UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE STUDENT UNION
VOLUNTEERING POLICY

UMSU is committed to enhancing students' experiences at University by providing meaningful volunteering experiences, student led extra-curricular programs and leadership opportunities.

Volunteering opportunities at UMSU aim to address human, environmental and/or social needs within the University community and the wider community. UMSU recognises that volunteering provides many benefits for students, staff and programs at the University of Melbourne. Volunteering opportunities support professional and personal development and encourage participants to make a difference in their community whilst learning new skills, meeting people, creating networks and developing their resume.

PURPOSE OF THIS POLICY

To ensure that volunteers participate and engage with UMSU in a manner that is safe, significant, fulfilling and appreciated and which contributes to the common good.

SCOPE

This policy
- provides a framework for all UMSU volunteer programs, activities and opportunities;
- applies to all UMSU Volunteers and UMSU staff and Student Representatives involved in UMSU volunteer programs unless otherwise specified;
- establishes lines of responsibility for UMSU's volunteering programs and activities;
- defines the rights and responsibilities of UMSU Volunteers, staff and student representatives in relation to UMSU volunteer programs;
- lists a range of procedures to support the governance, management and operation of UMSU Volunteering Programs;
- establishes the Volunteering Reference Group.

PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING AT UMSU

- UMSU acknowledges and aspires to meet The National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.
- UMSU is committed to student volunteering and will actively promote and endorse volunteer programs and activities and ensure the allocation of adequate resources.
- Wherever possible UMSU encourages active student leadership in the operation of UMSU Volunteer Programs.
- UMSU is committed to Volunteer Programs which contribute to enhancing the experience of students and are consistent with the aims and objectives established in the UMSU Constitution.
- UMSU is committed to supporting volunteer activities which involve time willingly given for the common good.
- UMSU is committed to the recruitment, selection and training of staff, Student Representatives and Program Directors who value volunteer involvement. UMSU undertakes to ensure staff, Student Representatives and Program Directors working with volunteers are adequately trained and supported in volunteer management.
- UMSU Volunteer Programs may be established to meet needs either within UMSU, the University or the wider community.

- UMSU Volunteer Programs cannot perform functions that are established within the roles of staff or student representative departments and the work of volunteers will complement but not undermine the work of paid staff.

UMSU is grateful for the hard work of its volunteers and recognises that volunteers:

- can provide personal attention in one to one relationships with end users
- increase the "humanisation" of UMSU services
- offer an opportunity to tap into different cultures and life experiences
- provide close contacts with the community
- offer new ideas, perspectives and input into the way the organisation and its services are run
- have specialised skills and knowledge
- increase flexibility in the provision of services
- add quality to UMSU services
- are not seen as having the same vested interests as paid staff

DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING

UMSU adopts the definition of volunteering endorsed by *Volunteering Australia*:

"Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain."

Volunteering Australia (VA) endorsed the following notes in support of this definition:

Volunteering is part of the wider concept of civic participation. These notes clarify what Volunteering Australia considers volunteering is, but also lists a number of somewhat similar activities or areas that are outside of volunteering. These may also act as pathways for people to become volunteers.

The term 'volunteering' covers a wide diversity of activities in Australian society. It includes formal volunteering that takes place within organisations (including institutions and agencies) in a structured way and informal volunteering, acts that take place outside the context of a formal organisation.

While the vast majority of volunteering is undertaken by individuals, entities also donate employee time, and this is included within this definition of volunteering.

Consideration of the term volunteering needs to also note best practice guidelines. Volunteering should not be exploitative or be used to replace paid employment. While volunteering provides substantial benefits to society, importantly it also provides significant benefits to the volunteers themselves. The personal benefits of volunteering need to be recognised and fostered. Further information regarding best practice and the appropriate involvement of volunteers in organisations and more widely is available on the VA website.

For the common good

- This definition aligns with the United Nations (UN) view that volunteering 'should be for the common good. It should directly or indirectly benefit people outside the family or household or else benefit a cause, even though the person volunteering normally benefits as well.' Volunteering is often considered as contributing to community wellbeing and volunteering activities cover all sectors of society, leisure and hobby areas and include, but are not limited to:

- Animal-related including animal welfare
- Arts/heritage/culture
- Business/professional/union
- Education and training
- Emergency services
- Environment
- Faith-based
- Health
- International aid/development
- Law/justice/political
- Parenting, children and youth
- Sport and physical recreation
- Welfare/community

- Activism can be considered volunteering. This definition is aligned to the current UN position on volunteering that states: 'When people participate in peaceful activism, for or against animal research or building of a dam, both sides seek what they consider to be beneficial outcomes. They are included in our definition. Activities involving or inciting violence that harm society and actions not corresponding to the values attributed to volunteerism are not included in our definition'.
- Volunteers cannot be exploited for profit.
- Volunteering can include the concept of reciprocity such as participating in groups where a reciprocal exchange of help/services is undertaken for the benefit of others as well as the volunteer

Without Financial Gain

- Volunteers can receive reimbursement of out of pocket expenses.
- Volunteers can be rewarded and recognised as part of good practice. While this process may introduce an element of financial or material benefit to the volunteer it does not exclude the activity from being considered volunteering.
- Volunteers may receive an honorarium, stipend or similar payment as recognition for voluntary services or professional services voluntarily rendered, in accordance with Australian Taxation Office rulings. Based on the nature of such payments and the recipient's circumstances, the receipt of this type of payment does not preclude the person from being considered a volunteer.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS

UMSU volunteers have the right to:

- be treated with respect and gratitude for their contribution;
- volunteer in a healthy and safe environment consistent with current legislation.
- be interviewed, selected and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation;
- be adequately covered by insurance;
- be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which they are volunteering;
- be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of UMSU;

- be given a copy of the organisation's Volunteering Policy and any other policy which affects their volunteering activities;
- not fill a position previously held by a paid worker;
- not do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes;
- have a volunteering position description and agreed working hours;
- have access to grievance procedures;
- be provided with an orientation to the organisation;
- have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the Privacy Act 1988;
- be provided with sufficient training and appropriate resources to undertake their volunteering activities
- refuse volunteering activities which are outside their role description.

UMSU Volunteers are responsible for:

- signing and adhering to UMSU's volunteering agreement and role-specific position descriptions
- being aware of and adhering to UMSU policies and procedures;
- attending induction and completing training as required;
- volunteering under the direction of an UMSU staff member, Student Representative or Program Director;
- monitoring their hours of volunteering, work and study activities to make sure they do not spend over 40 hours per week undertaking such activities;
- protecting UMSU's confidential and sensitive information;
- where possible advising their Volunteer supervisor if unable to attend volunteering commitments;
- performing their role in a reliable and respectful manner and to the best of their abilities;
- furthering the aims of UMSU and representing UMSU in a professional manner.

LIABILITY

UMSU will hold Voluntary Workers Insurance for all Volunteers and will ensure volunteers are inducted and trained to the skills and responsibilities they undertake.

VOLUNTEERING REFERENCE GROUP

This Policy establishes the Volunteering Reference Group (VRG) which will be convened by the Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation. Refer *Volunteering Reference Group Terms of Reference.*

COORDINATOR: VOLUNTEERING AND STUDENT REPRESENTATION

The Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation supports all volunteering activities across UMSU. This position is responsible for overseeing the induction and Workplace Health and Safety of individuals engaging in volunteering activities, championing volunteering within UMSU, encouraging new volunteering opportunities, ensuring UMSU's compliance with Volunteering policy, procedure and encouraging best practice.

TYPES OF VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT

This policy recognises that both unstructured Volunteering activities and structured Volunteer Programs occur within UMSU.

Volunteering activities are opportunities for students to volunteer for a short-term activity for example helping with a BBQ event. Volunteering activities do not need to be endorsed by Students' Council as an UMSU Volunteer Program.

Departments or Divisions operating offering **Volunteering activities** are required to:

- comply with this policy and associated procedures as appropriate and as stated in the relevant procedure
- operate the activity under a ratified General Volunteering Operating Framework
- provide volunteer selection, training and supervision processes in line with *Volunteering recruitment, selection and screening procedure*
- request that volunteers sign an UMSU volunteer agreement and/or UMSU Code of Conduct annually

Volunteer Programs are run by UMSU Departments or Divisions and are ongoing programs that require regular student participation. **Volunteer Programs** must:

- be endorsed by Students' Council as an UMSU **Volunteer Program**
- comply with this policy and associated procedures
- operate under a ratified **Operating Framework**
- undertake volunteer recruitment, selection, supervision and training processes in line with *Volunteering recruitment, selection and screening procedure*
- request that volunteers sign an UMSU volunteer agreement and/or UMSU Code of Conduct when they commence with the Program

An **Operating Framework** is developed in conjunction with the Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation and contains the following information:

- The scope of the program
- The nature, purpose and values of the program
- The benefits for volunteers, the end users, and UMSU
- The roles and responsibilities of the people involved in the program
- The reporting structure within the program
- Program specific risk management considerations

Operating Frameworks must be authorised as appropriate for the type of **Volunteer Program**.

WHO IS A VOLUNTEER AND WHO IS NOT A VOLUNTEER?

An UMSU Volunteer is normally:

- A current student of the University of Melbourne, or
- A recently graduated student of the University of Melbourne who commenced the volunteering activity while they were a student

For the purposes of this policy and accompanying policies and procedures:

- UMSU Staff or Student Office Bearers

- Members of an Executive of an affiliated Clubs or Society
- Members of a Student Theatre Group
- Contributors to the UMSU Media Department

Who are performing duties associated with these roles are not **Volunteers**.

Where a **Volunteer Supervisor** or a **Volunteer Program Director** identifies exceptional circumstances where a **Volunteer Program** may need to engage **Volunteers** or **Volunteer Program Directors** who are not currently or recently enrolled students of the University of Melbourne then approval for recruitment for students of other institutions may be authorised.

A request to engage students from other institutions as **Volunteers** or **Volunteer Program Directors** should be made to the **Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation** and should include:

- The rationale for the need to engage students from other institutions as **Volunteers** or **Volunteer Program Directors**
- Details of the recruitment process that has already been undertaken or an assessment of why a recruitment process limited to only University of Melbourne students will be insufficient
- The impact on the **Volunteer Program** of rejecting the request
- Any other relevant matters

The **Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation** will consider this request and make a recommendation to the Chief Executive Officer in relation to the request. The Chief Executive Officer, in consultation with the President and the General Secretary, is responsible for making a determination in relation to the request.

VOLUNTEER SUPERVISORS

For the purposes of this policy and accompanying procedures, a **Volunteer Supervisor** refers to a staff member or student who supervises volunteers within a program or activity. **Volunteer Supervisors** may be Program Directors, Office Bearers or staff members.
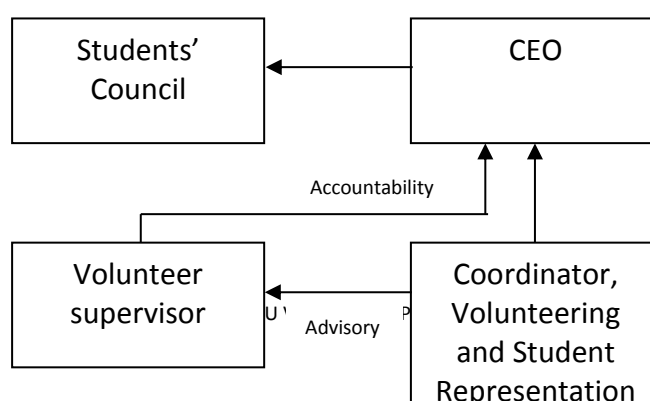
VOLUNTEER PROGRAM DIRECTORS

For the purposes of this policy and accompanying procedures, a **Volunteer Program Director** refers to a student who coordinates a student-run UMSU Volunteering program that is not a part of an UMSU Student Representative Department.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

This Policy establishes two categories of **Volunteer Program**.
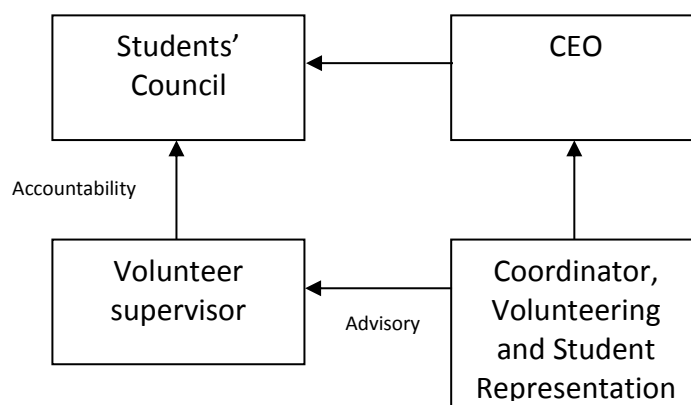
1. Staff led Programs

Staff are accountable to Students' Council via the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and *the protocol of staff and student representative interaction*.

2. Student led Programs

There are two categories of Student led Programs:

a. Student Representative Department Programs where Student Office Bearers are accountable to Students' Council as set out in the Constitution.
b. Other Volunteer Programs, led by Volunteer Program Directors who are accountable to Students' Council.

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  │  Students'  │ ◄──────────  │     CEO     │
  │   Council   │              │             │
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        ▲                             ▲
 Accountability                       │
        │                             │
  ┌─────────────┐              ┌──────────────┐
  │  Volunteer  │ ◄──────────  │ Coordinator, │
  │ supervisor  │   Advisory   │ Volunteering │
  │             │              │ and Student  │
  └─────────────┘              │Representation│
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Refer to Management of Volunteer Involvement Procedure for further details of reporting and accountability lines for UMSU volunteering programs.

STUDENTS' COUNCIL

Students' Council must authorise any:

- New **Volunteer Program**
- Major Changes to an existing **Volunteer Program's Operating Framework**
- The cessation of a **Volunteer Program**

STARTING A NEW VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

All new **Volunteer Programs** must be approved by Students' Council.

A proposal to approve a new **Volunteer Program** will be submitted to Students' Council and must include the following information:

- The nature of the proposed program
- The rationale for the proposed program
- The category of Volunteer Program
- How the proposed Program will operate
- The financial and other resource implications of the proposed Program
- A proposed budget for the Program
- A timeline for the commencement of the proposed Program
- A proposal for the measurement of the success of the Program
- A proposed **Operating Framework** for the program

Prior to making a determination in relation to a proposal for a new **Volunteer Program** Students' Council must undertake a consultation process to allow student and stakeholder feedback in relation to the proposed **Volunteer Program**. This consultation period shall be not less than four weeks and consultation will be undertaken by the Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation.

The Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation will prepare a summary of the feedback received throughout the consultation period and prepare recommendations in relation to the proposed Volunteer Program and submit these to the CEO.

The CEO will make recommendations to Students' Council in relation to the proposed **Volunteer Program**.

MAJOR CHANGE TO A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Any Major Change to an existing **Volunteer Program** must be approved by Students' Council. A major change is a change which deviates from the Volunteer Program Operational Framework for that program or activity as endorsed by Student Council.

A proposal to implement major change to an existing **Volunteer Program** will be submitted to Students' Council and must include the following information:

- The nature of the proposed change including any change to the governance model
- The rationale for the proposed change
- How the proposed changes will impact the operation of the Program
- The financial and other resource implications of the proposed change
- Details of any revised budget arrangements arising from the proposed change
- A timeline for the implementation of the proposed change
- A proposal for the measurement of the success of the change

Prior to making a determination in relation to a proposal to implement a Major Change to an existing **Volunteer Program** Students' Council must undertake a consultation process to allow student and stakeholder feedback in relation to the proposed **Volunteer Program**. This consultation shall be not less than four weeks and consultation will be undertaken by the Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation.

The Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation will prepare a summary of the feedback received throughout the consultation period and prepare recommendations in relation to the proposed Major Change and submit these to the CEO.

The CEO will make recommendations to Council in relation to the proposed Major Change.

DISCONTINUING A VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Discontinuation of any **Volunteer Program** must be approved by Students' Council.

A proposal to discontinue a **Volunteer Program** will be submitted to Students' Council and must include the following information:

- The nature of the Program
- The rationale for the proposed discontinuation of the Program
- The financial and other resource implications of the proposed discontinuation of the Program

Prior to making a determination in relation to a proposal to discontinue a **Volunteer Program**, Students' Council must undertake a consultation process to allow student and stakeholder feedback in relation to the proposed discontinuation. This consultation shall be four weeks and consultation will be undertaken by the **Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation**.

The **Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation** will prepare a summary of the feedback received throughout the consultation period and prepare recommendations in relation to the proposed discontinuation of a Volunteer Program and submit these to the CEO.

The CEO will make recommendations to Council in relation to the proposed discontinuation of a **Volunteer Program**.

FUNDING OF VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS

Divisional Managers, Student Office Bearers and Students' Council are responsible for ensuring that **Volunteer Programs** are allocated necessary funds to support their operation and for setting the value of that funding.

Where **Volunteer Programs** seek external funding, this must be undertaken in consultation with the Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation.

Any sponsorship or advertising for **Volunteer Programs** must be sought in consultation with the Coordinator, Volunteering and Student Representation and the Manager, Communications & Marketing and must comply with UMSU regulations and policies relating to advertising and sponsorship.

SSAF funds allocated to the operation of **Volunteer Programs** must comply with SSAF funding guidelines.

RELATED PROCEDURES

Management of volunteer involvement procedure

Volunteer recruitment, selection and screening procedure

Volunteer induction, training and supervision procedure

Volunteer reward and recognition procedure

Volunteering risk management procedure

Volunteering honoraria procedure

Volunteering service delivery procedure

Volunteering quality management and continuous improvement procedure:

- Volunteering policy and procedure review process
- Volunteer involvement audit checklist

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Volunteering Operating Framework templates:

- Department Volunteer Program Operating Framework template
- Director led Volunteer Program Operating Framework template
- General Volunteering Activity Operating Framework template
- Staff led Volunteer Program Operating Framework template

Position description templates:

- Volunteer Program Director
- Volunteer

Volunteer agreement
Volunteering Reference Group: Terms of Reference

RELATED UMSU POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

UMSU Privacy Policy
UMSU Acceptable Conduct Policy

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Disputes in relation to this Policy shall be resolved in accordance with relevant UMSU Policy and Procedure