

# Volunteering Policy

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## 1 Introduction

Unite Students is dedicated to supporting the local communities it works within and as part of this pledge has an established employee Volunteering Scheme. The scheme seeks to encourage and facilitate employees who wish to engage with community based projects/charities. Participation is not limited to those charities and organisations that we already have an established relationship with.

### 1.1 Purpose

This policy intends to support, encourage and develop employees who wish to take part within the scheme by providing a framework of participation. This document informs both employees and managers of the processes involved. In keeping with our Social Impact programme Unite Students is committed to championing the scheme, as well as helping employees identify suitable voluntary activities that mutually benefit the individual, the company and the charity.

### 1.2 Scope

This policy relates to all permanent and fixed term employees of UNITE Integrated Solutions plc, who have successfully completed their probationary period although this restriction may be lifted if the volunteering day is to be used as part of a wider team activity. This policy therefore excludes agency temporary workers and contractors.

### 1.3 Responsibilities

**Roles & Accountabilities** The following details the accountabilities of all parties under Unite Students' Volunteering Policy: Employees Responsible for requesting volunteering days. Responsible for following relevant policies and procedures. Line Managers Responsible for approval review of volunteering requests. Social Impact Team Responsible for approval of 'ad-hoc' volunteering requests Social Impact and Ops Engagement Manager Responsible for the regular reviews of the policy

## 2 Policy

### 2.1.1 Intent

Unite Students ensures that all employees have an opportunity to take part in the scheme and it does not in any way effect any leave or pay entitlements as involvement in the scheme will be classed as a normal working day.

### 2.1.2 Principles

- Employee Volunteering Scheme** Employees will receive the equivalent of one full working day (7.5 hours) off work to volunteer for their chosen charity. This can be used at any time in the year, as long as the employee is given line manager approval. This time can be taken as one continuous day, or split out into a combination of sessions spread over the duration of the nominated volunteering period (not totalling more than 7.5 hours of working time during the annually nominated volunteering period). If a particular volunteering opportunity occurs outside of the employees normal working hours, the employee can still participate in the volunteering in their own time, and then take this time back in lieu from their working schedule (at a time mutually agreed by their line manager). Volunteering days are to be used to volunteer for a local charity or community project.

The Volunteering Day cannot be used for anything else or paid in lieu, if the individual chooses not to partake in any volunteering activity. Employees will have the choice to choose either a pre described opportunity with a partner charity, or source and arrange their own volunteering day (subject to the 'Finding your own volunteering opportunity Guidelines').

- Approval and Appeals** Employees are responsible for submitting their request for their chosen volunteering opportunity through the online form via the intranet. They must do this no less than two weeks before the requested date of the volunteering opportunity. The volunteering opportunity and date requested must be approved by the appropriate line manager and in the case where an employee is choosing an ad hoc opportunity authorisation must also be gained by the Social Impact Team to ensure that the appropriate health and safety checks have been

carried out . In the case where approval is not given for a volunteering request, the Line Manager must state a reason why the request has been declined e.g. three people on holiday on that date already. In this case employees should resubmit an alternative request or appeal the decision. Should the employee wish to appeal the decision, they can submit an appeal in writing to their line managers, manager, detailing why they feel this should be reconsidered. This will then be reviewed and a final decision made. Any appeal must be done within 5 working days of the decline being received. In the case an employee's request is declined, they are able to make another request to volunteer. When applying for leave for a particular day, consideration should be given to business needs on that day to ensure it is viable (this will also be reviewed by the approving line manager).

- **Ad hoc Volunteering Opportunities** Ad hoc opportunities can only be arranged with a registered charity, university partner or agreed community project, (see 'Finding your own volunteering opportunity Guidelines'). Employees can apply for opportunities individually, or as a team (if suitable).
- **Employee Conduct** Employees will be governed by the same code of conduct and disciplinary policy while carrying out their volunteering and any breaches in this will be escalated accordingly. In the event of sickness on the day of the opportunity the employee will be expected to notify their line manager, and the point of contact for their volunteering opportunity, in line with our Sickness Policy. Failure to do so will be treated as AWOL and investigated in line with our Disciplinary Policy.
- **Travel** The individual will be responsible for arranging and paying for their own travel to and from the volunteering location. In the event that they are driving, the employee will need to adhere to the 'Motor Vehicle Policy'. No expenses will be paid for this as the journey to and from the volunteering will be made in lieu of that days travel to and from the employee's normal place of work.
- **Post Volunteering Review** All employees who take part in the volunteering opportunity will be required to complete a post volunteering survey which will be sent to them after they have participated in the scheme. Failure to do so will mean that they lose the right to participate in the volunteering scheme in future.