

Employee Volunteering Policy and Procedure

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This policy will be reviewed periodically to ensure compliance with changes in employment law and equality and diversity legislation. In the event that this policy or procedure is not compliant, the relevant legislation shall prevail.

Changes to this policy will be subject to consultation with the University's recognised Trade Unions before implementation

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1. INTRODUCTION

Volunteering offers an opportunity to actively contribute to community organisations that benefit from working in partnership with the University. Volunteers use their knowledge, skills and experiences to support community or voluntary sector organisations in their service delivery or strategic development.

Volunteering is a great way to develop skills and engage with new people by taking on exciting and rewarding challenges. Volunteering benefits local communities, the University and employees undertaking voluntary work.

As part of Brunel's commitment to employee engagement and development and to local communities, the University operates an employer supported volunteering scheme, giving employees the opportunity to volunteer during work time. Opportunities are wide ranging from individual placements drawing upon an individual's professional experience to departmental team challenges involving practical tasks.

The University also provides leave of absence for employees undertaking voluntary public service and Reserve Forces activities. Reserve Forces include members of the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marine Reserves, the Army Reserves and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force. The University also recognises that they may be mobilised at any time for operations and will be required to attend training.

Further information on the reserve forces and mobilisation is available on the Government webpages at: <https://www.gov.uk/employee-reservist>

2. SCOPE AND ELIGIBILITY

This policy and procedure applies to all employees of the University regardless of length of service or grade. They do not apply to agency workers or contractors.

It is important to note that time off to volunteer under this policy is not an automatic entitlement. Employees have the opportunity to apply to volunteer but requests and the timing of volunteering activity during work time must be agreed by the employee's line manager to avoid service disruption. The University encourages employees to participate in volunteering and line managers are encouraged to do their utmost to support volunteering where possible.

Employees applying to volunteer must be eligible to be at work, i.e. not absent due to ill health or on family leave or similar.

Brunel students who are also working at the University should apply for volunteering activities through the student volunteering programme.

3. VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES

Volunteering activities recognised by the University under this policy are required to either be registered with Brunel Volunteers or activities associated with voluntary public service including voluntary reserve forces.

All organisations seeking volunteers from the University have to provide full risk assessments to the University and demonstrate that they have appropriate Employment Liability Insurance in place that will cover University employees whilst volunteering.

Throughout their volunteering in work time, volunteers remain University employees and are expected to represent the best interests of the University at all times.

Volunteers have the right to withdraw from volunteering at any time.

Brunel Volunteers

Volunteering through Brunel Volunteers may take place in London Borough of Hillingdon or at another agreed location. A wide range of volunteering opportunities are available through Brunel Volunteers partner charities and organisations.

Voluntary Public Service and Reserve Forces

Voluntary public service duties include:

- A justice of the Peace
- A member of a local authority
- School Governor
- A member of any statutory tribunal
- Reserve forces (including adult cadet forces)

4. TIME OFF FOR VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITIES DURING WORK TIME

Unused volunteering time from one year cannot be carried over into another year. In addition, there is no provision for employees to volunteer time outside of working hours to be counted as overtime or 'in lieu'.

Approval in relation to a further period of volunteering may be granted by the line manager but it may also be withdrawn should the needs of the service change or in order to allow other employees to participate volunteering activities.

Volunteering days can be taken consecutively or as a series of full, half days or hourly sessions in agreement with the line manager.

Part time employees and those employed on a fixed term contract can apply to volunteer on a pro-rata basis.

Brunel Volunteers

The amount of time spent volunteering will depend on the type of activity chosen, the needs of the charity or organisation and the agreement of the employee's line manager. Permanent and full-time employees may apply to volunteer in activities registered with Brunel Volunteers in work time for up to 36 hours in every 12 month period.

Voluntary Public Service and Reserve Forces

The University shall grant, subject to the exigencies of the service, volunteering leave with pay not exceeding 18 days in each annual leave year for the purpose of carrying out voluntary public service and reserve forces activities (including adult cadet forces and attendance at training exercises, camps etc)

An employee who is appointed Chair, or equivalent, of a public body and thereby attracts additional duties may be granted up to 6 days additional paid leave for carrying out such additional duties, including any magisterial duties.

Any additional periods should be taken from annual leave.

5. FEES AND EXPENSES

The University is not responsible for any travelling or other expenses incurred in association with volunteering activities. In many cases the host organisations will reimburse travel expenses in line with their own policies and arrangements.

Volunteering should be undertaken on the basis that it is unpaid. Employees who are granted volunteering leave should undertake to refund to the University any fees or attendance allowances received other than fees paid specifically as travelling or subsistence expenses.

6. PROCEDURE

An application to support volunteering can be made at any time.

Employees should discuss their wish to participate in volunteering activity with their line manager at the earliest opportunity as early communication and planning of potential volunteering activity will help to minimise service disruption.

In the event of a line manager declining an application for volunteering, in the first instance an informal discussion with the line manager should be sought to resolve the issue. Advice may also be sought from the Human Resources Directorate.

Brunel Volunteers

Further details on volunteering opportunities are available on the Brunel Volunteer's web pages here <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/pdc/volunteers/opportunities> Once an employee has chosen a volunteering role they should complete the Employee Volunteering Permission Form in conjunction with their line manager. The form can be downloaded at: <https://www.brunel.ac.uk/pdc/volunteers/staff-volunteering> Completed volunteering applications should be returned to brunelvolunteers@brunel.ac.uk A Brunel Volunteers colleague will then contact the employee to organise a meeting with their chosen charity or organisation.

If a department/team would like to organise a group volunteering sessions, for example as a team building activity, the relevant manager should contact Brunel Volunteers for an up to date list of opportunities.

Public Service Duties and Reserve Forces

Employees should submit their request for volunteering leave in writing (by email is acceptable) to their line manager for consideration in advance of agreeing to any volunteering activities. The request should outline the nature of the volunteering, confirmation of the host organisation and the dates of leave requested.

7. MONITORING AND RECORDING VOLUNTEERING ACTIVITY

Employees must record any time away from work on volunteering activities through the absence module in CHIME.

8. RECOGNITION

As a Brunel Volunteer, employees will be invited to the Brunel Volunteers Award Ceremony held annually at the end of each academic year.