

## **Volunteer policy**

### **1. Introduction**

The University has an ongoing commitment to public and community engagement and several departments run outreach programmes. It is recognised that volunteering programmes can promote public engagement and widen access, increase depth of participation, promote diversity and equality, and social outcomes such as well-being.

This volunteer policy acknowledges the contribution made to the University by volunteers. The University recognises that it is important for volunteers to feel supported and appreciated, that their time is well spent, and that they work in a distinctive but complementary role alongside paid staff in a mutually beneficial way.

### **2. Definition**

Volunteers are those who carry out unpaid work for a charity, voluntary organisation, or a fundraising body. (ACAS)

Volunteering involves spending time, unpaid, doing something to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives. Volunteering must be a choice freely made by each individual.

The University uses volunteers to add value to its core activities and promote public engagement and not as a replacement for paid staff.

### **3. Voluntary status**

Volunteers should not be confused with employees, casual workers, interns, or consultants because all these roles have, as appropriate, contracts of employment, contracts for services, or letters of engagement and are paid a salary or fee. Volunteers are not trainees or any other participants in work placement schemes, because volunteers have no obligation to perform the tasks that they do because of a wider course of study or for career development.

A volunteer does not work under a contract with the University. A volunteer is not obliged to work for the University. A volunteer will not be paid for their volunteering. The voluntary role is flexible.

University volunteers will not be classified as 'workers' entitled to statutory benefits, if the only money they receive is in respect of actual receipted expenses, and they receive no benefits other than training to improve their ability to do the work they are carrying out.

### **4. Expectations**

University departments that offer volunteering opportunities should produce a volunteer letter, which sets out the expectations from both the department's and the volunteer's perspective. A sample volunteer letter is available.

The volunteer letter can be a reasonably informal description of the volunteer's role, the times when it is mutually convenient for the volunteer to perform it, the induction and training required, the

supervision and feedback they can expect to receive, the expenses for which they will be reimbursed, and the remedy if they have a problem or complaint.

Volunteers should be treated in a manner consistent with the letter. Departments should be aware that volunteers may leave at any time.

## **5. Guidance**

Detailed guidance is given in Annexe A as to how volunteers may be recruited and organised in departments.