Employee Volunteering Policy

1. Introduction and Purpose

1.1 At The University of Manchester we are proud to be England's first civic university with a strong commitment towards social responsibility and civic engagement within the wider community, as detailed in our Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement plan. We want to recruit and retain talented employees at all levels, who increasingly value opportunities to make wider contributions to social and civic life through their employment.

1.2 Employer supported volunteering allows the University of Manchester to give and gain. We understand the importance of ensuring our employees are able to give time to make wider contributions to social and civic life. We as an employer also gain through the knowledge and skills our employees bring back to their roles at the university, the wellbeing benefits associated with volunteering and the contribution this makes to our value proposition as an employer of choice.

1.3 The purpose of this policy is to provide all employees with the support and opportunity to request **up to three days paid volunteering leave per year (pro-rata for part-time employees)**, which can be taken in hourly units, half days, or full days, to proactively engage with volunteering activities within their local community. Volunteering leave is in addition to annual leave entitlement.

1.4 This policy outlines key benefits of volunteering, the types of volunteering opportunities available to employees and the process to apply for volunteering leave.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy applies to all University of Manchester employees.

2.2 This policy is non-contractual and can be amended at any time.

2.3 This policy does not apply to non-contractual volunteering roles within The University, e.g. Diversity, Sustainability or Wellbeing Champions, or Harassment Advisors, which employees may undertake alongside their contractual role at The University of Manchester.

2.4 This policy does not apply to volunteer Public Service Duties e.g. Jury Duty, Local Councillor, Volunteer Reserve Forces. More details on these roles can be found in the Public Service Leave policy.

2.5 Employees are permitted to engage in a volunteering activity of their choice, ideally within their local community. However, line managers can consider requests for volunteering activities located elsewhere within the UK.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 It is the responsibility of the line manager to review and consider any applications for volunteering leave in accordance with this policy. Line managers are encouraged to support applications for volunteering leave, whilst ensuring they balance the request against operational requirements and needs when determining if the request can be approved. This is applicable to both individual and team applications.

3.2 Line managers must ensure they are satisfied that the proposed volunteering activity adheres to the requirements set out in Section 10 of this policy. If unsure about whether a proposed activity meets the relevant requirements, line managers are encouraged to seek guidance from their own manager/Head of Department/School for clarification.

3.3 It is the responsibility of the employee to request time off for volunteering leave by submitting an application form to their line manager within the timeframe outlined in point 9.4 of this policy.

3.4 Employees must adhere to the procedure set out within this policy, ensuring that any proposed volunteering activity they want to participate in, meets the requirements set out in Section 10 of this policy.

4. Definitions

- *Civic Engagement*: This is how we work in partnership with our communities to use both ours, and their collective knowledge, skills, concerns, shared priorities and power to bring about positive change. It is defined by place. For The University of Manchester and many employees this will mean Greater Manchester, however we recognise that for some employees, supporting their local community may take place beyond our city region.

- *Employee volunteer*: An employee of The University of Manchester who is supported by the University to freely provide their time, skills, knowledge and/or experience to a charity or community organisation.

- *Employer supported volunteering (ESV)*: This is where an organisation provides their employees with the opportunity to volunteer within works time.

- *Employee value proposition (EVP)*: This can be defined as a statement of the values, rewards, recognition, support, and company culture that an employer provides to their employees, in exchange for their talent, skills and experience.

- *Social Responsibility*: The way in which we make a difference to the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of our communities.

- *Volunteering*: Volunteering is when an individual or group freely give their time, skills, knowledge or experience to benefit others without financial payment or compensation of any sort. Taking time out to help friends and family members is not classed as volunteering.

- *Volunteering leave*: The amount of time approved by line managers to allow employees to participate in a volunteering activity of their choosing within works time.

5. What are the benefits of volunteering?

5.1 All employees are entitled to request volunteering leave and the reason or motivation for doing so can be many and varied. The University recognises that volunteering can bring numerous benefits for both employees and the wider university community and provides the opportunity to make a difference where it matters.

5.2 Benefits for employees may include, but are not limited to:

- Improved physical and mental wellbeing
- An increased sense of purpose, which can help boost morale and provide a sense of fulfilment
- Engaging with and contributing to their local community by giving something back, which is one of our *Six ways to wellbeing.*
- Using their skills, knowledge or experience to help others
- Supporting a cause that is meaningful to them
- Increased job satisfaction
- Learning or developing new skills, which can increase employability and career opportunities
- Meeting new people, networking and building connections, which can also help build self-esteem and confidence

5.3 Benefits for the University of Manchester may include, but are not limited to:

- Gaining practical knowledge and experience that can help advance the quality of our core research, teaching and social responsibility goals
- Improved recruitment and retention for the university amongst employees who expect such opportunities as part of our Employee Value Proposition (EVP)
- Employees exchanging ideas and knowledge transfer
- Employees being ambassadors and advocates of the university's values; demonstrating our commitment to social responsibility, civic engagement and our EDI Strategy
- Employees may learn or develop new skills, which they then bring back into their core role within the university
- Employees continuing their professional development, which may help with career progression
- Meeting new people and building connections, which are helpful towards the university's work
- Teambuilding and widening networks, whether within departments or across the wider university community.

6. Types of volunteering

6.1 There are two routes that employees can use to participate in volunteering activities:

- A University of Manchester related volunteering activity that has been organised and is managed by the University (see section 7) e.g. Purple Wave which is run by UoM Sport.

- A non-University of Manchester related volunteering activity that has been identified by an employee(s) and is organised by an external organisation/third party. This is inclusive of our two external volunteering partnerships.

6.2 As noted in point 2.4 for this purpose of this policy, volunteering leave is different from the activities undertaken via the Public Service Leave Policy.

6.3 For **Professional Services employees**, volunteering must be related to the priorities within the university's social responsibility and civic engagement plan, namely to advance:

- Social inclusion
- Prosperous communities
- Better health
- Environmental sustainability
- Cultural engagement

6.4 Below are some examples of the types of volunteering activities **Professional Services employees** may want to get involved in (please note that this is not intended to be an exhaustive list):

- Providing support in a local school e.g. paired reading
- Sports coaching and/or officiating
- Supporting a foodbank or homeless shelter
- Supporting a local mental health charity with an event
- External Mentoring e.g. at a local secondary school/college
- Chaperoning e.g. medical patient chaperone
- Marshalling/Stewarding at events
- Supporting a local wildlife trust
- Leading a Rainbows/Brownies/Beaver Scouts group
- Being a Charity Trustee
- Being a School Governor
- Providing professional advice and expertise to third sector organisations e.g. on Marketing, Estates, Risk, IT.

6.5 For **Academic employees** (inclusive of Research and Teaching focused grade 5 roles), it is suggested that volunteering should be related to and beneficial for their core research or teaching role, however this is not compulsory. Some examples may include but are not limited to:

- The delivery of an educational enrichment talk in a school or community setting
- Contributing as a trustee of a voluntary, community or social enterprise organisation, related to your research or teaching expertise
- Being a School Governor
- Providing support or advice to an external organisation based on your academic expertise

6.6 As noted in points 6.4 and 6.5, the University operates a separate School Governor Initiative, which is managed by our Access, Student Employability Success and Development team, within the Directorate for Student Experience. More details of how you can get involved can be found here.

6.7 Employees are advised that any volunteering time used to support School Governing activity encompasses the 3 days permitted under the remit of this policy. It is not in addition to the time permitted separately for School Governing activities.

6.8 If the voluntary activity requires a DBS check, then it will be the responsibility of the external/third party organisation to obtain this, not The University of Manchester.

6.9 The types of volunteering opportunities that will be supported are at the discretion of the University.

7. Volunteering within The University of Manchester

7.1 There are a number of ways in which employees can volunteer within the University (excluding those noted in 2.3). These could be opportunities that arise within your own Directorate or Faculty, which you may be keen to get involved in, or opportunities which are advertised on StaffNet. Alternatively, employees are encouraged to take a closer look at what opportunities may lie in areas they may have not otherwise considered. Some of which include:

Within one of our Cultural Institutions:

- Jodrell Bank
- Manchester Museum
- Whitworth Art Gallery

Alternatively, opportunities can be sought within Faculty or via UoM Sport.

- Faculty of Science and Engineering: Get involved in outreach and engagement
- UoM Sport | Volunteering and Internships

7.2 There is no expectation that employees are required to volunteer within their own Directorate or Faculty. Employees should not feel obliged to engage with a volunteering activity they do not wish to participate in. Any university related volunteering activity undertaken by an employee should be through their own personal choice.

8. External Volunteering Partnerships

8.1 The University is pleased to introduce two new external volunteering partnerships, and we welcome all colleagues to explore and discover the opportunities on offer and consider taking part.

8.2 Our new external partnerships are with:

- The Access Project

"The Access Project is a charity dedicated to supporting under-resourced young people to access top universities through their unique programme of mentoring, skills coaching and tuition."

The Access Project offers colleagues the opportunity to become a volunteer coach, or a volunteer tutor, both of which come with support and training.

- STEM Ambassadors

"Our STEM Ambassador programme supports a network of thousands of amazing volunteers to bring real-life examples of STEM careers into schools, colleges, and universities across the UK. They help to break stereotypes and offer engaging activities to inspire the next generation into the infinite possibilities of STEM pathways.

*The STEM Ambassador programme is **powered by STEM Learning** and funded by **UK Research and Innovation**."*

"Our volunteers do not need to have a background in education. We offer training and support to enable our Ambassadors to confidently deliver a range of activities to young people, including career talks."

8.3 For the avoidance of doubt, volunteering with an external partnership would be considered a non-University of Manchester related volunteering activity.

9. Requesting time off for volunteering

9.1 All University of Manchester employees are entitled to request **up to three days paid leave** each annual leave year (1 October to 30 September) to participate in approved volunteering activities **during their contractual working hours**. This entitlement is pro-rata for part-time employees.

9.2 Employees can make an application to volunteer as an individual and/or as part of a team.

9.3 Volunteering opportunities may come in a variety of ways and what works for one setting may not work as well for another. To support our employees in accessing opportunities, volunteering leave can be taken flexibly and does not need to be taken in full block days. For example, for some employees it may be more practicable to take half a day at a time, or one or two hours per week.

9.4 Employees who wish to apply for volunteering leave are required to complete the Employee Volunteering Application Form and submit it to their line manager for discussion. Ideally the request should be submitted to line managers at least four weeks prior to when the volunteering activity is due to take place.

9.5 Line managers are encouraged to support and approve requests for volunteering leave, taking into consideration any operational needs of the school/department for the time being requested off.

9.6 Where it is not possible to give four weeks' notice e.g. an appeal for volunteers is made at short-notice, line managers are still encouraged to consider the request in the spirit of this policy and approve where possible, factoring in any operational needs.

9.7 Line Managers should not routinely decline requests unless the associated time away will have significant operational impact. In such circumstances, employees and line managers are encouraged to discuss whether there are any other alternative times/dates, which can be supported to allow for the volunteering leave.

9.8 Line managers should keep a local record of any volunteering leave they approve for their employees and send approved application forms to EmployeeVolunteeringApplications@manchester.ac.uk

9.9 In some cases, the amount of time and commitment required by the volunteering activity may exceed the maximum three days' leave permitted by the university. In such scenarios, employees may want to request annual leave or seek approval from their line manager to take unpaid leave for volunteering commitments, which exceed the three days of paid volunteering leave permitted by the University.

9.10 Employees who wish to participate in longer-term volunteering activities, which coincide with their contractual working hours, may want to give consideration to submitting a flexible working request under the Flexible Working Policy.

9.11 It is recognised that many of our employees already carry out volunteering activities in their own time and although this is welcome and highly commendable, it is separate from this policy, which details the provisions of volunteering within your contractual working hours.

9.12 Employees who volunteer outside of their contracted working hours cannot request for the time to be reimbursed or given back in lieu to take at a later date. Additionally, any volunteering leave not taken within the annual leave year (1 October to 30 September) cannot be carried over into the next year.

10. Key requirements for when making an application for volunteering leave

10.1 When considering what activities or initiatives you would like to use your volunteering leave to support, employees are reminded that they must ensure they adhere to the following:

- For Professional Service employees, the proposed activity is in keeping with our Social Responsibility and Civic Engagement plan and can demonstrate a clear benefit for both the volunteer and the community.
- For Academic employees, it is recommended that the volunteering activity should be related to and beneficial for their core research and teaching role, however this is not compulsory.
- The proposed activity is not affiliated with any political party or proscribed terrorist groups or organisations and does not promote hatred or discrimination of any kind.
- The proposed activity and/or participation in the chosen activity must not bring The University of Manchester into disrepute.
- That there is no conflict of interest between the proposed activity and any declarations an employee may have made via the Registers of Interest.
- The proposed volunteering activity does not conflict with the employee's role and responsibilities at The University of Manchester.
- That the proposed activity is ideally within the employee's local community but can be further afield within the UK.
- If the proposed activity is group/team based, has consideration been given as to whether it is suitable and inclusive for all attendees?
- Is an Equality Impact Assessment required? If yes, has it been completed and submitted to the EDI team?
- Unless as part of a legitimate charitable cause, using volunteering leave to help out a friend or family member is not considered volunteering and would not be permitted under the remit of this policy e.g. helping a friend move house, taking a sick relative's dog for a walk.
- Employees are reminded that when they are volunteering during works time, they remain a representative of The University of Manchester, and as such they are expected to act accordingly. A failure to do so may result in their behaviour/actions being investigated in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure, which could result in formal action being taken.
- Employees are trusted to utilise their volunteering leave for the purposes detailed on their application form. Any suspected instances of misuse will be investigated in accordance with the relevant disciplinary procedure, which could result in formal action being taken.
- Volunteering is not the same as employment; employees should never accept payment of any nature in exchange for volunteering. However, employees may discuss with the volunteering organisation if any expenses incurred are reimbursable e.g. meals, travel costs.
- Unless stated otherwise, any travel costs incurred to and from the place of volunteering will not be reimbursed by the University of Manchester.
- That any external/third party organisation hosting the volunteering activity can provide confirmation to the employee that they hold suitable liability insurance that covers volunteers, and that they have carried out an appropriate risk assessment of the volunteering activity.
- If the proposed activity is with an external organisation, employees must enquire about whether they have any specific policies which are applicable to volunteers, which they need to abide by e.g. a Health and Safety policy, Code of Conduct.

11. Insurance and Risk Assessments

11.1 When participating in any volunteering activity, employees are reminded that they have a responsibility for their own personal health and safety.

11.2 Employees who participate in a University of Manchester related volunteering activity i.e. an activity which is organised and managed by the University, will be covered by the University's Public and Employer's Liability insurance.

11.3 A risk assessment should form part of any university related volunteering activity, and this should be carried out by the activity organiser(s). This is to ensure that any potential risks have been identified and that suitable measures are in place to mitigate those risks.

11.4 A risk assessment supports our employees to make an informed decision as to whether they wish to participate in the activity, or not.

11.5 When participating in a volunteering activity which is not related to The University of Manchester i.e. organised and managed by an external/third party, employees must ensure that the host organisation has suitable liability insurance which covers volunteers and that a risk assessment for the activity has been carried out.

11.6 Whilst The University of Manchester cannot advise on, nor validate external risk assessments, some considerations for employees when thinking about volunteering with an external organisation include:

- Is the host organisation able to confirm they have the appropriate insurance in place to cover volunteers, should an accident occur?
- Are they willing to share with you the risk assessment for the proposed activity?
- Is any training required beforehand to ensure you are safe and comfortable to carry out the activity? E.g. where are the fire exits? Are you expected to use particular equipment?
- Do you need any particular protective clothing/shoes?

12. Review

12.1 This policy will be reviewed after its first 12 months in operation and then every two years thereafter.

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