

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SPECIAL LIBRARIES & ARCHIVES

VOLUNTEERS POLICY

Volunteers play an important role within Historic Collections contributing to the overall success of the department. As such, volunteers are encouraged and supported whenever possible. Every effort is made to accommodate students of the University of Aberdeen wishing to become volunteers, particularly where a vocational interest is expressed.

This policy gives guidance to staff and volunteers supervising or engaged in voluntary activities within Historic Collections. It applies to all volunteers working in Special Libraries and Archives, Marischal Museum and the University's scientific museums and collections. Within the scope of this policy, a volunteer is anyone who, without financial compensation, or expectation of it, performs duties at the direction of and on behalf of Historic Collections. Volunteers are appointed to enhance the work of paid employees, not as a substitute for them.

Historic Collections recognise that people volunteer for a variety of reasons and, as such, will endeavour to arrange placements so they are as mutually beneficial as possible to both parties. Consequently, volunteer placements will be made by interview and discussion with appropriate staff members, to match the applicant's skills, talents, interests and desires with the needs of Historic Collections at the time. Selection for interview will be based on the Volunteer Enquiry Form or the applicant's CV where appropriate. Selected applicants will be asked to provide the names and contact details of two referees. Professional, technical or other qualifications may be necessary for some volunteer placements. Where this is the case, the volunteer will need to hold the relevant qualification before taking up a placement.

Personal details of volunteers will be held on a database, accessible only to authorised staff in Historic Collections. Information will not be divulged to third parties without the individual's consent. Enquiries by applicants will be held on file for one year and will be reviewed within this period should a suitable opportunity become available.

Volunteers will be directly accountable to a named member of staff and will be asked to discuss and agree a written job description prior to beginning their placement. At this stage, the volunteer and their supervising member of staff will agree when and how much time is to be committed. The placement may be cancelled immediately at any time at the discretion of either of the parties and will expire automatically at the end of the period of agreement unless renewed by both parties. An initial review will be undertaken after a mutually agreed period of time. Training will be given to all volunteers where necessary to enable them to carry out the tasks detailed in the volunteer job description. Training needs will be reviewed and updated regularly. All volunteers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of privileged information to which they may be exposed while carrying out their assigned tasks. Out-of-pocket expenses will be paid to volunteers when agreed in advance with their supervising member of staff.

There is no upper age limit, but volunteers should not continue beyond a point which is detrimental to their health and safety or where they cannot carry out their tasks effectively. Volunteers are required to share responsibility for Health and Safety, and to follow the University's Health and Safety Policy. They are also required to exercise particular care when working with, or near to, museum objects or archival material. Any personal protective equipment required to carry out agreed tasks will be provided by the supervising member of

staff. Volunteers should discuss any health conditions with their supervising member of staff if it may affect their ability to carry out their assigned tasks. Volunteers are covered by University insurance whilst undertaking duties on behalf of Historic Collections. Volunteers will be insured for driving University vehicles where it is necessary to the placement and by arrangement with their supervising member of staff.

Established volunteers may be appointed as Honorary Curatorial Assistants where they demonstrate a substantial and continuing commitment. Appointments are made and reviewed on an annual basis. Honorary status brings with it additional benefits, including access to University library, sports and IT facilities.

The University of Aberdeen is committed to equal opportunities as detailed in the Equal Opportunities Policy Statement.