



volunteer ireland

obair dheonach éireann

Volunteer/Intern Policy and Procedures

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1. Policy

1.1 Policy Statement

Volunteering is at the heart of Volunteer Ireland (VI). We believe in the ethos and value of volunteering and that volunteers and interns make a vital contribution to the vision and objectives of VI and Irish society. We see our people as our greatest asset and the people that work in VI come from a wide variety of backgrounds. We have something in common – a passion for the community and a desire to celebrate our diversity. We value openness, honesty and people with a straightforward style to focus on the important things. We regard volunteers/interns as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the organisation and within all appropriate activities.

As the national volunteer development agency, it is essential that VI present a model of good practice in volunteer management. We are committed to a) equality of opportunity for all volunteers/interns, b) providing a diverse, inclusive, accepting and welcoming volunteer programme and c) ensuring that volunteers/interns will benefit and prosper from their experience with the organisation. To meet these commitments, we will:

1. Aim to recruit volunteers/interns from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, races, abilities and nationalities in line with our equality and diversity policy.
2. Consider involving anyone who wishes to volunteer with the organisation
 - That can demonstrate a commitment to our vision and objectives
 - Whose needs as volunteers/interns match the needs of the organisation and
 - That does not have a conflict of interest with any aspect of the organisation
3. Engage volunteers/interns across all departments, including the Board, Sub-Committees, day-to-day administration, specific projects, event planning and coordination, communications and social media and training.
 - On occasion VI is approached by individuals wishing to offer their skills, experience and support in a specific area and in these instances a volunteer role may be designed to facilitate this in line with VIs work.
4. Engage volunteers/interns to enhance the work of paid staff, not as a substitute for them.
 - Clear roles will be established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers/interns to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.
5. Provide a safe space for everyone to volunteer.
 - By joining this Volunteer programme, you agree that everybody should be free from intimidation or harassment, resulting from prejudice or discrimination.
6. Train, support and supervise volunteers/interns to the best of our abilities, and to act quickly and fairly if difficulties arise.
7. Provide volunteers/interns with appropriate resources to carry out their role effectively and efficiently, including expenses.
8. Treat volunteers/interns as full members of the VI team, in the same manner as paid employees and include them in the organisation's functions (staff meetings and workshops etc.) and decision-making procedures, whenever possible.
9. Ensure that the health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers/interns is treated with the same commitment as that of VI employees.
10. Have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers/interns.
11. Carry out diversity monitoring on an annual basis to assess the diversity of our volunteers/interns and to explore ways in which we can engage volunteers/interns from diverse groups.

1.2 Purpose

To provide staff and Board members with clear guidelines on; involving volunteers/interns, to outline expectations and to explain management systems and operating standards.

To ensure consistency of practice and equality and diversity in our volunteer programme

1.3 Scope

This policy applies specifically to the activities associated with volunteers and interns engaged with VIs internal volunteer programme (a separate Volunteer Policy is in operation for the Event Volunteers programme).

It applies to all staff who are involved in engaging volunteers and/or interns

1.4 Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures is implemented efficiently and effectively.

All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary Board members) are expected to facilitate this process.

Each Volunteer and intern are assigned a Volunteer Manager (VM) who is responsible for their day to day line management.

Volunteers/interns and staff are expected to act in accordance with all VI policies and procedures.

2. General Information

2.1 Definition of Volunteering

- “Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, and individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person’s own free will, without payment.”
- The White Paper Supporting Voluntary Activity (2000)
- In essence “Doing more than you have to, because you want to, because you care!”

2.2 The Difference between a Volunteer and an Intern

- Many people are confused about the difference between a volunteer and an intern or whether there’s even a difference at all. While it’s true that both may have similar experiences and get similar benefits from their role, there are a few differences between a volunteer and an intern which require us to separate them out as positions. The following document should be read to provide clarity:
- https://www.volunteer.ie/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/Volunteer_vs_Intern.pdf

2.3 Appropriate Behaviour

- VI is committed to managing volunteers/interns in a manner that meets the needs of both the individual and the organisation. Please refer to the Harassment and Anti-bullying Policy.

2.4 Confidentiality

- VI respects a volunteers/interns right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers/interns are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with VI.

2.5 Intellectual Property

- All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by volunteers/interns during their involvement with the organisation is VI property and copyright and therefore should not be disclosed to any person without our written consent.
- Volunteers/interns are expected to exercise caution and care with any documents or other material containing confidential information and at the end of their involvement with the organisation, return any such material in their possession.

2.6 Representing VI

- Volunteers/interns must seek prior approval from VI before undertaking any representation on behalf of the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the media, posting comments or images online or joint initiatives with other organisations and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

2.7 Expenses

- Please refer to our Expenses Policy for full details of volunteer/intern expenses. Please note VIs volunteer/intern expenses policy is subject to change and is regularly reviewed.

2.8 Insurance

- Insurance is provided by VI to cover all volunteers/interns while acting on behalf of and at the direction of VI in line with the tasks outlined within the volunteer/intern role description.
- Drivers using their cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their VM and their own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.

2.9 Personal Information & Confidentiality

- All information is dealt with in accordance with Data Protection Policy and Data Protection Acts. A folder and database are maintained on all volunteers/interns, to include their initial application, role description along with any relevant information on scheduling and notes.
- All personal data held on file will be shredded or safely destroyed within 1 year of a volunteers/interns leave date.
- Volunteers/interns can access their personal information freely upon request.
- Responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer/intern receives such information will rest with their VM.

2.10 References

- Where appropriate and upon request volunteers/interns may be furnished with a reference that states the role they held and the days/hours they volunteered with VI.

2.11 Consultation with Volunteers

- Volunteers/interns are included in our organisation's strategic planning process; including consultations such as the call for input on the national volunteering strategy.
- They participate in staff and team meetings and complete an exit survey.
- Each VM should ensure they engage with the volunteer/intern and give them appropriate support within the project or programme they are working on.

2.12 Expectations

- A full outline of volunteer/intern and VI expectations can be found in the Volunteer Agreement issued to and signed by all volunteers/interns.

2.13 Associated Documents

- Complaints Policy
- Harassment & Anti Bullying Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Expenses Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection Policy

3. Procedures

3.1 Recruitment & Selection

Purpose

To ensure a fair and transparent process and that VI engages the best possible individuals to enhance the services provided

Staff Involved

All staff

Procedure

General Guidelines

- Potential volunteers/interns are required to submit a CV and cover letter, as outlined in the advertised role. Positions are open to people aged 18 and over.
- Where a role involves volunteering with children or vulnerable persons volunteers/interns may be required to complete Garda Vetting. This will only be done in line with the current legislation and where a specific programme is engaging with children or vulnerable persons on a regular or ongoing basis.
- References are required for all roles (see candidate selection)

Role Descriptions

- To ensure that programmes and services are provided efficiently and effectively, VI will provide each volunteer with a specific written role description prior to beginning their role. The role description lays out the specific tasks involved in the position, the qualities and skills required to fill the position and any other relevant details of the role.
- When developing a new role, VI staff members should use the current Volunteer Role Description Template and guidelines outlined in the recruitment and selection procedure outlined below.

1. Developing the Role Description

- a) Develop and write up your volunteer role description using the most current VI template. Please note the following:
 - The role should be based on an identified need within the organisation and should directly align to the organisation's strategic priorities.
 - The volunteer role should not replace a paid staff role.
 - The role should be of value to the volunteer, give them a sense of satisfaction and an opportunity to share, learn and engage.
- b) When developing your volunteer/intern role description ensure to include the following:
 - Brief overview and title of the role
 - Main task(s) and responsibilities
 - Time commitment required – days and hours required for the role, e.g. 2 days per week, 1 hour a month

- Start and Finish Dates – Length of time involved: once off, occasionally, for 2 months, 6 months, ongoing etc.
- Location where the volunteer will be based e.g. at VI office or offsite at projects or events
- Experience, skills, qualities, qualifications, interests - Think about what type of person would suit this role, is it someone who is detailed oriented or does it require a big picture thinker, do you need someone to lead a team, direct a group or someone willing to support and take on your programme's administrative tasks?
- Benefits of the role – thinking about what the person will get out of the role e.g. as a Team Leader on Team Impact Days they have a great opportunity to gain insight into how local community organisations work and the challenges and issues they face, they have an opportunity to meet people from many companies and from around the globe, they get to take on a leadership role and give back to local communities in the greater Dublin area.
- Support, training and supervision – what type of support, training and supervision will they receive. Is it on the job training, an induction to VI, optional training such as Essentials of Volunteer Management, the Wheel training provided via Accenture or Manual Handling Training?
- Location - where will they be based? Is it at VI offices or if they are working with the corporate programme where they are likely to be off site at meetings, site visits and Team Impact Days on a regular basis?

Note: Where a potential volunteer/intern contacts us regarding a specialist skill a list of agreed tasks may be drawn up rather than a full role description.

2. Advertising the Role

To encourage diversity and to ensure our opportunities are open to all, each role should be posted in a variety of locations. These might include:

- On I-VOL (the national database of volunteer opportunities)
 - Contact Dublin City Volunteer Centre to register your opportunity and remember, we are already a registered organisation on I-VOL.
- Activelink.
- Local colleges and universities.
- International internship programmes.
- Local newsletters e.g. minority groups, socially marginalised groups, migrant populations etc.

Note: Remember to respond to all volunteers who enquire about the role. This is one of the first rules in volunteer management.

3. Candidate Selection

- For longer term roles you should look to meet with the potential volunteer either in the office or video chat if they are outside of Dublin or in another country.
 - Where possible two staff members should meet with the candidate.
- For once off, or occasional volunteers a phone call may suffice.
- Be sure to use the agreed question list during the meeting.
- When the meeting is complete, we suggest both you and candidate take some time to consider if they would be a good fit for the role.
- Tell the candidate you will be in touch in the coming days.
- Contact the candidate within the agreed timeframe and offer/do not offer the role.
- If you offer the role to the candidate, please follow the steps below in order to ensure the appropriate reference is in place for the type of volunteer role the individual will be engaging in.
 - a) Long term, regular and ongoing volunteer roles

- Volunteers in these roles are asked to provide two references using VI's agreed standard reference check documentation
- b) Student placement/internship roles
 - Volunteers/interns in these roles are asked to have their sending college, university, school or intern sending programme read and sign the standard recommendation form. By signing this form, the sending organisation confirms the student/intern's suitability for the role.
- c) Short term project based, occasional and once-off roles
 - Volunteers in these roles are asked to have the standard recommendation form signed by, e.g. a VI staff member or a colleague in a similar field. By signing this form, the signatory confirms the individual's suitability for the role.

Note: In the last two cases above you should still meet, chat, interview the candidate to ensure they are suitable for the role. You should also ensure there is a quality role available for them.

3.1 Successful Candidate(s) – Appointment and Trial Period

- Following reference checks the successful candidate(s) will be notified by phone and/or email.
- All placements are subject to an initial agreed trial period.
 - The trial period is dependent on the nature and hours of the volunteer role and is communicated via the volunteer agreement. Most trial periods are 6 weeks and can be extended.
- At the end of this time, the VM will meet with the volunteer/intern to discuss their suitability for the role.
- At this point, volunteers/interns may continue in their current role, be reassigned to a more suitable role, or be asked to leave.

3.2 Unsuccessful Candidates

- All enquiries and applications should be responded to.
 - If you are not inviting someone to interview you should inform them of this by email or phone and refer them to their local volunteer centre.
 - If you interview the candidate and do not offer them the role (they may not have the skills or qualities you are looking for or you may have found someone else who is more suitable) explain they were not accepted and refer them to their local volunteer centre.

Records

Role Description, Volunteer Agreement, Record of Meetings, Emails, CVs and Cover Letters, Copy of Role Advertisement, References, Garda Vetting Details, Volunteer Reference Check Form

3.2 Development

Purpose

To ensure that volunteer/intern development and support needs are identified and addressed.

Staff Involved

All staff

Procedure

Induction and Orientation

When providing volunteers/interns with an induction staff should use the agreed Volunteer Induction Checklist.

1. On a volunteer/interns first day, they can expect to receive a planned induction with their VM. This induction involves, but is not limited to:
 - An introduction to all staff, volunteers and interns
 - General housekeeping
 - Health & Safety
 - Volunteer policy and agreement overview
 - Terms and nature of the role
 - VI operations
 - VI services
 - Additional relevant policies and procedures, as appropriate
2. In addition, during induction, all new volunteers/interns will:
 - Identify a list of agreed tasks and/or several measurable learning objectives with their VM. These can include technical and or behaviour competencies and work activities that can provide the individual with an opportunity to practice and develop within their role.
 - Agree working times with their VM that are as flexible as the tasks allow.
 - Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of full-time paid staff, but unscheduled absences can create organisational problems.
 - When expecting to be absent, volunteers/interns should inform their VM as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.
 - Be made aware of their responsibility to notify their VM by phone as soon as possible if they are unable to commit to their role if they are sick or for personal reasons.
 - Be informed that if they wish to take a holiday, they must notify their VM, providing at least one week's notice so workloads can be managed.
 - Be informed of any expenses in line with the organisations expenses policy.
 - Be made aware that insurance is provided to cover all volunteers/interns while working on behalf of and at the direction of VI in line with the tasks outlined within their role description.
 - Individuals using their own cars in connection with their voluntary work must inform their VM and own insurance company to ensure adequate and continued cover.
 - Be informed that all their personal information is dealt with in accordance with our data protection policy and procedures.

Training

1. Role specific training will be provided to assist volunteers with their position and its tasks, where applicable.
2. All volunteers are actively encouraged to identify and avail of training opportunities within VI networks and externally.
 - Approval to undertake external training must be agreed in advance with the VM and is dependent on resources.
 - If external training is paid for by VI, any course or other materials remain the property of VI.
 - Volunteers may be required to submit a short report outlining the content and usefulness of the course or meeting attended and disseminated to relevant staff/volunteers within VI.

Records

Record of Meetings, Training Budget, Induction Checklist, Training Records

3.3 Management

Purpose

To ensure that volunteers/interns are managed in an effective and efficient manner.

Staff Involved

All staff

Procedure

- VI is committed to managing volunteers/interns in a manner that meets the needs of the organisation and the individual.
- We recruit a broad range of volunteers/interns with a wide range of skills for roles in the organisation. Some of our roles are office based, some activity or task-based and others are virtual volunteer roles. For this reason, we will provide proportionate support and supervision to our volunteers which will be agreed in advance.
- VI commits to supporting all volunteers/interns to develop personally and professionally within their role.
- All staff members may receive training and guidance on how to involve volunteers/interns effectively in their programme(s).

Support and Supervision

- All volunteers/interns are allocated a dedicated VM. It is the role of the VM to:
 - Provide advice and guidance relating to the work.
 - Provide support and supervision for the duration of the volunteer/intern role.
 - Encourage training opportunities where possible.
 - Answer questions about policies and procedures.
 - Deliver induction.
 - Encourage the volunteer/intern to attend training and arrange training if required.
 - Provide the volunteer/intern with access to all information they need relevant to their role.
 - Consult with the volunteer/intern on any decisions that would substantially affect their role.
 - Meet time and duty commitments for volunteers/interns on a day to day basis.
 - Provide volunteers/interns with notice regarding upcoming scheduled events or training where their attendance is required.
 - Deal with any issues or concerns involving volunteers/interns.
- Formal supervision sessions should take place between the volunteer/intern and the VM at regular intervals, depending on the role. During these sessions the VM should:
 - Provide the volunteer/intern with feedback on their work.
 - Suggest any changes in activities.
 - Plan further tasks.
 - Ascertain if the volunteer/intern is happy in the role.
 - Provide the volunteer/intern with an opportunity to highlight any issues they may have.
 - Convey appreciation to the volunteer/intern and thank them for their contribution to the organisation.
 - Find out if the need any more support.
- If appropriate, improvement action may be taken following support and supervision sessions. Examples include, extending a trial period, additional training and/or reassignment.

Time and Duty Commitments

- VI staff are expected to meet time and duty commitments for volunteers/interns, to provide appropriate time at induction and orientation, training and on a day to day basis.
- If a volunteer/intern is sick or unable to commit to their role for personal reasons, they should notify their VM by phone as soon as possible.

- If a volunteer/intern wishes to take a holiday, they are requested to notify their VM and provide at least one week's notice so that workloads can be managed effectively.

Volunteer/Intern Recognition

Volunteers/interns provide a unique service to VI, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded.

- VI staff are responsible for thanking all volunteers/interns informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation.
- The VM and/or CEO is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, such as International Volunteer Day or when a volunteer/intern role with the organisation comes to an agreed end.
 - Examples of formal recognition include cards, certificates, appreciation events etc.

Ending the Volunteer/Intern Relationship

- Volunteer/intern roles have a natural end, where the individual will often move on to further opportunities or paid work. In this instance VI will:
 - Conduct an online exit survey with the volunteer/intern to capture feedback on their role, experience within the organisation and future learning opportunities.
- In the instance of a volunteer/intern breaching VI policies, procedures for dealing with challenges are outlined in section 3.4.

Volunteer/Intern Records

- A folder and database are to be maintained on all volunteers/interns, to include their initial application, role description along with any relevant information on scheduling and notes.
- Records are to be maintained in line with the data protection policy and procedures.

Records

Record of Meetings, Complaints Form, Emails, Letters, Volunteer/Intern Records, Data Protection Policy

3.4 Dealing with Challenges

Purpose

To ensure that any issues or concerns involving volunteers/interns are managed in an effective and efficient manner.

Staff Involved

All staff, CEO, Board Members

Procedure

- If appropriate, improvement action(s) may be taken following support and supervision sessions, examples include:
 - extending a trial period
 - additional training
 - and/or reassignment.

Issues & Difficulties

- All volunteers/interns have access to a process to address any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their work or how they are managed.
- If a volunteer/intern is unhappy in their role or have an issue or concern they wish to discuss they may approach their VM or escalate their issue or concern to the CEO.

- The matter will be dealt with in a private and confidential manner and in line with VIs complaints policy and procedures.
- Volunteers/interns who do not adhere to VIs policies and procedures or who fail to perform their tasks satisfactorily may be asked to leave.
- Volunteer involvement will not be ended until the individual has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for being asked to leave with their VM.
- Grounds for being asked to leave include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Gross misconduct
 - Being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol)
 - Theft
 - Misuse of equipment and materials
 - Abuse of clients and co-workers
 - Breaches of confidentiality
 - Failure to abide by policies and procedures
 - Failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard
 - Report relating to child safety
- When a volunteer/intern is asked to leave this will be communicated both in person and in writing to the individual.
- If a volunteer/intern is deemed to have behaved with extreme detriment to VI and its reputation and to the health and safety of others involved in the organisation, VI reserves the right to end its relationship with the individual with immediate effect.

Records

Record of Meetings, Complaints Policy and Procedures, Complaints Form, Emails, Letters

3.5 Health & Safety

Purpose

To ensure that volunteers/interns are fully aware of their health & safety obligations and the responsibility of the organisation to comply with relevant guidelines and legislation

Staff Involved

All staff and Volunteers/Interns

Procedure

- VI is committed to looking after the health, safety and wellbeing of staff, volunteers and interns on our premises or using our services. This commitment applies equally to our team of volunteers who are vital to the services we provide.
- Any activities carried out on a voluntary basis are covered by the same health and safety legislative requirements as those carried out by VI employees.
- It's therefore important volunteers/interns understand and accept their personal responsibility towards promoting and maintaining health and safety standards in order to provide a safe working environment for all.
- The VM must inform volunteers/interns that it is important that they:
 - Carry out duties without endangering either their health and safety or that of colleagues, third parties and/or the general public.
 - Comply with all relevant instructions and procedures relating to safety and follow guidance provided by VI
 - Inform their VM of any personal health and safety requirements that they may have

- If any volunteers/interns have any doubts regarding their health and safety responsibilities, they should speak to VIs Health & Safety Officer as soon as possible.

Records

Record of Meetings, Induction Checklist, Training Attendance Records, Health & Safety Policy and Procedures

3.6 Diversity Monitoring

Purpose

To examine how the organisations human resource policies and procedures are working and to ensure equality and diversity issues are identified and addressed

Staff Involved

TPM, CPM

Procedure

- It is VIs policy to recruit the best people with the right skills, knowledge and experience and to provide equal opportunity for all. It is a key priority for VI not to discriminate against any person because of:
 - Gender
 - Civil Status
 - Family Status
 - Sexual Orientation
 - Religion
 - Age
 - Disability
 - Race
 - Membership of the Traveller Community
- To achieve diversity, we carry out annual diversity monitoring of our volunteers/interns to assess represented and under-represented groups within our volunteer programme.
 - This is issued in quarter one each year
- We send a link to all volunteers/interns, engaged the previous year, to complete a short online survey (Survey Monkey).
- After the data is collated a report is compiled which will set the objectives for the following year in working with new or underrepresented groups.

Records

Survey Results, Diversity Report, Equality & Diversity Checklist and Action Plan

4. Volunteer/Intern Code of Conduct

- The VM must inform the volunteer(s) of the code of conduct including their responsibility to:
 - Present a positive image of the organisation.
 - Seek prior approval before undertaking any representation on behalf of the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the media, joint initiatives with other organisations and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.
 - Ensure that they do not disclose any information without written consent as all written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by volunteers during their involvement with us, is our property and our copyright.

- Exercise caution and care with any documents or other material containing confidential information and at the end of their involvement with the organisation, return any such material in their possession.

5. Monitoring and Review

Volunteers/interns will have the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience during regularly scheduled support and supervision meetings when they complete their activities. This information will be compiled and disseminated at the next scheduled staff meeting. The Board will be provided with relevant information at regularly scheduled meetings and any action delegated as appropriate. This policy will be reviewed every three years or sooner if required. The supporting procedures will be reviewed annually or sooner if required.

Records

Record of Meetings, Emails, Updated Document(s), Document Control Matrix