

RESEARCH COUNCIL VOLUNTEERING GUIDANCE

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Introduction

The volunteering guidance provides a framework for employees, managers and HR when considering requests related to volunteering and should be read in conjunction with the Research Council Special Leave Policy.

The TU Side have been consulted about the contents of this guidance.

The volunteering guidance applies to all Research Council employees. This includes those employed on permanent or temporary contracts, but excludes visiting workers, students and those workers provided by a third party agency.

The UK Shared Business Services Ltd (SBS) provides HR services across the Research Council. However some employees are deployed at establishments/facilities/ships that do not access services from SBS. In these cases reference to the SBS or System will not apply and employees should refer to the Research Council HR team for assistance.

1. Principles

1.1 The Research Council will encourage and support volunteering activities which:

- Enhance the employees' personal learning and development by helping to develop and build a range of skills and abilities that they can bring back to the workplace.
- Have a particular link to the work of the Research Council or where the Research Council has a particular expertise that can be usefully passed onto the voluntary sector.
- Develop and strengthen links with the local community by sharing the knowledge, skills and abilities of employees with community activities, programmes and organisations.

2. Benefits for Research Council Employees

2.1 The benefits for the individual of volunteering may include:

- Increased motivation and confidence.
- A chance to develop personal/transferable skills such as leadership, time management, communication and presentation skills.
- An opportunity to use existing skills in a new environment.
- The chance to meet and work with people from across the organisation and external to the organisation.

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- An extra dimension to life by providing new experiences outside the usual work and social environment.
- The opportunity to contribute to an issue that they really care about.
- Increased corporate and social responsibility for the Research Council.

3. Benefits for the Research Council

- Provides an opportunity for employees to develop skills in areas/activities that they may not have access to in their day to day role (eg leadership, decision making, communication, budgeting, time management etc) which can be transferrable to the work situation.
- Increased local profile for the Research Council and promoting a strong corporate responsibility.
- Engaged and motivated workforce.
- Increased staff loyalty and retention rates.
- Higher staff morale.

4. Applying for Special Leave for Volunteering Activities

- 4.1 All special leave must be authorised in advance, by the line manager in consultation with the Research Council HR team, who must consider all reasonable requests.
- 4.2 When making the request employees must demonstrate that it will not impact on their work schedule, other work related responsibilities, create the need for overtime, or cause conflicts with other employee's schedules.
- 4.3 Applications should state:
- The voluntary activity and organisation the employee wishes to contribute to.
 - The nature of their contribution and how it meets the principles of this guidance.
 - Time being requested.
- 4.4 A maximum of two paid days per year will be granted to employees who wish to undertake volunteering activities which meet the criteria in paragraph 1.1.

5. Insurance, Health and Safety

- 5.1 Employees should ensure that the volunteering activity is covered by the appropriate public/employers liability insurance and that they receive appropriate health and safety training.

6. Guidance Review

- 6.1 This guidance will be regularly reviewed to incorporate any legislation changes. The TU may request that guidance is reviewed.

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7. Amendment History

Version	Date	Comments/Changes