

Employee Volunteering Policy



Policy owner

UCD HR

Approval date and body

UMT, 26 September 2023

1. Purpose

UCD seeks to play a leading role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the communities that it serves and to continually animate our values, in particular those of engagement, integrity and diversity. As part of its commitment to community engagement, the University has introduced an Employee Volunteering Policy. This policy supports our employees by allowing them to allocate work time to engage in volunteering activities - usually with registered charities* or other such organisations that may be approved by UCD, contributes to UCD's commitment to community development and enhances employee engagement. The impact will be demonstrated through recording the aggregated days that UCD employees volunteer.

2. Definitions

Volunteering: The University defines volunteering as a commitment of time and energy for the benefit of the employee, the registered charity/organisation and its stakeholders. Volunteering can take many forms. It is undertaken freely and not for additional financial gain.

Volunteering Time: Employees may apply to allocate paid work time to participate in voluntary activities. Typically this would equate to 2 days per year (pro-rata for part time employees) but where a specific case is made, may be more. One example is volunteering for UCD Volunteers Overseas, where employees who act as leaders on overseas trips for the charity can be allocated more work time (typically 10 or more days per assignment). In all cases this is subject to approval by their line manager and alignment with University objectives and values.

Employee Volunteering Application Form: Prior to applying for volunteering time, it is the responsibility of an employee to gather all necessary information to complete their volunteering application form and for ensuring that the information provided is accurate. This includes getting line manager approval and ensuring that the host organisation completes their section of the employee volunteering application form prior to volunteering time being taken.

Host Organisation: The organisation where employees volunteer.

*As registered with the Charities Regulator

3. Scope

The policy applies to all permanent and fixed-term employees of the University. It has been designed to enable employees to be proactive in identifying suitable voluntary activities. The University accepts no liability, vicarious or otherwise, with respect to employees on volunteering time.

4. Principles

- 4.1 Employees are eligible to apply for paid volunteering time to undertake volunteer work (instead of their normal duties), typically for up to two of their equivalent working days per annum (1 January to 31 December), subject to approval by their line manager.
- 4.2 Where employees wish to devote more time to volunteering, for example to assist with UCD Volunteers Overseas fieldwork outside of Ireland, 10 days or more per assignment of their working time can be assigned, subject to approval by their line manager.
- 4.3 Many employees may be volunteering significant amounts in their own time. This is welcome but is separate from this policy which concerns the provision to allocate working time to volunteering activities. Volunteers will not be reimbursed for any of their free time they may wish to devote to such activities or the working time granted to carry out volunteering activities.
- 4.4 The release of employees from work to participate in voluntary work must be balanced against the other demands and priorities of their role within the University and as such, time allocated for this purpose is not an entitlement and is at the sole discretion of the line manager. Volunteering time will always be subject to the prior agreement of the employee's line manager and will reflect the operational requirements of the University which will take priority.
- 4.5 Time allowances cannot be carried forward from one year to the next.
- 4.6 Employees must have completed their Probation Period before making an application under this policy.

5. Liability

The employee is undertaking a role with the host organisation as a volunteer in their personal capacity and not as an employee or representative of the University and the University gives no warranty as to the suitability of either the employee or the host organisation. The employees who volunteer are not agents of UCD and any role that they carry out is not done so on behalf of UCD.

The University accepts no liability, vicarious or otherwise, with respect to employees on volunteering time either to the employee, the host organization or any other third party.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Employee Volunteers:

- Any application for volunteering time should initially be discussed with the employee's line manager two months in advance of any proposed period of volunteering.
- Following initial discussion with their line manager, the employee should complete a Volunteering Application Form and submit this to their line manager in good time for approval before the volunteering activity is due to take place, normally a minimum of 4 weeks.
- As part of the application process, it is the responsibility of the employee to gather all necessary information to complete their volunteering application form and for ensuring that the information provided is accurate.
- As part of the volunteering application form, the employee needs to ensure the external host organisation provides as appropriate safety equipment, training, safety clothing and effective supervision and must also arrange for Garda Vetting, if required. Volunteers should ensure

that they are aware of relevant emergency procedures such as evacuation procedures, how to obtain First Aid, how to seek assistance in an emergency, etc.

Line Manager:

- Discuss with employees their volunteering request in terms of type of proposed volunteering activity and how this supports the individual’s personal development and the University’s wider community engagement agenda.
- Managers will consider each case on its merits considering the University’s policy to support the granting of time for this activity, except in cases where there are work reasons where this is not appropriate.
- A record of volunteering time will be kept by the line manager (in a similar fashion to how annual leave is recorded) and the completed Employee Volunteering Application Form should be sent to HR to be added to the employee’s file at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed date of the volunteering activity. The data will be stored for statistical purposes to assess the impact of this policy.

7. Related documents

Employee Volunteering Application Form

8. Version history

Version	Date	Description	Author
1.0	February 2018	Version 1 Policy	Culture & Engagement – UCD HR
1.1	February 2018	Version 2 Policy	UCD HR following consultation with Legal and SIRC
1.2	March 2018	Policy approved by Employee Engagement Network	
1.3	April 2018	Updated policy following review and feedback from UMT	Culture & Engagement – UCD HR
1.4	2 May 2018	Policy approved by UMT	
1.5	28 May 2020	Moved to a new template, formatting changes.	S Raleigh
1.6	September 2023	Clarification in relation to the probation period added. Minor spelling /formatting changes.	P.Fitzgerald