

Volunteer Service Policy

Responsibility for policy: Director of People and Capability

Approving authority: Vice-Chancellor

Last reviewed: September 2024

Next review: September 2029

Application

1. This policy applies to all staff of the University of Waikato.

Purpose

2. The purpose of this policy is to set out the principles and processes that apply to volunteer service undertaken as a staff member of the University of Waikato for the benefit of the community.

Scope

3. This policy applies to volunteer service undertaken by staff in their capacity as employees of the University of Waikato and does not apply to volunteer service undertaken by staff as private individuals in their own time.

Related documents

4. The following documents set out further information relevant to this policy:
 - [Management of Work-Related Discomfort, Pain, Injury and Illness Policy](#)
 - [Safety and Wellness Policy](#)
 - [Staff Code of Conduct](#)
 - [Volunteer Service Request Form](#)

Definitions

5. In this policy **volunteer service** means service willingly given for the benefit of a not-for-profit community organisation or cause.

Principles

6. The University recognises the value and importance of community involvement and encourages staff to participate in volunteer activities in support of organisations, projects and causes for the common good.

Eligibility for volunteer service

7. All staff who are employed in a continuing position on at least a 0.5 FTE basis or who are employed in a fixed-term position on at least a 0.5 FTE basis for at least 12 consecutive months are eligible to apply to undertake volunteer service.
8. Eligible staff may be granted one day (or two half days) per calendar year in the case of full-time staff, and one half-day per calendar year in the case of part-time staff, which cannot be accrued.
9. Volunteer service is not an entitlement and does not alter a staff member's terms and conditions of employment.

Volunteer service activities

10. Staff are encouraged to identify their own volunteering opportunity or to undertake volunteer service for an established community organisation, project or cause.
11. Volunteer service activities may be undertaken by staff individually or as part of a group.
12. Staff members must not knowingly engage in any volunteer service under this policy:
 - a. which is illegal or discriminatory
 - b. which benefits commercial organisations or political groups
 - c. which is, or is likely to be, in conflict with the interests of the University
 - d. which damages, or has the potential to damage, the reputation of the University
 - e. for the direct benefit of a family member, or
 - f. for personal financial gain.

Volunteer service management

13. Staff members must obtain approval to undertake volunteer service from their line manager using the [Volunteer Service Request Form](#) no less than five working days prior to the requested period of service.
14. Wherever possible, the timing of volunteer service should be determined by agreement between the staff member and their line manager.
15. Line managers should attempt to approve volunteer service requested by staff in their area of responsibility but have the discretion to decline service if it would breach this policy or significantly impact University operations.
16. Line managers may require written verification from an official of the relevant community organisation of the volunteer service and/or evidence that the volunteer service has been undertaken.
17. If the request is approved by the line manager the staff member must book the absence through the University's online leave system Āku Mahi; any changes to volunteer service require the approval of the relevant line manager and must also be reflected in Āku Mahi.

Costs and expenses while undertaking volunteer service

18. No contribution will be made by the University towards expenses attached to volunteer service, such as accommodation, transport, parking, or meals.

Health and safety

19. Staff are responsible for taking reasonable care of their own health and safety while undertaking volunteer service and for complying with all reasonable policies, procedures or instructions notified to them by the community organisation for which they are undertaking voluntary service during the period of service.
20. Any accident or incident that occurs while undertaking volunteer service will be considered to be work-related and must be reported through the online [Incident Report Form](#) in accordance with the University's procedures for reporting accidents and incidents.
21. Any injury or illness that occurs as an outcome of undertaking volunteer service will be managed in accordance with the [Management of Work-Related Discomfort, Pain, Injury and Illness Policy](#).

Responsibilities

- 22. Staff are responsible for undertaking volunteer service in accordance with this policy.
- 23. Line managers are responsible for ensuring that volunteer service in their area of responsibility is managed in accordance with this policy.
- 24. The Director of People and Capability is responsible for:
 - a. the provision of information and advice about volunteer service to staff, and
 - b. the provision of an annual report to the Vice-Chancellor on volunteer service undertaken by staff under this policy.

Responsibility for monitoring compliance

- 25. The Director of People and Capability is responsible for monitoring compliance with this policy and reporting any breaches to the Vice-Chancellor.
- 26. Breaches of this policy may result in disciplinary action under the [Staff Code of Conduct](#).