



*Volunteer Policy
and Procedural
Guidelines*

Statement of policy

Volunteering is at the heart of RIBSA. We firmly believe in the ethos and value of volunteering and believe that volunteers make a vital contribution not just to our association but to society as a whole. We regard volunteers as a valuable resource and encourage them to get involved at all levels of the association and within all appropriate activities.

RIBSA aims to recruit volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, age groups, races, abilities and nationalities. We are committed to equality of opportunity for all volunteers. RIBSA aims to have a reciprocal and mutually beneficial relationship with our volunteers. It is RIBSA's intention that volunteers will benefit and prosper from their experience with the association.

Definition of Volunteering

“Volunteering is the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, and individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment.”

“The White Paper Supporting Voluntary Activity (2000)”

Procedural guidelines

1. General principles

1.1 Scope

The purpose of this policy is to provide all staff and volunteers with clear guidelines on involving volunteers; to outline expectations; and to explain management / supervision systems and operating standards. It supplements other RIBSA policies and procedures. This policy does not constitute a binding contract and is subject to change. Volunteers and staff are expected to act in accordance with all RIBSA policies and procedures as outlined by this policy.

1.2 Responsibility

The Chief Executive Officer/chairperson is responsible for ensuring that the policy and the procedures in this document are implemented efficiently and effectively. All other staff and volunteers (including voluntary Board members) are expected to facilitate this process.

1.3 Eligibility

RIBSA will consider involving anyone who wishes to volunteer with the association. Individuals must, however, be able to demonstrate a commitment to the aims of the organisation and may only be placed if their needs as volunteers match the needs of the association. No person who has a conflict of interest with any aspect of the

association will be accepted as a volunteer unless notified in advance. RIBSA will support their volunteers if they wish to volunteer elsewhere.

1.4 Relationship with paid staff

Volunteers are appointed to enhance the capacity of paid staff not as a substitute for them. Clear roles are established to differentiate between paid staff and volunteers to foster mutually beneficial and complementary relationships.

1.5 Working conditions

Volunteers are treated as full members of RIBSA team. They are treated equally and fairly as paid staff and are included in the association's functions and decision-making processes wherever practical. Volunteers are provided with appropriate work sites and have access to the space, equipment and facilities necessary to volunteer effectively and comfortably.

1.6 Working times

Working times are negotiated between the relevant line-manager and the volunteer and are as flexible as the tasks allow. Voluntary time commitment is never expected to match that of full-time paid staff, but unscheduled absences can create organisational problems. When expecting to be absent, volunteers should inform their supervisor as soon as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made.

1.8 Volunteer Roles

RIBSA engages volunteers across all departments with day-to-day administration, specific project plans, event planning and coordination, communications and social media and training. The Board of directors are also volunteers. On occasion Volunteer Ireland is approached by individuals wishing to offer their skills, experience and support in a particular area and in these instances a volunteer role can be designed to facilitate all of this and in line with RIBSA's work.

1.9 Expectations

A full outline of volunteer organisational expectations can be found in the Volunteer Agreement document that accompanies this policy.

2. Recruitment

2.1 Recruitment and Selection

Volunteer positions are advertised on www.ribsa.ie and various social media platforms. Volunteers are selected based on requirements of the role, experience, skills, availability and interest.

2.2 Appointment and Probation

Successful volunteers will be notified via telephone and or email. References are required and depending on the role. All volunteers will be required to complete Garda Vetting.

2.3 Role Descriptions

To ensure that programmes and services are provided efficiently and effectively, RIBSA will provide each volunteer with a specific role description prior to beginning their role. The role description lays out the specific tasks involved in the position, the qualities and skills required to fill the position and any other relevant details of the role.

2.4 Induction

On a volunteer's first day, they can expect to receive a planned induction with their line manager. This induction involves, but is not limited to, an introduction to all staff/volunteers, general housekeeping, volunteer policy and agreement overview, terms and nature of the role, RIBSA operations, RIBSA services and, as appropriate, further policies and procedures.

In addition to this, all new volunteers will identify a number of measurable learning objectives at their induction. These can include technical and or behaviour competencies and work activities that can provide the individual with an opportunity to practice and develop within their role.

2.5 Training

Role specific training will be provided to assist volunteers with their position and its tasks where applicable. All volunteers are actively encouraged to identify and avail of training opportunities within RIBSA networks and externally. Approval to undertake external training must be agreed in advance with the designated supervisor/line manager, approved by the CEO and is dependent on resources. If external training is paid for by RIBSA, any course or other materials remain the property of RIBSA. Volunteers are required to submit a short report outlining the content and usefulness of the course or meeting attended and disseminated to relevant staff/volunteers within RIBSA.

3. Code of Conduct

3.1 Appropriate behaviour

RIBSA is committed to managing volunteers in a manner that meets the needs of both the individual and the organisation. Please refer RIBSA Code of Conduct.

3.2 Confidentiality

RIBSA respects a volunteer's right to privacy and confidentiality. In turn, volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all privileged information to which they are exposed while volunteering with RIBSA.

3.3 Intellectual Property

All written material, whether held on paper, electronically or magnetically which was made or acquired by volunteers during the course of their involvement with RIBSA is our property and our copyright and therefore should not be disclosed to any person without our written consent. Volunteers are expected to exercise caution and care with any documents or other material containing confidential information and at the end of your involvement with the organisation, return any such material in your possession.

3.4 Representation of RIBSA

Volunteers must seek prior approval from RIBSA before undertaking any representation on behalf of the organisation. This includes, but is not limited to, statements to the media, joint initiatives with other organisations and agreements involving contractual or financial obligations.

4. Management of Volunteers

4.1 Management of Volunteers

RIBSA is committed to managing volunteers in a manner that meets the needs of both the organisation and the volunteer. Each line manager is responsible for the management of their assigned volunteers, including answering questions regarding policies, delivering induction, arranging training, providing support and supervision and dealing with any complaints or grievances involving volunteers.

Volunteers are managed by a staff member/line manager who has the skills and experience in a particular role, and has responsibility for implementing the strategic goals of a particular area.

4.2 Support and Supervision

All volunteers are allocated a designated supervisor/line manager. It is the role of the designated supervisor to provide advice and guidance relating to the work, provide support and supervision for the duration of the volunteer role and encourage training opportunities where possible.

RIBSA commits to supporting all volunteers to develop personally and professionally within their role.

4.3 Corrective Action

If appropriate, corrective action may be taken following support and supervision sessions. Examples include extending a probation period, additional training and/or reassignment.

4.4 Time and Duty commitments

RIBSA members are expected to meet time and duty commitments for volunteers, to provide appropriate time at induction, training and on a day to day basis.

RIBSA will aim to provide volunteers with notice regarding upcoming scheduled events or training where their attendance is required.

If a volunteer is sick or unable to commit to their role for personal reasons they should notify their designated supervisor/line manager by phone as soon as possible. In addition if a volunteer wishes to take a holiday they are requested to notify their designated supervisor/line manager and provide at least one week's notice so that workloads can be managed effectively.

4.5 Ending the volunteer relationship

Volunteer roles have a natural end where the individual will often move on to further opportunities or paid work. In this instance RIBSA will conduct an exit interview with the volunteer as a way to capture feedback on their role, experience within the association and future learning opportunities.

In the instance of a volunteer breaching RIBSA policies, grievance and disciplinary procedures are outlined below.

4.6 Grievance and Disciplinary Difficulties

All volunteers have access to a process to address any issues or difficulties about any aspect of their work or how they are managed. If a volunteer is unhappy in their role or have a grievance they wish to discuss they may approach their designated line manager, or escalate their grievance to the CEO. The matter will be dealt with in a private and confidential manner and in line with RIBSA's HR standards.

Volunteers who do not adhere to RIBSA's policies and procedures or who fail to perform their volunteer tasks satisfactorily may be asked to leave. Volunteer involvement will not be ended until the individual has an opportunity to discuss the reasons for being asked to leave with the supervisor. Grounds for being asked to leave include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Gross misconduct
- Being under the influence of drugs (including alcohol)
- Theft
- Misuse of equipment and materials
- Abuse of clients and co-workers
- Breaches of confidentiality
- Failure to abide by policies and procedures
- Failure to complete duties to a satisfactory standard

When a volunteer is asked to leave this will be communicated both in person and in writing to the individual. If a volunteer is deemed to have behaved with extreme detriment to RIBSA and its reputation and to the health and safety of others involved in the organisation, RIBSA reserves the right to end its relationship with the individual with immediate effect.

5. General Information

5.1 Recognition

Volunteers provide a unique service to RIBSA, the benefits of which are difficult to quantify. It is essential that their efforts are recognised and rewarded. RIBSA members are responsible for thanking all volunteers informally on a regular basis for the valuable contribution that they make to the organisation. The CEO is responsible for ensuring that more formalised recognition takes place at key times, such as International Volunteer Day. Examples of formal recognition include cards, certificates, appreciation events, training etc.

5.2 Expenses

Please refer to Expenses Policy for full details of volunteer expenses. [Please note Volunteer Ireland's volunteer expenses policy is subject to change and is regularly reviewed]

5.3 Insurance

Each volunteer is responsible for their own insurance.

5.4 Personal Information and Confidentiality

All information is dealt with in accordance with Data Protection Policy and Data Protection Acts. A folder and database is maintained on all volunteers, to include their initial application, role description along with any relevant information on scheduling and notes. All personal data held on file will be shredded or safely destroyed within 1 year of a volunteer's leave date. Volunteers are able to access their personal information freely upon request. Responsibility for ensuring that the volunteer receives such information will rest with their line manager.

5.5 References

Where appropriate and upon request volunteers may be furnished with a reference that states the role, days and hours the volunteer worked.

5. Monitoring and evaluation

6.1 Volunteer Involvement

RIBSA monitors and evaluates volunteer involvement in the organisation on a regular basis and seeks to make ongoing improvements.

6.2 Feedback

Constructive feedback on this document is always welcome. It must be given to the Chief Executive Officer who will ensure that it is considered fully.

6.3 Review

This document will be reviewed and ratified by the volunteers, staff and Governance sub-committee on a three-yearly basis. Amendments may be added throughout this period.

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