

Augusta University

Policy Library

Volunteer Services and Engagement Policy

Policy Manager: Human Resources

POLICY STATEMENT

Augusta University welcomes volunteer support to accomplish its mission of education and public service. The service, advice, and insight that volunteers provide are an invaluable resource. The university will make every effort to provide volunteers a meaningful, worthwhile experience.

Augusta University recognizes the need for balance among several factors: the desirability of volunteer service; the need to protect volunteer interests; and the need to minimize risk to the volunteer and the university. This policy addresses the disparate issues you may encounter as you seek to engage university volunteers (see Definitions) and provides uniform procedures for screening and engaging volunteers. This policy does not cover or govern volunteers who agree to serve as human subjects in university research protocols.

AFFECTED STAKEHOLDERS

Indicate all entities and persons within the Enterprise that are affected by this policy:

- Alumni Faculty Graduate Students Health Professional Students
 Staff Undergraduate Students Vendors/Contractors Visitors
 Other: Volunteer

DEFINITIONS

These definitions apply to these terms as they are used in this policy:

Agent of the University – An individual acting on behalf of the university.

Fair Labor Standards Act – If a public sector (including an AU employee) is otherwise employed by the agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer, the employee shall not be considered a volunteer.) / A determination by the Department of Labor that a person’s service was that of an employee will result in the time of service being compensable.

Indemnification – Protection by the university in the settlement of demands and expense incurred in connection with judgement or claims against an individual, provided that the act or omission causing the judgement or claim occurred while the individual was functioning in the performance of authorized duties on behalf of the university.

Stored Energy – Physical energy stored in springs, elevated machine members, rotating flywheels, and hydraulic systems, or as air, gas, steam, or water pressure, etc.

University Volunteer – An individual who performs services directly related to the business of the university, without the expectation of compensation. 1. “An individual who performs hours of service for the university for civic, charitable, educational or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered, is considered to be a volunteer during such hours. Individuals performing hours of service for the university will be considered volunteers for the time so spent and not submit to sections 6,7,and 11 of the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) when such hours of service are performed in accord with sections 3(e)(4)(A) and (B) of the FLSA and the guidelines in this subpart.”

You – An individual who, on behalf of the university, is engaging or seeking to engage a university volunteer.

PROCESS & PROCEDURES

A. Defining a University Volunteer

Uncompensated individuals who perform services directly related to the business of the university, to support the activities of the university, or to gain experience in specific endeavors. To qualify as a university volunteer, an individual must be willing to provide services according to the procedures of this policy. An individual who performs volunteer services for an entity that is not directly related to the business of the university (e.g., a government or public agency or an alumni association), is not considered a university volunteer for the purposes of this policy. However, an individual who performs volunteer services in the community on behalf of the university when there is no outside agency involved is considered a university volunteer.

Caution: These situations may appear ambiguous. Whenever you are not certain as to whether an individual should be classified as a university volunteer, contact Human Resources for assistance.

B. Responsibilities and Rights of the University Volunteer

A university volunteer is an agent of the university while performing assigned duties. Therefore, university volunteers are expected to abide by university policies and external regulations that govern their actions, including but not limited to those of ethical behavior, confidentiality, financial responsibility, and drug use. University volunteers are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and are not considered employees for any purpose. Therefore, they are not eligible for any university benefits, including Worker’s Compensation, as a result of this volunteer association.

The university is self-insured through the Department of Administrative Services Risk Management Services against state tort claims. This coverage is extended to the University Volunteers who are a part of the University Volunteer Program described in this policy. The liability coverage is for injuries and/or property damage volunteers may cause others while acting in the course of their official volunteer duties. Liability coverage does not apply when Volunteers deviate from the course of their volunteer duties.

All Volunteers must establish proof of identity and citizenship or permanent residency. If the individual is not a citizen or permanent resident of the United States, he/she must provide documentation of his/her visa status. An individual with a pending non-immigrant visa application or employment authorization card to work at the university cannot serve as a volunteer. Volunteer status may not be used as a way to avoid or defer compliance with the employment eligibility requirements of federal immigration laws.

C. Who May Volunteer

Anyone, including retirees, students, alumni, or others may provide volunteer services to the university, with the following restrictions: (see *Selecting and Engaging a Volunteer*).

- Individuals under the age of fifteen may not become university volunteers.
- An individual under the age of eighteen must obtain parental consent to volunteer.

It is important to determine that a person performing services of a volunteer and will not be considered an employee under the Fair Labor Standard Act. A determination by the Department of Labor that a person's service was that of an employee's will result in the time of service being compensable.

Augusta University shall not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, sex, national origin, religion, age or disability in the selection of volunteers or in the provision of services. (Augusta University's non-discrimination statement — without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion, marital status, citizenship, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, and/or other legally protected classification.

D. Unpaid Academic Faculty Appointments

Individuals who have unpaid faculty academic appointments with the university through Human Resources are not considered volunteers under this policy when acting in their faculty capacity. They are, however, permitted to volunteer their services in non-faculty related roles according to the terms and conditions set forth in this document.

E. Exchange Visitor Affiliates (EVA)

Exchange Visitor Affiliates are J Exchange Visitor Program participants who are not employed by Augusta University and are entered in the PeopleSoft system with a position code attached to an unfunded CFC. They are not considered volunteers when engaging in J program activities. An EVA, however, may, with prior permission from an Augusta University J program Responsible Officer, engage in volunteer activities according to the terms and conditions set forth in this document.

F. J Exchange Program Participant Employees

Individuals who are in the U.S. as an Augusta University J Exchange Visitor program participants and who are employed by Augusta University, must have prior permission from an Augusta University J program Responsible Officer to engage in volunteer activities according to the terms and conditions set forth in this document.

G. Augusta University Employees Who Volunteer

The Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provides that, if a public sector employee (including an AU employee) is otherwise employed by the agency to perform the same type of services as those for which the individual proposes to volunteer, the employee shall not be considered a volunteer. As such, an AU employee may not volunteer to take on additional duties related to their primary job for which he/she could be paid. The term “same type of services” shall be defined as any duty or responsibility that is closely related to the duties performed by or responsibilities assigned to the compensated AU employee. There are no limitations or restrictions imposed by FLSA on the types of services which a private individual (non-AU employee) may volunteer to perform for Augusta University, except that a volunteer under this policy may not perform services that are regularly performed by a compensated employee.

Because volunteer assignments are separate from AU employment, such assignments shall not affect the employee’s regular benefits (e.g., paid time off accrual, service credit, insurance benefits, and overtime calculations).

H. Procedural Statement

The university benefits from the services of its many volunteers from outside the Institution. The university is an institution of the University System of Georgia and is an instrument of the State of Georgia. As such, it is included within the coverage of the Georgia State Tort Claims Act, O.C.G.A. §§50-21-20 *et seq.* (“GTCA”). Nothing in this policy is intended to waive the sovereign or governmental immunity of any state employee, agent, or volunteer, or to enlarge the coverage provided under the GTCA.

Volunteers must use their personal medical benefits and personal auto coverage in the event of activity-related injury and for damage to their personal vehicles. Volunteers are not eligible for nor entitled to any compensation or institutional benefits, including Worker’s Compensation. The term volunteer as used in these guidelines excludes AU students participating in activities that are part of a course or program in which the student is enrolled. However, students volunteering on campus and working with animals or minors must complete a Volunteer Agreement and Background Investigation, regardless of the volunteer’s duration.

I. Volunteer Agreement

The lists that follow are not exhaustive; they are intended to provide guidelines when considering university volunteer engagement.

Note: For some university volunteers, the following categories may not be appropriate (e.g., advisory council members, trustees, reunion chairs). If you believe such an exception to these categories exists, contact Human Resources for guidance.

J. Services Requiring a Volunteer Agreement

For the following activities, volunteers are generally required to complete a Volunteer Agreement (see Forms). Additionally, any program or project that will include long-term or ongoing campus volunteer involvement will require a volunteer agreement as well.

- Volunteer activities with students and/or subjects of experiments*
- Activities with minors including specialty camps and child-care services*
- Persons involved with the handling of currency*
- Volunteer activities working with patients, human research subjects, or animals*
- Long-term or on-going volunteer services such as mentoring
- People dealing with confidential or sensitive information*
- Recreational and Competitive Sports
- Fitness Center/Wellness Center Volunteers
- Library Activities
- Individuals that have a copy of building keys or badged access to controlled areas
- Laboratory work*
- Professional services, such as those performed by accountants, architects, doctors, engineers, etc.*
- Travel of any kind*

Caution: For individuals under the age of eighteen (18), parental consent is required. Additionally, an individual must be eighteen (18) years old to perform the activities denoted above with an *. Exceptions to this age requirement in university laboratories must be approved and signed off by the requesting Department Chair who accepts responsibility for the minor while performing volunteer service in their department.

K. Prohibited Activities

University volunteers are generally prohibited from performing the following activities:

- Operation of heavy equipment
- Work with hazardous/infectious materials, environments, or related areas which may otherwise place the volunteer at risk for physical harm, until they have received adequate orientation and training of the hazards from the supervisor who is responsible for the area where hazards exist.
- Work with stored energy
- Any activity considered inappropriate for an employee
- Entering into any contract on behalf of the university
- Administration of direct patient care

- Operation of state-owned vehicles

L. Selecting and Engaging a University Volunteer

When engaging a university volunteer, it is the unit’s responsibility to be certain the individual has adequate experience, qualifications, and training for the task he or she will be required to perform. The following procedures are required to engage a volunteer.

1. The sponsoring department representative must complete and submit an online Volunteer Request Form to Human Resources.
 - a. Departments should carefully consider the types of duties appropriate for a volunteer to perform. Volunteers should receive a high level of support and training in order to successfully complete their tasks.
 - b. To avoid the appearance of impropriety and potential for workplace conflict, volunteers may not be supervised by members of their immediate family.
2. Ask each potential university volunteer to complete the Augusta University online volunteer application.
 - a. Ascertain whether the individual is at least eighteen years of age. If so, continue to step 4.
3. If the individual is between fifteen and eighteen years of age, he or she may only become a university volunteer for services not restricted with an asterisk above (individuals under fifteen (15) may not volunteer for services). In these cases, a Parental Consent Form must also be completed (see Forms).
4. Once the volunteer has submitted their application, they are contacted by Human Resources to come in and meet a volunteer coordinator, complete their volunteer agreement, background screening paperwork and complete online safety and privacy testing.
5. Criminal background checks, applicable health screening, and appropriate training (such as hazardous materials training) are completed for all volunteers prior to their beginning service in their assigned department at the university.
6. Upon satisfactory completion of the AU volunteer onboarding process, the volunteer is issued an Augusta University Volunteer ID badge and will then be allowed to begin their volunteer service position directly with their assigned unit.
7. The assigned volunteer unit is responsible for conducting a unit specific orientation and all training related to safely and effectively performing their volunteer role.
8. A university volunteer may serve no longer than one year without renewal. All forms and processes above must be renewed annually for current volunteers who will serve in the same

capacity on a long-term basis.

9. If the individual is a returning volunteer but the break in their service is greater than one year, all applicable forms and processes described above must be completed again.
10. If the individual is a current volunteer but their duties are changed, all applicable forms and processes described above must be completed again.

Note: For some university volunteers, it may not be appropriate to follow some of the steps above (e.g., advisory council members, trustees, reunion chairs). If you believe such a case exists, contact Human Resources for guidance.

M. Volunteer Badging, Hours Tracking and Attire

Once a volunteer has completed the volunteer onboarding process, they will receive a new volunteer identification badge. Volunteers are required to wear and display their current volunteer badge in a visible location, on their clothing, at all times while performing volunteer activities. Additionally, volunteers are required to log-in and out through the Volunteer Services Volgistics™ reporting system for their volunteer shifts, to ensure volunteer time records are accurately maintained.

Appropriate attire for university volunteers will be determined by their assigned university department based on their duties and volunteer placement location.

N. Background Checks

Personal identification, fingerprinting, and/or background checks continue to be required as the campus president determines appropriate. Background checks are required for volunteers who perform volunteer activities involving direct contact with minor children at AU hosted recreational camps or who perform duties that would regularly require a background check if performed by AU employees. Sensitive positions are those designated by AU as requiring heightened scrutiny of individuals holding the position, based on potential for harm to children, concerns for safety and security of people, animals, or property, or heightened risk of financial loss to AU or individuals in the university community. The volunteer is required to pass the background check prior to engaging in any volunteer activities. The results of a criminal records check may subject a current volunteer to disciplinary action up to and including termination of volunteer status under certain circumstances. Background checks are administered through Human Resources.

O. Dismissal

You may end a university volunteer's term of service at any time and without prior warning; however, you are encouraged to reach out to the Human Resources prior to dismissal to discuss volunteer related issues. The unit supervisor is required to notify the Human Resources of any volunteer dismissal and to obtain the volunteer's badge at the time of dismissal for deactivation in our volunteer database system.

P. University Volunteer Indemnification

Indemnification is provided to university volunteers in the same manner as is applicable to employees, that is: for acts or omissions arising within the scope of the volunteer's performance of specifically authorized duties or assignments on behalf of the university. In order to ensure adequate documentation, it is important that the department or unit engaging the university volunteer notify the Human Resources who will also provide a copy of the Volunteer Agreement (with the Description of Volunteer Services attached) to Risk Management.

Q. Payments to University Volunteers

Payment, promise of payment, or special consideration for voluntary services are not allowed. However, the School, Office or Department may reimburse pre-approved actual and reasonable expenses arising from the performances of assigned tasks following the standard university reimbursement procedures. Such pre-approval shall be documented in writing between the volunteer and the School, Office, or Department head prior to the occurrence of the activity for which expenses are authorized.

R. Responsibilities

1. ***The Sponsoring Department (You)***: Identify, orient, train, and manage university volunteers using the procedures specified in the Augusta University Volunteer Policy.
2. ***Human Resources***: Coordinate and manage volunteer screening and badging process once volunteers have been identified by departments. Determine when exceptions to this policy exist. Provide policy clarification. Consult with departments and units regarding application of this policy. Maintain volunteer records including volunteer hours and general personnel information.
3. ***University Volunteer***: Refrain from engaging in activities that are not specified in your Augusta University Volunteer Duty Description, if provided. As an agent of the university, abide by all university policies and external regulations that govern your actions.

REFERENCES & SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

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RELATED POLICIES

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APPROVED BY:

Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost, Augusta University

Date: 11/14/2024

President, Augusta University

Date: 11/18/2024