

210 - Volunteer Services Policy

Subject: Volunteer Service at the University of Chicago

Section: U210

Date: January 19, 2018

PURPOSE:

To establish uniform procedures for screening and engaging volunteers, and to balance the following considerations: the desirability of utilizing volunteers' services; the need to protect volunteers' interests; and the need to minimize legal risk to volunteers and the University.

POLICY:

The University does not intend for volunteers to perform or displace work that is presently being performed by University employees. Volunteer arrangements thus may not be used to circumvent the established processes that govern standard University-authorized hires.

University volunteers do not have an employment relationship with the University on any grounds or for any reason, and thus they are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act or Illinois wage laws, and are not eligible for any University benefit, including Workers' Compensation. At all times, the University has the discretion to select volunteers.

Note: The policy also does not cover volunteers who agree to serve as human subjects in University research protocols.

DEFINITION:

University volunteers are uncompensated individuals who perform services directly related to the business University business, support University activities, or gain experience in specific endeavors. By definition, volunteers perform services without promise, expectation or receipt of any compensation, future employment or any other employment or educational-related benefit.

A. Volunteer Guidelines

1. The host academic or administrative unit is responsible for properly screening, engaging, and terminating all volunteers. The unit is also responsible also for ensuring an individual has appropriate experience, qualifications, and training for the tasks to be performed.
2. To qualify as a University volunteer, an individual must be willing to provide services according to this policy, and complete and sign a University of Chicago Volunteer Agreement and other associated forms, as appropriate.
3. Anyone may volunteer at the University, with the following restrictions:

- an individual who is a minor under the age of 14 may not serve as a University volunteer;
 - an employee may not become a University volunteer in any capacity in which he/she is employed by the University, or which is essentially similar to the individual's regular work at the University, or under circumstances that suggest the decision to volunteer is not made freely;
 - all volunteers must establish proof of identity and citizenship or permanent residency;
 - an individual who is not a United States citizen or permanent resident must provide documentation of his/her visa status. An individual holding a temporary visa may not serve as a volunteer in a position where others receive compensation or perform the same services. An individual with a pending H-1B visa application to work at the University cannot serve as a volunteer. Volunteer status may not be used as a way to avoid or defer compliance with the employment eligibility requirements of federal immigration laws
4. A University volunteer is considered an agent of the University while performing assigned duties and is expected to abide by University policies and internal/external regulations which govern his/her actions, including employee conduct ([sexual assault](#), [unlawful discrimination and harassment](#), [compliance](#), and workplace violence), [substance abuse](#), [treatment of confidential information](#), use of [University technologies](#), and [financial responsibility](#).
 5. A University volunteer is not authorized to, and must not, enter into any contract on behalf of the University.
 6. Although payment for volunteer services is not permitted under any circumstance, a unit may reimburse a volunteer for actual and reasonable expenses incurred in the course of the volunteer arrangement and consistent with standard University reimbursement guidelines. Reimbursement must not be used as a substitute for compensation and cannot be linked to productivity.
 7. The University provides indemnification (compensation paid to an individual for expenses, settlements and judgments incurred, made and entered against him/her) to a University volunteer in the same manner as provided to an employee – for acts or omissions arising within the scope of the volunteer's good-faith performance of specifically authorized duties or assignments on behalf of the University.
 8. The University or a University volunteer may end his/her volunteer service at any time and without advance notice.
 9. All University volunteers whom have direct contact with minors while working in a covered program are required to comply with the [Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse Policy & FAQ's for Staff and Volunteers \(U1009\)](#) and [Safety of Children in University Programs \(U216\)](#).

B. Services Not Requiring a Volunteer Agreement

The University generally considers the following activities low-risk, and thus do not require a completed volunteer agreement:

- visiting committee membership;
- reunion chairs;
- commencement volunteer;

- gallery/program guide;
- museum docent (provided there is no travel requirement);
- phone-a-thon volunteer;
- public speaker; and
- public member of any Institutional Review Board and Institutional Animal Care and Use Committees.

C. Services Requiring a Volunteer Agreement

A volunteer is generally required to complete a Volunteer Agreement to perform the following activities:

- library activities;
- professional services, such as those performed by accountants, architects, doctors, engineers, etc.;
- travel of any kind;
- activities associated with confidential information (e.g., social security numbers, credit card numbers, bank account numbers, medical records);
- activities with patients and/or subjects of experiments; and
- non-educational activities with minors.

D. Prohibited Activities Volunteers may never engage in any activity considered inappropriate for an employee and are prohibited from working with the following hazardous materials or in the following hazardous environments:

A University volunteer is prohibited from performing the following activities:

- operating heavy equipment;
- Performing work involving the handling or storage of blood, blood products, or body fluids or tissues;
- Handling Risk Group 2 or Risk Group 3 pathogens;
- Working with carcinogens, teratogens, or mutagens;
- Handling radioactive substances;
- Using radioactive devices;
- Entering animal research facilities;
- Working with research animals.
- Entering BSL3 laboratories or ABSL3 animal facilities;
- Entering Select Agent registered laboratories or Select Agent animal facilities;
- Working in an area or performing activities requiring the use of a respirator;
- Operating Class III Lasers;
- Working in areas with possible exposure to lead or its compounds;
- Working with substances present on the OSHA particularly hazardous substances list;
- Working in areas where explosives or articles containing explosive components are used or stored;
- Working in a Machine Shop

- working with or having access to any export-controlled materials;
- working with stored energy (e.g., physical energy stored in air, gas, steam, water pressure, or in springs, elevated machines, rotating flywheels, fans, hydraulic systems, etc.);
- any activity considered inappropriate for an employee;
- entering into any contract on behalf of the University.

Employees represented by a union may be governed by the appropriate bargaining unit agreement.

Last updated on 1/19/18