

VOLUNTEER SERVICE

A. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to allow volunteerism at The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley for humanitarian, public service, and educational purposes.

B. Persons Affected

This policy applies to students, staff, faculty, job applicants and applicants for admissions, retirees, external community members, and any other potential beneficiary of the programs, services or activities of The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley (UTRGV).

This policy does not apply to individuals who seek an unpaid faculty appointment at UT Rio Grande Valley. (See applicable policy).

This policy also does not apply to paid and unpaid internships or to service learning courses. (See applicable policies).

C. Definitions

1. Internship - a structured experiential learning opportunity monitored by a practicing professional with learning outcomes related to a student's academic background or career goals. Internships are typically compensated or eligible for academic credit.
2. Service Learning - a thoughtfully organized service experience that addresses a need in the community through a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship and integrates a reflective component that relates the service experience to academic course objectives and the student's learning.
3. Volunteers - individuals who volunteer or donate their services for public service or humanitarian objectives, usually on a part-time and temporary basis. An individual meets the criteria of a volunteer under the following circumstances:
 - a. the individual provides services for humanitarian, a public service purpose, for the benefit of education, or other personal motive, without promise or expectation of compensation or employment; and
 - b. the services of the volunteer do not replace or disturb regular employees in the performance of their normal duties.

D. Policy

UT Rio Grande Valley acknowledges and values the role of volunteer opportunities in enhancing the vision and mission of UTRGV. Accordingly, it is the policy of UT Rio Grande Valley to encourage fair and efficient processes to provide volunteer opportunities, in keeping with federal and state laws and UTRGV policy.

1. *Volunteer Participation:*

- a. Anyone, including retirees, students and alumni, may volunteer, with an approved application in accordance with the procedures outlined in section E. below, and under the following conditions: The initial period for volunteering should be no longer than 6 months. The period may be extended for an additional 6 months with the prior approval from the Office of Human Resources, Compensation.
- b. A non-University student, who is under 18, may only volunteer with parental consent. Volunteers must be 16 years of age or older unless there is a formal volunteer program approved. Anyone working with minor volunteers must complete Child Protection Training and may be subject to criminal background checks. Minors are also prohibited from working in research and clinical laboratories that work with BSL-2 agents, radioactive materials, acutely toxic agents, or chemicals that are deemed hazardous by Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management (EHSRM).
- c. A foreign national employee must also receive clearance from the Office of Human Resources, Immigration Services before volunteering.

2. *Prohibited Activities:*

- a. Volunteers cannot replace or be substituted for current employees or perform work that would otherwise require payment of a wage. Volunteer services are generally limited to humanitarian, charitable or public service purposes and normally are rendered on a part-time and temporary basis.
- b. Non-exempt employees may not volunteer to do the same work for which they are employed.
- c. Volunteers are also prohibited from performing the following activities:
 - i. Operating heavy equipment, including vehicles;
 - ii. Working with stored energy (e.g. steam, electricity, hydraulics);
 - iii. Entering into any contract on behalf of UTRGV;
 - iv. Working in direct patient care areas or with Protected Health Information (PHI), except in accordance with UT Rio Grande Valley policies and procedures, or UT Rio Grande Valley Health System policies and procedures, as applicable.

3. *Exceptions:*

Any exceptions to this policy will only be made in limited circumstances and must receive prior written approval from the Chief Human Resources Officer.

E. Procedures

1. *Application:*

- a. Each potential volunteer must complete the UT Rio Grande Valley Volunteer Application that includes processes, procedures, forms, and expectations specific to the assignment.

- b. Volunteers must satisfactorily complete all applicable training and orientation prior to commencing activities.
- c. Acceptance of a volunteer is subject to a satisfactory reference check by the Sponsoring Manager hosting the volunteer and a criminal background check prior to the assignment. The background checks must be coordinated through the Office of Human Resources, but may also include alternate background check sources for current UT Rio Grande Valley and non-UT Rio Grande Valley students.
- d. If the individual is returning or starting a new assignment, and, if a break in assignment is 6 months or more, all forms and processes must be completed or updated.

A current volunteer whose duties materially change, or who wishes to begin a new volunteer assignment, must complete all forms and process for the new role.

- e. Volunteers are subject to, and must abide by, all applicable UTRGV policies, procedures and rules, including but not limited to those relating to health and safety, confidentiality, intellectual property, protected health information, non-discrimination, computer use, ethics, conflicts of interest, criminal background checks, alcohol and drug free campus and non-violence policies.

2. *Security / Campus ID:*

Volunteers whose tenure is expected to exceed a period of two weeks are required to apply for and obtain an official campus ID card which provides them with a formal form of identification. Volunteers are required to wear the campus identification card at all times. Volunteers who need access to any campus facility or to IT infrastructure services are required to go through the Person of Interest (POI) access process, complete a POI form and submit it to the Office of Human Resources, Operations.

3. *Sponsoring Department Responsibilities:*

- a. Maintaining a database of all volunteers associated with their respective programs.
- b. Ensuring personnel comply with the mandates specific to this policy.
- c. Selecting an individual with experience and qualifications appropriate for the tasks they will be expected to perform.
- d. Ensuring completion of the UT Rio Grande Valley Volunteer Application, and any other applicable liability waiver or form. Further, prior to the first day of volunteer service, Sponsoring Managers are also responsible for obtaining all proper clearances and approvals within their department and from any required external departments, such as the UTRGV Environmental Health, Safety and Risk Management, and the Office of Human Resources, Immigration Services.
- e. Conducting reference checks and verify that the individual successfully passed a background check prior to the start of service.
- f. Ensuring that the volunteer is properly trained on all applicable policies and practices such as IT security policies, applicable departmental policies and procedures, safety equipment practices, and ensure compliance with set applicable standards.

- g. Sponsoring faculty or staff are prohibited from providing volunteers with physical files or shared drive access to sensitive UTRGV information through a sponsored guest account.
 - h. Ensuring that the volunteer's activities are monitored at all times, either by the sponsoring faculty or staff supervisor of record on the UT Rio Grande Valley Volunteer Application, or an appropriate adult delegate.
 - i. Informing the volunteer that he or she is responsible for providing their own insurance and that UTRGV will not be providing the volunteer with insurance coverage.
 - j. Ensuring that adult volunteers who work with hazardous materials, as approved by EHSRM, attend the training applicable to their respective volunteer service activity. Ensure that volunteers are provided with the appropriate supervision while working with hazardous materials.
 - k. Collecting any UT Rio Grande Valley property in the possession of the volunteer by end of the last day of service.
 - l. Requesting the activation and subsequent deactivation of any official volunteer UT Rio Grande Valley-issued badge or identification card and any other UT Rio Grande Valley access upon completion of activity.
 - m. Retaining all forms and documents for a period of three years from the date the volunteer ends service.
 - n. Reviewing this policy and all applicable policies and procedures specific to the service opportunity with the volunteer.
 - o. Ensure that all extended volunteers apply for and obtain a:
 - i. Campus ID card with access to the rooms applicable to their volunteer assignment, and
 - ii. Provide volunteers with a unique id for access to the appropriate training.
4. *End of Service or Service Completion:*
- a. Volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner. Volunteer service opportunities approved under this policy may be terminated at any time without cause or prior notice.
 - b. Email accounts, keys, ID badges and any other equipment issued to the volunteer remain the property of UT Rio Grande Valley and must be returned at the end of service.
- F. **Relevant Federal and/or State Statute(s), Board of Regents' Rule(s), UTS Policy(ies), and/or Coordinating Board Rule(s)**
- [Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, as amended 29 U.S.C. 201, section 3\(e\)\(4\)\(A\) and \(B\), 29 C.F.R. § § 553.101 and 29 C.F.R. § § 553.103](#)