

Volunteering Policy

Introduction

This policy applies to those individuals who volunteer (see definition below) at the Woolf Institute (hereafter 'Institute'). Volunteering is a great way for alumni and supporters to stay connected to the Institute and share personal experiences and expertise.

Definition of a Volunteer

Generally, volunteering is described as an unpaid activity where someone gives their time to help an organisation or an individual to whom they are not related, and from which they gain no significant or tangible benefit or remuneration. People volunteer for many different reasons. They may choose to volunteer to develop skills or gain experience, to socialise or to give something back to society. They may also volunteer because they feel a moral duty or compelling reasons to take part in this voluntary action or support a particular cause. The key element is that it is freely undertaken. At the Institute, volunteers can be alumni and non-alumni.

Volunteering Policy Summary

There are a number of volunteer roles. Not all of the points below will be appropriate for your volunteer activity, but have been provided to give you an overview of the support given to volunteers at the Institute.

The Institute will endeavour to:

- Provide adequate information, training and assistance for you to be able to meet your volunteering responsibilities.
- Provide an induction so that you can carry out your role safely and effectively.
- Provide appropriate insurance cover whilst you undertake voluntary service.
- Provide a good understanding of how the Institute works and what it does.
- Provide you with support as well as feedback.
- Be receptive to your comments and suggestions regarding ways in which together we might better achieve our respective tasks.
- Ensure that in relation to your voluntary work you are free from discrimination in accordance with the Equal Opportunities Policy and Codes of Practice.
- Encourage you to discuss any new ideas, proposals or concerns with the staff liaison responsible for your area.
- Keep confidential all personal information relating to you which falls under the Data Protection Act 1988.

What we expect from you:

- Perform your volunteering role in a professional manner and to the best of your ability.
- Carry out the project agreed between you and Institute staff, or let us know if you encounter difficulties.

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- Take part in training provided and ask for support if it is needed.
- Follow the Institute's procedures and standards, including health, security and safety and equal opportunities, in relation to our staff, other volunteers, alumni and the public.
- Meet time commitments and give reasonable notice of any absence.
- Be accountable, and accept and give constructive feedback.
- Maintain and respect all confidential information.
- Provide feedback on your experience as a volunteer.
- Adhere to the Institute's core values of freedom of thought and expression as well as freedom from discrimination.

Recruitment

Volunteers may be recruited through advertisements on the Institute's website or in newsletters, or through the Institute's social media outlets. Volunteers should be asked to complete the Volunteer Form and submit two references from non-family members who have known them for at least one year, and provide proof of their identity and address. These documents should be checked before the volunteer starts any activities. All non-EU volunteers must have a visa that permits them to volunteer whilst they are in the UK.

Role description

For any regular activity, volunteers should receive a role description that explains informally the knowledge and skills needed for the role, its main tasks and the experience it will offer them.

Induction

An induction should provide background information on the Institute, explain any relevant procedures, describe the volunteer role and outline how the volunteer will be supported. It should outline the health and safety policy, and any other policies relating to the volunteer, e.g. data protection, security etc.

Access to the Woolf Institute Building

The Institute will make arrangements for you to have an access card to the building and rooms relevant to your role. On leaving, you must return the access card to the Office Manager.

Supervision

Your supervisor will be named for each volunteering opportunity and will act as a point of staff contact. Your supervisor will meet with you at the end of any settling in period to ensure that both parties are satisfied with the volunteer arrangement, and thereafter will be available to discuss any successes, concerns, or problems.

Expenses

The Institute can reimburse certain out-of-pocket expenses incurred in connection with your volunteering role, so long as they are evidenced by receipts.

References

Records should be kept of the work done by volunteers, to enable their involvement to be monitored effectively. The supervisor may write references for volunteers, detailing the role and number of voluntary hours undertaken.

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Leaving

When a volunteer role comes to an end or the volunteer takes the decision to leave, arrange an informal exit interview.

The Woolf Institute

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