

POLICY STATEMENT

Volunteer involvement in Oxford Archaeology's (OA's) work makes an important contribution to the organisation and helps fulfil our charitable objective to 'advance education in the subject of archaeology for the public benefit'. OA supports and encourages volunteering and seeks to ensure that it is mutually beneficial for the organisation and for the volunteers themselves.

INTRODUCTION

This Volunteer Policy sets out the principles and practices by which OA involves volunteers and it is relevant to both staff and volunteers within the organisation. It sets out roles, responsibilities and procedures in order to provide a common understanding and to ensure best practice in relation to the management of volunteers. We are committed to offering a flexible range of opportunities and to encouraging a diversity of people to volunteer with us.

At Oxford Archaeology, volunteers are valued for:

- championing our charitable aims within the wider community;
- bringing additional skills and new perspectives to the organisation; and
- enhancing the public benefit of our work.

PRINCIPLES

Volunteers are not used to replace paid staff.

OA recognises that there are costs associated with volunteer involvement and will seek to ensure adequate financial and staffing resources are available for the development and support of volunteering.

Appropriate steps will be taken to ensure that paid staff are clear about the role of volunteers, and to foster good working relationships between paid staff and volunteers. We recognise our responsibility to organise volunteering efficiently and sensitively so that the valuable gift of a volunteer's time is best used to the mutual advantage of all concerned.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Volunteer roles

The National Council for Voluntary Organisations defines volunteering as 'any activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit the environment or someone (individuals or groups) other than, or in addition to, close relatives.'

- It is undertaken freely, by choice;
- is undertaken to be of public benefit; and
- is not undertaken for financial gain.

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Volunteering can include formal activity undertaken through public, private and voluntary organisations as well as informal community participation and social action. Volunteers may be involved on a one-off, short term or on a longer term, regular basis.

Work experience placements and internships are not the same as volunteering. Work experience placements, which can be paid or unpaid, are part of a course of study arranged through an educational institution and are for an agreed period of time. Internships, which can be paid or unpaid, are a temporary position to gain professional experience with an emphasis on on-the-job training.

OA staff roles

OA's Community Archaeology Manager has responsibility for the development and co-ordination of voluntary activity within the organisation, including volunteering policies and procedures and the welfare of volunteers. All volunteers will have a designated staff member or in some circumstances, an experienced volunteer for guidance, support and supervision. OA staff involved in volunteering will be given clear guidance on how to carry out their roles.

Responsibilities

The volunteer : staff relationship is based on trust and mutual understanding. There is no enforceable obligation, contractual or otherwise, for the volunteer to attend or to undertake particular tasks or for the organisation to provide continuing opportunities for voluntary involvement, provision of training or benefits. However, there is a presumption of mutual support and reliability. Reciprocal expectations are acknowledged – both of what the organisation expects of volunteers and what volunteers can expect of the organisation.

The organisation expects volunteers:

- to be reliable and honest;
- to uphold the organisation's values and comply with organisational policies to make the most of opportunities given;
- to contribute positively to the aims of the organisation and avoid bringing the organisation into disrepute; and
- to carry out tasks within agreed guidelines.

Volunteers can expect:

- to have clear information about what is and is not expected of them;
- to receive adequate support and training;
- to be insured and to volunteer in a safe environment;
- to be treated with respect and in a non-discriminatory manner;
- to be recognised and appreciated;
- to be able to say 'no' to anything which they consider to be unrealistic or unreasonable; and
- to know what to do if something goes wrong.

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PROCEDURES

Recruitment and Selection

Equal opportunities principles will be adhered to when recruiting volunteers. Opportunities will be widely promoted so as to attract interest from different sectors of the community, and positive action to target recruitment may be used where appropriate. Online application is encouraged but non-digital methods of application are also available.

Information will be made available to those enquiring about volunteering, setting out the nature and purpose of the volunteering role, key tasks, skills required and benefits. A risk assessment will be undertaken on all volunteer roles.

Recruitment will usually involve an informal interview, completion of an application form and, in some circumstances, taking of references. The process will be defined and consistent for any given role - for example the recruitment process for regular volunteers and for volunteers for one-off events will be tailored in each case and may differ from one another.

Where applicants are not able to be placed in their preferred role, they will be provided with feedback and given the opportunity to discuss alternative volunteering roles, or signposted to the local volunteer centre or the UK's national volunteering database, Do-it.org.

For roles which involve sustained and direct contact with young people or adults at risk, volunteers will be required to have a full DBS disclosure check which will be arranged by the organisation. DBS disclosures are dealt with in the strictest confidence. A criminal record is not necessarily a bar to volunteering.

Equal Opportunities and Diversity

Oxford Archaeology is committed to supporting, developing and promoting diversity and equality in all of its volunteering practices and activities and aims to establish an inclusive culture free from discrimination and based on the values of fairness, dignity and respect. The organisation will support and develop volunteers through providing everyone with access to opportunities and support on an equal basis regardless of race, national or ethnic origin, disability, age, gender, sexual orientation, transgender identity or religion/belief.

Confidentiality and Data Protection

Oxford Archaeology collects and processes personal data relating to its volunteers, interns and work experience students. The organisation is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses personal data relating to its volunteers and to meeting its data protection obligations. OA sets out its policies in the 'Volunteers, Interns and Work Experience Privacy Notice' (<http://oxfordarchaeology.com/community-training/volunteering>).

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Health and Safety and Minimising Risk

Oxford Archaeology has a duty of care to take reasonable precautions to avoid causing harm to others, with relevant safety measures in place to reduce the risk of ill health and injury. Risk Assessments are carried out for all activities involving volunteers to determine what measures should be put in place, if any, to reduce the risk to an acceptable level. On the basis of the risk assessment, volunteers will be given training and information to carry out their roles safely.

Volunteers have a responsibility to comply with the Oxford Archaeology Health and Safety Policy, and a duty to undertake activities and use any equipment in accordance with the training and instruction given. The volunteer has a duty to report to their manager any situation that they consider to be a potential risk to safety. All volunteers have to sign to say that they have read Oxford Archaeology's Health and Safety Policy.

Induction and Training

Volunteers will be given induction and training appropriate to the specific tasks to be undertaken.

Support and Supervision

Volunteers will be offered support and supervision as appropriate and this is discussed during induction. Arrangements vary according to the volunteer and the role undertaken.

Expenses

Volunteers will be given clear information about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.

Recognition

Formal recognition of the contribution of volunteers is expressed through annual reports, website articles, social media and during National Volunteers' Week celebrations.

Problem Solving and Complaints Procedure

The organisation aims to treat all volunteers fairly, objectively and consistently. Volunteers will be given the opportunity, where relevant, to share their views and opinions with the organisation through review meetings and surveys and OA seeks to ensure that volunteers' views are heard, noted and acted upon promptly. We will attempt to deal with any problems informally and at the earliest opportunity. All volunteers will have a named person to whom they can turn in the case of any difficulty. Where informal resolution is not possible, Oxford Archaeology's Community Archaeology Manager, the appropriate Senior Manager and the HR Officer will be informed and a formal complaints procedure will be followed. Volunteers will be made aware of the organisation's complaints policy and how to use it. They will also be made aware of how inappropriate behaviour by volunteers will be addressed by the organisation.

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Moving On

When volunteers move on from volunteering with us they will be asked to provide feedback on the volunteering experience by way of an exit questionnaire. They will also be given the opportunity to discuss their responses to the questionnaire more fully. Volunteers will have the right to request a reference. Volunteers will be supported to move on to other options.

Other Relevant Documents:

OA Health and Safety Policy

Volunteers, Interns and Work Experience Privacy Notice

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