

**Title:** BU Staff Volunteering Policy and Procedure

**Keywords:** Volunteering

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**Publish Date:** 1st September 2023

**Review Date:** 1st September 2026

**Policy Owner:** Karen Butters

**Audience:** Staff

1. **Policy Aims**
   1. BU is keen to promote and is fully committed to supporting the principles of volunteering and to support staff who already undertake volunteering or wish to take up volunteering opportunities in the future. Work has been undertaken to identify a key community partner who will help BU drive forward this BU2025 action and fully commit to improving staff experience and societal impact.
   2. The aim of this policy is to support, encourage and develop staff to be proactive in voluntary activities that mutually benefit the individual, the University, and the community. It is hoped that this will allow staff to build connections with the local community, allowing individuals to ‘give back’ to and enrich society whilst at the same time boosting the BU brand and reputation generally and in particular as an employer of choice in both attracting and retaining talent.
   3. Volunteering is also seen as providing a number of benefits to organisations by improving levels of staff engagement, a positive staff experience and improve overall health and wellbeing. It will also provide an opportunity for staff to experience different environments and to learn and develop/hone skills including communication, teamwork, and resilience.
2. **Definition and Principles**
   1. The University defines a staff volunteer as a substantive member of staff (permanent or fixed term) who is supported to engage in projects, approved by the University, to the benefit of the local community. These activities are undertaken freely and are not for financial gain by the staff or the University.
   2. The University will only approve volunteer leave if the following principles are satisfied:
   * The activity benefits both the community and the volunteer
   * The activity does not promote discrimination, hatred, or extreme political/religious views.
   * The activity does not conflict with the staff members role or responsibilities.
   * The activity is in line with the University’s overall strategy for enriching society.
3. **Scope**
   1. The policy applies to all staff with a permanent or fixed term University contract only.
   2. Staff are eligible to apply for paid volunteering leave to undertake approved volunteer work for up to two of their equivalent working days per annum (September to August). This will apply to new volunteer applications as well as those with existing volunteer commitments. Time off for this purpose cannot be carried forward from one year to the next.
   3. Many staff may already be volunteering significant amounts in their own time and this information will be gathered through an initial application/information gathering process. Some existing volunteering may be covered by other special leave provisions such as undertaking public duties. Further [guidance](https://staffintranet.bournemouth.ac.uk/aboutbu/policiesprocedures/people/supportingfamilywork-lifebalance/familydomesticemergenciesandotherleave/) on this can be found on the staff intranet.
   4. The release of staff from work to participate in voluntary work will need to be considered by managers against the other demands and priorities of their role within BU. Time off for this purpose will not be considered as an absolute entitlement but BU will seek to agree the request wherever possible. Taking the time off for voluntary work will always be subject to the prior agreement of the member of staff’s line manager and will reflect the service needs of the individual professional service or faculty as well the wider University.
4. **Community Partnership – Community Action Network**
   1. In order for the BU Volunteering Scheme to be a success, it is important for staff to be encouraged to take part in volunteering activity and that the opportunities open to them are of good quality, have and are contributing to a positive impact on communities and organisations they are supporting. This will be achieved by having, where possible, constructive, and transparent relationships between BU and voluntary organisations providing the opportunities via Community Action Network, our volunteering community partner.
   2. Community Action Network (CAN) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, formed in 2019 from the merger of Poole Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) and Bournemouth CVS, these charities had a rich history going back over 50 years, and form the foundations of CAN’s work going forward. CAN’s mission is to see communities that are strong, healthy, diverse, vibrant, and flourishing. They work in partnership to make that happen through:
   * EMPOWERING the voluntary sector to survive and thrive, by providing expertise, support, development opportunities and training.
   * ENABLING volunteering through a Volunteering Hub, helping everyone to play an active role in their community.
   * CONNECTING communities by helping to create conditions where everyone’s voice is valued and heard by facilitating great local networking and communication.
   1. CAN are members of National Association for Voluntary and Community Action ([NAVCA](https://navca.org.uk/)), the national membership body, and hold their quality mark and National Council for Voluntary Organisations ([NCVO](https://www.can100.org/Listing/unite%20to%20champion%20the%20remarkable%20role%20of%20charities%20and%20volunteers)) who unite to champion the remarkable role of charities and volunteers.
   2. CAN [Together We CAN 2020–2025 plan](https://www.can100.org/together-we-can-2020-2025) sets out their strategy up to 2025 and a set of values to underpin all that they do.
   3. Working in partnership with CAN, who will capture key information on BU staff who volunteer through their network, we will receive management information in relation to volunteering for monitoring and review purposes. Benefits and participation will be monitored and regularly reported to ULT as part of the BU2025 implementation reporting process.
5. **Staff Volunteers**
   1. Staff with existing volunteering commitments should discuss this with their line manager, ensure the volunteering activity meets with the principles in section 2 above and agree volunteering leave dates. Existing volunteers must complete the [Staff Volunteering Application Form](https://forms.office.com/e/58DUrrg6Ww) to ensure the absence is approved and supported, but also to ensure we are capturing this key data.
   2. New volunteers should discuss with their line manager the desire to undertake volunteering activities for experience, their personal development and/or to participate in the wider community engagement agenda. Staff can learn more about how CAN will support them in finding a suitable volunteer role which may complement their BU role or allow them to try something completely new. Find out more about CAN by visiting their [website](https://can100.org/volunteering-hub/bu-staff-volunteering/)
   3. Staff interested in volunteering must complete the [Staff Volunteering Application Form](https://forms.office.com/e/58DUrrg6Ww). The application process applies to each separate day requested and should be completed before the volunteering activity is due to take place.
   4. BU will receive management information in relation to volunteering for monitoring and review purposes. Levels of participation will be monitored against the volunteering leave application process and regularly reported to ULT.
   5. All application for volunteering leave must have the support of a named line manager. More information for staff on the BU Volunteering Scheme can be found here. (hyperlink to staff FAQs)
6. **Line Manager Responsibilities**
   1. As part of the line management and/or appraisal process discuss with staff existing volunteering activities or opportunities to gain experience, for personal development and/or participation in the wider community engagement agenda.
   2. An on-line form has been developed to enable staff to apply for up to two days volunteering leave per year. Please be advised that the form has been designed to request each day in isolation (one day per completion). Please also be aware that when staff submit a request, they will be asked to confirm that their line manager is aware of the volunteering activity, that it meets the BU criteria and that the manager is fully supportive of their application.
   3. The release of staff from work to participate in voluntary work will need to be considered by managers against the other demands and priorities of the staff member’s role within BU. Time off for volunteering will not be considered as an absolute entitlement but managers should seek to agree the request wherever possible. Taking time off for voluntary work will always be subject to the agreement and approval of the manager and should reflect the service needs of the individual professional service or faculty as well the wider University.
   4. Where there are work or operational reasons for refusing a volunteering leave request, the manager should clearly communicate to the member of staff as soon as possible. In these circumstances, line managers and staff should discuss whether an alternative activity or time could be arranged.
7. **Right of Refusal**
   1. The University reserves the right to refuse a member of staff request to volunteer during their normal working hours. A request may be refused if it is believed, for example, that:
   * There will be a detrimental impact on the needs of the member of staff’s faculty, school, department, or the University.
   * The member of staff’s work commitments cannot be rearranged to accommodate the requested time off.
   * The member of staff’s individual performance levels are likely to suffer.
   1. However, if a member of staff feels that they have been unreasonably refused the right to volunteer, they should raise the matter with their line manager and seek advice from HR. Staff also have the right to consult with their Trade Union and raise the matter through the grievance procedure.
8. **Group Volunteering** 
   1. For large group projects within a faculty, department or professional service, an individual should be named as the volunteer group leader to liaise with CAN. (something here about how CAN will support group volunteering?)
   2. Volunteering group leaders should ensure that all staff taking part have completed the [Staff Volunteering Application Form](https://forms.office.com/e/58DUrrg6Ww).
9. **Conduct Whilst Volunteering** 
   1. Staff undertaking volunteering approved by the University are reminded that they would be representing the University and are therefore bound by its policies and procedures in relation to their conduct and behaviour for the duration of the episode of volunteering.
10. **Governance and Review**
    1. An annual update will be submitted to ULT, the University Health & Safety Committee and Audit, Risk and Governance Committee to monitor the benefits of staff volunteering.