

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

Volunteers support the Royal Society of Sculptors across multiple areas of its work. We are committed to providing worthwhile opportunities for individuals to contribute to and get involved with the Society. In return our volunteers give us their skills, perspectives, enthusiasm and time, helping the Society to inspire, inform and engage people with sculpture/three dimensional art.

Principles

- Our volunteers are valued as an important part of the Society and are integral to the work that we do;
- We will make sure that volunteers have a clear understanding of their role at the Society;
- The Society will provide all possible support and encouragement, offering rewarding opportunities, a safe working environment and the training necessary for each volunteer role;
- The relationship between the Society and its volunteers is entirely voluntary and does not imply any contract of employment;
- The role of volunteers within the organisation is to supplement the work of paid employees, not to replace them. All volunteer roles will be clearly distinct from staff roles. Tasks undertaken by volunteers should enhance the work of the Society but their absence should never make it impossible for the Society's basic work to continue;
- The Society will only take on volunteers where there are sufficient paid staff and resources to support their contribution;
- Volunteers will only be taken on where there is demonstrable profit or advantage to the Society to do so; and
- Whilst the benefits the Society, as a charity, gains from volunteers is the priority, the Society is committed to ensuring that it is a mutually beneficial partnership offering volunteers learning, development and enjoyment.

Designing Volunteering Roles

The decision making process for creating a volunteer role within the Society is as follows:

The staff member who wishes to involve a volunteer discusses the idea with their line manager and the Volunteer Co-ordinator. The pitch needs to include the following information:

- The role and timescale;
- Why the position is required, and how it fits the key principles listed above;
- How it differs from, and supports existing paid staff roles;
- Who is going to be responsible for the volunteer and who will offer support and supervision;
- Will the volunteer need training (if so, how will this be delivered);
- Source the budget for travel expenses and determine the equipment/space required; and
- Whether the position will require the volunteer to declare any criminal convictions, be risk assessed or DBS checked.

Volunteer Recruitment and Selection

The Society recruits volunteers from all sections of the community with a range of skills, life experience, ages, backgrounds and knowledge. Volunteer recruitment is always in line with the Society's Equality and Diversity Policy.

The Society recognises the importance of responding to applications to volunteer as promptly as possible in order to support the reputation of the Society. The recruitment process should always be professional yet informal in style to ensure there are not additional barriers for

applicants who have less experience in the working world. All interviews must follow the Society Informal Interview Form. Interviews should help the volunteer decide whether the role is right for them, as much as for the Society. Therefore frankness, for example about the needs, requirements and limitations of the role, is vital. During the interview the Society interviewer will endeavour to understand the candidate's motivations for volunteering, such as personal development or CV enhancement, to ensure the Society can make the experience as fulfilling as possible for each volunteer.

All volunteer roles have a Society Role Description. The selection of volunteers should be based on these specific requirements, skills and qualities. Of course there is also the need to make sure both sides are comfortable working together too. The Society can and should reject or suggest alternative roles for any volunteers who are unsuitable for the task. If unsure, an initial trial period of a couple of sessions under closer supervision may be useful for both sides.

Satisfactory character references need to be sought for all volunteers prior to induction. Volunteers who will be working closely with children, young people and vulnerable adults will need to be registered for a Disclosure and Barring Service check before starting in the role.

Induction and Training

The Society is committed to supporting its volunteers in their ability to carry out their role. Volunteers will be given the training necessary to undertake their tasks and on-going training will ensure their progression and development. All volunteers will be required to attend an induction session with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. This must include the basic and specific health and safety guidelines for their area and role, basic visitor care principles and the Society's aims. It should be welcoming, comprehensive and clarify working practices, allowing volunteers to work safely and effectively. See the Volunteer Induction Checklist for further details, which must be completed with every new volunteer, and reviewed with those returning after a long break from the role. After the induction all volunteers must complete a Volunteer Agreement Form to be able to volunteer with the Society.

Introduction Periods

All Society volunteers have an introduction period of six weeks. After having been a volunteer with the Society for six weeks the Volunteer Co-ordinator emails each volunteer to check in with them and assess if the role is right for them, offering an opportunity to feedback and make adjustments to the role as required. This encourages a good relationship based on openness between the Volunteer Co-ordinator and the volunteer.

Support and Supervision

All volunteers will be directly supervised by a member of Society staff. Their supervisor will be their main point of contact and the one responsible for the volunteer; however, the Volunteer Co-ordinator will also provide overarching volunteer support. In the course of their roles volunteers will - at times - be supported by other members of Society staff. In accordance with their role and their motivations, volunteers should be directed to training where possible, including in-house sessions and staff training as appropriate.

Recognition

The Society values the involvement of volunteers and aims to recognise volunteer contributions wherever possible, from showcasing their activity to providing learning and social opportunities for them to attend. The Society is committed to providing opportunities for volunteers to gain new skills and experience relevant to their roles.

Professional Conduct of Volunteers

Volunteers represent the Society and its values. Our volunteers can be some of our finest ambassadors and therefore should act within the Society's best interest, conforming to the Society ways of working regarding confidentiality and the Data Protection Act. Volunteers must treat as strictly confidential all information not generally available to the public that may come to their knowledge in the course of their time with the Society. In particular, any information relating to the Society's finances or an employee (i.e. personal details etc) should not be discussed either inside or outside the Society unless absolutely necessary, when it should in the first instance only be discussed in private with their direct supervisor. This applies both during and after their time with the Society to avoid serious embarrassment for the Society or an individual as well as to maintain the professionalism and good reputation of the Society. Volunteers should not speak to the press about the Society without first checking with their line manager.

If it becomes clear to a volunteer's supervisor that a volunteer is causing disruption to other work within the staff team, is not completing tasks satisfactorily or is not following confidentiality and Society policies, they will raise the issue with the Volunteer Co-ordinator. Together the Volunteer Co-ordinator and line manager will meet with the volunteer, giving a clear explanation of the issue(s). If there are ways of correcting the problem that are agreeable to all parties, and practically and economically viable, then a trial period may be negotiated to enable the volunteer to continue in their role. This could include for example, closer supervision, additional training or an agreement to modify behaviour whilst volunteering.

The following instances or scenarios will not be tolerated under any circumstances, and the volunteer would be asked to leave immediately:

- Any illegal action;
- A serious breach of confidentiality;
- Unauthorised handling or damage to Society property;
- Drug or alcohol abuse;
- Bullying and physical or verbal abuse towards anyone working at or visiting the Society; or
- Discrimination against anyone working at or visiting the Society on the basis of age, gender, marital status, sexuality, ethnic or national origin, religious beliefs or disability.

More often, issues may arise that are not clear-cut. These should be discussed with the volunteer in private, and where possible the volunteer should be supported to make their own decision about continuing volunteering in their role, and for the Society. Due care and attention must be paid to the Society's policies on Discrimination. Please see the more detailed Volunteering Problem Solving Policy for further details.

Expenses

Reasonable volunteer expenses for travel (e.g. mileage, bus, tube or standard class rail travel) that are incurred because of volunteering at the Society will be reimbursed at a capped rate of £8 per day. All expenses incurred must be evidenced, by retention of receipts or print-outs from Oyster card accounts.

Health and Safety

We will not place volunteers in situations that put their health and safety, or that of others, at risk. Volunteers must comply with the Society's overall Health and Safety Policy; copies are available from the main office on request. The Volunteer Co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that volunteers receive a Volunteer Induction, paying particular attention to health and safety matters. It is the responsibility of the Society staff to take reasonable care of their own health and safety and for those who may be affected by their acts or omissions including volunteers. The Royal Society of Sculptors will undertake a risk assessment of the premises annually, and volunteers are encouraged to report to a member of staff any issues which they notice that may affect health and safety for any staff, volunteers or visitors.

Under the law, individuals have a primary "duty of care" to themselves and all others. Although the organisation is covered by insurance, all care must be taken to ensure that staff and volunteers understand the risks and safety requirements in order to satisfy such policies and keep themselves and others safe. This means that, while volunteering for the Society you must:

- Be satisfied that you are fit enough to participate. Someone with a serious medical condition or chronic back problems, for example, would be best advised to restrict their activities;
- Not undertake tasks for which you are unsuited or for which you have no experience. This might apply, for example, to heavy lifting or prolonged physical activity;
- All volunteers should be aware of the arrangements for first aid across the site. There will always be first aiders available from the main office; and
- If working in areas of the site without direct supervision, all volunteers are advised to have a mobile phone with them that is switched on and to hand at all times.

Insurance

Volunteers will be covered by the Society's public liability insurance while carrying out their roles.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

The Society is committed to equal opportunities. No-one will receive less or more favourable treatment on the grounds of age, gender, marital status, sexuality, ethnic or national origin, religious beliefs or disability. Volunteers will be expected to work in accordance with the Society's Equal Opportunities Policy and the Society will take serious action if these principles are not adhered to by a volunteer.

Volunteer Exit

The Society is happy to provide references outlining volunteers' contributions following a regular commitment of six months minimum. Once someone has formally left their role as volunteer with the Society they should return their name badge and they will be removed from volunteer communications, but they are very much encouraged to stay in touch.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every two years at which point changes and amendments will be made as necessary. A copy of this policy is made available for all staff and volunteers in the main office.

This policy has been approved by the Director of the Royal Society of Sculptors.