 Volunteer Role Description

A [volunteer role description](#) for all volunteers is of critical importance. The role description:

- raises the status of the volunteer
- establishes the role of the volunteer within the organisation and in relation to paid staff
- determines parameters of the tasks and duties associated with the role
- indicates the requirements of orientation and training programs for volunteers
- raises issues of risk management and health, safety and wellbeing which may need to be addressed
- provides the basis for performance review and evaluation
- can be useful in the process of discipline and dismissal
- defines the appropriateness of a task
- defines lines of accountability
- role descriptions should be concise, reflect the essence of the role and contain:
  - role title
  - key purpose and responsibilities
  - skills qualifications, qualities, knowledge and licence requirements
  - location, day and time details
  - orientation and training requirements
  - benefits such as making professional and social contacts
  - details about the volunteer's line supervisor.

#### 3.2 Advertising volunteer roles

Volunteer roles can be advertised through many channels maintained by the External Engagement Division including: the volunteer [website](#), social media, newsletters, Volunteer Coordinators' Network, as well as more broadly through Volunteering SA&NT, Northern Volunteering, Seek Volunteering and GoVolunteer. Please contact the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator to advertise through these channels or for further information.

#### 3.3 Information Sessions

Some volunteer groups may benefit from holding an information session for interested volunteers so they can learn more about the volunteer program before they apply for a volunteer role. This can assist with setting expectations about the volunteer roles and for potential volunteers to familiarise themselves with the volunteer group's mission and goals.

#### 3.4 Interviews

Larger volunteer groups may find it useful to coordinate group interviews while others may prefer one-to-one. Either way it is important to develop a list of questions so that each interview has a consistent format. These questions focus on the skills needed for the volunteer role, to clarify expectations and organisational fit. A [template](#) has been provided for you as an example of the type of questions you may like to ask.

### 4. SCREENING, REGISTRATION & APPOINTMENT

#### 4.1 Screening requirements

Determine the screening requirements for each volunteer role is guided by legislation, organisational policy and a risk assessment based on the role. For volunteers involved in programs or projects for children or other vulnerable people will require relevant statutory clearance, such as a working with children check or a police record check. It is the responsibility of the local area

volunteer coordinator to organise the appropriate screening checks required for their volunteer group.

## 4.2 References

Reference checks can help verify the volunteer's experience, qualifications and help ensure that the information they have provided is accurate. Conducting reference checks are particularly important for roles where your volunteer will be involved in finances, working with vulnerable people or children. It is recommended that referees should be contacted after the interview. A [template](#) has been provided for you as an example of the type of questions you may like to ask, or alternatively you can email the question form to the referee for completion.

## 4.3 Volunteer registration

As outlined in the volunteer policy, all volunteers must be registered with the External Engagement Division for insurance purposes. They must provide their full name and contact details, emergency contact information and advise the university of any health conditions which may impact upon their role as a volunteer. Volunteer Coordinators are responsible for managing their volunteer registrations via their [Better Impact Volunteer Management](#) account. Ongoing training and support are provided in use of the system. Please contact the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator for further information about Better Impact.

## 4.4 Volunteer agreement form

Volunteer Coordinators must ensure that volunteers sign an agreement with the university to document their volunteer role in relation to their specific volunteer group or project. A [volunteer agreement form](#) has been established, however local areas may need to adapt the form for specific requirements based on the role. It should be noted that the volunteer agreement form does not include Intellectual Property, and we recommend checking the [Intellectual Property Policy](#) before the volunteer commences or contact Legal & Risk for further clarification.

# 5. ORIENTATION, INDUCTION & HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLBEING

## 5.1 Volunteer Handbook

On the first day the volunteer should be given the [volunteer handbook](#) that includes;

- our values
- volunteer rights and responsibilities
- volunteer insurance guide
- code of conduct
- volunteer concerns and complaints
- volunteer counselling services

## 5.2 Orientation & Induction

Proper orientation and induction for volunteers enables them to perform their role as required and ensures they understand their responsibilities and their rights within the university. It defines the expectations of the volunteer relationship on both sides and prepares the volunteer to perform their role. If a volunteer acts against policy or procedures, the university may be responsible because of a failure to properly induct, train or supervise.

Volunteers should be provided with a corporate induction, volunteer service induction and health, safety and wellbeing induction. As well as a local induction that is specifically tailored to their role and workplace and may include:

- explanation of work unit structure
- logging volunteering hours for each shift
- tour of facilities and amenities
- building access
- computer access
- introduction to staff, fire warden, first aid officer
- local hazards including tools, equipment, materials
- location of first aid kit
- fire and emergency plans, including evacuation point
- procedure for [reporting](#) hazards, accidents and injuries.

### 5.3 Health, Safety and Wellbeing

Under the [safety legislation](#) for volunteers we must meet the same safety requirements and standards as all other workplaces within the university. The requirements for documentation in relation to education, training, licences and permits (where required), hazard management, risk assessment and incident reporting all apply equally to a volunteer group. For further information please visit the university's health, safety and wellbeing [website](#).

It is recommended that volunteers should sign in at the beginning and end of each day. This enables the volunteer coordinator to track volunteers in the case of emergency evacuation, and record attendances and hours for the annual report.

### 5.4 Risk Assessment

The university have a duty of care to ensure the health and safety of its volunteers. Risk assessments should be conducted for the activities undertaken by volunteers and should be assessed on an annual basis.

It is important to observe and consider volunteers who may not be fit to undertake the volunteer activity or are at a higher risk due to age. Risk assessments should be completed for individual volunteers who are over the age of 85, that identifies potential hazards and risks and enabling proactive measures to prevent harm and injuries to themselves and others. A [template](#) has been provided for you as an example or contact [Legal & Risk](#) for further assistance.

## 6. TRAINING DEVELOPMENT & ONGOING SUPPORT

### 6.1 Volunteer Training

Volunteer coordinators must ensure that volunteers under their program have adequate information, training and resources to undertake their tasks. The University Volunteer Program provide professional development at no cost for volunteers who can choose from a wide range of training sessions.

### 6.2 Ongoing Support

Ongoing support requirements may differ depending on the type of role and responsibilities of the volunteer. For example, if the volunteer role is supporting vulnerable people or people at risk, it may be important to check in formally and informally on a more frequent basis. It is important to monitor how volunteers are performing in their role and provide them with regular feedback, such as positive reinforcement and where improvements can be made. This provides an opportunity for volunteers to have their say and to identify any additional support or training they might require, or to share any concerns they may have. Volunteers will feel well supported in their role and you will be more likely to retain them. For further information please refer to the [key points in retaining volunteers](#).



## 7. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT & RECOGNITION

### 7.1 Volunteer Recognition

Volunteers need to feel both valued and valuable, and to understand how their role contributes to your volunteer group's goals and mission. Volunteers who feel valued are more likely to be loyal to your volunteer group and become long-term volunteers.

We encourage volunteer groups to undertake a range of different acknowledgement and recognition activities that fit within their budget. Many informal strategies are either no-cost or lower-cost but are just as vital as larger events.

Examples of these are;

- acknowledge volunteers at the beginning of their shift, a simple hello and thanks for being here is enough
- send welcome letters when volunteers are first recruited
- provide them with a welcome pack when they first start, you may like to include a name badge
- give personal praise to volunteers while they are on the job
- ask staff to thank the volunteers personally
- inviting volunteers to Divisional or Faculty events
- hosting an event during [National Volunteer Week](#) or [National Student Volunteer Week](#)
- inviting senior staff to a morning tea to meet volunteers
- conducting tours of relevant areas of the University
- keeping volunteers informed of relevant information within the University, for example a copy of the School or Faculty Newsletter
- presenting certificates to acknowledge their service
- presenting them with a [volunteer pin](#)
- sending a birthday card or thank you card
- nominate volunteers or your volunteer group for a [University Volunteer Achievement Award](#)
- encourage volunteers to attend the University Volunteer Program end of year [event](#)
- further ideas can be found under the [resources page](#).

## 8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT & PROGRAM REVIEW

### 8.1 Performance Management

Volunteer Coordinators are responsible for resolving any grievances that arise in relation to a volunteer and is one of the more challenging tasks that they can face, but there are strategies that can be put in place to help make it less stressful.

Sometimes a problem can be resolved by having an informal conversation with the volunteer and by using documents such as the code of conduct or volunteer role description as a basis for the discussion. Of course, this depends on what has taken place and the seriousness of the issue, we recommend that Volunteer Coordinator's advice their line manager of any grievances and ask them to assist in the resolution of the grievance where required and if appropriate contact the university's [Integrity Unit](#) for guidance and support.

We have also provided some [resources](#) that you might find useful, including;

- [tips for having a performance conversation with a volunteer](#)
- [8 tips for giving feedback to volunteers](#) and
- [dealing with conflict](#).



## 8.2 Program Review

Feedback and evaluation from volunteers can provide valuable information about the volunteer group. It is recommended that an evaluation of the volunteer group be undertaken six months after commencement and then every 12 months thereafter.

Questions to consider in an [evaluation form](#) ;

- Why did you choose to volunteer with us?
- What are the most enjoyable aspects of your volunteering role?
- Effectiveness of your volunteer work
- Volunteer work environment
- What would you suggest needs to be improved to make the experience better for other volunteers in the future?
- Would you recommend volunteering at university to others? If so, why?
- General feedback and suggestions.

We also recommend volunteer groups using the [gap assessment tool](#) to identify areas of improvement within their program.

## 9 EXITING VOLUNTEERS

### 9.1 Completion of volunteer group

If a volunteer group has fulfilled its goals and objectives, it will move into the completion stage. Some groups may close due to organisational developments such as restructuring. It is important to achieve closure for the group on a positive note.

Volunteers may feel a sense of loss when the group's work comes to an end. It is therefore important to recognise the volunteers for their contribution, accomplishments and celebrate the group's overall success. Volunteer Coordinators can recommend other volunteering areas within the University or direct them to the University's [volunteer webpage](#) or [Volunteering SA&NT](#).

### 9.2 Exiting Volunteers

Volunteers who are leaving the university should be given the opportunity to provide feedback about their experiences with their volunteer group through either completing a [volunteer exit form](#) or attending an exit interview conducted by their volunteer coordinator or supervisor. The exit form and interview are both voluntary and therefore the volunteer is under no obligation to answer all questions.

### 9.3 Dismissing Volunteers

If a volunteer is being dismissed due to a serious event, it is important not just to deal with the issue at hand, but to look at what took place leading up to the event and regard it as a learning opportunity. This may help prevent similar occurrences in the future. It is best practice to send a letter formally acknowledging a volunteer's departure from your volunteer group and at the same time provide an opportunity for them to provide any feedback via the [volunteer exit form](#).

## 10. OTHER RESOURCES

For resources and templates please visit the Volunteer Management [website](#). For further support and information please contact the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator on 8313 3354 or [volunteer@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:volunteer@adelaide.edu.au)