



Growing the Award volunteer network

How to successfully recruit, retain and manage the volunteers supporting your work



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Versions

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Foreword

Volunteering is the lifeblood of the Award. Without volunteers giving their time to act as leaders, assessors, fund-raisers, supporters, trustees, advisory board members and doing countless other tasks, no young person would have the opportunity to participate.

One of the things we're regularly asked for is advice on how to recruit, retain and develop great volunteers. This guide has been put together to provide that advice. It takes a look at the role of volunteers, where they fit into the organisation and what support they may need from you, and offers considerations for how you might apply the principles of the guide in your respective country to help your Award grow further.

I hope you find this a useful tool in shaping what's to come...



John May

Secretary General,
The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 What is a volunteer and a volunteer manager?

A volunteer is a person who freely offers to take part in an enterprise or organisation. The volunteer manager's role is to watch over the well-being of volunteers and constituents, and the organisations with which they engage. The volunteer manager will provide volunteers with leadership, target setting, support and advice in a nurturing and encouraging manner.

Often the differentiator between a volunteer and a staff member lies in the level of accountability that the role holder has, whether there is a contract of employment in place, and whether a mutual obligation (the need for one party to return the supply of payment, goods or services for those given by the other) lies between both parties.

1.2 Volunteers within the Award

Within the Award there are a broad range of volunteers: teachers who volunteer after school to provide the Award to their pupils; parents who support their children to take part in the Award; members of National Award Operators who volunteer as Award Leaders. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Learning Framework available via the [Learning Hub](#) lists the Award's volunteers as the following:

- Award Leader
- Adventurous Journey Supervisor
- Adventurous Journey Assessor
- Operating Authority Manager
- Coordinator
- Assessor
- Award Trainer
- National Director and Award Staff
- Foundation staff
- Trustee/Board member
- Supporter eg sponsor or parent

Volunteer managers can be a volunteer themselves, or a member of the local business community who volunteers as a trustee or board member. Most undertake their duties for The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation (the Foundation) or a National Award Operator without financial remuneration. For example, it is worth noting that whilst some Award Leaders are paid through their roles as teachers at Independent Award Centres, the Award still treats them as volunteers.

The Foundation has developed a Trustee's Toolkit, which you may find a valuable resource that can be downloaded from the [Learning Hub](#).

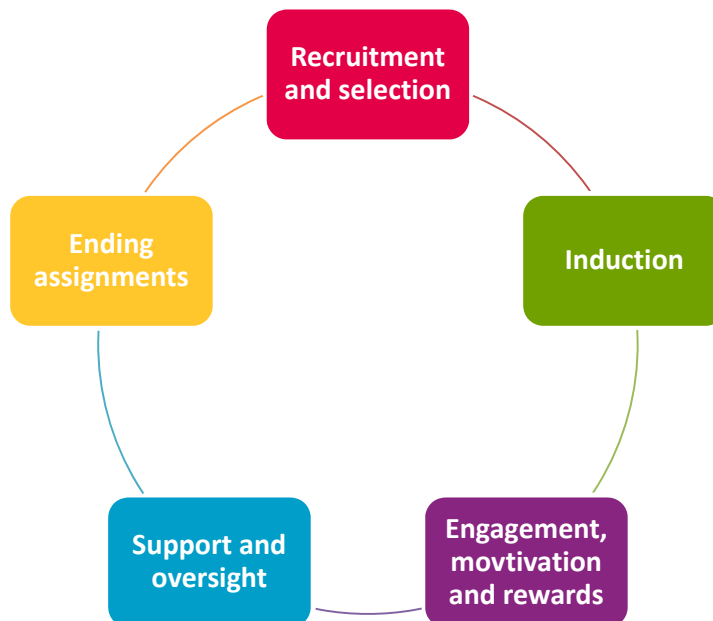
1.3 The need for volunteers

The Award has a far reaching impact on participants around the world, and in all cases operates a lean structure in terms of employees. One of the key areas where volunteers are at their most valuable is in the delivery of the Award, taking on the roles of Award co-ordinator, Award Leader, Adventurous Journey Assessor, and many more. Volunteers can be great assets in the infrastructure of a National Award Operator too, offering extra practical support in areas such as researching, administration and organising events.

It is important to be clear and understand what you want to achieve from volunteers and for how long you would like them to volunteer; your organisation will be investing time, resources and money and this will have an initial impact on the productivity of staff to accommodate volunteers.

As well, it is useful to consider the life cycle of a volunteer within your organisation, and how when a volunteer leaves the role may still need more volunteers to fill.

Life cycle of a volunteer



1.4 The role of a volunteer

Everyone volunteers for a reason. It might be to give back to the community, to 'relive' one's own Award experiences, to learn new skills or to gain self-worth. Some of those who identify themselves as volunteers may not serve a meaningful purpose within the organisation, but are satisfying their own needs such as gaining recognition. It is necessary to make a distinction between these two types of volunteers, as a more actively involved volunteer will be more beneficial for the organisation.

It is important to understand why you are involving volunteers within the organisation and how they will fit into the daily working environment. Plan for their involvement before recruitment begins. If your organisation wants to set up something new or improve its existing volunteer programme, one approach could be to discuss why you want to involve volunteers and what you want volunteers to help your organisation achieve. You may wish to consult with staff and ask for their input. A volunteer should complement or add value to your existing staff base.

Being clear about a volunteer's role within the organisation makes recruitment easier and means that potential volunteers understand the volunteering opportunity available. A straightforward role description that details the specific activities in which a particular volunteer is involved will help to set out clearly and realistically the skills, experience and time commitment required by the volunteer. This will ensure you are more likely to attract volunteers with the most to contribute, help to give the volunteer an accurate idea of the work they will be doing and also ensure that the volunteer is attracted by the tasks.

There may be times when volunteers have more than one role within an organisation. They may be managed by staff or by other volunteers, or at times the volunteer might even be managing others, for example as a trustee. It is important to have agreed descriptions on each type of volunteering role. Being clear from the beginning about how the volunteer is with you to carry out certain tasks and how this will benefit the organisation will give them a greater sense of involvement and feel they are making a contribution to the organisation. As an example, a trustee may volunteer at an event; under this situation, they would be managed by the relevant staff member and would not be expected to assume authority so as to not disrupt the event from running as effectively as possible.

1.5 Creating a volunteer policy

Many groups and organisations find it helpful to have a 'volunteer policy' in place to summarise in a single document how they will recruit, involve and support volunteers. A volunteer policy is useful in setting out what volunteers can expect from an organisation and in helping volunteer managers to provide them with good quality, consistent support.

A volunteer policy summarises and signposts to other policies and procedures. It can place your use of volunteers in context, by explaining their role within your organisation and their distinctiveness from paid staff. It also helps ensure that paid staff, senior management and trustees fully understand why volunteers are involved, what role they have within the organisation and where the distinction lies between staff and volunteers.

A volunteer policy demonstrates an organisation's commitment to its volunteer programme and its individual volunteers. It helps to ensure consistency. Dealing with volunteers means dealing with a

diverse range of people. Being able to refer to a written policy ensures that decisions do not have to be made on an ad hoc basis and that all volunteers are treated equally.

A policy allows volunteers to know where they stand; it offers some security in that they know how they can expect to be treated, and where they can turn if they feel that things are going wrong.

If your organisation has not yet started to work with volunteers it is the ideal starting point to consider exactly how you will involve them in your work, as it encompasses everything from recruitment to supervision and dealing with any problems that may arise.

1.6 Designing a volunteer programme

You will probably find it helpful to design a framework for your volunteer programme. This would include:

- either a volunteer policy or handbook, which could feature the following:
 - a) Expenses policy
 - b) Health and safety information, and possibly a risk assessment of the volunteer role
 - c) Background information about the organisation
 - d) Information about the support and supervision arrangements that the volunteer will receive
- an induction (including meeting other staff and volunteers, finding out where things are etc.)
- potential training that the volunteer will need in order to perform their role
- appropriate insurance cover for the volunteer
- monitoring and evaluation of the volunteer

1.7 Writing a volunteer role description

When writing a volunteer role description (sometimes also referred to as a terms of reference document), you should try to make it detailed but concise. Building the description around different headings is useful. You may find the below headings a useful basis for your role description, alongside the [template registration form](#) included in the appendix:

- Title of role (be specific)
- Purpose of role
- Main activities/tasks
- Qualities/experience/skills sought (where relevant)
- Training provision (if applicable)
- Availability
- Location
- Main point of contact/supervisor

There is always room for flexibility. If you look at a task description carefully, you may find that there are ways of including people who don't have all the skills that you need. You may have money available for training so that someone with limited skills can learn new or additional skills. Or maybe the role can be split up so that you have volunteers with different skills doing different tasks.

However, be realistic: if there is no scope for flexibility, it may be better to help the individual find a more appropriate role in another organisation. It is also important to be realistic about what the organisation can offer volunteers.

Useful things to think about when developing a task description might be:

- Who will be responsible for the volunteer?
- What tasks do you have that you need volunteers to do?
- How might these tasks be combined to create a role?
- How much training could you give?
- How much support and supervision can you give?
- Are there any areas for role development?
- What skills would the volunteer need to have already?

As a rule, volunteer tasks are patterned along the job descriptions of paid staff. Volunteers carry out work deemed necessary, but National Award Operators are required, as part of their licence agreement, to employ at least one full time member of staff on a paid basis.

A volunteer role description can help you to structure supervision sessions and is a great way to evaluate your organisation's volunteering programme. It can also provide a guide to ensuring all resources and procedures are in place before the volunteer arrives.

Chapter 2: Recruitment and selection

2.1 Recruiting volunteers

Recruiting volunteers can be seen as a similar process to promoting the organisation and it is vital that you have a clear message. The nature of this message will depend on your organisation, your supporter base and the work you want the volunteers to do. However, in general it will include:

- A piece about the organisation
- A compelling message to inspire those unfamiliar with the Award
- What the voluntary work is
- What the organisation as a whole does
- How a new volunteer can make a difference
- How to find out more

Most methods of recruitment elaborate on the points above within the role description. It is key that as much necessary information as possible is provided.

2.2 Recruitment ideas

2.2.1 Print

You might consider placing printed information in:

- Schools and colleges (student support centres, student unions and employment offices)
- Libraries
- Public buildings
- Sports and leisure centres

2.2.2 Volunteer centres

In some countries there are many volunteer centres that put people in touch with organisations that need volunteers. Organisations may need to register with their local centre, which might also be able to provide advice and support on working with volunteers. However, this will differ from country to country and some research into what your country offers may be needed.

2.2.3 Businesses

Businesses often partner with a charity to demonstrate their corporate social responsibility, which could result in publicity, pro bono work and fundraising, as well as generating a bigger pool of volunteers.

2.2.4 Events

Events where you are able to have an exhibition stand are a great opportunity to recruit new volunteers and potential participants. There are many places and events at which stands can be set up, including career and recruitment fairs.

2.2.5 Gold Award Presentations and Alumni

Former Award participants and holders make up a good proportion of new volunteers, and demonstrate a commitment to their role. It would be beneficial to give current participants the opportunity to volunteer with your organisation as part of their Award programme and to keep in touch with former ones, making them feel welcome to volunteer at any stage if possible.

Adults who have volunteered for the Award in the past would be more willing to re-join than recruiting new volunteers from scratch. It would be useful to keep in contact with former volunteers and be able to approach them further down the line.

2.2.6 Media

A steady stream of coverage about your organisation and its work can help to raise your profile and thereby aid recruitment of volunteers. Press coverage can also be used as a form of public recognition for volunteers' work.

You can also advertise for volunteers in the local press. Do your research and find out what sort of people are likely to see the advert. Tailor your message accordingly, for example, stressing the skills and experience that can be gained.

If you are considering placing an advert, you should:

- Ensure your advert reflects the diversity of the local community
- Consult with other organisations that have placed adverts
- Check the newspaper's circulation areas and numbers
- Ask if there is a special rate for volunteer vacancies
- Have a closing date

2.3 Selection

For some voluntary work, selection can be very informal and therefore a focus on an introductory chat about the work and the potential volunteer's interests is more suitable. If the role has some responsibility, selection procedures should be more formal. Key elements of selection can include:

- Application forms
- References
- Interviews
- Criminal record checks (especially if volunteers are working with young people)
- Health checks
- Equal opportunities

2.4 Diversity in recruitment

Organisations sometimes find it difficult to get a diverse range of recruits, especially if they rely on word of mouth. Diversity can be important in allowing you to reflect the composition of your local community and to allow for varied view points and different cultural references. This can help meet your organisation's mission. Use your equality statement when recruiting.

2.5 People with disabilities

People's disabilities need not be their greatest concern and need not impact on their contribution whilst volunteering. One of the best ways to deal with potential difficulties is to take a proactive approach as to what can be achieved by the potential volunteer before looking at what restrictions the role could pose.

2.6 Older people

Volunteering among older people has increased in recent years. Many older people have gained vast experience and have fine-tuned their skills over many years, which could be invaluable to your organisation.

2.7 People from minority communities

Volunteers from different minority backgrounds can provide a variety of experience, skills and perspectives to which you may not have immediate access.

2.8 Unemployed people

People who are unemployed often have a huge amount to offer and can gain a great deal from volunteering. Unemployed people can gain skills and experience from volunteering. They are likely to want voluntary work that provides them with a chance to gain skills and experience that will be helpful in finding paid work.

Where state aid is given, volunteering may impact on the volunteer being able to work at certain times of the day.

2.9 Flexibility in recruitment

In today's society people have a number of demands placed upon them, which may make it difficult to commit to the working hours and length of their volunteering. Whilst some volunteers may wish to commit to a certain schedule, it is important to remain flexible as this will result in recruiting volunteers with a host of valuable experiences and skills.

Flexibility extends to the variety of volunteer roles and tasks. Variation should be offered in the amount of commitment, the level of responsibility and the type of activity the volunteer will undertake. This will enhance the volunteer's experience, which may stand them in good stead in their personal and career development.

In addition, many people may be unsure of how to go about volunteering or who to contact. By having as much information as possible available and making volunteering an easy process, you will

not only find more people wanting to volunteer, but it will also help build a positive image for the organisation and volunteering.

2.10 Initial enquiries and application forms

The application process that you have for volunteers will depend very much on your organisation and the role that volunteers play within it. Some organisations have more people wanting to volunteer than they can take on, so they need to be selective; others need to screen potential volunteers carefully because of the work that they are doing; other organisations take on anybody who is interested in volunteering with them.

The application process is as much about the volunteer deciding whether they like the organisation, as it is about the organisation deciding to take on the volunteer. An ideal application process will reflect both.

It is important to brief all staff on the recruitment of volunteers, so they can respond to any initial enquiries as soon as possible and to the best of their knowledge. Avoid asking potential volunteers too many questions over the telephone or email. However, you may want to check what they know about the organisation and anything essential such as their availability.

It is a good idea to have an information pack available to send to people interested in volunteering. The pack could contain:

- A welcome letter
- Information about the organisation
- The volunteer's role
- Practical information about expenses and training
- Information from existing volunteers about what they get out of volunteering with your organisation

Avoid including formal policies, as it is better to deal with these during the volunteer's induction. You should view the information pack as an extension of your recruitment materials.

If you have the resources, it can be helpful to invite potential volunteers to come and visit your organisation and talk to existing volunteers before deciding whether they want to apply to volunteer with you.

2.11 Application forms

Application forms for volunteers can be unnecessary, as they often ask for irrelevant information. Asking applicants to write about why they want to volunteer with you is putting people without confidence in their written language at a disadvantage. Generally if there's information you need to know, you can ask it at the interview stage.

Most volunteer application forms are also based on forms used for paid staff and many ask for more information than is needed, or indeed appropriate. If you are going to use an application form to

record details, be clear about what information you need and why. An example application form or a [registration form](#) has been included in the appendix.

2.12 Monitoring and evaluation

Any information you need for the purpose of equal opportunities monitoring should be requested on an additional form, which should be kept separate from other personal details and the volunteer application form.

Monitoring and evaluating the recruitment aspect of your volunteer programme can be a useful way of finding out your most effective methods of advertising for volunteers, and can help you plan future recruitment campaigns.

2.13 Before the interview

For an interview to be successful, it's necessary to ensure that you're prepared for it (not just the potential volunteer). The first step would be to find out if the interviewee has any support needs or accessibility requirements, so that you can make any appropriate arrangements. It is important to have any relevant paperwork at hand during the interview in case you need to refer to it.

You may like to have a list of set questions to ask potential volunteers, to help make the interview process fair, equitable and consistent. Depending on the candidate's answers, you may want to ask additional questions so that you can gain a more rounded picture of the potential volunteer. It is important to make notes on the conversation as you will have a record of what was discussed, and this will add structure to the volunteer's role and help define expectations.

In advance of any interview it is a good idea to send the volunteer information before they start, such as the information pack mentioned previously in 2.9.

Any interview with a volunteer is a two-way process, an opportunity for both parties to find out more about each other and this should be clearly explained to the potential volunteer. If, however, it is actually a selection process and not all applicants will be taken on by the organisation, people should be made aware of this at the outset.

2.14 In the interview

It's a good idea to use the beginning of the interview to remind the candidate of the purpose of the meeting and to check that you have their details correctly recorded. Essentially, the informal interview should be a two-way process whereby the potential volunteer receives enough information to decide whether they would like to volunteer with you, and you find out enough about them to decide if you are interested in taking them on.

You may want to tell them about:

- The aims of the organisation and the role of volunteers
- The various stakeholders

- The role/task description
- Training and resources offered to volunteers
- How the volunteer will be supported in their role
- Your expectations of volunteers
- The days, times and duration they could potentially perform the volunteer role
- The organisation's commitment to equal opportunities

You may want the volunteer to tell you:

- Why they are interested in volunteering with your organisation
- Their knowledge of your organisation
- Their understanding of relevant issues concerning stakeholders
- What they hope to gain from volunteering
- Relevant skills, interests and experience
- Their availability and when they could start, if accepted to volunteer
- Resources they will need (for instance, do they have any additional support needs or do they require support from outside the organisation?)

At the end of the interview you should be in a position to check whether the volunteer has any further questions or information to give you, and that they have all the necessary information to take away. You should agree what will happen next, when you expect to be in touch and reimburse their expenses for attending the interview, if applicable.

2.15 After the interview

Make sure that you follow up anything that you've agreed with the potential volunteer within the timescale that you've indicated. The recruitment and selection process may have resulted in a number of people being interested in volunteering, but not taken forward at this particular time. Retaining the information about the interested individuals will allow you to develop a pool of potential future volunteers. You should ask all who applied if they would like to receive a newsletter or equivalent, keeping them informed and engaged.

2.16 Award licensing requirements and vetting

It is important to have a vetting or screening process in place that will help minimise risk to your organisation, particularly if your volunteers will have unsupervised access to young people, handle money or act in a position of trust/authority.

One way to screen volunteers is to check any references they provide as soon as you can, as they may influence the tasks assigned to the volunteer or they may highlight skills or attributes which the volunteer has not shared with you.

As part of being given their conditional or full licence, National Award Operators and Independent Award Centres are assessed against a set of standards. Please refer to the necessary licence and validation documentation for full details, however in summary, the following requirements relating to volunteers are required:

- All Award volunteers are to be subject to and are to sign a Code of Conduct.

- All Award volunteers are subject to their respective national child protection legislation.
- All Award volunteers must be recorded on a database, to include details of their date of birth, training, vetting and that they have signed a Code of Conduct.

Chapter 3: Induction

3.1 Induction

Having successfully recruited new volunteers, the next step is to provide an induction, which aims to introduce new volunteers to the organisation and their role in it. By using the induction to help them work through this process, you are much more likely to find out about their motivations and end up with a committed, happy volunteer.

It can be a good idea to talk to the volunteer on their first day about what you hope to cover in the induction period. By explaining exactly what they will be doing over the next few weeks, you will help to put them at ease. On their first day you will probably want to keep things very basic. You may want to:

- Introduce them to other staff and volunteers
- Show them around
- Explain who they can go to if they have any questions or problems
- Show them where they will be sitting and where they can find any equipment they need
- Let them know about breaks; whether they take one any time they want or if you have set times, where can they go locally if they need to go out, where can they buy food
- Let them know what happens at the end of the day; is there a set time when they leave or is it flexible, do they need to let someone know they are going home?
- Explain how they can claim expenses
- Explain your organisation's policy on volunteers using phones/internet for their own use

There will be some formal items that you need to cover quite early on such as important policies and procedures. Whilst it may be tempting just to hand over a file of policies, by going through them you can make sure that the volunteer understands them and is comfortable with them. More formal things that you may want to cover might be:

- Health and Safety - you will need to show people where the fire exits, fire extinguishers, First Aid Kit etc. are, as well as pointing out any potential hazards
- History, ethos and structure of the organisation - you may not want to cover this in too much detail unless the volunteer is really interested, but it is all useful background information
- Code of conduct for volunteers - this should outline what the volunteer can expect from you and what you expect in return. You will probably want to cover how you will train and supervise them, what times you will expect them to come in, what they should do if they can't come in etc.
- Policies - what policies you have will depend on your organisation, but you will probably want to cover equal opportunities, confidentiality, and problem solving procedures

The volunteer will have had to take in a lot of information, so you will need to reiterate who they can contact to ask questions and where they can find copies of policies etc.

You will need to keep some details about volunteers on file, such as their contact details, who to call in case of an emergency and any medical issues. Only relevant personal information should be held.

The rest of the induction period will probably be taken up with training and the volunteer trying out the type of work they will be doing. Obviously a lot will be dependent on resources but if you work closely with the volunteer in this initial period, you should be able to gain a much better picture of how they work, what interests them, what support they need and what they are hoping to get out of volunteering for you. In order to let them find out as much as possible about the organisation, you might want to think about:

- Letting them shadow other staff and volunteers
- Try out tasks in different parts of the organisation
- Asking them to attend any events the organisation might be involved with
- Invite them to any social events that are happening

All this should mean that when you sit down together after their first few weeks, both you and the volunteer should be in a better position to talk about their future at the organisation.

3.2 Code of conduct and expectations

A volunteer agreement sets out what volunteers and the organisation can expect from each other, and is normally based on the role description. The agreement is not and should not be a contract, as it describes expectations rather than obligations. From a business protection perspective, it also proves to relevant authorities that the volunteer is not a worker/employee.

A volunteer agreement should be taken seriously by both the organisation and volunteer. Volunteer managers should take into account that whilst their managing style may be similar to that of employees, they must be aware of the time and resources volunteers are freely offering. Furthermore, volunteers may take longer to complete tasks than employees, as they may need to prioritise other items over their volunteering and it would be useful to take this into consideration when creating time frames.

Being clear and concise about what the organisation will provide and what it expects from the volunteer will help avoid the creation of mutual obligations, which may be interpreted by the law as having created a contract.

An organisation may typically include:

- A full induction and any training necessary for the volunteer role
- A named mentor for the volunteer, with regular meetings
- To treat volunteers in line with its equal opportunities policy
- To reimburse out of pocket expenses, where there are receipts or similar evidence of cost to the volunteer
- To provide insurance cover for the volunteers
- To implement good health and safety practice

A volunteer agreement might expect volunteers to:

- Follow the organisation's policies and procedures, including equal opportunities, health and safety and confidentiality
- To meet mutually agreed time commitments, or give notice if this is not possible

It is better to talk of hopes and expectations, with the understanding that volunteers are free to come and go as they wish, and that there are no obligations. However, it is acceptable to have the same expectations for the volunteer to complete the tasks agreed upon as you would have for an employee.

It is important to be careful what you offer a volunteer. Even benefits that are necessary for the volunteer to carry out their work, such as training, can cause issues if they're conducted in such a way so as to suggest an obligation on the part of the volunteer.

Where it is not practical to remove all benefits or obligations, it makes sense to state in volunteer documents such as agreements or policies that there is no intention to create a legally binding relationship.

Volunteers within different countries are or are not afforded protection depending on the volunteer agreement. If in doubt, seek legal advice in your own country of operation. We have included the Foundation's [code of conduct for volunteers](#) in the appendix as an example.

3.3 Training

It is also important to consider whether volunteers will need or benefit from training. Whatever form it takes, training will help nurture volunteers who feel supported and have the skills and confidence to contribute fully to the organisation.

The training your volunteers receive will depend entirely on the kind of work they will be doing. When developing a training policy you will need to decide what will best meet your organisational requirements, bearing in mind the resources you have at your disposal. The key is to make sure that it is designed around their roles.

If necessary, you may need to send volunteers on a training course. It is important that you research the need for external training, as this could have a financial implication for the organisation.

On a practical note, it is important to look at space and equipment. Volunteers will need adequate physical space to work in and may need access to telephones, computers and other equipment depending on what their actual role will be. It can cause real friction to introduce volunteers to an already cramped environment.

The following modules, and much more, are available on the [Learning Hub](#). National Award Operators can grant volunteers access to the modules for them to gain a better understanding of the Award and its requirements.

- Module 1: Introduction to the Award
- Module 2: History of the Award
- Module 3: Philosophy of the Award

3.4 Expenses

Whilst unpaid, volunteering shouldn't leave volunteers out of pocket, otherwise it can be difficult to involve a diverse range of people. That's why it's good practice to reimburse a volunteer for the expenses they incur.

Whilst this should be a straightforward matter, there are a number of legal and good practice issues to be aware of, including ensuring you don't inadvertently grant employment rights to volunteers. Again, this may differ from country to country and therefore it is best to research local legal and good practices.

You will need to keep a record of the expenses volunteers are paid. In terms of finance, you might only be concerned with the overall amount, but you need to be able to show that you are reimbursing out of pocket expenses only. Asking for receipts will ensure this.

You will also need to consider any other costs incurred by your volunteer programme, such as training for both the volunteer and the volunteer manager and publicity materials for recruitment.

3.5 Health and safety

All organisations should be committed to the health and safety of their staff and volunteers, and as part of the Foundation's Fundamental Standards, National Award Operators must be compliant with national child protection guidelines and health & safety legislation. Failure to follow your country's respective health and safety regulations could result in volunteers taking legal action if injured whilst in your care. You should carry out risk assessments and, if necessary, act upon them to lower the risk. This includes a risk assessment of:

- The organisation's premises
- The organisation's activities
- The roles carried out by volunteers

It is important to provide not only staff, but volunteers with the necessary training, information or equipment they may need to remain safe whilst working with the organisation. Volunteers are expected to remember their duty of care towards others and not act in a way that might endanger those around them.

You may wish to include the following elements in your health and safety policies:

- Risk assessments
- Lone Working Policy
- Dealing with difficult situations/people
- Child Protection Policy
- Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy

3.6 Insurance

All groups and organisations that work with volunteers should consider what types of insurance they need to put in place to cover them for that involvement. A volunteer will usually be insured by the

organisation they are volunteering with, but you will need to check what insurance policy your organisation has and if it covers volunteers.

Chapter 4: Engagement, motivation and rewards

4.1 Volunteer engagement

While volunteers shouldn't feel over loaded in their work, it is important that they are engaged in what they do and get a sense of achievement from their work.

A useful starting point is to think about the possible motivations that people might have for becoming volunteers. This can help you to design volunteering opportunities and influence your recruitment message.

Motivations for volunteering might include:

- Commitment to the organisation - it is important to emphasise how their contribution will make a difference
- Meeting people - volunteering can be a very sociable activity
- Gaining skills - when recruiting, stress the skills and experience that volunteers could gain
- Utilising existing skills - some people want to use their skills to help a good cause
- Keeping active - more older people are volunteering

4.2 Motivations for volunteering

Being aware of a volunteer's motivations is a useful tool to have, as it can help to steer the volunteer's journey during their time with your organisation. An informal chat at the recruitment stage can be a helpful way of discovering a person's motivations for wanting to volunteer with you. Such motivations can include:

- Learning new skills
- Using existing skills
- Addressing a specific problem in the community
- To have fun
- Gaining work experience
- Feeling useful
- Getting out of the house
- Making new friends

If these needs are not met by volunteering with you, then the volunteer will either move on to another organisation or into a different activity altogether. Therefore it makes sense to find out what these motivations are and monitor how well they are being fulfilled, so that they remain an advocate of the organisation.

4.3 Changing motivations

Remember too that motivations can change over time, which makes communication with volunteers very important. Someone might start volunteering to improve their CV, but decide to stay because they enjoy the company of the people they work alongside. Most of us like to feel that we're a part

of something. By talking to volunteers, both informally and as part of supervision meetings, you can keep track of their motivations, and if possible adapt their role to continue meeting them.

4.4 Creating rewarding volunteer roles

Building retention into your volunteer programme starts long before volunteers are even recruited. So, the key is to think creatively about how you can design interesting and rewarding roles around these tasks that will make volunteers want to stay.

When drawing up a volunteer role/task description think about the tasks you would like the volunteer to perform. What is there in the role that would attract and keep volunteers? A chance to learn new skills? Meet new people? And what does the role have to offer a volunteer in the medium to long term?

Task/role descriptions should not be regarded as being set in stone; if possible they should be flexible enough to allow for some adaptation to suit individual volunteers. If a volunteer has some say over the role they are coming into, then there is more chance that they are going to be happy in it.

Role descriptions should also be open for negotiation further down the road. Once volunteers are established within the role they may start looking for new challenges, or find that they really dislike a task they thought they would enjoy. Obviously, there are limits to flexibility, as your organisation has its own needs that need to be met.

4.5 Reward and recognition

Volunteers should feel that they are an important part of the organisation. They should be involved in decision making and their achievements should be recognised. There are many ways of making volunteers feel involved, welcome or acknowledged. Different people value different forms of recognition, so here are some suggestions for both formal and informal ways of showing how much you value your organisation's volunteers.

Examples of formal

- Volunteer events (for example, a thank you event as part of Volunteers' Week)
- Awards (see below)
- Invite volunteers to meetings that affect them, such as staff meetings if appropriate
- Invite volunteers to working groups etc. (Again, if there are internal issues affecting volunteers, they should be involved in the process)

Examples of informal

- Saying 'thank you'
- Making sure they have enough tasks to do every day
- Including them in social events
- Going out for lunch etc.
- Consulting on informal matters

A reward or recognition may come in the form of an award. Awards are a token or symbol of appreciation and recognition. They can happen either in a private or public forum and can include:

- Certificates
- Badges
- Group photographs
- Clothing, such as t-shirts, caps, etc.

Awards are particularly useful in generating a sense of bonding or group involvement among those who do not often have an opportunity to gather together or for whom sharing their togetherness is otherwise difficult. Awards are good short-term “bonding” or motivating tools at a group level. In the case of events, often there is a mutual appreciation and recognition of everyone else’s contribution to the team effort or goal.

4.6 Being inclusive

Make sure that volunteers are involved in the internal life of the organisation, invited to participate in relevant meetings, and included in any social plans, if appropriate.

4.7 Good practice

The better and more efficiently volunteers are treated, the better they will feel about the organisation to which they are donating their time. Key things to bear in mind are clarity and consistency. Volunteers should know where they stand. This means:

- Fully inducting volunteers
- Keeping volunteers advised of what they can expect and what your organisation expects
- Having a volunteer policy in place
- Having a named supervisor to go to with problems
- Having clear problem solving and complaints procedures
- Taking equal opportunities and diversity seriously
- Taking into consider the prior learning of volunteers

Chapter 5: Support and oversight

5.1 Support

All volunteers need support and supervision. The form that this takes will vary widely. Volunteers at a one off event will need different support to a long term volunteer. What is important is that it is appropriate to the role and the individual volunteer.

It is important to remember that everyone is an individual. Some volunteers will need a lot of help and support from their organisation. Don't prejudge what support someone might need, ask them. Some people may need a little extra training, or on the job coaching. Other volunteers may lack confidence and need reassurance that they are doing things correctly.

It's worth considering peer support. This could be through a buddying system or volunteer meetings, for example. As well as providing support for new volunteers, a buddying system is a good way of recognising the expertise of experienced volunteers. Volunteer meetings are a chance for volunteers to collectively have input into the work and daily life of an organisation, but can also give volunteers a chance to share experiences.

A volunteer may require extra support for a variety of reasons. For instance, they could:

- be lacking in confidence after a long period of unemployment
- have physical disabilities or health conditions
- have learning disabilities
- have mental health issues
- have issues at home
- be striving to break patterns of negative behaviour, such as gambling or drug misuse
- have a different first language to yours

5.2 Types of support

The support offered can take many forms and will depend on the individual volunteer's needs. For instance, the manager or supervisor may meet with the individual to discuss their needs and identify ways in which the organisation can support them to volunteer, or the volunteer may already have a carer or support worker who can assist them in performing their volunteer role.

Some organisations may provide a buddy or a mentor, who could be either a more experienced volunteer or a member of staff. In some cases, volunteers may require extra supervision or support meetings.

By offering a more in-depth level of support, organisations find that they can broaden their volunteer base by recruiting from sections of the community that they may not have previously reached. By making volunteering more inclusive, the organisation can demonstrate its commitment to equal opportunities and diversity.

Such schemes also give volunteers the opportunity to make a valuable contribution to both the organisation and the wider society. Not only can they benefit from the volunteering experience, but

they can also give something back. We shouldn't let our prejudices affect helping others – we want the award to be available to all, and need to adapt our approach to making this happen. That means engaging with people from all walks of life to find out how the Award can help them. This is also very much in the spirit of the 'Service' section of the Award.

5.3 Progress meetings

Progress meetings may not be appropriate for all models of volunteer involvement, but for many volunteers it is the best way of ensuring that they get a chance to give and receive feedback. They offer the chance for an open two way conversation about the volunteers' work.

Avoid it being seen as an appraisal. Reassure volunteers that it's a chance to talk in a private space, and that it's as much about you listening to the volunteer as you talking to them.

Arrange a private space for the progress meeting. It's meant to be a chance for the volunteer to speak their mind, which is difficult if they feel they can be heard by others.

Some suggested questions to ask are:

- What's gone well?
- What hasn't?
- Are there any other tasks within the organisation you would like to do?
- Do you feel there is any support or training you need?

Make sure that you let volunteers know that you are pleased with their work. Where regular formal supervision meetings are not appropriate to your involvement of volunteers, you should consider finding other ways of giving and receiving feedback. This could be through informal catch up meetings, or calling home based volunteers, if appropriate. Additionally, where 1-2-1 meetings may not be appropriate, collective meetings with volunteers providing the same service could be arranged to talk about the above issues in a broader manner.

Ending assignments and further resources

6.1 Volunteering end date

You may have discussed how long the volunteer will be with your organisation during the recruitment/induction stages, and have agreed on a fixed end date. It could be their time may come to a natural conclusion when they have fulfilled the tasks set for them, or the organisational need for them has come to an end. In any case, you may be able to reassign them to another volunteer role. However you should be prepared that as a volunteer is not under any contractual obligations, they can leave at any stage.

6.2 Exit Interview

At the end of the volunteer's time with your organisation, you should arrange an exit interview. They can be questionnaires or informal chats that might reveal issues in your organisation that need addressing. Remember that people leaving the organisation are likely to be more candid than they would otherwise be. Where possible, it may be better if the exit interview isn't being conducted by a volunteer's immediate supervisor, to allow them to be as honest as possible.

Some questions you might ask are:

- Do people know what they're letting themselves in for when they volunteer for you?
- Does the information supplied to applicants give them a clear picture of what will be expected of them when they volunteer?
- Do volunteers receive task or role descriptions?
- Are volunteers taken seriously within the organisation?
- Are problems and issues raised by volunteers dealt with efficiently and effectively?
- Are you clear about reimbursing expenses to volunteers?
- Are there clear lines of communication within the organisation?
- Do the volunteers have a designated person to talk to about any concerns or problems they may have?
- Is the volunteer co-ordinator/manager easily accessible?
- Are volunteers clear about the contribution they're making to your organisation, its service users and the wider community?

Even if you don't think there is a problem, exit interviews are a useful tool for monitoring how you engage volunteers within the organisation, and may influence how other volunteers fit within your organisation in the future.

6.3 References

Many volunteers will ask you to provide references for other volunteering or employment opportunities after they leave. As with employees, they will ask for either a professional or personal reference. Within the professional reference, it is important for you to provide confirmation that the volunteer was with you and what dates they volunteered for.

A personal reference should focus more on individual characteristics, positive attributes and good qualities about a volunteer. Positive attributes might include:

- Maturity
- Responsibility
- Ability to get on well with others
- Ability to learn quickly
- Enthusiasm
- Politeness
- Cheerfulness
- Able to follow instruction
- Able to work on your own initiative

It is important that references are not too enthusiastic in language, as future employers or volunteer managers may not take it too seriously, and that they do not include anything unprofessional, as this may hinder the volunteer's prospects.

6.4 Evaluation

Evaluating the impact added through utilising volunteers enables an organisation to see the added productivity and economic added value provided to them through others dedicating their time and efforts. This, in turn, can indicate areas where further volunteering is needed, or where the future volunteering needs will arise.

In order to calculate the benefits a volunteer has on an organisation, it is useful to breakdown the purpose of having a volunteer and measure their impact on your organisation. Some motives for having volunteers could be:

- Promoting your organisation
- Recruiting more volunteers
- Fulfil grant/funding applications
- Improve programmes
- Encourage improvements within productivity, engagement, retention, and recruitment amongst staff as well as volunteers

To achieve the motives listed above you may wish to collect and review data, such as the number of hours worked by a volunteer over a period of time, or collect feedback from surveys and speaking with volunteers.

The monetary value of a volunteer can be calculated by placing a monetary value against each hour the volunteer contributes to the organisation. Over a period of time, this could equate to a substantial contribution. You may also receive testimonials from other employees with whom volunteers have worked and how they feel volunteers have benefited the organisation.

Lastly, you can review the volunteers' contribution to the project they were working on, or how well they performed the tasks set out when they first started.

By sharing volunteer stories and experiences through social media, newsletters and other methods of external communications, you will show stakeholders your impact on volunteers and promote your organisation.

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The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation's Volunteer Registration Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact telephone number: _____

Email address: _____

What are your reasons for volunteering and what would you like to achieve through volunteering
with the Foundation? _____

How long are you able to volunteer for? _____

Days available: Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday

Number of hours per day: _____

Any support needs? _____

Previous experience: _____

Any other information you feel is relevant: _____

Please supply the names and contact details of two referees who know you well. Please note these can't be a relative.

Name: _____	Name: _____
Relationship to Referee: _____	Relationship to Referee: _____
Position: _____	Position: _____
Address: _____	Address: _____
_____	_____
_____	_____
Tel no: _____	Tel no: _____

Please return your completed form to The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation either via email to: xxxx@xxxxxxxx.org

Or via post to:

xxxxxxx
xxxxxxx
xxxxxxx
xxxxxxx

If you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Volunteer role description



Location	XXXXX
Time agreed	Dependent on volunteer's availability
Reporting to	XXXXX

Overall purpose:

The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is the world's leading youth achievement award, equipping young people for life and work. The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award Foundation (the Foundation) leads the global growth of the Award to new countries, increasing awareness of the value of non-formal education.

The Foundation has a far reaching impact on participants around the world, but it is still a small charity in terms of employees. Volunteers can be an invaluable asset that offer staff extra support such as researching, administration, organising events and much more.

We are looking for volunteers who would like to enhance their knowledge and understanding of this area of work. If you feel you have the qualities and skills outlined below, please let us know.

Tasks include:

- Providing extra support to staff in areas such as research, administration, data entry, diary management and helping with events
- Attending meetings if required
- Completing any tasks within the time specified
- Providing information as requested
- Carrying out the role in line with relevant policies and procedures; including confidentiality and health and safety

Qualities and skills required by the role:

- Good communication skills and ability to work with a range of people
- Basic computer skills, with knowledge of Microsoft Office
- Good organisational skills, such as filing and diary keeping

No formal training is given for this role, however full support will be given to help volunteers understand and carry out any aspect of the role as appropriate.

The Foundation believes that active participation in volunteerism enables people to develop their knowledge and skills. It develops an awareness of social and global issues, and encourages empathy and responsibility towards others.

Please note: This role is purely voluntary and this arrangement is not meant to be legally binding or act as an employment contract.

Code of conduct for volunteers

Between **(Name)** of **(Address)** and **(Name of organisation)**.

This agreement sets out the terms and conditions of your volunteering role with **(name of organisation)** and constitutes the terms of engagement for the duration of your involvement with the Award.

Role: **(Role Name)**

Date of Commencement: **(Commencement date)**

Agreement review date: **(Review date)**

Remuneration: **Unpaid placement, with reimbursement for out of pocket expenses.**

In undertaking the role of **(specific role)**, and in line with the related terms of reference, I agree to:

1. Exercise due care and diligence in carrying out my role and responsibilities
2. Do my best at all times to meet the expectations of the organisation and with all applicable laws relevant to fulfilling my obligations to the organisation
3. Consult to undergo a police and/or reference and/or background checks when requested by the organisation
4. Undertake training and meet accreditation requirements of the role, as appropriate
5. Respect the privacy of persons served by the organisation and hold in confidence private and personal information collected by the organisation
6. Immediately advise the organisation of any matter in which I am involved that has or could lead to a criminal conviction
7. In carrying out my role and responsibilities for the organisation, I agree:
 - To represent the organisation with professionalism and be responsible for conducting myself with courtesy and appropriate behaviour
 - To conduct myself in a respectful manner, exhibit good conduct and be a positive role model
 - To display respect and courtesy for participants, other volunteers, staff, contractors, event guests and property
 - To provide a safe environment by not harming young people or adults in any way whether through discrimination, sexual harassment, physical force, verbal or mental abuse, neglect or other harmful actions
 - To work cooperatively as a team member with the employees of the organisation and other volunteers
 - To follow through and complete accepted tasks
 - To copy and distribute materials only for the purposes of the organisation and will not use them without the prior written consent of the organisation
 - Not use those materials in any way which would bring the organisation into disrepute
 - That once my appointment with the organisation ends, I will immediately stop all use of the materials

- That any improvements or developments or new versions of materials, including new materials I create based on or incorporating them, belong to the organisation and I assign all rights, including intellectual property rights to the organisation

(Name of organisation) agrees to:

1. Explain the rights and responsibilities of volunteers
2. Provide support, supervision and training to enable volunteers to undertake their roles
3. Respect the privacy of volunteers and hold in confidence private and personal information collected by the organisation
4. Treat volunteers with respect in line with equal opportunity requirements

(Name of organisation) has provided me with a description of my role and responsibilities, and the requirements of the Award which I have read and understand. I will comply with all of these requirements.

I am aware of the expectations as outlined in this document and that my appointment as a volunteer in relation to the Award may be terminated as a result of any breach by me of the undertakings in this document.

I agree to the above terms.

Volunteer name: _____

Volunteer signature: _____

Date: _____

(Name of organisation) representative full name: _____

(Name of organisation) representative signature: _____

Date: _____