Volunteer Management (Including Volunteer Researcher) Policy

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) The engagement of volunteers allows the University of Newcastle (University) to strengthen its strategic relationships with local and international institutions and with community stakeholders. It also enables members of the wider community to engage with and support the activities of the University.

(2) The engagement of Volunteer researchers assists the University in supporting collaborative research partnerships and enhances the University's international research profile.

(3) This document is supported by the Volunteer Management (Including Volunteer Researcher) Procedure and must be read in conjunction with that document.

Section 2 - Purpose

(4) This Policy establishes the University's intent and requirements in the engagement and management of volunteers.

Section 3 - Scope

(5) This policy applies to the engagement of volunteers, who are not remunerated, and who:

a. wish to volunteer their services or time to assist the University;
b. are Volunteer researchers; or
c. are individuals who are approved to undertake a program of vocational development as a work experience volunteer.

(6) This policy does not apply to:

a. persons offering to participate in a research trial or project;
b. staff and students of the University engaging in work integrated learning activities;
c. individuals attending the University as part of a formal student exchange program or collaborative research arrangement;
d. community members appointed to University committees (these appointments are governed by the relevant Committee terms of reference (or similar document); or
e. visiting or honorary appointments, these appointments are governed by the Honorary Academic Titles and Visiting Appointments Policy.

Section 4 - Principles

(7) The overarching principles of volunteering at the University are:

a. volunteers are not a substitute for paid work and do not replace paid workers, nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers;
b. volunteering provides meaningful opportunities for individuals to contribute to our University;
c. volunteering work is unpaid;
d. volunteering is always a matter of choice;
e. volunteering is an inclusive activity open to all who are able and suitable;
f. volunteer rights and contributions are recognised;
g. volunteers are provided with appropriate induction, training, instruction, and supervision; and
h. volunteers are provided with, and consulted regarding, a healthy and safe workplace in accordance with our Work Health and Safety Policy, and are obligated to comply with the University's Work Health and Safety Management system as it relates to their volunteering role, work, and work environment.

Requirements of Volunteers

(8) Volunteers engaged by the University must comply with the legislative and statutory obligations of the University.

(9) Volunteers must:

a. act in accordance with the University's policies, procedures and Staff Code of Conduct.
b. not disclose, disseminate, or make use of confidential information relating to the University's operations gained during their engagement as a volunteer; and
c. conduct their volunteer activities in accordance with the volunteer role description, and direction from the volunteer supervisor.

(10) Volunteers may be required to provide evidence of any required clearance checks, and if so, must provide these prior to commencing the volunteering activity.

(11) Volunteers may elect to obtain personal insurance to cover their volunteer activities. It is the individual volunteer’s responsibility to obtain insurance that is appropriate to their needs.

(12) Work experience volunteers are required to provide proof of personal accident and public liability insurance (or other applicable insurance) from their employer prior to commencing their work experience.

Engagement of Volunteers

(13) The engagement of a volunteer must be:

a. documented in a volunteer role description;
b. informed by a risk assessment, including assessment of work health and safety hazards and risk controls, in accordance with the University's Risk Management Policy and Risk Management Framework; and
c. approved by an authorised delegate.

(14) Each volunteer must:

a. be assessed for suitability against the requirements of the volunteer role and activities;
b. be subject to appropriate screening prior to commencement, including any required clearance checks, including

but not limited to working with children, child protection checks etc.;

c. not be engaged unless there is an approved volunteer role description and risk assessment;
d. only be engaged by the University when the supervision and infrastructure necessary to support the volunteer activities are available and have been assigned; and
e. be invited to participate as a volunteer in writing and be provided with a copy of the approved volunteer role description.

(15) An invitation to participate as a volunteer, or the engagement of a volunteer, may be withdrawn at any time without notice and at the discretion of a relevant delegate.

(16) Volunteers may be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses subject to the conditions set out in the Volunteer Management (Including Volunteer Researcher) Procedure, and to any relevant University policy document.

(17) Student volunteer engagements should, wherever possible, be coordinated through the UniCrew Volunteering Program. In certain circumstances staff volunteer engagements may also be eligible for volunteering roles through this program.

Insurance

(18) Volunteers may be covered by the University's Public Liability and Personal Accident insurance policies for the duration of their volunteer engagement.

(19) Minimum levels of insurance, as appropriate to the volunteer engagement, will be required where a volunteer is providing services to the University in association with a third party.

(20) Volunteers are not covered by workers' compensation insurance or legislation.

(21) Volunteers should seek their own advice regarding insurance coverage appropriate to their individual circumstances.

Information Management and Privacy

(22) All personal information, health information, and sensitive information collected by the University will be subject to the requirements of the University's Privacy Policy and Privacy Management Plan.

(23) Records relating to the engagement of volunteers must be kept in accordance with the Records Governance Policy.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	29th November 2023
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Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
Approval Date	27th November 2023
Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Executive	Martin Sainsbury Chief People and Culture Officer martin.sainsbury@newcastle.edu.au
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Glossary Terms and Definitions

"University" - The University of Newcastle, a body corporate established under sections 4 and 5 of the University of Newcastle Act 1989.

"Risk" - Effect of uncertainty on objectives. Note: An effect is a deviation from the expected, whether it is positive and/or negative.

"Risk assessment" - The overall process of risk identification, risk analysis, and risk evaluation.

"Personal information" - Has the same meaning as in the Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW).

"Student" - A person formally enrolled in a course or active in a program offered by the University or affiliated entity.

"Work experience volunteer" - Means an individual who is approved to undertake vocational work experience at a University facility without remuneration in the form of salary.

"Health information" - As defined in the Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002, or any replacing legislation.

"Research" - As defined in the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research, or any replacing Code or document.

"Staff" - Means a person who was at the relevant time employed by the University and includes professional and academic staff of the University, by contract or ongoing, as well as conjoint staff but does not include visitors to the University.

"Volunteer researcher" - Means an individual, other than a visiting or conjoint appointment, Higher Degree by Research candidate or participant in a formal student exchange program, who is invited to participate in research activities without being employed or remunerated by the University. This includes international placements and a University of Newcastle student with approval to participate in research activities outside of their assessable course or program requirements. An international volunteer researcher would normally: i. be at least eighteen

years of age; ii. have been studying or engaged in their field of expertise for at least the last twelve months prior to the visit; iii. have sufficient English proficiency to undertake a research program; iv. have adequate health insurance; v. not be enrolled at post-graduate level at another Australian institution; and vi. hold an appropriate visa for the purpose and duration of stay.

"Delegate" - (noun) refers to a person occupying a position that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority, or a committee or body that has been granted or sub-delegated a delegation of authority.