

Human Resources Policy

Volunteers

Policy Number: B12 (QH-POL-259)

Publication date: May 2021

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 Queensland Health.

This policy does not apply to employees of Queensland Ambulance Service. Instead, Queensland Ambulance Service employees are to refer to their local policy/procedure.

Delegation: The 'delegate' is as listed in the relevant Department of Health Human Resource (HR) Delegations Manual or Hospital and Health Services 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*
- *Hospital and Health Boards Act 2011*
- *Human Rights Act 2019*
- *Public Sector Ethics Act 1994*
- *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*
- *Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000*
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Health Workforce (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No. 1) 2019
- Health Practitioners and Dental Officers (Queensland Health) Certified Agreement (No.3) 2019
- Queensland Public Health Sector Certified Agreement (No. 10) 2019 (EB10)
- Health Service Directive 047/16: Vaccine Preventable Disease Screening for Contractors, Students and Volunteers

Related policy or documents:

- Code of Conduct for the Queensland Public Service
- Recruitment and selection HR Policy B1 (H-POL-212)
- Employment screening HR Policy B40 (QH-POL-122)
- Queensland Government Indemnity Guideline
- Queensland Health Privacy Plan
- [National Standards for Volunteer Involvement](#)

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1 Policy

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

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

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. Volunteers are not to fill a position previously held by a paid employee, and 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. Patient safety is to remain paramount at all times.

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 between Queensland Health and the volunteer), have a duty statement and agreed volunteering hours, and be provided with orientation and sufficient training.

The 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 employees are reluctant to undertake. Queensland Health recognises an individual's right to freedom from forced work under the *Human Rights Act 2019*.

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, e.g. directions to outpatient clinics or other services within the hospital campus
- visiting and providing comfort to patients
- doing errands, e.g. re-stocking brochures, compiling patient support packs
- other tasks not performed by employees and 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.

Attachment One outlines the processes and responsibilities.

Definitions:

Volunteer	For the purposes of this policy, a volunteer is an individual who supports Queensland Health either through direct contact with patients/clients or other activities without financial gain or reward.
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Volunteer coordinator/manager	An individual who is a paid employee of Queensland Health responsible for coordinating, recruiting and managing the volunteers, ensuring their rights and responsibilities are upheld.
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History:

May 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – update references and naming conventions – clarify definition of volunteer coordinator/manager (Definitions) – include employment screening requirements (Attachment Two).
August 2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy amended to reinstate original 2009 version policy provisions as a result of the restoration of conditions under the <i>Industrial Relations Act 1999</i> effective 11 June 2015.
October 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy formatted as part of the HR Policy Simplification project. • Policy amended to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – limit application to Department of Health volunteers – update references and naming conventions.
June 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protected policy updated in accordance with EB7.
May 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy formatted into HR Policy template.
February 2008	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy revised as part of the whole-of-government review of volunteer programs and to incorporate requirements for criminal history checking.
Previous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IRM 3.20 Use of Volunteers • Circular ER 33/05 – Use of Volunteers • Circular ER 04/06 – Use of Volunteers.

Attachment One – Processes and responsibilities

The following information is provided as the minimum mandatory standard practice, procedure or process to enable satisfactory compliance with this Queensland 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 standard practice.

1 Responsibilities

1.1 Responsibilities of Queensland Health

Queensland Health is to:

- ensure all volunteers possess the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to perform their roles
- indemnify volunteers while working on behalf of Queensland Health, under the Queensland Government Indemnity Guideline
- cover volunteers for personal accident and injury while volunteering for Queensland Health through a personal accident and injury insurance policy
- ensure all volunteers have undertaken the relevant employment screening requirements as outlined in Attachment Two of this policy and Employment Screening HR Policy B40
- ensure individual volunteer information is registered and maintained in an appropriate confidential file.

1.2 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 all volunteer applications, interview candidates and register approved volunteers on an internal database prior to the person commencing volunteer activities
- provide volunteers with clear information about their role and obligations
- provide volunteers with adequate orientation, and ensure mandatory training requirements are completed
- provide volunteers with appropriate training relevant to the performance of their roles and information regarding Queensland Health policy and legislative requirements, e.g. Code of Conduct, workplace health and safety, and Queensland Health privacy plan
- 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, e.g. when volunteers have access to confidential information in a health environment. Volunteer coordinators/managers are not to place volunteers in these situations. An appropriate risk management approach may be to document potential issues and agreed strategies in a confidentiality agreement between the Hospital and Health Service/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 Queensland Health to identify areas for improvement in the future.

1.3 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 employees, including the areas of workplace health and safety, Code of Conduct, standards of ethical behaviour including declarations of conflicts of interest, patients/clients rights to privacy and confidentiality, equal employment, anti-discrimination and human rights
- attend local orientation/induction programs prior to commencement as a volunteer to ensure access to corporate information and workplace health and safety procedures
- undertake mandatory training requirements
- wear identification badges at all times within Queensland Health facilities
- provide evidence of relevant employment screening requirements e.g. current blue card if involved with provision of services directed primarily towards children in a school or school-based facility
- ensure their compliance with Health Service Directive: Vaccine Preventable Disease Screening for Contractors, Students and Volunteers, where required
- advise and/or record their attendance for each volunteer activity according to the process established in their Queensland Health facility. 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.

1.4 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, e.g. uniform, access card.

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.

Attachment Two – Employment screening requirements

TYPE OF CHECK REQUIRED	GENERAL CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK	CORRECTIVE SERVICES CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK	AGED CARE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK (NATIONAL POLICE CERTIFICATE)	WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK (Blue Card)
Volunteers engaged and coordinated by Queensland Health.	Volunteers coordinated by Queensland Health when the duration of the volunteering is expected to exceed 1 month. Check undertaken by Queensland Health.	Any volunteer engaged in offender health services or in a Queensland Corrective Services facility. Check undertaken by Queensland Health.	Volunteers 16 years of age or over engaged in aged care services who have, or are reasonably likely to have, unsupervised access to care recipients are to hold a national police certificate. Check undertaken by Queensland Health.	Volunteers 18 years of age or over, unless exempt, undertaking employment regulated under the <i>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act 2000</i> , are to have a blue card before they start volunteering regardless of how often they come into contact with children and young people. Check undertaken by Queensland Health.