



# Volunteer and Volunteer Release/Agreement Form

## Purpose

To establish guidelines and procedures for volunteering at the University.

## Definitions

### Authorized Volunteer:

A volunteer is defined as the following:

1. "An individual who performs hours of service for the University for civic, charitable, educational or humanitarian reasons, without promise, expectation or receipt of compensation for services rendered, is considered to be a volunteer during such hours. Individuals performing hours of service for the University will be considered volunteers for the time so spent and not submit to sections 6, 7 and 11 of the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act) when such hours of service are performed in accord with sections 3(e) (4) (A) and (B) of the FLSA and the guidelines in this subpart."
2. A non-university employee, including students. (Refer to procedural statement for exceptions for students.)

## Procedural Statement

The University benefits from the services of its many volunteers from outside the institution. The University is an institution of the University System of Georgia, and is an instrumentality of the State of Georgia. As such, it is included within the coverage of the Georgia State Tort Claims Act, O.C.G.A. §§ 50-21-20 *et seq.* ("GTCA"). Nothing in this policy is intended to waive the sovereign or governmental immunity of any state employee, agent, or volunteer, or to enlarge the coverage provided under the GTCA.

Non-university volunteers must use their personal medical benefits and personal auto coverage in the event of activity-related injury and for damage to their personal vehicles. Individuals are not eligible for nor entitled to any compensation or institutional benefits, including Worker's Compensation. The term volunteer as used in these guidelines excludes VSU students participating in activities that are part of a course or program in which the student is enrolled. However, students volunteering on campus and working with animals or minors must complete a Volunteer Release Agreement and Background Investigation, regardless of the volunteer's duration.

## Guidelines:

1. To qualify as a volunteer, an individual must be willing to provide services according to the procedures in this policy.
2. A volunteer is a representative of the University while performing assigned duties. Therefore, volunteers are expected to abide by institutional policies and external regulations that govern their actions, including but not limited to those of ethical behavior, confidentiality, financial responsibility, and illegal use of drugs. Volunteers are not covered by the Fair Labor Standards Act and are not considered employees for any purpose. As a result of this volunteer association, they are not eligible for nor entitled to any institutional benefits, including Worker's Compensation.



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3. Departments must request that Human Resources conduct criminal background checks on non- University volunteers and receive acceptable results before the volunteer can engage in any activities or services on a Valdosta State University program or project. The volunteer applicant may not perform any volunteer duties until such time as the Department of Human Resources has notified the relevant parties that the volunteer applicant has been authorized to volunteer.
4. Individuals shall be considered volunteers only where their services are offered freely and without pressure or coercion, direct or implied.
5. All volunteers must be informed that they will receive no compensation or benefits in exchange for their services.
6. When selecting and engaging volunteers, the supervisor must take care to ensure that the individual has adequate experience, qualifications, and training for the task he or she will be required to perform. Departments should determine if a [Volunteer Release/Agreement Form](#) and background investigation are necessary.
7. The volunteer must complete the [Volunteer Release/Agreement Form](#). This signed form must be retained by the department for two years.
8. If an individual is a returning volunteer, but the break in service is greater than one (1) year, all applicable forms and processes must be completed again, including the background check.
9. Volunteer service at Valdosta State University is non-contractual. The University may terminate the service of any volunteer at any time without prior notice.
10. Use of a volunteer's services in any attempt to abuse or manipulate wage or overtime requirements is not allowed.
11. Anyone, including current or retired employees, students, alumni, or others may provide volunteer services to the institution, with the following restrictions: An employee may not become a volunteer at the institution in any capacity in which she or he is employed by the university, or which is in the same occupational category, or which is essentially similar to the individual's regular work at the university.
12. Volunteers are prohibited from working in high security or sensitive areas.
13. Volunteers are prohibited from the following:
  - Operation of heavy equipment
  - Operation of state-owned motor vehicles
  - Working with hazardous materials, environments or related areas which may otherwise place the volunteer at risk for physical harm, until they have received adequate orientation and training of the hazards from the supervisor/principal investigator who is responsible for the areas where the hazards exist



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- Working with stored energy
- Any activity considered inappropriate for an employee
- Entering into any contract on behalf of the institution.

14. Payment for volunteer services is not allowed. An individual providing volunteer services does so without the expectation of employment, an offer of employment or compensation other than reimbursement for reasonable expenses incurred while performing in an official capacity as a volunteer.

## **A. Services Requiring a Volunteer/Release Agreement and Background Investigation:**

- Volunteer activities with students and/or subjects of experiments
- Activities with minors such as specialty camps and child-care services
- A person volunteering for an extended period of time (e.g., one week or greater)
- Persons involved with the handling of currency
- Volunteer activities working with patients, human research subjects or animals
- Long-term or on-going volunteer services such as mentoring
- People dealing with confidential and sensitive information
- Travel of any kind
- Recreational and Competitive Sports
- Fitness Center/Wellness Center volunteers
- Library activities
- Individuals that have a copy of building keys

**Please Note:** To ensure consistency in application, please contact Human Resources before allowing a person to begin volunteering in the department.

To perform any of the voluntary activities listed above, a [Volunteer Release/Agreement form](#) and online Background Investigation form must be completed.

**\*\*Any volunteer working with minors must complete a Volunteer Release Agreement and Background Investigation, regardless of the volunteer's duration for volunteering.**

## **B. Services Not Requiring a Background Investigation:**

- Volunteer fundraising activities
- Phone-a-thon volunteer
- Advisory council participation
- Commencement volunteer
- Gallery/program guides
- Public speakers
- Participation in all volunteer committees
- Ushering campus events

**Note:** To ensure consistency in application, please contact Human Resources before allowing a person to begin volunteering in the department.

**All volunteers must complete the [Volunteer Release/Agreement Form](#).**



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## Affected Stakeholders

Indicate all entities and persons within the university affected by this policy:

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Alumni              | <input type="checkbox"/> Graduate Students   | <input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate Students              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Staff    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Faculty  | <input type="checkbox"/> Student Employees                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Vendors/Contractors | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>volunteers</u> |

## Policy Attributes

<i>Responsible Office(s)</i>	Human Resources and Employee Development, University Center, 1205 N. Patterson St., 229-333-5709, hrstaff@valdosta.edu
<i>Approving Officer or Body</i>	Vice President, Finance and Administration, University Center, 1205 N. Patterson St., 229-333-5710
<i>Date Approved</i>	10/13/2017
<i>Last Review Date</i>	10/25/2019
<i>Next Review Date</i>	10/25/2021