

Volunteers and Work Experience Students Policy

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1 Purpose of policy

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Department of Communities and Justice's approach to requests from people who want to volunteer with the Department or students who want to undertake work experience with the Department.

Arrangements for volunteers and work experience students are outlined in the Volunteers and Work Experience Students Procedure.

1.2 Background

This policy replaces any previous Department of Justice, Corrective Services NSW and Family and Community Services policies providing advice about volunteers and work experience students.

2 Definitions

Term	Definition
Placement	The activities and tasks that a volunteer or student will undertake while at the Department.
Duty of Care	<p>Under the Department's Code of Ethical Conduct we have a duty of care to maintain and ensure a safe work environment.</p> <p>All employees have a duty of care to clients and colleagues, including volunteers and people undertaking work experience. Duty of care can be physical, emotional or financial; it is the obligation to take reasonable care to make sure that nobody in the workplace is harmed.</p>
Relevant manager/ supervisor	The relevant manager is the manager/supervisor who is responsible for inducting and supervising the volunteer or student while they are at the Department. Their responsibilities are listed in Section 6.
Student <i>(15 years old and in year 10 or above)</i>	<p>For the purposes of this policy, a student is a person studying, either full or part time, at a school, university, TAFE College or Registered Training Organisation who is not covered by a 'formal arrangement' with a tertiary education institution, i.e. an arrangement for students who are enrolled in a course that has a compulsory work related placement as a course requirement.</p> <p>Arrangements for students covered by a formal arrangement with a tertiary education institution are described in the Department's Student Placement Policy and Procedure.</p>
Volunteer	Under the Work Health and Safety Act 2011 (NSW) 'volunteer' means a person who is acting on a short-term voluntary basis (irrespective of whether the person receives out-of-pocket expenses)
Work Experience	<p>Work experience is a short-term placement of a student with an employer to provide them with opportunities for practical work experience.</p> <p>In the Department, work experience may be available to:</p>

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high school and TAFE students seeking work experience through an established work experience program • other students (not covered by the Student Placement Policy and Procedure) where opportunities, appropriate to the knowledge, skills and expectations of the student are available and the placement is not covered by a formal arrangement with a tertiary institution.

3 Scope and application

This policy applies to requests from:

- members of the public who wish to volunteer with the Department
- secondary school students who are 15 years old and in year 10 or above seeking to undertake work experience with the Department. Such placements should be arranged in conjunction with the student's school and each student must have written consent from a parent or legal guardian
- tertiary students seeking to undertake work experience with the Department outside a formal arrangement between a tertiary education institution and the Department.

This policy does not apply to any formal volunteer program that the Department has established, or may establish. Participants in such programs would be covered by the specific program guidelines.

This policy does not apply to students who are covered by a formal arrangement between the Department and a tertiary education institution. These arrangements are described in the Student Placement Policy and Procedure.

This policy applies to all DCJ employees within the Stronger Communities Cluster.

4 Policy statement

Occasionally, the Department is approached by individuals offering their services in a voluntary capacity or students seeking work experience.

The Department supports work experience students and the use of volunteers as part of its commitment to involvement with the community. However, given the nature of some of the work undertaken within the Department, placement to certain areas will not be supported for a number of reasons; including work health and safety, confidentiality, client welfare and the potential impact of the work on the volunteer or student.

Placements should also not cause a real, potential and/or perceived conflict of interest.

Volunteers and work experience students will not be engaged to replace paid employees. Volunteers and work experience students are not paid by the Department, are not employees of the Department and are not to be placed in established roles during the placement.

Applications for volunteer or work experience placements are subject to appropriate approval by management (as described in the Volunteers and Work Experience Students Procedure).

The Department will consider applications for short-term volunteer or work experience placements where it is assessed that the volunteer or student can be appropriately managed, supervised and provided with suitable task(s) without significant disruption to the Department's business, especially when it involves work with clients.

Volunteers may be placed in a situation where there is direct contact with offenders and young people in custody, but under strict supervision. Work experience students are not to be placed in a situation where there is direct contact with offenders and young people in custody or clients in detention.

The placement must be unpaid except for the reimbursement of any agreed costs e.g. transport to an event at which the person is volunteering.

The Department will not accept applications from volunteers or students under 15 years of age. Secondary school work experience students must be in Year 10 or above.

The Department may offer work experience to tertiary students where the arrangement is not covered by a formal agreement, provided the students can provide evidence that the institution agrees to cover them for insurance purposes while they are at the Department. As per the Student Placement Policy and Procedure, priority will be given to students studying courses that are relevant to the Department.

A volunteer or work experience placement can be terminated at the discretion of the Department at any time without notice or cause.

5 Related legislation and documents

Volunteers and work experience students must comply with all relevant legislation and the Department's policies and procedures, including but not limited to:

- [Work Health and Safety Act 2011 \(NSW\)](#)
- [Code of Ethical Conduct](#)
- [Conflict of Interest Policy and Procedure](#)
- [Bullying and Harassment Policy](#) and procedures

- workforce safety and wellbeing policies and procedures
- Volunteers and Work Experience Students Procedure.

6 Roles and responsibilities

6.1 Relevant manager/ supervisor

- confirms that the necessary employment screening clearances, conflict of interest and confidentiality agreements have been met before the volunteer or student commences
- obtains a copy of the relevant insurance coverages e.g. professional indemnity, from the educational institution for student
- inducts the volunteer or student. Induction will include providing copies of and discussing relevant policies and procedures including the Code of Ethical Conduct
- ensures the volunteer or student signs all documents relevant to the arrangement and provides a consent form (where applicable) as described in the Volunteers and Work Experience Students Procedure
- identifies task(s) to be undertaken. These should be appropriate to the knowledge, skills and expectations of the person and the work area
- provides adequate training, information and supervision to enable the volunteer or student to carry out their agreed task(s) competently and safely. If the individual will be working with machinery or equipment they must be provided with any necessary personal protective equipment and be supervised by a trained employee
- provides appropriate and regular feedback to the person (at least weekly)
- if required by the school or tertiary institution, maintains an appropriate record of task(s) undertaken, skills used and knowledge acquired during the placement and meet any other reporting requirements related to the placement
- scans and files any relevant documents securely in the Department's records management systems e.g. approval documents, work experience logs, correspondence and insurance details
- liaise with the school or institution in relation to the student's progress during their placement
- notifies the relevant school or institution of any concerns regarding the student immediately when they become apparent.

6.2 Volunteer or work experience student

- complies with the Department’s policies and procedures and in particular the Code of Ethical Conduct
- signs all documents relevant to the arrangement and provides a consent form (where applicable) as described in the Volunteers and Work Experience Students Procedure
- undertakes work as directed by the relevant manager/ supervisor
- advises the relevant manager/ supervisor immediately of any issues that may impact their placement.

7 Support and assistance

Support and assistance about this policy is available from:

- your relevant manager/ supervisor
- your People Business Partner representative.

8 Document information

Document name	Volunteers and Work Experience Students Policy
Applies to	All Department of Communities and Justice managers/supervisors who are responsible for inducting and supervising the volunteer or work experience student while they are at the Department
Replaces	Department of Family and Community Services Volunteers and Workplace Students Policy CSNSW Work Experience and Student Placement Policy and Guidelines
Document reference	SUB21/39003
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Commenced	17 May 2021
Due for review	16 May 2023
Policy owner	Workforce Strategy, Inclusion and Systems

9 Support and advice

For more advice contact:

Business unit	Workforce Strategy, Inclusion & Systems People, Corporate Services
Email	HRPolicyGovernance@facstaff.nsw.gov.au