

Volunteer Protocols

Volunteer Management & Coordination

Please read these protocols in conjunction with the Volunteer Policy and Procedure.

Table of contents

1. Introduction	3
2. The purpose of these protocols	3
3. First steps in establishing a volunteer group	3
4. Approval of volunteering initiatives	3
5. Setting up your volunteer group	4
6. Volunteer recruitment and screening	4
7. Onboarding volunteers	6
8. Volunteer Induction	7
9. Training and Support	7
10. Volunteer Acknowledgement and Recognition	8
11. Performance Management	8
12. Program Review	9
13. Exiting Volunteers	9
14. Supporting resources and templates	10

1. Introduction

The **Adelaide University Volunteer Program** (AUVP) consists of structured groups of volunteers embedded within specific colleges, portfolios, or University initiatives. Each group is coordinated by a designated staff member responsible for overseeing volunteer initiatives and ensuring alignment with our strategic and operational goals.

Volunteers may include students, staff, alumni, and members of the public. This program is distinct from one-off volunteering, which involves individuals contributing to isolated events or tasks outside a formal group structure.

2. The purpose of these protocols

These protocols outline the requirements under the AUVP and provide a practical, structured approach to implementing the University's volunteer management procedures. They also reinforce the principles of the **Volunteer Policy**.

Volunteer coordination at the University is guided by the **National Standards for Volunteer Involvement**, developed by Volunteering Australia, ensuring that our practices align with recognised models for best practice.

3. First steps in establishing a volunteer group

Before setting up a volunteer group, please contact the **Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator** within the Community & Regional Engagement Function. They will confirm that your planned volunteer initiatives align with the AUVP framework and provide the support and guidance needed to get started.

The Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator will assist you with:

- understanding the program requirements
- accessing resources and tools
- navigating key processes and compliance obligations.

4. Approval of volunteering initiatives

To begin the approval process, a staff member must be appointed to the role of Volunteer Coordinator. We recommend reviewing the responsibilities of a Volunteer Coordinator outlined in the **Volunteer Procedures** section 4.5.

Once the Volunteer Coordinator has been identified, they must complete the;

- **Volunteer Group Registration Form** - formally registers the volunteer group, outlining its purpose, roles, operations, risks, and required approvals to ensure alignment with university volunteer policies and procedures.
- **Volunteer Role Description** - defines responsibilities, expectations, accountability, and safety requirements.

- **Volunteer Role Risk Assessment & Legal Compliance** - identifies health and safety considerations, potential risks, and any required compliance measures.

5. Setting up your volunteer group

Once the required documents have been approved, the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator will guide you through the next steps for establishing your volunteer group. This includes setting up and configuring your [Better Impact Volunteer Management](#) account in line with AUVP standards. Volunteer Coordinators (and Admins of the system) are required to complete the mandatory 4-hour Better Impact training and adhere to the Better Impact Volunteer Management Protocols, which provide essential guidance on system use, branding, compliance, and best practice for managing volunteers.

The following sections of these protocols provide step-by-step guidance to support you through each stage of the process, including volunteer registration, role descriptions, information sessions, recruitment, screening, induction, training, rostering, supervision, recognition, and ongoing performance management and review.

6. Volunteer recruitment and screening

Through structured, well-supported volunteer opportunities, our program ensures that every volunteer role is purposeful, aligned with institutional priorities, and delivers mutual benefit.

Which is why a volunteer role description is essential for establishing clarity around responsibilities, expectations, accountability, and safety requirements. It ensures volunteers understand the purpose of their role and how their contribution supports the wider objectives of the organisation.

The below steps outline practical ways to attract, inform, and select volunteers, helping ensure that each role is supported by effective communication and consistent processes.

6.1. How to advertise a volunteer role

Volunteer roles can be promoted through a range of internal channels including the volunteer [website](#), student eNewsletter, Staff Portal announcements, and the Volunteer Coordinators' Network.

Roles may also be advertised externally through Volunteering SA&NT, Northern Volunteering, SEEK Volunteer, and GoVolunteer. For further information on advertising roles through these external channels, please contact the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator

6.2. How to run a volunteer information session

Information sessions help set clear expectations, introduce the group's mission and goals, and allow potential volunteers to make informed decisions about their involvement before applying.

When planning an information session, you may like to consider the following:

- **Plan the session timing** – schedule the information session with enough notice for prospective volunteers to attend, and ensure it aligns with the anticipated start date and preparation time required for the volunteer role.
- **Introduce the volunteer program** – outline the purpose, goals, and values of the volunteer group.
- **Explain available roles** – describe key tasks, required skills, responsibilities, and expected time commitments.
- **Discuss training and support** – highlight induction processes, supervision, and resources provided to volunteers.
- **Outline next steps** – provide information on how to apply, screening requirements, and upcoming timelines.
- **Allow time for questions** – give attendees the chance to ask about the role, expectations, or the volunteer experience.
- **Include current volunteers** – invite existing volunteers to share their experiences, as they can offer valuable insights and serve as strong advocates for the program.

6.3. How to conduct volunteer interviews

Larger volunteer groups may find it beneficial to conduct group interviews, while others may prefer one-to-one conversations. Regardless of the format, it is important to prepare a consistent set of interview questions. These questions should focus on the skills required for the role, clarify expectations, and help assess organisational fit. A [template](#) has been provided as an example of the types of questions you may wish to use.

6.4. Conducting reference checks

Reference checks help verify the volunteer’s experience, attributes, and the accuracy of the information they have provided. Conducting reference checks are particularly important, especially for roles that involve financial or data entry responsibilities, committee decisions and working with vulnerable people or children. Referees should be contacted after the interview. A [template](#) is available to guide the questions you may wish to ask, or you may choose to email the form directly to the referee for completion.

6.5. Screening Requirements

Determining the screening requirements for each volunteer role is guided by legislation, university policies and the role-specific risk assessment. Volunteers involved in activities that engage children and other vulnerable people must hold the relevant statutory clearances, such as Working With Children Check or a police record check. The local area Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for identifying, arranging, and verifying all required screening checks for their volunteer group.

7. Onboarding volunteers

A consistent and compliant onboarding process ensures volunteers are safe, supported and appropriately covered by the university's insurance and duty of care responsibilities.

Registration enables the university to maintain accurate records of who is participating in volunteer activities and ensures volunteers receive the information and support they need before commencing.

7.1. Volunteer Registration

As part of the onboarding process, all volunteers must be registered into the Better Impact Volunteer Management System.

Volunteers are required to provide;

- Full name and contact details
- Date of Birth
- Emergency contact information
- Any health conditions that may affect their ability to safely perform the role.

7.2. Volunteer Agreement


The university requires all volunteers to sign the [AUVP Volunteer Agreement](#) to clearly document their role and responsibilities as outlined in the university's Volunteer Policy. The volunteer should also sign their Volunteer Role Description to ensure that they acknowledge the role expectations and understand the nature of the engagement.

Volunteer coordinators must ensure;

- AUVP Volunteer Agreement is signed by the volunteer and returned to the AUVP for processing before the volunteer begins
- The Volunteer Role Description is signed and uploaded to their Volunteer Portal

7.3. Volunteer Handbook

All volunteers must receive a copy of the [Volunteer Handbook](#), which provides key information and links to University policies, Code of Conduct, volunteer rights and responsibilities, insurance coverage, wellbeing and safety guidance and instructions on how to provide feedback or report concerns and complaints.


 **Tip:** Set up a [Welcome Email template](#) in your Better Impact account, attach the Agreement Form, Role Description and Volunteer Handbook and include clear instructions for next steps.

8. Volunteer Induction

A well-planned induction is a critical first step in preparing volunteers for their role and ensuring they begin their experience feeling confident and supported. An effective induction helps volunteers understand what is expected of them and how to contribute safely and meaningfully within their team.

A local induction may include:

- explanation of the work unit structure and key contact points
- instructions on how to log hours and sign up to volunteer shifts
- signing in and out of volunteer shifts
- tour of facilities, amenities, and access points
- building and room access requirements
- computer or system access (if applicable)
- introductions to staff, fire wardens, and first aid officers
- identification of local hazards, tools, equipment, and materials
- location of first aid kits and emergency equipment
- fire and emergency procedures, including evacuation points
- processes for reporting hazards, accidents, near misses, and injuries
- clarification of boundaries, confidentiality expectations, and privacy requirements
- explanation of supervision arrangements and who to contact for support
- opportunity for volunteers to network and connect with each other

 **Tip:** Invite current volunteers to assist with inductions. They may like to run a team-building activity or share their own experiences to help welcome new volunteers.

9. Training and Support


Volunteer Coordinators must ensure that volunteers have the information, training, and resources necessary to perform their tasks safely and effectively. The AUVP also provides a range of professional and personal development opportunities at no cost to volunteers, offering access to a wide selection of training sessions to support their skills and engagement.

9.1. Ongoing Support

Ongoing support requirements will vary depending on the nature of the volunteer role and its responsibilities. For roles involving vulnerable people or individuals at risk, more frequent formal and informal check-ins may be necessary to ensure volunteers feel supported and safe.

It is important to monitor volunteer performance regularly and provide constructive feedback, including positive reinforcement and guidance on areas for improvement. These conversations give volunteers the opportunity to express their views, identify any additional support or training they may need and raise any concerns early.

Consistent, meaningful support helps volunteers feel valued and confident in their role, improving the overall experience and increasing retention.

 **Tip:** Add a volunteer feedback box to your local area or enable feedback fields on volunteer activities to capture feedback when volunteers log their hours.

10. Volunteer Acknowledgement and Recognition

Volunteers need to feel both valued and valuable, and to understand how their contribution supports the goals and mission of your volunteer group. When volunteers feel appreciated, they are more likely to stay engaged, remain loyal to the program, and continue as long-term contributors.

Volunteer groups are encouraged to implement a variety of acknowledgement and recognition activities that suit their capacity and budget. Many meaningful strategies require little or no cost yet play a vital role in creating a positive and supportive volunteer experience.

Tips:

- acknowledging volunteers at the beginning of their shift with a simple hello and thank you
- sending welcome letters when volunteers are first recruited
- providing a welcome pack when they start, which may include a name badge
- offering personal praise while volunteers are on shift
- encouraging staff to thank volunteers directly
- inviting volunteers to College, Portfolio or Function events
- hosting an event during National Volunteer Week or National Student Volunteer Week
- inviting senior staff to attend a morning tea with volunteers
- arranging tours of relevant areas of the University
- keeping volunteers informed about University activities, such as sharing the School or College newsletter (if appropriate)
- presenting [certificates](#) to recognise years of service or contribution
- sending a birthday card or thank-you card
- encouraging volunteers to attend the University Volunteer end-of-year recognition event

11. Performance Management

Volunteer Coordinators are responsible for managing and resolving any grievances involving volunteers. This can be one of the more challenging aspects of the role, but there are strategies that can help make the process less stressful and more effective.

In many cases, concerns can be addressed through an informal conversation with the volunteer, using documents such as the [Code of Conduct](#) or the Volunteer Role Description to guide the discussion.

The appropriate response will depend on the nature and seriousness of the issue. Volunteer Coordinators should inform their line manager of any grievance and seek support as needed. Where appropriate, they should also contact the University's [Integrity Unit](#) for guidance and assistance.

12. Program Review

Feedback and evaluation from volunteers provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of a volunteer group and help identify opportunities for improvement. It is recommended that each volunteer group conduct an evaluation six months after commencement, and annually thereafter.

Questions you may consider including in an evaluation form:

- Why did you choose to volunteer with us?
- What aspects of your volunteering role do you enjoy most?
- How effective do you feel in your volunteer work?
- How would you describe the volunteer work environment?
- What improvements would you suggest enhancing future volunteer experiences?
- Would you recommend volunteering at the University to others? If so, why?
- Do you have any general feedback or suggestions?

We also recommend using the [Gap Assessment Tool](#) to help identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for further development within your volunteer group.

13. Exiting Volunteers

Volunteers leave or transition out of a volunteer group for a range of reasons, and it is important that each exit, whether planned or voluntary, or due to dismissal is handled respectfully, professionally and in a way that supports both the volunteer and the university.

13.1. Completion of a Volunteer Group

When a volunteer group has fulfilled its goals and objectives, or when organisational changes such as restructuring lead to its closure, it is important to bring the group to a positive and meaningful conclusion. Volunteers may experience a sense of loss when the group's work ends, so acknowledging their contributions and celebrating the group's collective achievements is essential.

Volunteer Coordinators are encouraged to recognise volunteers for their service and, where appropriate, suggest other volunteering opportunities within the University or direct volunteers to the University's [volunteer webpage](#) or [Volunteering SA&NT](#).

13.2. Exiting Volunteers

Volunteers who choose to leave the University should be offered the opportunity to provide feedback on their experience. This can be done through a [voluntary exit form](#) or an exit interview conducted by the Volunteer Coordinator or supervisor. Participation is optional, and volunteers are not required to answer all questions. Exit feedback can assist in improving the volunteer program and understanding the volunteer's experience.

13.3. Dismissing Volunteers

If a volunteer is dismissed due to a serious issue, the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator must be notified. It is also important to address the matter appropriately and reflect on the circumstances that led to it, using the experience as a learning opportunity to prevent similar issues in the future. It is best practice to send a formal letter acknowledging the volunteer's departure and inviting them to offer any feedback via the [volunteer exit form](#).

14. Supporting resources and templates

For additional resources and templates, please visit the [Volunteering Collaboration Hub](#). If you require further support or guidance, please contact the Senior Volunteer Program Coordinator on 8313 3354 or via volunteer@adelaide.edu.au.

Thank you for taking the time to read this document and for your commitment to supporting volunteer initiatives at the University. Your contribution plays an important role in strengthening our volunteer community and enhancing the positive impact we create together.