

Volunteer Policy

UCL Special Collections

Purpose of the Volunteer Policy

This policy:

- Formally acknowledges and supports the role of volunteers
- Sets out a policy to ensure good working practices
- Defines the rights and responsibilities of UCL Special Collections volunteers
- Encourages and enables the involvement of volunteers

Use of Volunteers

Volunteering at UCL Special Collections is not considered a money-saving activity or a substitute for appropriate staffing levels; rather, it provides added value for library and archive users. Volunteers gain useful experience, develop new skills, and have an opportunity to work with qualified archivists, librarians and educators.

The distinction between volunteering and unpaid work must be clearly defined. UCL Special Collections take the lead from the UK Government and apply their guidance from their Policy Guidance for Tier 4 Student Visas to all volunteers, irrespective of whether they are students, international students or otherwise:

‘Students who are volunteering do not have a contract, they must not be a substitute for an employee and they must not be doing unpaid work –

i.e. receiving payment in kind (although they are sometimes reimbursed for reasonable travel and subsistence expenses). Volunteers usually help a charity or voluntary or public- sector organisation.’

See appendix for the UK Government’s Policy Guidance for Tier 4 Student Visas.

Volunteer Programme

Our volunteer procedure is comprised of the following:

- Volunteer Registration Form
- Informal meeting and discussion
- Volunteer Agreement
- Formal induction and training
- Volunteer Supervisor: named member of staff to manage each volunteer

A formal programme ensures cohesion and consistency and helps volunteers clarify their role in relation to Library & Archive staff.

Volunteer Rights:

Every UCL Special Collections volunteer has the right:

- To have a description of their volunteering role and what is expected of them
- To be given appropriate training
- To be supported in their volunteering role
- To be safe in their volunteer placement
- To have agreed expenses reimbursed, according to the Volunteer Expense Policy
- To have any concerns or questions dealt with promptly
- To stop or adjust their volunteering placement at any time, if possible and agreeable to UCL Special Collections.
- To have their personal information kept in a secure and responsible manner
- To have open access to their personal information kept by UCL Special Collections
- To be recognised as an individual, according to UCL's Equal Opportunities Policy
- To receive up to date information about UCL Special Collections Volunteers' activities

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- To abide by UCL Special Collections Volunteers' policies and procedures
- To act in accordance with the UCL's Equal Opportunities Policy
- To keep in regular contact with their Volunteer Supervisor
- To inform their Volunteer Supervisor if they have a problem or concern
- To attend training where appropriate
- To maintain their agreed level of commitment
- To respect confidentiality
- To be reliable
- To act appropriately and set a good example to others when volunteering
- To be open and honest with the UCL Special Collections
- To give feedback on their volunteering role to UCL

Eligibility for Joining UCL SPECIAL COLLECTIONS Volunteers

Non-EEA citizens must adhere to visa restrictions regarding which activities they can participate in. For instance, holders of a tier 4 (General) Student Visitor visa can volunteer for a limited number of hours per week.

Volunteers must be 18 years old and over.

Recruitment, Induction and Training

- UCL Special Collections is committed to providing appropriate and effective induction and training for volunteers. A separate Training Plan will outline training provision in more detail.
- All new volunteers will be provided with basic information about the rights and responsibilities of volunteers, and the support provided UCL Special Collections.
- All volunteer selection and training procedures pay proper regard to equal opportunities.
- UCL Special Collections will try to place volunteers on projects they most want to do, but will not always be able to guarantee this. In such circumstances, we will work with the volunteer to find an appropriate alternative placement.
- Training will be reviewed annually by UCL Special Collections staff and Volunteer Supervisors.

Support and Contact

UCL Special Collections is committed to supporting its volunteers. Volunteer Supervisors will be the first point of support and contact for a volunteer if they have any problems or issues they wish to raise.

Expenses

- UCL Special Collections believes that volunteers should not suffer a financial penalty as a consequence of their involvement as a volunteer, and will encourage volunteers to claim agreed out-of-pocket expenses.
- A maximum of £5/day will be reimbursed for travel (with a printed receipt).
- Expenses are not reimbursed on the day that they are claimed, but will be administered into the volunteer's bank account through the Finance Department at a later date.**

**Volunteers will need a bank account to claim travel and subsistence expenses.

Insurance

- Volunteers taking part in authorised UCL Special Collections volunteer activities are covered by the UCL's Employer Liability Insurance.
- Cover and guidelines will be provided to volunteers during induction.
- It is the responsibility of UCL Special Collections staff to ensure that projects adhere to these standards.

Equal Opportunities

UCL Special Collections volunteer programme complies with UCL's Equal Opportunities Policy. Volunteers are expected to have an understanding of, and commitment to, this policy. A copy is kept by staff in the Newsam Library and Archives at UCL IoE.

Responsibility for upholding the Equal Opportunities policy, and for dealing with any complaints arising from it, will rest with the Equalities Manager and UCL Special Collections Volunteer Supervisors.

Equal Access and Support Requirements

We are committed to making volunteering accessible to all community members. We recognise that adjustments may need to be made to role structures and processes to provide appropriate access and/or support for volunteers who have a disability, and are committed to making these adjustments wherever possible.

UCL Special Collections will take the following steps to support access to volunteering:

- Encourage potential volunteers to disclose support requirements through the Volunteer Registration Form.
- Offer confidential consultations to volunteers who have a disability to discuss accessibility and support requirements, and to identify reasonable adjustments to project and/or processes to enable access.
- Provide accurate information on the accessibility of activities for various volunteer roles.
- Seek advice on improving access.

Confidentiality

Details about other people should only be discussed on a need to know basis. Any details of a personal nature will only be disclosed with the consent of the person involved. The only exception to this is if there is an immediate safety issue for clients, volunteers, staff, or the public.

Documentation and Data Collection

In accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, written information about volunteer personal details will be kept securely in L501 in the Newsam Library & Archives and will only be accessed by authorised members of staff, and, on request, the relevant volunteer.

Data information will be kept in line with University College London's current data protection policy. If a volunteer wishes to remove their information from UCL Special Collections' records, they are within their rights to request this and they will be removed.

UCL Special Collections may contact volunteers up to 3 years after their role has ended as part of their impact assessment and evaluation.

Problem Solving

If a volunteer experiences any problems or issues related to their volunteering with UCL Special Collections, it is their responsibility to raise these at the earliest opportunity with their Volunteer Supervisor. If the volunteer is a student at UCL, and they wish to speak to a more independent representative, the volunteer can contact UCL's Volunteer Services Unit.

A 'settling in' period of three sessions* is to be allowed, at the end of which the volunteer and/or the Volunteer Supervisor is within their rights to end the volunteer position holder's time with UCL Special Collections, should it be deemed necessary.

Any issues/problems discussed will be treated as confidential.

*A session is a half day or shorter.

Project Lengths

Depending on the availability of the volunteer, projects range in length from one day to a full term, with the possibility of extension upon project completion.

Monitoring of the Volunteer Policy

The policy will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure that it is still appropriate to UCL Special Collections Volunteers.

Date of last review: September 2019

Date of next review: September 2020

Appendix

August 2019, UK Government's policy guidance for Tier 4 Student Visas

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/822984/T4_Migrant_Guidance_August_2019_.pdf