

Volunteers

Human Resources Policy

Effective Date: June 2009

1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline requirements for the recruitment and management of volunteers.

2 APPLICATION

This policy applies to all volunteers providing services within Queensland Health.

3 GUIDELINES

Guidelines may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. The guidelines must be consistent with this policy.

4 DELEGATION

The 'delegate' is as listed in the Queensland Health Human Resource Delegations Manual as amended from time to time.

5 REFERENCES

- Queensland Public Health Sector Certified Agreement (No. 7) 2008 (EB7)
- *Aged Care Act 1997* and Associated Accountability Amendment Principles 2006 (No 1)
- *Anti Discrimination Act 1991*
- *Child Protection Act 1999*
- *Health Services Act 2000*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Act*
- Queensland Health Privacy Plan
- Criminal History Checking HR Policy B40
- Indemnity for Employees and Other Persons HR Policy

6 SUPERSEDES

- IRM 3.20 Use of Volunteers
- Circular ER 33/05 – Use of Volunteers
- Circular ER 04/06 – Use of Volunteers

7 POLICY

Queensland Health values its volunteers and acknowledges that volunteers complement and enhance the functioning of the health service districts.

Volunteering is to benefit the community and the volunteer, and be of the volunteer's own free will.

Volunteering is never to be used as a precondition for paid employment nor as a **substitute for paid work**. Volunteers **are not** to replace paid Queensland Health employees or pose a threat to their job security. They **are not** to fill a position previously held by a paid employee. Volunteers **are not** required to do the work of paid employees during industrial disputes, except when there is no other reasonable way to resume continuity of patient services.

Volunteers are not covered by Awards or Certified Agreements. Volunteers have the right to operate in a healthy and safe environment, be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses (as agreed by Queensland Health and the volunteer), have a duty statement and agreed volunteering hours, and be provided with orientation and sufficient training.

Activities undertaken by a volunteer are to positively support the achievements of the volunteer program. The activities are to be meaningful to the volunteer and contribute in a meaningful way to the objectives of Queensland Health. Volunteers are not to be exploited or expected to perform tasks that paid staff are reluctant to undertake.

Examples of how volunteers contribute to Queensland Health may include direct and indirect patient support such as:

- meeting, greeting and providing guidance to patients and visitors
- visiting and providing comfort to patients
- doing errands and re-stocking brochures
- other tasks considered appropriate by the volunteer coordinator/manager.

Volunteer activities and achievements are to be recognised, celebrated and promoted within Queensland Health and the community. Volunteer arrangements may be ended by the volunteer or Queensland Health at any time.

8 APPLYING THE POLICY

8.1 Responsibilities of Queensland Health

Queensland Health is to:

- ensure all volunteers possess the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to perform their roles
- provide volunteers with adequate orientation, information and appropriate training relevant to the performance of their roles and Queensland Health policy and legislative requirements, e.g. Code of Conduct, workplace health and safety, and Queensland Health privacy plan
- indemnify volunteers while working on behalf of Queensland Health, under the Indemnity for Employees and Other Persons HR Policy
- cover volunteers for personal accident and injury while volunteering for Queensland Health through a personal accident and injury insurance policy
- ensure all volunteers working in areas providing services directed primarily at children at a school or school-based facility have the appropriate blue card (working with children) check (refer Criminal History Checking HR Policy B40)
- ensure that all persons volunteering in areas providing services that are directed primarily at aged care have the appropriate criminal history check (refer Criminal History Checking HR Policy B40)

- ensure individual volunteer information is registered and maintained in an appropriate confidential file.

8.2 Responsibilities of volunteer coordinator/manager

The volunteer coordinator/manager is to be a paid Queensland Health employee and is to:

- coordinate and manage the volunteer program within the applicable area
- assess and approve all volunteer applications and register approved applications on an internal database prior to the person commencing volunteer activities
- recruit and develop appropriate volunteers and provide them with clear information about their role and obligations
- assess any activities proposed for, or undertaken by volunteers to identify and control any foreseeable health and safety risks
- ensure situations don't arise where there maybe a conflict of interest, especially when volunteers may have access to confidential information in a health environment. Volunteer coordinators/managers may decide not to place volunteers in these situations. Alternatively an appropriate risk management approach may be to document potential issues and agreed strategies in a confidentiality agreement between Queensland Health and the volunteer
- provide volunteers with regular feedback on the services they provide, as well as providing appropriate reward and recognition strategies
- evaluate and monitor volunteer activities, applying management procedures and consideration of non-voluntary cessation of volunteer involvement when appropriate. All volunteers are to be treated in accordance with the principles of natural justice
- consider conducting exit surveys when volunteers leave Queensland Health to identify areas for improvement in the future.

8.3 Responsibilities of volunteers

Each volunteer is to:

- apply for and be registered as a Queensland Health volunteer with the relevant volunteer coordinator/manager
- comply with the same legislative requirements and ethical standards as paid staff, including the areas of workplace health and safety, Queensland Health Code of Conduct, standards of ethical behaviour, patients/clients rights to privacy and confidentiality, equal employment and anti-discrimination
- attend district orientation/induction programs prior to commencement as a volunteer to ensure access to corporate information and workplace health and safety procedures
- wear identification badges at all times within Queensland Health facilities
- provide evidence of a current blue card **if** involved with provision of services directed primarily towards children in a school or school-based facility
- advise and/or record their attendance for each volunteer activity according to the process established in their health service district. This is important for statistical and insurance purposes
- be entitled to claim reimbursement for mileage, public transport costs and/or phone calls when the costs are incurred carrying out activities in accordance with their duty statement, and as delegated and agreed to by their supervisor.

8.4 Cessation of volunteer involvement

When a volunteer is no longer involved with Queensland Health, they are to surrender their identification badge and any other items belonging to Queensland Health.

It is important for volunteer coordinators/managers to address issues in a timely manner that may lead to potential risks, conflict or conflict of interests. In situations when these matters cannot be resolved Queensland Health may consider various options including ending the volunteer arrangement.

9 DEFINITIONS

Volunteer	An individual who supports Queensland Health either through direct contact with patients/clients or other activities without financial gain or reward.
Volunteer coordinator/manager	An individual who is a paid employee of Queensland Health who manages the activities of the volunteers and reports on their activities.

10 HISTORY

June 2009	Protected policy updated in accordance with EB7.
May 2008	Policy formatted into HR Policy template.
February 2008	Policy revised as part of the whole-of-government review of volunteer programs and to incorporate requirements for criminal history checking.