



**University of
Nottingham**
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Manuscripts and Special Collections

Volunteering Policy

2021

1. Aim of policy

Volunteers are an important and valued part of the University of Nottingham. The mission of Manuscripts and Special Collections (MSC) is to support the University of Nottingham by acquiring, preserving and developing archives, manuscripts and rare books to enrich and inspire the student experience, teaching, learning and research excellence, and to widen access through public engagement. In support of this mission, MSC engages volunteers in a variety of activities. It recognises that volunteers make important contributions to aspects of collections care, access and engagement, and that the time, energy and skills offered by volunteers is of great benefit to MSC. The aim of this policy is to provide overall guidance to staff and volunteers engaged in these activities, in line with the [University of Nottingham Volunteering Policy](#). The policy does not constitute a binding contractual or personnel agreement.

2. Scope of policy

Unless otherwise stated this policy applies to all people working or undertaking tasks involving archives or special collections for MSC without remuneration, including students on placements organised by the University, students seeking careers experience, and non-student volunteers. It establishes clear guidelines for the involvement of volunteers with MSC, acknowledging the value of the contribution made by volunteers, recognising the respective roles, rights and responsibilities of volunteers and staff, and ensuring the quality of both the volunteering opportunities on offer and the work carried out by volunteers.

3. Application and Recruitment

Requests to volunteer within MSC will be considered individually. Preference will be given to current students or recent graduates of the University of Nottingham, and to those who indicate an intention to pursue a career or academic course in the archive, heritage or library sector. Potential volunteers must submit an application form. If no suitable placement is available immediately, the form will be held on file for one year (or for the duration of the period of interest specified by the applicant, if shorter). If a suitable placement becomes available, potential volunteers will be asked to make a preliminary visit to MSC for an informal meeting with the proposed supervisor to ascertain their interest in and expectations of volunteering, and whether they have the appropriate skills and capabilities for the proposed tasks or project. MSC staff may accept or refuse requests depending on the availability of suitable supervisors, on whether suitable, meaningful work can be found for volunteers, and on the aptitude of volunteers for such work.

Volunteers may be actively recruited, for example as part of a specific project or if a certain skillset is required. Before recruiting new volunteers, MSC staff will ensure that a clearly defined project or

role has been prepared. Student placements arranged by Faculties or University schemes have their own application and recruitment procedures.

Our University has always been a supportive, inclusive, caring and positive community. We warmly welcome applications from those of different cultures, ethnicities and beliefs – indeed this very diversity is vital to our success, it is fundamental to our values and enriches life on campus.

4. Commitment

The volunteer and MSC should agree mutually convenient days, times and duration for the placement, in advance of the placement start date. Volunteers should notify MSC of any absence in advance, or in case of illness/emergency, as soon as possible.

5. Induction

All volunteers will receive a general induction on their first day to cover the purposes and requirements of the role, as well as practical information on working hours, breaks, location of toilets, parking facilities, introductions to relevant staff, emergency procedures and other health and safety requirements. As part of the induction process, all volunteers will be presented with the Volunteer's Survival Guide, which sets out all the important information, and will also be required to sign a Volunteer Agreement confirming their understanding of, and agreement to, the terms of their placement.

6. Supervision

Each volunteer will have a clearly identified supervisor who will be responsible for the direct management of the volunteer and guidance of their work. Supervisors will be responsible for developing suitable assignments for volunteers and providing them with feedback. They shall be the first point of contact for the volunteers that they manage, with support from other MSC staff as required. Staff assigned supervisory responsibility for volunteers will be provided with appropriate training as required.

7. Volunteer rights and responsibilities

The University of Nottingham views its volunteers as a valuable resource. They will be extended the right to meaningful assignments and the right to effective supervision. In return, volunteers shall agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities and judgement.

If working with data the volunteer will not disclose, copy, use, amend or delete any data (verbally, in writing, digitally or by any other means) other than as instructed by their supervisor. In particular, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged or restricted information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. Volunteers may be asked to sign an 'Access to Restricted Archives' form when working with certain sensitive or modern material.

On completion of the task or project, volunteers will be required to delete any digital copies of archives which have been synced or downloaded onto a personal device, such as a laptop or phone.

8. Trial period

All long term and careers experience placements are subject to a limited trial period, the appropriate length of which is to be agreed by both parties and will be determined by the nature and length of the placement. At the end of this period or at the end of the task, the supervisor should meet with the volunteer to review the placement. This is a mutual opportunity for assessment of the initial placement.

9. Training

Volunteers will receive specific on-the-job training to provide them with the information and skills necessary to perform their duties. The timing and method of delivery of such training should be appropriate to the complexity and demands of the role and the capabilities of the volunteer. Staff who supervise volunteers shall have primary responsibility for design and delivery of on-the-job training to those volunteers assigned to them.

10. Refusal of assignments

MSC staff are not expected to make unreasonable demands on volunteers. Volunteers have the right to refuse tasks that appear to be outside the original agreed role, or beyond their skills and capabilities.

11. Reimbursement of expenses

[The University of Nottingham Volunteering Policy](#) sets out that reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. If the volunteer travels to and from MSC by car, the University can provide daily parking permits which must be applied for in advance (mileage is not payable).

There is no budget allocation for Departments engaging volunteers, but to encourage use of public transport, MSC will reimburse the cost of tram or bus tickets for local travel. Students on placements organised by the University are not eligible for help towards their expenses but a free hopper bus runs between campuses.

Costs of food and drink are not reimbursed. Volunteers should not be asked to work over lunchtime and are welcome to tea and coffee as provided by MSC or to purchase refreshments from the onsite facilities.

Where volunteers are unable to travel to King's Meadow campus, the possibility of remote projects can be discussed.

12. Resignation & Termination

Volunteers may resign from their volunteer service at any time. Advance notice should be given wherever possible. MSC may at any time and for whatever reason terminate a volunteer's service.

13. Feedback

MSC welcomes feedback from volunteers regarding their expectations, experiences and suggestions for improvement. Volunteers are able to complete an evaluation form at the end of their placement. Supervisors will provide feedback regularly during the task and can provide references on request.

14. Complaints

Volunteers should express any concerns or grievances to their supervisor in the first instance. Should a volunteer not wish to discuss the matter with their supervisor, they may express any concerns or grievances to the Senior Archivists, Keeper or to the University's Volunteering Team.

15. Copyright

Upon signing the Volunteer Agreement volunteers assign the copyright of any original works produced while volunteering (e.g. lists, catalogues, notes or other documents in any medium) to Manuscripts and Special Collections, the University of Nottingham.

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