VOLUNTEERS POLICY

SLT 10.7

Date of Last Update:
April 25, 2013

Approved By:

- Senior Leadership Team

Responsible Office:
Office of General Counsel

POLICY STATEMENT

This 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, University 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.

PROCEDURES

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 University 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 Leadership Team member.

Protection of Volunteer

According to the Board Policy BOT 10.3, Indemnification:

"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 if the volunteer assignment involves working directly 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.

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.

It is the responsibility of the individual unit to ensure that 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 General Counsel. According to Board policy, as stated in the Board of Trustees' Policies, all legal services must be provided through the Office of General Counsel.

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.

Risk Management

Volunteers cannot replace employee positions. Volunteer services are generally limited to humanitarian, charitable, or public services. University volunteers are also prohibited from performing the following activities:

1. Working in any capacity in which the volunteer 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,
2. Operating heavy equipment e.g. forklift, hi-lo, backhoe, etc.,
3. 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,
4. Any activity considered inappropriate for an employee,
5. Entering into any contract on behalf of the University,

6. Rendering professional services without possessing the required credentials,
7. Any actions beyond the scope of the volunteer assignment, and
8. Provide legal advice or assistance without prior written approval from the University General Counsel.

In some cases where the volunteer assignment involves higher levels of risk exposure to the individual and others, the University department is responsible for disclosing those risks to the volunteer in writing. This will assure that information about the risks associated with the volunteer assignment are clearly communicated to the individuals who are engaged as university volunteers. Examples of services that require risk disclosure include but are not limited to:

1. Laboratory activities,
2. Services with potential exposure to bloodborne pathogens,
3. Professional services that require licensure and/or certification such as those performed by accountants, architects, doctors, engineers, etc. and trade services such as construction, plumbing, electrical, etc,
4. Travel of any kind,
5. Activities in any environment which requires orientation or training, and
6. Activities with patients and/or subjects of experiments.

Use of Volunteer Procedures

The procedures and forms to implement this policy can be found on the Risk Management Website.

DEFINITIONS

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 University Volunteer for the purposes of this policy.