



# **AMS VOLUNTEER POLICY & PROCEDURES MANUAL**

**Amendments**

APPROVED BY ASSEMBLY

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## INTRODUCTION

Since its creation in 1858 the Alma Mater Society (AMS), has owed its success to the hard work and dedication of individual volunteers. With the steady growth of the AMS it is important that its policy and procedures have evolved into documents that ensure that the values of the organization are retained within its official institutional memory.

This document seeks to define the value of AMS volunteers, and provide a single place for AMS participants to go for guidance on the treatment of volunteers once they have been hired.

The AMS is an equal opportunity employer. It shall endeavour to be non-sexist, non-racist, non-homophobic, and otherwise all-inclusive. The AMS and all of its volunteers are expected to operate within the guidelines of the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

This document is to apply to all volunteer positions within the Alma Mater Society and includes those volunteers who receive an honorarium.

NOTE: Where Corporate Bylaws regulate the Media Services in a manner different to that which is laid out in this policy, the bylaws shall take precedence.

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## 1. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**1.01** Volunteering, as defined by Volunteer Ontario “is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one’s own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbour, transforming a collection of houses into a community as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others. By caring and contributing to change, volunteers decrease suffering and disparity, while they gain skills, self-esteem and change their lives. People work to improve the lives of their neighbours and, in return, enhance their own.”

**1.02** The AMS endorses the Canadian Code of Volunteer Involvement as formulated by Volunteer Canada. The Code includes the values, guiding principles and organizational standards for volunteer involvement that shall be applied to the AMS. The AMS recognizes that volunteers are a vital human resource, are accountable to the AMS and shall commit the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.

**1.03** The AMS recognizes the following principles and values in regards to AMS volunteers.

- i) Volunteer involvement is necessary for the AMS to be a relevant student government
- ii) Volunteer involvement strengthens the Queen’s community
- iii) Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both the volunteer and the AMS
- iv) Volunteer involvement is based on relationships
- v) AMS Council and AMS Assembly acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the AMS’ mission to serve and represent the diversity of students at Queen’s

**1.04** Furthermore, the AMS seeks to provide opportunities through which AMS members may develop a wide range of skills and experiences. Volunteer positions shall exist with the intent of providing AMS members a meaningful opportunity.

## 2. STAFFING

**2.01** The staffing of all AMS volunteer positions shall be done in accordance with the AMS Hiring and Appointment Policy and Procedures Manual.

**2.02** The term for all AMS volunteer positions shall normally be one year, coinciding with the academic year (i.e. September to April). Some positions however may require a greater commitment between May and August, and the commitment of others may be concentrated in either the Fall or Winter semester. Thus, visiting students and students who are one exchange for a single semester shall be eligible for certain volunteer positions.

**2.03** Volunteer assignments shall reflect the purpose of the AMS and involve volunteers in purposeful ways, reflecting their various abilities, needs and backgrounds

## 3. HOURS OF WORK

**3.01** Due to the varying degree of work necessary for each volunteer position, the AMS cannot define the precise number of hours that are expected from each volunteer; however the AMS shall strive to make all volunteers fully aware of their job descriptions, any remuneration, and approximate time requirements.

**3.02** The Human Resources Officer shall be responsible for making volunteers aware of this manual and informing them how to access it at any time.

**3.03** Insofar as senior volunteers are expected to hold office hours, recommendations for those hours are as follows:

- i) Deputy Commissioner/Officer - 3 Office Hours a week during the school year - Approximately 10-15 hours a week to fulfil the requirements of the position
- ii) Committee Chair - 1 Office Hour a week during the school year - Approximately 5-10 hours a week to fulfil the requirements of the position
- iii) Committee member – office hours as required – shall normally not exceed 3-5 hours/week

#### 4. HONORARIA

**4.01** The Human Resources Officer shall be responsible for collecting the names and position titles of those who are to receive an honorarium. The HRO shall ensure there is an appropriate payment schedule in place and that subsequently there is full adherence to the provisions of the schedule. Honoraria shall typically be paid in two equal parts, half in December and half in April, unless otherwise stipulated by direct supervisor. The HRO shall work with supervisors to communicate payment schedules and deadlines for submitting necessary paperwork, e.g. TD1 forms and void cheques.

**4.02** Receipt of the last portion of an honorarium shall be contingent on the completion of a Transition Manual, where applicable.

**4.03** Insofar as an honorarium is considered to be a thank you for service, all honoraria shall normally be paid in full. Where a supervisor has determined special circumstances to exist that warrant reduction in an expected honorarium, the supervisor shall require approval from the appropriate member of the Executive or relevant Director, where applicable.

#### 5. ATTENDANCE

**5.01** Every volunteer shall make a commitment to satisfy the requirements of their position, including regular attendance of all scheduled meetings or training sessions. Unsatisfactory attendance or notification of absences shall be cause for disciplinary action.

#### 6. TRANSPORTATION

**6.01** If for any reason a volunteer feels uncomfortable walking home alone volunteers will be directed to the Walkhome or may be provided with a taxi ride at the expense of the relevant Commission.

#### 7. LEAVES OF ABSENCES

**7.01** A volunteer shall notify his/her supervisor if he/she is ill or is required to take a leave of absence of their job. In the case where the absence compromises the fulfilment of the responsibilities of the job then the supervisor may either appoint a temporary replacement or hire a replacement.

#### 8. PERFORMANCE APPRAISALS

**8.01** It is the responsibility of the supervisor to conduct performance appraisals of their volunteers.

**8.02** Evaluations may be carried out formally through the use of AMS performance appraisals; however some committees shall not be required to carry out formal evaluations. It shall be at the discretion of the supervisor as to which committees shall carry out formal appraisals and which committees carry out appraisals informally.

**8.03** Any volunteer may request a formal evaluation if they desire one.

**8.04** Committees that have a large fiscal responsibility to the AMS must conduct formal evaluations. An example of an informal evaluation would be a brainstorming session during a committee meeting to get all committee members ideas as to how they feel the committee is progressing towards their end goals.

**8.05** All material related to appraisals shall be collected by the supervisor and submitted to the Human Resources Officer to be kept on file for future reference.

## 9. DISCIPLINE

**9.01** The fundamental objective of volunteer discipline is to correct and to improve performance, not to punish.

**9.02** The AMS is responsible for maintaining trust with students and ensuring its programs and events are reputable and successful. Therefore, when all else has failed, volunteers may be discharged. In all incidents, the ultimate authority shall rest with the volunteer supervisor. The disciplinary process ensures volunteers are held accountable if they do not meet established standards. All volunteers shall be made aware of their role description and the accompanying expectations before the commencement of their term.

**9.03** When a conflict of interest exists (e.g. personal relationship, housemate) between a volunteer and their supervisor, the supervisor shall remove themselves from any disciplinary process. Responsibility for the process shall be delegated to another AMS volunteer or employee in a supervisory position to the volunteer, subject to the approval of the Vice President, University Affairs.

**9.04** Consistent with section 1.04 of the AMS Hiring Policy and Appointments Policy and Procedures Manual, the AMS shall endeavour to ensure its volunteers' AMS experience does not impede their academic performance. In the event a volunteer is encountering serious academic challenges, their supervisor shall meet with the volunteer and empathetically explore any effect that the volunteer's AMS position may be having on their academic performance. Irrespective of the volunteer's performance, dismissal may be recommended by the supervisor if in her/his judgment this is a step that is essential to a resolution of the volunteer's academic challenges.

**9.05** Where volunteer discipline is being considered as a course of action, the ultimate authority shall rest with the supervisor. The escalating measures listed below shall generally be followed in the case of volunteer misconduct.

- i) **Verbal Warning:** If an infraction occurs or a volunteer's performance is clearly not meeting expectations, then the volunteer must be made aware of said misconduct and/or areas of concern. The supervisor shall review expectations with the volunteer and offer suggestions for improvement.
- ii) **Written Warning:** If another infraction occurs or performance does not improve following a verbal warning, a warning in the form of a letter shall be given, informing the volunteer of where their performance does not meet expectations. The supervisor shall schedule a meeting with the volunteer to address areas of concern and state expectations for improvement. A second letter may be written if needed, constituting a final warning.

iii) Any further breach of expectations and/or rules shall be considered grounds for dismissal, upon consultation with the supervisor and the Vice President (University Affairs).

**9.06** A volunteer shall be notified of dismissal verbally in a meeting with the supervisor(s) and in a written letter to be signed by the supervisor(s) and the volunteer.

**9.07** The Human Resources Officer, insofar as this position is a support for both the organization and individual volunteers, shall not be present at any discipline meetings including those related to dismissal.

**9.08** All disciplinary actions and any record of such shall remain confidential. Records of disciplinary action shall be maintained in the Human Resources Office until December 31 of the academic year immediately following the volunteer's term, at which point all records shall be destroyed.

## 10. PROCESS FOR APPEAL

**10.01** Any AMS volunteer who believes he or she has been disciplined unfairly or not in accordance with AMS policy should discuss this matter with his/her direct supervisor. The appeal process should only be used if this discussion does not satisfy the volunteer.

**10.02** If a volunteer is unable to settle the disciplinary decision with his/her supervisor, the volunteer may appeal the action to the next level of authority and/or Vice President, University Affairs, who may decide to:

- i) Uphold the disciplinary action
- ii) Reject the disciplinary action and recommend to modify the decision
- iii) Overturn the disciplinary decision

## 11. CONFIDENTIALITY OF PERSONNEL RECORDS

**11.01** Volunteer performance records are maintained in the Human Resources Office and are strictly confidential.

**11.02** Volunteers may review the contents of their personal files in the Human Resources Office by submitting a request to the Human Resources Officer.

**11.03** Volunteer records may be viewed by hiring committees for all AMS salaried positions and for service staff positions. Commissioners and Officers may access these files for applicants for volunteer positions within their Commission or Office.

**11.04** Evaluations are completed for the purpose of improving volunteer performance and are the property of the AMS. Any release of these confidential records shall require approval from the AMS Executive.

## 12. TRAINING

**12.01** Volunteers shall receive an orientation to the AMS and its policies and procedures and shall receive training for their volunteer assignment.

**12.02** The Human Resources Officer, in conjunction with the Vice-President University Affairs, shall be responsible for determining the content of volunteer training each year and ensuring that volunteers receive said training.

- i) Volunteer training shall be satisfied through pan-AMS sessions or through sessions directed at individual Commission or Office volunteers.

**12.03** The Human Resources Officer shall be responsible for tracking volunteer attendance at pan-AMS training sessions. For mandatory training conducted through Commission or Office-specific sessions, the Commissioner or Officer shall be responsible for tracking volunteer attendance and submitting it to the Human Resources Officer.

**12.04** In accordance with the Accessibility for Ontarions with Disabilities Act, all AMS volunteers holding leadership positions shall receive mandatory training on Accessible Customer Service.

**11.05** AMS volunteers shall receive any additional training as mandated by the Vice-President University Affairs.

### 13. VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

**13.01** Volunteers shall be regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods. Volunteer supervisors shall be accorded a budget that allows them to formally recognize the volunteers within their respective portfolio.

**13.02** The Human Resources Office shall create and maintain mechanisms in order to recognize pan-AMS volunteers.

**13.03** The AMS shall honour outstanding volunteers annually with Volunteer of the Year Awards.

- i) Each Commission and Media Service shall have the option of submitting one or more names for the Volunteer of the Year Award in their Commission/service.
- ii) Any full-time staff in the AMS may nominate a volunteer for one of three pan-AMS awards:
  - a. Volunteer of the Year – Camaraderie
  - b. Volunteer of the Year – Community
  - c. Volunteer of the Year – Involvement
- iii) The Human Resources Office shall be responsible for updating Volunteer of the Year award plaques and organizing the presentation of awards, which shall generally occur at the Volunteer Gala held at the end of each academic year

### 14. TRANSITION

**14.01** Deputies, Committee Chairs and other volunteer positions as designated by the Executive shall submit a transition manual by a date specified by the volunteer's supervisor.

**14.02** Any volunteer required to submit a transition manual, but failing to do so, shall not be eligible to receive an honorarium.

**14.03** Incoming Deputies, Committee Chairs, and other volunteers as designated by their supervisor are strongly encouraged to meet with their predecessor to facilitate the transition process.

**14.04** The contents of the transition manual shall be as follows:

- a) full job description and all responsibilities
- b) any committees/ boards/bodies on which the incoming volunteer sits or whose meetings must be attended
- c) a timeline of when essential tasks must be completed

- d) any ongoing projects/initiatives that require follow-up or continuation
- e) list of relevant contacts
- f) budgets or strategic planning documents where appropriate