



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN VOLUNTEER CHARTER

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2018 UPDATE SIMONE CAMERON-COEN

TCD Volunteer Charter

Introduction

There is a long tradition of student and staff volunteering both within the College and beyond in the local, national and international communities. Volunteering not only serves to benefit others, but it also has a positive impact on the individual including their personal and professional development. This document sets out TCD volunteer rights, responsibilities and standards which volunteers are expected to uphold.

Volunteers' rights

- To know if, and how, you are being selected.
- To be provided with a description of the volunteering role and what is expected.
- To be given meaningful work to do.
- To be offered appropriate training.
- To be thanked and have your contribution recognised
- To confidentiality- your records and references will remain confidential.
- To receive supervision and support.
- To get something out of the work for yourself as per your own aims and objectives.
- To know who to go to should a problem arise.
- To have concerns or questions dealt with promptly.
- To be given reasonable notice if there is a change of schedule.
- To make mistakes and learn from them.
- To be made aware of any disciplinary and grievance procedures.
- To be treated fairly, with dignity and respect, and not to experience discrimination.
- To have safe working conditions, including insurance cover provided by the volunteer project.
- To be informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in, the organisation as a whole.
- Where possible, to have out-of-pocket expenses reimbursed.
- To be able to say 'no' and to leave without feeling guilty.

Volunteers' responsibilities

- To obtain information about the volunteering project and role and to reflect on your motivations before making a commitment to volunteer.
- To be honest in all your dealings with an organisation, particularly if you may not be suited for work with certain client groups.
- As a representative of the volunteering project, to respect its values, aims, staff and clients.
- To carry out the prescribed volunteer duties to the best of your ability.
- To comply with relevant policies of the volunteer project e.g. Code of Conduct, Health & Safety etc.
- To adopt a professional approach and maintain appropriate boundaries with any client groups.
- To be punctual and reliable and give the organisation sufficient warning if unable to turn up.
- To attend essential training and support sessions.
- To act and dress appropriately.
- To respect the confidentiality of the volunteer project and associated persons.
- To provide constructive feedback to the volunteer project.
- To ask for guidance if you are unsure of any aspect of your volunteering role.
- To inform the volunteer project manager or supervisor if there is a problem.
- To leave when asked and/or when no longer enjoying the volunteering experience

- To give advance notice to the volunteer project if you intend to leave the project- absenteeism is not an appropriate alternative.
- To abide by the TCD Dignity & Respect Policy. Failure to do so may result in College Disciplinary Procedures. For further, see <https://www.tcd.ie/hr/assets/pdf/dignity-and-respect.pdf>
- As always, to respect the law and relevant College regulations.

Your Volunteer Project

You are entitled to research and select a volunteering opportunity which is suited to your interests, goals, schedule and other needs. Similarly, a volunteer project has the right to look for certain qualities and skills in volunteers which match the organisation's requirements and values. Volunteer recruitment is often done by means of an application form, interview process, induction session, the checking of references and your CV or any combination of these. Organisations through which volunteers have unsupervised access to children and vulnerable persons should also require volunteers to undergo Garda vetting (criminal record check) prior to any such unsupervised access.¹ Other volunteer projects who work with children and/or vulnerable populations may also require this as a matter of internal policy.

Once you begin to volunteer, your project or organisation should provide insurance cover for your activity and ensure that your rights as a volunteer (above) are upheld at all times. They should provide you with a clear role description, details of what training is provided, as well as copies of any relevant policies (claiming expenses, child protection, protection of vulnerable adults, grievance, health & safety etc.). If you are working with a particular client group, you should also discuss appropriate boundaries with your organisation in order to prevent any client from becoming overly dependent on you and vice versa. There should be a designated person in the organisation who deals with volunteers on your project and who should be available to offer you guidance and information should you require it. You should also feel comfortable approaching other persons in the organisation in case the volunteer liaison person is not available or not an appropriate contact for your particular concern or query.

It is important that both you and your organisation are satisfied with, and benefit from your volunteering experience. It is in the interest of your volunteer project to ensure that you have a positive and rewarding experience. If you have a problem, then you should be honest about this and discuss how this might be resolved with the appointed volunteer liaison person. If you choose to leave the volunteer project, communicate this to the volunteer liaison person in advance. Equally, the organisation is allowed to address any grievance in a fair manner and may ask volunteers to leave if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals.

Child and Vulnerable Persons Protection ²

If your volunteer role includes working with children and young people, your volunteer project should have a tailored child protection policy which you must read and uphold at all times. Such policies operate to protect the volunteer as well as the child. You should be provided with Child Protection Training.

If there is no Child Protection Policy in your volunteer project, it is necessary to familiarise yourself with the [Department of Children and Youth Affairs Children First Act 2015](#) and the [National Vetting Bureau \(Children and Vulnerable Persons\) Act 2012 to 2016](#). Garda vetting information can be found in the [Garda Vetting FAQs](#). The [Children First Guidance document](#) (pdf) gives an outline of roles and responsibilities of the Act.

¹ Trinity College Dublin's Child Protection Policy can be found <https://www.tcd.ie/about/policies/assets/pdf/child-protection-policy-final.pdf>.

² This section is only relevant where a volunteer placement includes working with persons under 18 years of age who have not been married.

Pay particular attention to who the 'Designated Person' in your volunteer project is as that is who is responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse (including physical, sexual or emotional abuse or neglect) to Tusla or An Garda Síochána. It is also their responsibility to support and advise volunteers about Child Protection policies and procedures. Should you have a child protection concern, it is your responsibility to approach the Designated Person immediately and in confidence. Only in the event of a serious emergency (i.e. where the child is at immediate risk of harm) and where the Designated Person is not contactable should you go directly to the Gardaí. This person may also be called the 'child protection officer', the 'children's officer' or another suitable name, depending on the organisation.

Declaration

In signing the declaration below, volunteers who work with children affirm that they are familiar with relevant Child Protection policies and procedures and their related rights and responsibilities.

I, _____, am aware of my rights as a Trinity College Dublin Volunteer and agree to uphold my corresponding responsibilities as set out in this Charter when volunteering with _____ (NAME OF PROJECT/ORGANISATION).

Signed: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____