



Use of Volunteers Procedures

Purpose

These procedures were designed to help departments comply with the **Use of Volunteers Policy** located in the Grand Valley Manual.

Policy Statement

The Use of Volunteer Policy is intended to reduce the risk related to the use of volunteers and their activities. The University accepts volunteer support to accomplish its educational mission and desires to ensure that volunteer relationships with the University are clearly established and understood by all parties. Payment for volunteer services is not allowed. However, departments may reimburse volunteers for actual and reasonable expenses, following the appropriate University policies. The University requires the same attention to duties and responsibilities for volunteers as it does for employees of the University. This policy also does not cover or govern volunteers who agree to serve as human subjects in University research protocols, as they are covered by other policies under the administration of the [Human Research Review Committee](#).

Definition

A volunteer is defined as an uncompensated individual who performs services directly related to the operations of the University for its benefit, to the mission of the University, or for the volunteer to gain experience in specific endeavors. To qualify as a volunteer, an individual must be willing to provide services according to the directions of the appropriate University representative. An individual who provides services for an entity that is not directly related to the business of the University (e.g., a government or public agency), is not considered to be a volunteer for the purposes of this policy.

Relationship

Volunteer arrangements may not be used to circumvent the established processes that govern the employment of people. Volunteers do not have an employment relationship with the University on any grounds or for any reason and are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act, Michigan wage laws, or the Youth Employment Standards Act, and are not eligible for any University benefit, including Worker's Compensation, or any other benefits of employment from the University, including but not limited to, health care, vacation, or sick time. Volunteers are not provided with accident or medical insurance, and are therefore responsible for any accident or medical expenses that may be incurred as a result of the volunteer assignment.

Payment for volunteer services is not permitted under any circumstance. However, the appropriate department has the authority to decide whether to reimburse a volunteer for actual

and reasonable expenses so long as the expenses fall under the University's reimbursement guidelines located on the [Business and Finance website](#). Reimbursement cannot be used as a substitute for compensation nor can it be linked to the volunteer's productivity.

Volunteers may not receive any institutional marketing materials reflecting their name and the University logos such as: business cards, letterhead, unless approved by the appropriate Vice President or Senior Management Team member.

Protection of Volunteer

According to the Board approved Administrative Manual under Chapter 6, Section L, Risk Management:

It is the policy of Grand Valley State University to support its Board members, officers, faculty, and staff in the reasonable and proper performance of their official duties, and to support students and volunteers when performing services on behalf of or under the direction of the university.

Volunteers are indemnified in the same manner as employees. It is important that the department or unit managing the volunteer maintain records as specified in this policy in order to ensure their volunteers are properly covered.

Eligibility

To be eligible to become a volunteer, one must:

- 1) Be willing to provide services according to this policy, complete and sign a Grand Valley State University Volunteer Profile, Disclosure, and Consent Form as well as other associated forms if deemed appropriate,
- 2) Have parental consent if under the age of 18,
- 3) Complete the Authorization for Release of Information for Background Check through the Human Resources Office if the volunteer assignment involves working with minor children, money or access to confidential information regarding employees, students, health, financial data, etc., and
- 4) Be authorized through the Department of Public Safety if the volunteer assignment requires operating a vehicle owned or leased by the University.
- 5) The individual must be willing to provide services according to the policy, complete and sign a Grand Valley State University **Volunteer Profile, Disclosure, and Consent Form** as well as other associated forms if deemed appropriate.
- 6) Volunteers are free to use their own vehicles during their assignment. However, the University's auto insurance will not cover personal vehicles. The owner's auto insurance will be the primary coverage for liability and collision damage

Who Is Not Eligible to Volunteer

- 1) Visitors who are in the process of changing their immigration status: A temporary visa holder who has applied to change status and whose employment authorization from the original status has expired must wait for the new status to be approved to resume employment. Such an individual must not “volunteer” anywhere at Grand Valley State while waiting for a decision on the change of status application.
- 2) A temporary visa holder working at Grand Valley State on an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) whose document has expired must stop employment and must not volunteer in the position previously held or another similar position. This individual must wait until receipt of the new EAD card to resume employment.
- 3) A temporary visa holder who has applied for an immigration benefit such as for permanent resident status and whose previous status has expired, may not volunteer in the position for which they previously held employment, but must wait for receipt of the permanent resident card.
- 4) For all of the examples above: Volunteering to continue to perform the duties, or a portion thereof, of the previously held position can be viewed as unauthorized employment and is not allowed.
- 5) Individuals in the following categories are eligible to volunteer in most circumstances. Please check with Padnos International Center (PIC) regarding students or Human Resources Office (HRO) regarding faculty and staff for individuals in specific categories:
 - a. F-1 Full-time students
 - b. F-2 Dependents of F-1 full-time students
 - c. J-1 Exchange visitors who could be full-time students, professors, researchers, or visiting scholars
 - d. J-2 Dependents of J-2 visitors
 - e. H-1B Grand Valley State employees in particular occupations
 - f. H-4 Dependents of H-1B employees
 - g. NOTE: B-1 Visitors for Business and B-2 Visitors for Recreation/Travel are NOT eligible to volunteer.

Responsibilities of the University Department Engaging Volunteers

Departments must keep records of volunteer names, dates of service(s), and services performed for a period of one year following the end of the volunteer assignment.

Department are responsible for ensuring their volunteers are aware of the unit’s rules and regulations. Volunteers must have the necessary training and/or supervision to safely carry out volunteer work. If the volunteer assignment involves providing professional services such as those performed by accountants, architects, doctors, engineers, etc., the department must assure that the volunteer has the appropriate credentials including licensure and/or certification.

One exception is that any legal services or assistance, whether by a volunteer or otherwise, must have prior written approval of the University Counsel. According to Board policy, as stated in the GVSU Administrative Manual, all legal services must be provided through the GVSU University Counsel Office.

If the volunteer assignment requires operating a vehicle, the volunteer must have a valid driver's license, and have a good driving record as determined by the Department of Public Safety.

Responsibilities and Rights of the University Volunteer

Volunteers are responsible for complying with all University policies and all relevant laws including but not limited to: personal conduct, sexual assault, unlawful discrimination and harassment, compliance, workplace violence, substance abuse; misuse of confidential information; use of University technologies; financial responsibility; and vehicle use. Volunteers are not considered agents of the University unless the authority has been expressly delegated to them by an authorized University official. Volunteers are also expected to comply with any rules and regulations specific to the department for which they are volunteering.

Managing Risk

1) Background Checks

If the volunteer assignment involves working directly with minor children, money or access to confidential employee, student, health, financial, etc. information, a criminal background check will be required prior to commencing the assignment. The **Authorization for Release of Information for Background Check** must be completed, signed and returned to the Human Resources Office for processing.

While any volunteers working directly with minors on a regular basis must undergo a criminal background check, it may be impractical to do background checks on volunteers who participate in large, short-term programs or events that rely on a large number of volunteers such as the Science Olympiad, STEPS, First Robotics or similar programs. In such cases, it is required that the volunteer never work unsupervised with minors and that there be more than one adult present at the program or event at all times. If possible in such cases, register volunteers ahead of time, check the list against the sex offender registry and check in the volunteers by comparing photo ID's against the volunteer list on the day of the event.

2) Motor Vehicle Record Checks

If the volunteer assignment requires operating a personal, University or rental vehicle the volunteer must be authorized through the Department of Public Safety. Volunteers who will be driving must be approved by going to Public Safety and presenting their driver's license. Processing takes at least a month so it is advised that volunteers anticipating driving as a part of their volunteer assignment complete this process well in advance of beginning their assignment. When filling out the form the volunteer should reference the University Department in which they are working.

All drivers are individually responsible for any traffic violations, tickets, etc., and will be expected to pay applicable fines.

3) Prohibitions

Volunteers are prohibited from performing the following activities:

- a. Working 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
- b. Operating heavy equipment (e.g. forklift, hi-lo, backhoe, etc.);
- c. Working with highly hazardous or toxic chemicals or agents and/or dangerous equipment or environments (i.e.: anything that could cause severe injury or death).
- d. Any activity considered inappropriate for an employee;
- e. Entering into any contract on behalf of the University;
- f. Rendering professional services without possessing the required credentials;
- g. Any actions beyond the scope of the volunteer assignment.

4) Informed Consent

In some cases where the volunteer assignment involves higher levels of risk exposure to the individual and others, the **Disclosure of Associated Risks** section of the **Volunteer Profile, Disclosure and Consent Form** must be completed. This will assure that information about the risks associated with the volunteer assignment are clearly communicated to the individuals who are engaged as volunteers. Services Requiring a Disclosure of Associated Risks form include but are not limited to:

- a. laboratory activities;
- b. services with potential exposure to blood borne pathogens;
- c. professional services that require licensure and/or certification such as those performed by accountants, architects, doctors, engineers, etc.;
- d. Trade services such as construction, plumbing, electrical, etc.
- e. travel of any kind;
- f. activities in any environment which requires orientation or training;
- g. activities with patients and/or subjects of experiments

Dismissal

The University or the volunteer may end his/her service at any time.

Recordkeeping

The University Department must keep records of volunteer names, dates of service, and services performed. Departments or units are responsible for proper screening, engagement, and training of volunteers. To accomplish this, departments must maintain a completed and signed copy of the **Volunteer Profile and Information Form** along with any other associated document(s) for a period of one year following the end of the volunteer assignment.

Protection of Personal Information

It is the responsibility of the Department to protect the personal information of the volunteer. Any documents such as the Authorization for Release of Information for Background Check containing personal information such as social security number, drivers license number and/or date of birth *must not* be maintained in the Department.

Forms

All forms listed below are located on the [Risk Management website](#)

Form	Use
<u>Volunteer Profile, Disclosure and Consent</u>	Provides necessary information about and to individuals who are engaged as volunteers as well as information about the risks associated with the volunteer assignment.
<u>Authorization for Release of Information for Background Check</u>	Consent from the individual that gives the University permission to conduct necessary background checks before their volunteer position is granted depending on the nature of the assignment and the risks involved.