Volunteers

Policy number: B12 (QH-POL-259)
Publication date: May 2014

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

Application: This policy applies to all volunteers providing services within the Department of Health.

This policy does not apply to Queensland Ambulance Service.

Delegation: The ‘delegate’ is as listed in the Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual, as amended from time to time.

Legislative or other authority:
- Aged Care Act 1997 and Associated Accountability Amendment Principles 2006 (No 1)
- Anti-Discrimination Act 1991
- Child Protection Act 1999
- Public Sector Ethics Act 1994
- Work Health and Safety Act 2011
- Queensland Health Privacy Plan

Related policy or documents:
- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- Employment screening HR policy B40 (QH-POL-122)
- Indemnity for employees and other persons HR policy I3 (QP-POL-152)

Policy subject:

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SCHEDULE ONE  Volunteer processes and responsibilities
1 Policy statement

The Department of Health values its volunteers and acknowledges that volunteers complement and enhance the functioning of Queensland’s hospital and health system.

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 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 the Department of 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 the Department of Health. Volunteers are not to be exploited or expected to perform tasks that paid staff are reluctant to undertake.

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

Definitions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer</td>
<td>An individual who supports the Department of Health either through direct contact with patients/clients or other activities without financial gain or reward. Excludes First Responders and Honorary Ambulance Officers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Volunteer coordinator/manager</td>
<td>An individual who is a paid employee of the Department of Health who manages the activities of the volunteers and reports on their activities.</td>
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History:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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| May 2014        | • Policy reviewed as part of the Queensland Ambulance Service (QAS) HR Policy Integration project.  
                  • Policy not applicable to QAS employees.  
                  • Policy amended to update definition of volunteer.                                    |
| October 2013    | • Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy Simplification project.  
                  • Policy amended to:  
                  − limit application to Department of Health volunteers  
                  − update references and naming conventions.                                           |
<p>| 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 |</p>
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<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IRM 3.20 Use of Volunteers</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Circular ER 33/05 – Use of Volunteers</td>
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<td>Circular ER 04/06 – Use of Volunteers</td>
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Volunteers – Schedule One
Volunteer processes and responsibilities

The following information is provided as the minimum mandatory standard practice, procedure or process to enable satisfactory compliance with this Department of Health HR policy.

Local guidelines/procedures may be developed to facilitate implementation of this policy. Any local guidelines/procedures must be consistent with this policy and schedule and ensure employee entitlements continue to be met.

1 Cessation of volunteer involvement

When a volunteer is no longer involved with the Department of Health, they are to surrender their identification badge and any other items belonging to the Department of 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 the Department of Health may consider various options including ending the volunteer arrangement.

2 Responsibilities

2.1 Responsibilities of the Department of Health

The Department of 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 Department of 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 the Department of Health, under the Indemnity for Employees and Other Persons HR Policy I3
- cover volunteers for personal accident and injury while volunteering for the Department of 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 to Employment Screening 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 to Employment Screening HR Policy B40)
- ensure individual volunteer information is registered and maintained in an appropriate confidential file.

2.2 Responsibilities of volunteer coordinator/manager

The volunteer coordinator/manager is to be a paid Department of 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 do not arise where there may be 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 the Department of 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 the Department of Health to identify areas for improvement in the future.

2.3 Responsibilities of volunteers

Each volunteer is to:

• apply for and be registered as a Department of Health volunteer with the relevant volunteer coordinator/manager
• comply with the same legislative requirements and ethical standards as paid employees, including the areas of workplace health and safety, Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service, standards of ethical behaviour, patients/clients rights to privacy and confidentiality, equal employment and anti-discrimination
• attend Department of Health 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 Department of 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 the Department of Health. 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.