



Volunteer Policy

1. Volunteering in Context

1.1 Overall policy on the use of Volunteers

The goal of Kent Union Volunteering is to encourage the active participation in the community of students at the University of Kent through the development of specific projects and events and to provide an access point for students to get involved in opportunities with the Union, University, local community groups and organisations.

1.2 Purpose of the Volunteer Policy

The purpose of the policy is to provide overall guidance and direction to volunteers and staff engaged in volunteer activity and volunteer management. The policy is intended for guidance only, and does not constitute, either implicitly or explicitly, a binding contractual or personnel agreement. Kent Union and Kent Union Volunteering reserve the exclusive right to change any aspect of the policy at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy.

1.3 Scope of the Volunteer Policy

Unless specifically stated, the policy applies to all volunteers registered with Kent Union Volunteering or Kent Union.

1.4 Role of the Volunteer Co-ordinators and Related Staff

The involvement of volunteers requires a planned and organised effort. The function of the Volunteer Co-ordinators and student activities staff is to provide a central co-ordinating point for effective volunteer management for the Union; with regards to volunteering while at University, to provide a 'bureau' service for potential volunteers interested in working in the larger community and appropriate support and training, to maintain adequate and accessible records of volunteering endeavours and achievements.

1.5 Definition of a Volunteer

A volunteer is any student or member of staff who registers with Kent Union Volunteering in order to perform a task or role with a community focus without compensation, or expectation of compensation beyond reimbursement of expenses incurred in the course of their duties. Volunteers are not considered employees of Kent Union or Kent Union Volunteering or the organisations with which they have contact through Kent Union Volunteering.

1.6 Discretion

The participation of volunteers in activities organised by or facilitated through Kent Volunteering is at the discretion of Kent Volunteering and other organisations involved in the activity. Volunteers must be willing to submit to appropriate checks before commencing volunteering as listed in the role description.

1.7 Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable asset to Kent Union, its staff and the University and their rights and responsibilities are laid out in the Volunteer Code of Conduct in the various Student Activities handbooks and found on the Kent Union Volunteering website.

2 Volunteer Management Procedures

2.1 Maintenance of Records

A system of records will be maintained on each volunteer, including initial registration details, copies of all written communication, a log of personal telephone contact, reports or correspondence received from other organisations related to the volunteer, and any other relevant documentation. These personal records shall be considered confidential within Kent Union Volunteering. The Volunteer's permission shall be sought before details are disclosed to an external organisation, except where to withhold information would leave Kent Union liable to prosecution.

2.2 Representation of Kent Union Volunteering

Prior to any action or statement that might significantly affect or obligate Kent Union Volunteering /Union; volunteers are requested to seek consultation and approval from the relevant union staff or Sabbatical Officer. These actions may include, but are not limited to, public statement to the press, collaborations or joint ventures, or any agreements involving contractual or financial obligations. Volunteers are authorised to act as representatives of Kent Volunteering if /as specifically indicated within their task and/or role descriptions and only to the extent of such written specification.

2.3 Confidentiality

Refer to the Volunteering Confidentiality policy, available on the Kent Union Volunteering website

2.4 Health and Safety

Refer to Volunteering Health and Safety policy, available on the Kent Union Volunteering website

2.5 Equal Opportunity

Refer to Volunteering Equal Opportunity policy, available on the Kent Union Volunteering website

3 Volunteer Recruitment And Selection

3.1 Role/ Task Description

Volunteers require a clear, complete and current description of the duties and responsibilities of their task or role. This role/task description should include a named supervisor and worksite. The Volunteering Co-ordinators are available to assist in the development of descriptions.

3.2 Requests for Volunteers

Enquires from organisations wishing to offer opportunities through Kent Volunteering should be made to the Volunteering Co-ordinators in the first instance and complete the organisation registration procedure online. All parties should understand that the recruitment of volunteers is enhanced by creative and interesting tasks and roles, and by well planned projects. The Volunteering Co-ordinators will direct appropriate students to the opportunities, but holds no responsibility for the 'recruitment' of a volunteer into an opportunity. The organisation should apply their normal recruitment criteria to students.

Kent Volunteering reserves the right to refuse to promote an opportunity or place / recruit volunteers where they feel effective use will not be made of their skills and abilities or where it appears the placement may be unsafe or unsuitable.

3.3

Volunteers shall be recruited pro-actively through the medium of the Kent Union website matching technologies, website pages, posters, leaflets, internal press, events and other means. Volunteers shall be recruited without regard to gender, disability, race, age, employment status or other irrelevant distinction that may be viewed as discriminatory within society.

The sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be the suitability to perform a specified task or role on behalf of Kent Volunteering or other organisation that has requested volunteers.

3.4 Selection

Kent Volunteering will endeavour to offer guidance to help potential volunteers find the organisation or project that will best meet their skills, knowledge and interests.

Those volunteers who opt for an elected position will be subject to the Kent Union's Constitution or the society/club Constitution.

Those who opt for a placement within a community group will be subject to that organisation's normal selection procedure. If a volunteer feels that they have been dealt with unfairly, they may contact the Volunteering Co-ordinators who will mediate between the organisation and individual.

3.5 References and Criminal Records Checks

Volunteers may be required to submit to a criminal records check before being placed within certain organisations, failure to do so will result in that placement being refused. A negative outcome from a check may again result in a position being refused but each case will be looked at individually.

4 Volunteering Training and Development

4.1 Orientation and Induction

All volunteers will receive an introduction to Kent Volunteering and the KSCV awards.

Each community placement will be responsible for providing volunteers with an induction.

Volunteers taking part in Kent Volunteering/Union projects and events will be trained as needed for the opportunity.

4.2 On Going Training and Support

Refer to Training and Support Fact Sheet, available on the Kent Union Volunteering website

5. Volunteer Supervision and Evaluation

5.1 Requirement of a Supervisor

Each volunteer who performs a task or role for an organisation should have a named supervisor who is responsible for their direct management. In addition the Student Activities staff are available for consultation, guidance and assistance, in confidence where appropriate.

5.2 Commitment and Absenteeism

Kent Volunteering recognises that academic life creates additional issues for students regarding their ability to commit to a role over a longer period of time. Volunteers should be honest and open about their availability during academic breaks with organisations. Organisations should respect student's priorities in terms of academic work, particularly around examination time. The Volunteering Co-ordinators are available to advise on such issues.

Student Volunteers are responsible for informing placements if they are unable to attend a session due to illness in a timely manner.

5.3 Termination

There may times when a placement feels it is in its best interests to end their relationship with a volunteer, either because they no longer wish to have a volunteer perform the role or they have issues with that volunteer's performance.

In the first instance, the placement is encouraged to talk to the Volunteering Co-ordinator about redeployment. In the second, the placement is requested to advise Kent Volunteering

regarding its decision and the Volunteering Co-ordinators will be available to offer guidance and advice to either party at any stage.

Volunteers that are in an elected position are subject to the terms set out in their club/society's constitution and/or the Union's constitution.

5.4 Concern and Grievances

Volunteers who feel they may have concerns or grievances about their volunteering are encouraged to speak to the Volunteering Co-ordinators who will advise them of the appropriate action to take and will offer support throughout the process.

Volunteers who have concerns or grievances about Kent Volunteering, its staff or Union staff should follow the procedures laid down in the Union's constitution, available on the Kent Union website or from a member of Kent Union staff.

5.5 Communication

Volunteers are entitled to all necessary information pertinent to performance of their tasks. Accordingly, volunteers should be included in and have access to all appropriate information, memos, materials and meetings.

Lines of communication should operate in both directions, and should exist both formally and informally. Volunteers should be consulted regarding all decisions which would substantially affect the performance of their duties.

5.6 Evaluation

Volunteers shall receive periodic evaluation to review their work. The evaluation session will review the performance of the volunteer, the skills developed, training needs identified and any issues that are concerning the volunteer and the relevance of the volunteering experience.

6. Volunteer Support and Recognition

6.1 Reimbursement of Expenses

Volunteers are eligible for the reimbursement of reasonable expenses details are to be found in the Expenses Fact Sheet, available on the Kent Union Volunteering website

6.2 Insurance

Liability and Accident insurance is provided for all volunteers engaged in Kent Volunteering projects and events, where volunteers are placed with in a community group/organisation the organisations insurance will cover them.

For clubs and societies, volunteers should check their activities are covered by the Union's insurance by speaking to the Student Activities staff.

6.3 Recognition

Kent Volunteering believes that volunteers' commitment and performance should be recognised as widely as possible. KSCV (Kent Student/Staff Certificate for Volunteering) is available to all volunteers and they are also signposted towards other organisations or schemes where appropriate for additional accreditation.

6.4 Volunteer Career Paths

All volunteers are encouraged to develop their personal skills to enhance their opportunities, the Volunteering Co-ordinators are available at all times to discuss volunteers' progression within their chosen field and to help volunteers promote the skills gained on their CVs.

7 Review Date: November 2007