

CHCVOL001

Be an effective volunteer

Release 1

Learner guide

Aspire Version 1.1



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CHCVOL001 Be an effective volunteer Release 1

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Before you begin

This learner guide is based on the unit of competency *CHCVOL001 Be an effective volunteer*, Release 1. Your trainer or training organisation must give you information about this unit of competency as part of your training program. You can access the unit of competency and assessment requirements at: www.training.gov.au.

How to work through this learner guide

This learner guide contains a number of features that will assist you in your learning. Your trainer will advise which parts of the learner guide you need to read, and which practice tasks and learning checkpoints you need to complete. The features of this learner guide are detailed in the following table.

Icon	Feature	How you can use each feature
	Learning content	▶ Read each topic in this learner guide. If you come across content that is confusing, make a note and discuss it with your trainer. Your trainer is in the best position to offer assistance. It is very important that you take on some of the responsibility for the learning you will undertake.
	Examples	▶ These highlight key learning points and provide realistic examples of workplace situations.
	Practice tasks	▶ Practice tasks give you the opportunity to put your skills and knowledge into action. Your trainer will tell you which practice tasks to complete.
	Summaries	▶ Key learning points are provided at the end of each topic.
	Learning checkpoints	▶ There is a learning checkpoint at the end of each topic. Your trainer will tell you which learning checkpoints to complete. These checkpoints give you an opportunity to check your progress and apply the skills and knowledge you have learnt.

Foundation skills

As you complete learning using this guide, you will be developing the foundation skills relevant for this unit. Foundation skills are the language, literacy and numeracy (LLN) skills and the employability skills required for participation in modern workplaces and contemporary life.

The following table outlines specific foundation skills noted for your learning in this learner guide.

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding your job role, organisational procedures and legal responsibilities ▶ Managing your work and seeing how well you are going ▶ Making goals for yourself at work ▶ Seeking professional development opportunities for continuous improvement
Reading	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding how documents are presented and being able to navigate through documents ▶ Understanding industry- and job-specific terminology ▶ Interpreting key information in relevant documents ▶ Understanding routine workplace checklists and documentation
Writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning, drafting and writing reports and documents ▶ Communicating through written letters, email and online ▶ Recording progress; reporting incidents
Oral communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Clarifying instructions ▶ Providing information ▶ Supporting others through encouragement, negotiation and conflict resolution ▶ Using body language to model desired behaviour and responding to others' body language
Numeracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Calculating costs, weights, measurements of height and distance ▶ Interpreting measurements
Teamwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Working well with other people by cooperating, collaborating, encouraging and building rapport
Planning and organising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Planning your workload and commitments ▶ Implementing tasks ▶ Completing work on time ▶ Knowing how to deal with hazards and risks
Making decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Understanding and applying decision-making processes ▶ Reviewing the impact of your decisions
Problem-solving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Identifying problems ▶ Working out how to fix a problem using problem-solving processes. Reviewing the outcome
Innovation and creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Recognising opportunities to develop and apply new ideas ▶ Generating ideas by thinking of new ways to do something ▶ Making suggestions to improve work

Foundation skill area	Foundation skill description
Technology and digital literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Efficiently using digitally based technologies and systems correctly and safely ▶ Accessing, organising and presenting information ▶ Using equipment correctly and safely

What do you already know?

Use the following table to identify what you may already know. This may assist you to work out what to focus on in your learning.

Topic	Key outcomes	Rate your confidence in each section
Topic 1 Prepare for volunteer work	1A The nature of volunteering	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1B The rights and responsibilities of volunteers	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1C The rights and responsibilities of organisations	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	1D Understanding the requirements of volunteer work	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 2 Work effectively as a volunteer	2A Managing and organising yourself	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2B Working as part of a team	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	2C Communication and positive relationships	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
Topic 3 Check and complete work in consultation with your supervisor	3A Requesting advice and assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident
	3B Reporting issues and completing documentation	<input type="checkbox"/> Confident <input type="checkbox"/> Basic understanding <input type="checkbox"/> Not confident



Topic 1

In this topic you will learn about:

1A The nature of volunteering

1B The rights and responsibilities of volunteers

1C The rights and responsibilities of organisations

1D Understanding the requirements of volunteer work

Prepare for volunteer work

Volunteers make a substantial economic, social and environmental contribution to the community.

A large proportion of the Australian community undertakes volunteer work. The reason for becoming a volunteer varies. For example, you may consider volunteering to be part of your civic responsibility, or you may want to improve the lives of people, animals or the environment.

Volunteering benefits the community and provides volunteers with:

- ▶ a sense of satisfaction
- ▶ opportunities for social interaction
- ▶ improved physical and mental wellbeing.

1A The nature of volunteering

Volunteers are motivated to provide service to others for reasons other than financial or material gain.

Volunteering is a unique activity because it:

- ▶ directly benefits the community and the person volunteering
- ▶ is unpaid work undertaken by choice and of the volunteer's own free will
- ▶ is undertaken in designated volunteer positions.



Volunteer work

There are two main categories of volunteering, formal and informal.

Informal volunteer work	Unpaid care or assistance provided to family, friends and members of the wider community.
Formal volunteer work	Unpaid service through an organised group, typically involving a commitment over time.

Informal volunteer work is generally not included in broader definitions because of the pre-existing relationship between the volunteer and the beneficiary (e.g. family member, friend). In these circumstances, the person may be volunteering because of obligation, rather than genuine free choice.

Other circumstances where the person is not doing unpaid work by choice are not considered to be volunteer work. This includes:

- ▶ jury duty
- ▶ community service work ordered by a court
- ▶ requirements of a course of study, such as hours of work placement.

The focus of this *Learner guide* is on formal volunteer work unless otherwise specified.

Motivations for volunteering

People are motivated to volunteer for a variety of reasons.

According to Volunteering Australia, some of most common reasons people give for becoming a volunteer are:

- ▶ to help others
- ▶ to help their community
- ▶ for personal satisfaction
- ▶ to do something worthwhile
- ▶ for social contact
- ▶ to use their skills and experience
- ▶ to be more active
- ▶ because of their religious beliefs.

For more facts and statistics about volunteering in Australia, see: <http://aspirelr.link/volunteering-in-australia-statistics>.

You may also be motivated by the chance to gain work experience that you can add to your CV. It may show a potential employer that you have an interest in a certain area, and skills and experience in undertaking this type of work. For example, if you would like to get a job in a bookshop, you may decide to volunteer at your local library.

Types of volunteering organisations

The types of volunteer-involving organisations (VIOs) also vary greatly across Australia.

The following table outlines the most popular types of organisations where people volunteer, based on statistics collected by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in 2014.

Type of organisation	Proportion of people who volunteered in this type of organisation*
Sport and physical recreation	31.1%
Education and training	23.9%
Welfare/community	21.2%
Religious	18.9%
Health	10.2%
Parenting, children and youth	5.4%
Environment	3.9%
Emergency services	3.8%
Arts/heritage	3.8%
Business/professional/union	2.1%
Other	10.9%

*The total percentage is higher than 100 because some respondents listed up to three voluntary work activities for different organisations.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, 4159.0 General Social Survey: Summary Results, Australia, 2014, <https://www.abs.gov.au/>

Benefits to the community

Communities benefit from the work undertaken by volunteers.

The benefits that volunteers experience are often ‘fed back’ into their communities. For example, volunteers may learn new skills, which they then apply in their workplace or with their family and friends.

Here are some benefits identified by Volunteering Australia.

<p>Economic benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Generating jobs ▶ Reducing the burden on governments to provide services to the community
<p>Social cohesion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Creating networks between people that strengthen communities ▶ Sustaining and strengthening values of the community ▶ Creating a sense of belonging and pride in communities by maintaining community-owned assets, such as scout halls and sporting clubs
<p>Civic benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintaining a robust democracy by providing a way for people to contribute to and draw strength from a cause ▶ Generating new ideas that can bring about political change ▶ Maintaining physical assets and infrastructure that benefit communities, such as sporting fields and nature reserves
<p>Psychological health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Promoting resilience and instilling hope and optimism in communities – this is particularly prevalent when communities are affected by disasters (e.g. bushfires or floods)
<p>Environmental benefits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Maintaining and caring for open-air areas, public spaces and the natural environment ▶ Bringing about environmental benefits for the community

Benefits to volunteers

Volunteering is based on the principle of reciprocity – exchanging things for mutual benefit.

The benefits of volunteering to volunteers themselves have been studied and reported for decades.

Here are some of the health outcomes identified by the University of Sydney in 2017. They found that, compared to people who don't volunteer, people who volunteer:

- ▶ experience higher rates of life satisfaction and a sense of purpose and meaning
- ▶ have opportunities for social interaction and new experiences
- ▶ benefit physically and have been found to have lower blood pressure
- ▶ have better rates of mental health, including reduced symptoms of depression and enhanced wellbeing
- ▶ become more trusting of others
- ▶ are more likely to provide informal assistance to people in the general community, which further strengthens community bonds and networks.

Source: University of Sydney, *7 Surprising benefits of volunteering* (May 2017), <https://sydney.edu.au>

For more information about the benefits of volunteering for volunteers see:
<http://aspirelr.link/benefits-of-volunteering>.

Principles of volunteering

There are 10 principles of volunteering.

The principles of volunteering were developed as part of an Australia-wide consultation conducted in 1996 involving volunteers, not-for-profit organisations, policy-makers and unions.

The specific intention of each principle is outlined in the table below.

Principle of volunteering	Intention of the principle
Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer	Volunteering is not an end in itself – it benefits the community. Volunteers benefit from the activity and are not undertaking the work purely for altruistic reasons.
Volunteer work is unpaid	Volunteering work is freely chosen, done for the greater good and without expectation of payment.
Volunteering is always a matter of choice	Volunteering differs from other forms of unpaid work because people freely choose to participate in it.
Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances	‘Compulsory volunteering’ is a contradiction, as voluntary work is an activity that is freely chosen.
Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community	Volunteering allows people to express social concerns and make a contribution to their community.
Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs	Volunteering is a source of advocacy and a vehicle for social change.
Volunteering is an activity performed in the not-for-profit sector only	Volunteering benefits communities and society, not privately held, for-profit companies.
Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work	Volunteering can be beneficial to individuals in a range of ways, but one of those benefits cannot be an income.
Volunteers do not replace paid workers, nor constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers	Volunteers must not be exploited and both paid staff and organisations must support the role of volunteers.
Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others	Volunteering should have a positive impact on the rights of other people.

Example**Benefits of volunteering**

Elena is a volunteer guide at a museum. She decided to undertake unpaid work at the museum when she retired. Elena works alongside paid staff and university students who are undertaking unpaid work at the museum as part of their degree requirements. She loves her role at the museum because she helps to educate visitors. She enjoys interacting with the visitors, staff and students, and is learning a lot about history – a topic she is passionate about.

**Practice task 1****Question 1**

Which of the following statements define volunteer work? Select all that apply.

- Volunteer work is undertaken by choice.
- Volunteer work benefits the community.
- Volunteers work purely for altruistic purposes.
- Volunteer work can only occur on a part-time basis.
- The volunteer must receive reimbursement for expenses.

Question 2

Which of the following are examples of the formal definition of volunteering?

- Placement in an organisation to obtain hours of work for a course of study
- Agreeing to look after the neighbour's child in an emergency
- Assisting with fundraising at the local Country Fire Authority
- Driving a relative to a doctor's appointment
- Helping with administrative work at a local animal rescue service
- Tutoring in exchange for child minding

Question 3

Match each volunteering principle to its explanation.

- | | |
|---|---|
| * It is a choice | * Volunteers gain from the activity and are not undertaking the work purely for altruistic reasons. |
| * It does not replace paid work | * Volunteering differs from other forms of unpaid work because people freely choose to participate in it. |
| * It benefits the community and the volunteer | * Volunteering is a source of advocacy and a vehicle for social change. |
| * Environmental and social needs can be addressed | * Volunteers must not be exploited and both paid staff and organisations must support the role of volunteers. |

1B The rights and responsibilities of volunteers

Volunteers have a range of rights, many of which are shared with paid employees.

The Fair Work Commission considers volunteering to be 'genuine' when it involves the following arrangements:

- ▶ The parties did not intend to create a legally binding employment relationship.
- ▶ The volunteer is under no obligation to attend the workplace or perform work.
- ▶ The volunteer doesn't expect to be paid for their work.



Volunteering can be undertaken in various settings, including government and private enterprise.

You can read more about different forms of unpaid work at: <http://aspirelr.link/fair-work-volunteering>.

Rights of a volunteer

In Australia, volunteers are covered by the same rights as every Australian who attends a place of work.

Legislation, including privacy laws and work health and safety (WHS) laws, apply to both paid workers and unpaid volunteers.

According to one of the peak bodies for volunteers, Volunteering Australia, there are 13 rights that apply to volunteers:

1. To work in a healthy and safe environment
2. To be interviewed and engaged in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
3. To be adequately covered by insurance
4. To be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation they are working for
5. To be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses
6. To be given a copy of the organisation's volunteer policy and any other policy that affects their work
7. Not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker
8. Not to do the work of paid staff during industrial disputes
9. To have a job description and agreed working hours
10. To have access to a grievance procedure

11. To be provided with orientation to the organisation
12. To have their confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the principles of the *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth)
13. To be provided with sufficient training to do their job

These rights are further outlined here: <http://aspirelr.link/volunteer-rights>.

Example

The rights of a volunteer

Loy is a Syrian refugee and has been working at his local animal rescue shelter for six months. One of his fellow volunteers regularly berates Loy, telling him that nobody wants to work with him, and he should go back to where he came from. Loy knows that as a volunteer he has the same legal protection against workplace bullying and harassment as paid employees. He reports the behaviour to his supervisor, who thanks him for speaking up and calls a private meeting with the other volunteer.



Responsibilities of a volunteer

As well as rights, you have certain responsibilities to the organisation you volunteer at.

Many of these responsibilities include the basic expectations any employer would have for their paid employees.

Volunteering Services Australia identifies the following responsibilities of people who choose to volunteer:

- ▶ Examine motives and be sure that they match the voluntary job.
- ▶ Understand the purpose and philosophy of the organisation before committing to volunteer.
- ▶ Understand rules and guidelines of the organisation, including WHS requirements.
- ▶ Be loyal to the organisation.
- ▶ Be willing to train for the job and take part in ongoing training when offered.
- ▶ Accept support and supervision.
- ▶ Participate in planning and feedback about the job.
- ▶ Be reliable.
- ▶ Work as a team member.
- ▶ Keep information confidential.

You can read more about the rights and responsibilities of volunteers at: <http://aspirelr.link/volunteering-services-australia-resources>.

Rights and responsibilities of clients

You have a responsibility to respect the rights of clients.

Depending on the service provided by the organisation, you may be required to interact with clients or customers in a customer service role. The rights of clients or customers will be outlined in organisational policies and procedures, such as the customer service policy. Ask your supervisor if you are unsure where to access these.

For example, if you volunteer in the healthcare sector, you may be expected to uphold the Australian Charter of Healthcare Rights. According to the Charter, clients have the right to:

- ▶ access healthcare, regardless of their ability to pay
- ▶ receive considerate, quality, respectful and safe care, regardless of social status, gender, race, sexual preference, religion, political belief, mental health or any disabilities
- ▶ receive clear, easy-to-understand information about their care, condition, treatment options, expected outcomes, potential side effects and costs
- ▶ have their privacy and confidentiality respected
- ▶ access personal information about themselves, in accordance with legislation
- ▶ make suggestions, give positive or negative feedback, ask questions and make complaints about their care
- ▶ engage someone to represent them, including external advocacy groups
- ▶ access an interpreter.



Clients may also have certain responsibilities. For example, clients accessing healthcare services have the responsibility to:

- ▶ show consideration and respect to all staff, volunteers, clients and visitors
- ▶ provide sufficient information to enable staff to provide the appropriate service, advice and/or care
- ▶ respect the privacy of others attending services
- ▶ participate in making decisions about their care and to ask for more information if they don't understand something
- ▶ carry out a treatment program or tell their healthcare worker if they are not intending to do so
- ▶ observe safety procedures that may be requested while attending a service
- ▶ provide at least 24 hours' notice if they are unable to make an appointment.

Adapted from: Your Community Health, *Your Rights and Responsibilities*, <https://www.yourcommunityhealth.org.au>

Expectations about volunteering

Before they become volunteers, many people make assumptions about what the volunteering experience will be like.

Personal expectations will be unique for every volunteer and some people build up a picture in their mind long before they interact with a VIO. For example, you may expect that you will be able to make a big difference on an issue you feel strongly about. In reality, the impact you have may be quite small.

Prior to becoming a volunteer, consider doing the following:

- ▶ Speak with a relevant person at the organisation about what the volunteer roles at the organisation involve.
- ▶ Look for information on the VIO's website about the organisation's vision and mission, purpose and philosophy.
- ▶ Research the history of the organisation.

Examine your expectations to determine if the organisation will suit your needs. Ask yourself:

- ▶ What are you hoping to get out of the experience?
- ▶ What tasks do you want to do?
- ▶ What difference are you hoping to make?
- ▶ How will your impact be measured?

This will help you to assess whether the volunteer role aligns with your own expectations and values.

Personal values and attitudes

Your personal values and attitudes influence your behaviour, how you treat other people, how you approach situations and the decisions you make.

Your values and attitudes will change over time and are influenced by a range of factors, such as:

- ▶ family and friends
- ▶ past experiences
- ▶ cultural background
- ▶ faith/religion
- ▶ education.

Personal attitudes and beliefs can motivate you to take action and influence your decisions. They can influence the expectations you have as a volunteer and the type of volunteer work you are attracted to.

Try to understand your own values and attitudes, and see if they align with those of the VIO, as outlined in the following example.

Aspect	What to consider	Example
Values	What is important to me?	I believe in protecting the habitat of native animals.
Attitudes	What are my feelings towards this issue?	I am passionate about this issue because bush regeneration is critical to protecting native animals.
Behaviour/ actions	What am I doing about this issue?	I'm volunteering for an organisation that undertakes bush regeneration.

Sometimes values and attitudes are informed by prejudice. Being aware of this possibility may help you be more open to differing views and perspectives, even if they initially seem to conflict with your values. Thinking about your own values will also help you appreciate the values that other people hold, which may make it easier for you to deal with workplace conflicts or differences of opinion as they arise.

Valuing yourself as a volunteer

Many people find their volunteer roles can be physically and emotionally demanding.

For example, volunteering can cause people to spend extended time away from paid work or socialising with family and friends. Some people find that their contribution as a volunteer can go unrecognised. This is partly because it is unpaid and does not have the same status as paid work that is rewarded with a salary.

Here are some tips to avoid becoming fatigued and to value yourself as a volunteer.

Know your limits	You may want to make a difference, but you are only one person. Recognise that there are limits of your energy, time and skills.
Learn to recognise stress	Recognising how you respond to stress will help you manage it in the long-term.
Learn to say no	Supporting your team mates is important, but sometimes you will need to say no. Prioritise your tasks and commitments. Recognise that you just won't be able to help someone out with tasks that fall outside the scope of your role.
Remember to have fun	Volunteering should be something that you find enjoyable, even if it's challenging.
Treat yourself occasionally	Schedule some time to do things that make you feel relaxed and positive.
Get support when you need it	Don't be afraid to ask for help and support when you need it.

You can read more about ways to look after yourself here:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/looking-after-yourself-volunteering>
- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/resources-for-volunteers>
- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/preventing-volunteer-fatigue>

Applying your volunteer rights

Ask questions so you can make a well-informed decision on your volunteering commitment.

A position description (PD) is an organisational document that defines the expectations and responsibilities of a worker or volunteer. A typical PD includes the following sections:

- ▶ description of the role, including role title, reporting lines and work hours
- ▶ information about the company, such as its values or strategic goals
- ▶ purpose of the role – a general description of what the role does and what it is responsible for
- ▶ job duties and responsibilities – a list of what the work tasks and responsibilities of the role are
- ▶ essential skills and qualifications – any qualifications, training and/or experience needed to perform the role.

Here are some practical questions you can ask to make sure you have all the information you require before committing to a role as a volunteer:

- ▶ Does the organisation have volunteer insurance?
- ▶ Does the organisation have information about its purpose and activities?
- ▶ What will your hours be and have these been agreed to by the organisation?
- ▶ Does the organisation have a volunteer policy that they can provide to you?
- ▶ Has the organisation held an induction session to discuss their policies and procedures, including work health and safety?
- ▶ Do you need any training before beginning your role?



Practice task 2

Question 1

Which of the following are recognised volunteer rights and responsibilities? Select all that apply.

- To be given truthful and accurate information about the organisation
- Not to fill a position previously held by a paid worker
- To have a functioning workspace and a space to secure your belongings
- To have access to a grievance procedure
- To be given an induction to the organisation
- To receive the same salary as other staff with the same responsibilities

Question 2

Which of the following statements about expectations of volunteers are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Valuing the protection of wildlife aligns with volunteering at an animal rescue shelter. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Your attitudes influence your feelings and opinions about an issue. | * Yes | * No |
| c. If expectations about what you can achieve are unrealistic, there will be conflict with other volunteers. | * Yes | * No |
| d. A volunteer's personal expectations need to be the same as those of the VIO. | * Yes | * No |
| e. Volunteering is hard work and you should be prepared to work long hours. | * Yes | * No |

1C The rights and responsibilities of organisations

Organisations can expect a certain level of service from their volunteers.

VIOs should apply the same sets of rules and expectations to their volunteer workers as their paid employees. A formal induction should be provided in which volunteer expectations are discussed, and roles and responsibilities are explained. There should also be a volunteer policy that you are required to read and agree to before the volunteer role starts.

Rights of organisations

According to Volunteering Services Australia, VIOs have rights in relation to what they can expect from volunteers.

The rights of organisations in relation to volunteers are to:

- ▶ receive as much effort and service from an unpaid worker as a paid one, even on a short-term basis
- ▶ expect conscientious acceptance of responsibilities as to promptness, reliability and good performance
- ▶ expect enthusiasm and belief in the work the organisation is doing
- ▶ express opinions about poor volunteer effort in a diplomatic way and suggest a change to another position
- ▶ make a decision as to where the volunteer would best fit
- ▶ expect clear and open communication from the volunteer at all times
- ▶ expect loyalty to the agency and only constructive criticism
- ▶ expect volunteers given leadership responsibilities to work effectively and productively
- ▶ release an undesirable volunteer, where it is clear that the volunteer is not suitable for the position.



For more information on the rights of VIOs, go to: <http://aspirelr.link/volunteering-services-australia-resources>.

Responsibilities of organisations

A set of standards to guide the volunteering sector was developed in 2015 by Volunteering Australia.

The eight standards were developed to:

- ▶ make the most of volunteers' contributions
- ▶ develop effective strategies and practices to manage volunteers
- ▶ involve volunteers in meaningful activities that contribute to organisational outcomes
- ▶ ensure the rights of volunteers are protected
- ▶ ensure volunteers are supported in their roles.

Each standard has a set of benchmarks that can be used to assess an organisation's achievement of the standard.

Standard	Description	Example
Leadership & management	The governing body and senior employees lead and promote a positive culture towards volunteering and implement effective management systems to support volunteer involvement.	Policies and procedures applying to volunteers are communicated, understood, and implemented by all relevant staff across the organisation.
Commitment to involvement	Commitment to volunteer involvement is set out through vision, planning and resourcing, and supports the organisation's strategic direction.	The organisation publicly declares its intent, purpose and commitment to involving volunteers.
Volunteer roles	Volunteers are engaged in meaningful roles that contribute to the organisation's purpose, goals and objectives.	Volunteer roles are reviewed with input from volunteers and employees.
Recruitment & selection	Volunteer recruitment and selection strategies are planned, consistent and meet the needs of the organisation and volunteers.	Volunteers are selected based on interest, knowledge and skills or attributes relevant to the role, and consistent with anti-discrimination legislation.
Support & development	Volunteers understand their roles and gain the knowledge, skills and feedback needed to safely and effectively carry out their duties.	Volunteers are provided with orientation relevant to their roles and responsibilities.
Workplace safety and wellbeing	The health, safety and wellbeing of volunteers is protected in the workplace.	Volunteers have access to complaints and grievance procedures.
Volunteer recognition	Volunteer contribution, value and impact is understood, appreciated and acknowledged.	The organisation regularly acknowledges contributions made by volunteers and the positive impact on the organisation, service users and the community.
Quality management & continuous improvement	Effective volunteer involvement results from a system of good practice, review and continuous improvement.	The organisation's performance with volunteer involvement is monitored and reported to the governing body, employees, volunteers and stakeholders.

For more information about the National Standards see: <http://aspirelr.link/national-standards-for-volunteer-involvement>.

For more information about the responsibilities of organisations for the work health and safety of volunteers, go to:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/whs-for-vios>
- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/safety-and-risk-management-of-volunteers>

Example

Respecting the opinion of volunteers

Ceridwen works as a volunteer at her local library. She takes her role seriously and is known as an extremely reliable member of the team. Ceridwen is passionate about promoting literacy and providing a space for local people to work, study and indulge in their passion for books. She expects to receive clear instructions from her supervisor about the tasks she needs to complete, and expects to be treated with respect.



Recently when she turned up for her fortnightly shift, Ceridwen noticed a new sign in the reading area which asked readers not to sit on the floor. Ceridwen knows that many children who visit the library like to sit on the floor to read, rather than sitting at a desk. She approaches her supervisor and suggests that perhaps the library can purchase some bean bags for the reading area to accommodate those readers who would prefer to sit on the floor. Ceridwen's supervisor takes her idea to the library manager.

Volunteering codes of practice

A code of conduct can offer guidance on the organisation's values and what it expects from its employees and volunteers.

A code of conduct is generally designed with the following information in mind:

- ▶ Ethical principles – A guide for how to respect colleagues and customers.
- ▶ Standards – This may include both standards of practice (how the organisation operates) and standards of conduct (how people should conduct themselves when performing tasks).
- ▶ Values – Key values that are embraced and championed by the organisation.
- ▶ Accountability – How people at all levels take responsibility for their actions.

A code of practice is designed to help organisations enhance volunteer experiences and to assist VIOs to comply with their legal requirements and duty of care.

For example, the Code of Practice published by Volunteering Queensland requires VIOs to agree to a range of practices, including:

- ▶ Interview and engage volunteer staff in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation.
- ▶ Provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteer staff.
- ▶ Volunteers should not derive financial gain for themselves from the volunteering tasks and activities they undertake.
- ▶ Acknowledge the rights of volunteer staff.
- ▶ Not ask a volunteer to work in a voluntary capacity for more than 16 hours per week.
- ▶ Offer volunteer staff the opportunity for professional development.
- ▶ Treat volunteer staff as valuable team members, and advise them of the opportunities to participate in decisions.

- ▶ Acknowledge the contributions of volunteer staff.
- ▶ Volunteers should be provided with induction and training.
- ▶ Ensure that all work by volunteers is undertaken on a voluntary basis and without coercion.
- ▶ Offer volunteers work opportunities appropriate to their skills, experience and aspirations.
- ▶ Ensure the tasks and activities undertaken by volunteers benefit the community and that volunteers do not derive financial gain for themselves.

Source: Volunteering Queensland, *Code of Practice*, <https://volunteeringqld.org.au/resources/code-of-practice>

Universal Declaration on Volunteering

The Universal Declaration on Volunteering supports the right of every person to volunteer, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, age, religion, ability, and social or economic circumstances.

The Declaration was developed in 1990 during the World Volunteer Conference in Paris and revised in 2001 for the United Nations International Year of the Volunteer.

It states that:

‘All people in the world should have the right to freely offer their time, talent and energy to others and to their communities through individual and collective action, without expectation of financial reward.’

The Declaration states that the United Nations supports the development of volunteering opportunities that:

- ▶ bring about the participation of communities in identifying and addressing problems
- ▶ inspire and allow young people to demonstrate leadership through service
- ▶ provide a voice for people who cannot speak for themselves
- ▶ enable others to volunteer
- ▶ complement but don't substitute the work of paid employees and other sectors
- ▶ allow people to gain new knowledge and skills, and develop their potential, self-reliance and creativity
- ▶ promote family, community, national and international solidarity.

For more information on the Universal Declaration on Volunteering, see: <http://aspirelr.link/universal-declaration-on-volunteering>.



Practice task 3

Question 1

Jodie is thinking about becoming a volunteer reader for See the Light, a not-for-profit organisation for people who are visually impaired.

Which of the following are the rights of the organisation where Jodie would like to volunteer? Select all that apply.

- The organisation has a right to expect Jodie to work the same hours as its full-time staff.
- The organisation has a right to expect Jodie to be enthusiastic about her role.
- The organisation has a right to expect that Jodie will not speak negatively about the organisation to anyone outside of it.
- The organisation has a right to expect Jodie to leave at any time without prior notice.

Question 2

Which of the following are part of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement? Select all that apply.

- Leadership and management
- Shared values
- Support and development
- Volunteer recognition
- Diversity and inclusion

Question 3

Which of the following statements about the Volunteering Queensland Code of Practice are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Volunteers can be asked to take up additional work during industrial disputes or paid staff shortages. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Volunteers should not derive financial gain for themselves from the volunteering tasks and activities they undertake. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Volunteers should be provided with induction and training. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Volunteers must not be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses as this is similar to being paid a salary. | * Yes | * No |

Question 4

Which of the following opportunities are supported by the Universal Declaration on Volunteering? Select all that apply.

- Provide a voice for people who cannot speak for themselves
- Promote environmental causes
- Promote national and international solidarity
- Reduce the burden on government services
- Allow people to reach their potential

1D Understanding the requirements of volunteer work

When you begin volunteering at an organisation, you will need an induction and training in the way the organisation operates.

Workplace policies, procedures and processes are designed to make sure operations run smoothly. They outline the legislative and regulatory requirements that a VIO must follow, and ensure the correct, safe and legal operations of staff and volunteers.



Common policies and procedures

Policies and procedures outline tasks and set limits on the actions of staff and any volunteers at the organisation.

Here are some common workplace policies, procedures and processes, and how they apply to your work as a volunteer.

Work health and safety	You are required to follow organisational procedures to identify and report hazards in the workplace.
Anti-discrimination and equal employment opportunity	Organisations have a responsibility to ensure all employees and volunteers are treated respectfully, equally and fairly no matter their age, gender, ethnicity, physical ability, religious belief, etc.
Performance management	You need to know: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ how you will receive feedback on your performance ▶ how your work will be evaluated.
Communication	You need to know about the protocols for communicating with others both internal and external to the organisation. This may include writing emails and how to represent the company on social media.
Dress code	You should be instructed on how you are expected to dress in the workplace, e.g. business attire Monday to Thursday and casual dress on Fridays.
Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure	You need to understand how the <i>Privacy Act 1988</i> (Cth) is applied in the workplace. Confidentiality procedures may restrict the use, storage and disclosure of information about a person that is outside the scope (purpose) for which the information was collected. For example, you may be instructed not to publish personal information of staff or customers online or send it to an unintended recipient in an email.

Other policies that may affect your job role include:

- ▶ use of company property, such as IT equipment or vehicles
- ▶ marketing guidelines, such as format and style guides for promotional material.

Example

Workplace policy

Here is an example of an IT policy covering internet and email use.

Internet and email policy

Internet use

The internet is provided by the Company for business use. Limited private use is permitted as long as the private use does not interfere with a person’s work and inappropriate sites are not accessed. Management has the right to access the system to check if private use is excessive or inappropriate.

Email use

Email facilities are provided for formal business correspondence.

Limited private use of email is allowed. However, management has the right to access incoming and outgoing emails to check if a worker’s usage or involvement is excessive or inappropriate.

All emails sent must include the approved business disclaimer.

To protect the Company from the potential effects of misuse and abuse of email, the following instructions are for all users:

- ▶ No material is to be sent as an email that is defamatory, in breach of copyright or business confidentiality, or prejudicial to the good standing of the Company in the community or to its relationship with staff, customers, suppliers and any other person or business with whom it has a relationship.
- ▶ Emails must not contain material that amounts to gossip about colleagues or that could be deemed offensive, demeaning, persistently irritating, threatening or discriminatory, including material that involves the harassment of others or concerns personal relationships.
- ▶ The email records of other persons are not to be accessed except by management (or persons authorised by management), or by authorised staff who have been requested to attend to a fault, upgrade or similar situation.
- ▶ When using email, a person must not pretend to be another person or use another person’s computer without permission.
- ▶ Excessive private use, including mass mailing, is not permitted.

Example

Organisational policies, procedures and processes

Lee has started volunteering as a delivery driver for a not-for-profit organisation. During the volunteer induction program, she asks where she can find a copy of the policies that relate specifically to her role, including the policy about using organisational email and the health and safety procedures and processes for people working with heavy equipment. Once she’s had a chance to read through the documents, she makes a time to meet with her supervisor to make sure she understands the policies and procedures that are relevant to her.

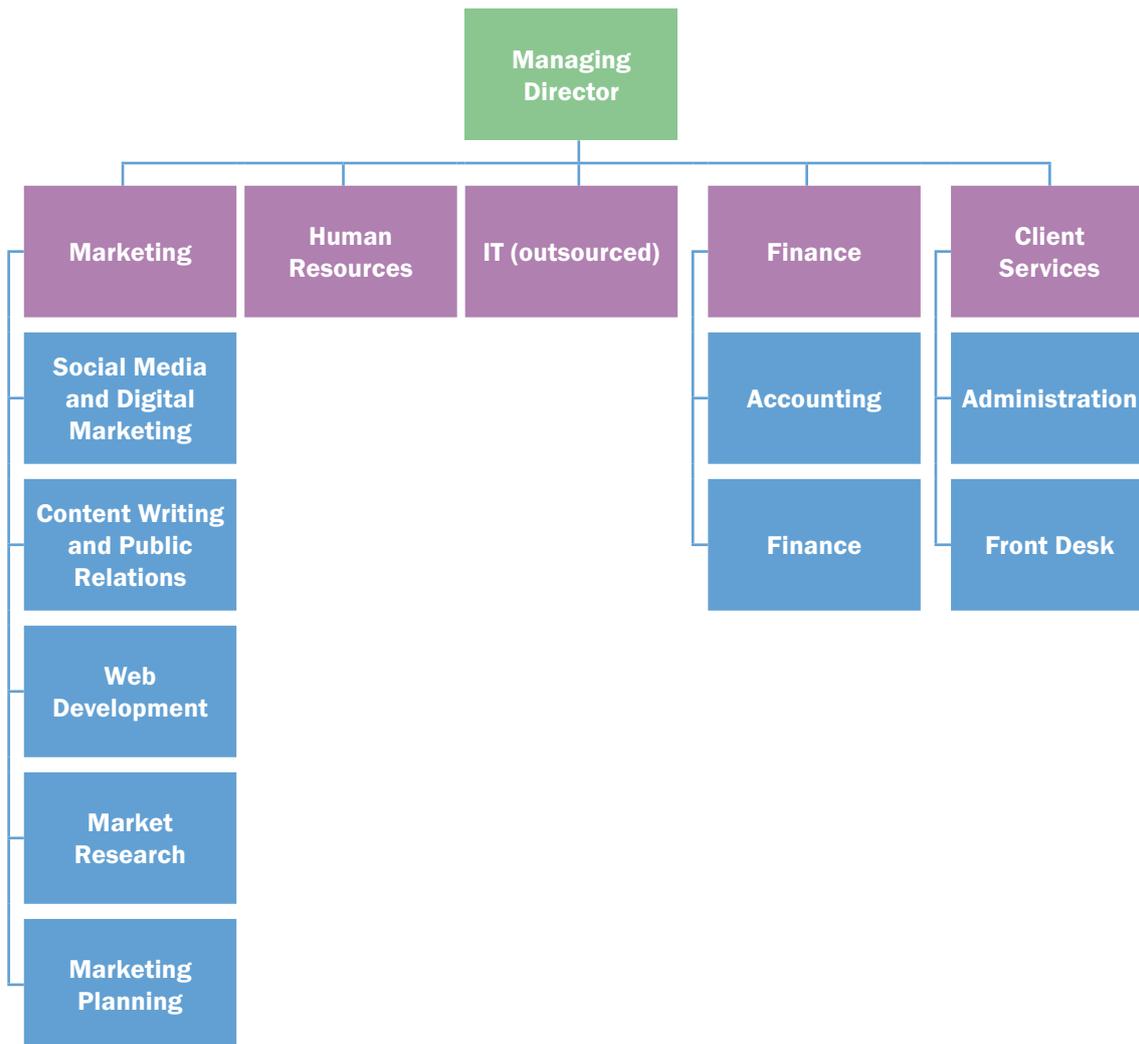


Organisational chart

An organisational chart outlines the structure of an organisation, including reporting lines and the arrangement of different departments.

An organisational chart can be particularly useful if you are new to the organisation and want to see how your role fits into the roles of others in the team and organisation.

For example, you may volunteer as a marketing and social media coordinator, and may wish to see how this role fits in with the marketing team and wider organisation. The following organisational chart can help you understand how the various departments and teams fit together.



In some organisations, each team member is assigned a specific role with responsibilities depending on the department they work for. Here is an example of different areas and the roles of those departments.

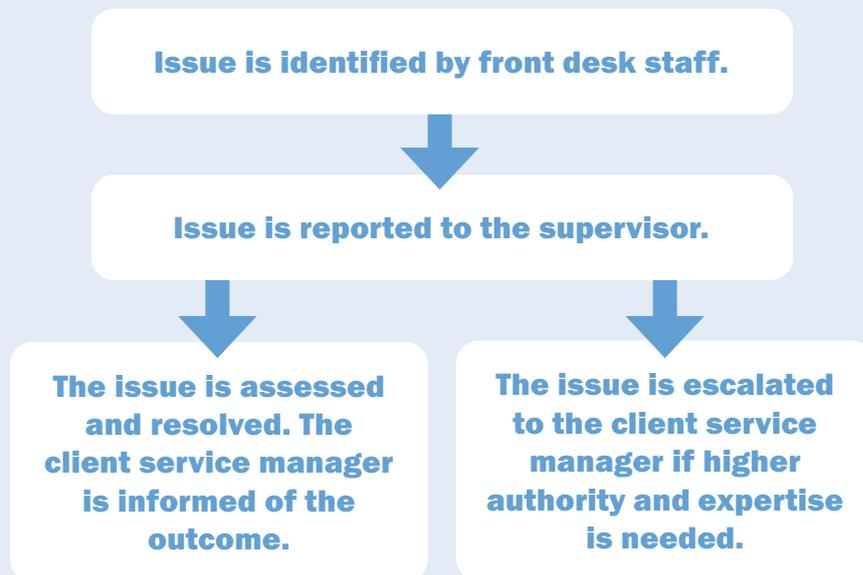
Area of organisation/ functional area	Role
Research and development	Developing new products and services
Sales, marketing and communication	Sales and marketing activities (e.g. social media management and public relations)

Production	Manufacturing products
Customer service	Managing the customer experience from first enquiry, during and after purchase
Human resources	Recruitment, selection process and appointment of new employees and staff employment conditions, such as leave entitlements
IT	IT support, system networks and programming
Accounting and finance	Payroll, accounts and financial management
Training	Professional development of staff
Risk management	Identifying and managing risks in the organisation
Project management	Overseeing major projects undertaken by the organisation
Executive team	Responsible for the achievement of strategic goals and high-level decision-making

Example

Issue-escalating process

Here is an example of a simple issue-escalating process that could be used to identify and report issues experienced by the front desk team.



Work role boundaries

It is important to maintain appropriate boundaries in your role as a volunteer.

This means not overstepping your role and being professional in your interactions with other volunteers, staff and customers you interact with.

Here are some strategies that may help you maintain appropriate boundaries in your role.

Know what not to do

You should not attempt to carry out work that:

- ▶ is not specified in the description of your role
- ▶ is known to be another person's responsibility
- ▶ cannot be performed safely due to lack of training or practical experience
- ▶ is unethical, illegal or outside the policies and procedures of the organisation.

Maintaining professional boundaries

Make sure you do not blur the distinction between being a professional and a friend when dealing with members of the public, including clients and customers.

If you work with vulnerable people, be careful not to allow clients to think of you as a friend. A client who considers themselves your friend may develop unrealistic expectations about what you can do for them and may become disappointed and disillusioned with the service if expectations are not met.

It can sometimes be difficult to identify the boundary between a professional and personal relationship. Boundary violations between a volunteer and a client include:

- ▶ lending a client money
- ▶ socialising with clients outside of work
- ▶ disclosing too much personal information about yourself to clients
- ▶ giving gifts to or receiving gifts from clients
- ▶ becoming involved in a romantic or intimate relationship with a client.

Your supervisor can answer questions and clarify the boundaries of your work role because they are the person responsible for overseeing your tasks.

Background checks

You may be required to undergo background checks before you begin working as a volunteer.

Depending on the type of organisation where you are volunteering, background checks may be required by law or by the organisation. These checks are usually required by all staff and volunteers. They are necessary to ensure the organisation protects its clients, staff and volunteers, which is part of the organisation's duty of care.

These checks are usually free for volunteers, but may involve a small fee for people who intend to commence paid work.

Here are some examples of background checks.

<p>Working with Children Checks (WWCCs)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ WWCCs are generally required by law in all Australian states and territories where people (whether paid or unpaid) are undertaking child-related work. ▶ WWCCs aim to keep children safe. ▶ They require applicants to provide information about their past employment and criminal history and submit that information to a relevant state or territory authority. ▶ The term 'Working with Children Checks' is only used in some states and territories. For example, in the Northern Territory, they are referred to as 'Ochre Cards'.
<p>Police Checks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Police Checks allow an organisation to check a volunteer's previous criminal convictions. ▶ Police Checks differ from Working with Children Checks because they cover a broader range of convictions, not just convictions relating to children. ▶ Police Checks are typically not mandatory; however, in some cases they may be legally required (e.g. where an organisation has a contractual agreement that requires them to undertake Police Checks for workers). ▶ Police Checks are often required where volunteers are working with vulnerable people, such as older people and people with a disability.
<p>Reference checks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Organisations may request references from volunteers, which may be work or personal references. ▶ Contact details of referees are often requested on a resume or cover letter in the application process.

Example

Participate in required background checks

Lucia is keen to volunteer for an organisation that matches volunteer mentors with vulnerable children to provide them with support, guidance and new opportunities. During the induction program, Lucia finds out she is required by law to participate in a Working with Children Check and a Police Check before she can be matched with a child. Lucia completes the required forms online and, with the support of the VIO, submits them to the relevant authorities. When the results of the checks come back, Lucia can move to the next stage in the volunteer induction process and be matched with a child.



Mandatory reporting

Mandatory reporting is the legal requirement that applies to some people to report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities.

Each state and territory has slightly different mandatory reporting requirements. These differences relate to:

- ▶ who is required to report suspected child abuse and neglect
- ▶ what types of abuse and neglect need to be reported
- ▶ when abuse and neglect needs to be reported.

The table below outlines the mandatory reporting requirements in each state and territory as they relate to volunteers. To fully understand your obligations as a volunteer, ask your supervisor as they are required to monitor any changes in requirements and let you know.

State/territory	Are volunteers required to report child abuse and neglect?	Which volunteers are required to report?	When are volunteers required to report?	More information
ACT	No	N/A	N/A	ACT Government: Reporting child abuse and neglect http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-act
New South Wales	No	N/A	N/A	NSW Government: Mandatory reporters http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporters-nsw
Northern Territory	Yes	▶ Any adult – including professionals, volunteers and the general public	If the individual has a belief on reasonable grounds that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer harm or exploitation	NT Government: Report child abuse http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-nt

State/territory	Are volunteers required to report child abuse and neglect?	Which volunteers are required to report?	When are volunteers required to report?	More information
Queensland	No	N/A	N/A	Queensland Government, Department of Child, Safety, Youth and Women: Mandatory reporting http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-qld
South Australia	Yes – in some settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Volunteers in organisations formed for religious or spiritual purposes ▶ Any person who is a volunteer in an organisation that provides health, welfare, education, sporting or recreational, childcare or residential services to children 	If there are reasonable grounds to suspect that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, and the suspicion is formed in the course of the person’s work (whether paid or voluntary) or while carrying out official duties	Government of South Australia, Department for Child Protection http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporters-sa

State/territory	Are volunteers required to report child abuse and neglect?	Which volunteers are required to report?	When are volunteers required to report?	More information
Tasmania	Yes – in some settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any person who is a volunteer in a government agency that provides health, welfare, education, childcare or residential services wholly or partly for children ▶ Any person who is a volunteer in an organisation that receives any funding from the Crown to provide health, welfare, education, childcare or residential services wholly or partly for children 	If the individual believes, suspects or knows that a child has been or is being abused or neglected, or if the child's safety, psychological wellbeing or interests are affected or likely to be affected by family violence	Tasmanian Government, Department of Health and Human Services http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-tas
Victoria	Yes – in some circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Any adult is required to report a sexual offence – including professionals, volunteers and the general public 	A reasonable belief that a sexual offence has been committed against a child under the age of 16 years by another person aged 18 years or older at the time of the offence	Victoria State Government, Health and Human Services, Children, Youth and Families: Mandatory reporting http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-vic
Western Australia	No	N/A	N/A	Government of Western Australia, Department of Communities Child Protection and Family Support http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-wa

Keep in mind that you do not need to be a mandatory reporter to make a report to a child protection agency. If you suspect that a child is at risk of abuse or neglect, you should still consider reporting it to the relevant authority.

For more information on mandatory reporting requirements see: <http://aspirelr.link/mandatory-reporting-child-abuse>.

For more information about who to report child abuse and neglect to in your state/territory see: <http://aspirelr.link/state-child-abuse-authority>.

Mandatory training

You may be required to complete some training in order to perform your volunteer role to the best of your abilities.

It might be training to ensure you remain safe and have the skills to perform your job competently, or may be required to obtain specific skills or knowledge necessary to perform your role.

Some VIOs will expect you to complete some training at your own expense. Others may be prepared to pay for the cost of your training. Larger organisations that run their own training programs will often make arrangements for volunteers to participate as part of their induction or before they begin their role.

Here are some examples of mandatory training:

- ▶ First aid, including CPR (cardio-pulmonary resuscitation)
- ▶ Responsible service of alcohol (RSA)
- ▶ Mandatory reporting
- ▶ Privacy and confidentiality
- ▶ Strategies for dealing with clients who are affected by alcohol or other drugs or have behaviours of concern
- ▶ Customer service or complaints
- ▶ Interview techniques
- ▶ Presentation skills
- ▶ Report-writing, such as applications for funding or writing case notes
- ▶ Data entry
- ▶ WHS training, including:
 - Identifying and reporting hazards
 - Completing incident reports
 - Emergency evacuation
 - Manual handling

Example

Privacy, confidentiality and disclosure

Barkad is a third-year university student who volunteers to mentor first-year university students who are the first members in their family to attend university. During the first mentoring session, Barkad is required to collect some basic information from Jules, one of his new mentees, including:

- ▶ his date of birth
- ▶ his place of birth
- ▶ his home address
- ▶ the countries where his parents were born
- ▶ the languages he speaks at home with his family.



This information is collected so the university can report on the socioeconomic backgrounds of the mentees in the program. Barkad has received privacy and confidentiality training from the university. He collects the information from Jules using a standard form that is then saved in a password-protected file that can only be accessed by relevant administrators.



Practice task 4

Question 1

Which of the following are correct in relation to organisational policies, procedures and processes? Select all that apply.

- They generally don't apply to volunteers.
- Their main purpose is to make the organisation look competent and professional.
- They help to instil appropriate behaviour and workplace practices.
- They are required to comply with legislation.
- They ensure that everyday work undertaken by the organisation aligns with the law.

Question 2

What is the purpose of an organisational chart? Select all that apply.

- To define the hierarchy in the organisation
- To clarify rates of pay for each team member
- To indicate the relationship between each role, team, branch and/or department
- To fulfil legislative requirements
- To indicate the lines of communication in the organisation

Question 3

David is a volunteer home visitor at an organisation that supports disadvantaged families. Which of the following indicate that David is not maintaining appropriate boundaries? Select all that apply.

- David is going to visit a client in his role as a volunteer home visitor.
- David has his own procedure for handling client complaints.
- David appreciates the gifts he receives from his clients.
- David accepts an invitation to go on a date with a client.
- David is sharing a joke with his client.

Question 4

Match each legal or ethical requirement on the left to how it applies to volunteer work on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Work health and safety | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Organisational procedures may restrict the use, storage and disclosure of information about a person that is outside the scope (purpose) for which the information was collected. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Privacy and confidentiality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Procedures include requirements to identify and report a potential hazard within the workplace. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mandatory training | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The legal requirement that certain people in the community must report suspected child abuse and neglect to government authorities. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Background checks | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * These must be undertaken to comply with legislation and to ensure the organisation protects clients, staff and other volunteers. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Mandatory reporting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Requirement to address skills and knowledge gaps to improve on practices. |



Summary

- ▶ Volunteer work is a choice that has reciprocal benefits for the community and for volunteers themselves.
- ▶ Codes, standards and principles inform the rights and responsibilities of volunteers and the organisations that employ them.
- ▶ Volunteers have many of the same rights as paid workers in Australia and some of the legal responsibilities, such as laws regarding privacy, mandatory reporting and background checks.
- ▶ To undertake your role effectively, you need to understand the policies, procedures and processes of the organisation where you are volunteering.
- ▶ Your personal values and attitudes will influence the choices you make about volunteering, such as which organisation you volunteer for and which type of role you undertake.
- ▶ Many volunteering roles are physically and emotionally demanding. You need to take care of your physical and mental health to manage stress and avoid burnout.
- ▶ When you begin volunteering, you will receive an induction and training in the way the organisation operates, including the policies, procedures and processes used by the VIO.
- ▶ You may be required to undergo background checks and learn about the requirements and responsibilities of your role before becoming a volunteer.



Learning checkpoint 1

Prepare for volunteer work

Part A

1. Which of the following activities would be considered formal volunteer roles? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. A person undertaking jury duty | * Yes | * No |
| b. A person undertaking unpaid work at a day care centre to gain some experience to add to their CV | * Yes | * No |
| c. A person undertaking bush regeneration work as part of a community service order | * Yes | * No |
| d. A university student volunteering at a soup kitchen to meet the requirements of an elective unit of study | * Yes | * No |
| e. A person undertaking unpaid work delivering meals to vulnerable people | * Yes | * No |

2. Match each benefit to the community on the left to the example on the right.

- | | |
|--------------------------|--|
| * Psychological health | * As a result of the increased number of volunteers coming to the beachside suburb to help rescue turtles, the local hotel has had to employ more staff. |
| * Environmental benefits | * The locals feel a sense of pride when they walk past the well-kept community-run tennis courts and club rooms. |
| * Economic benefits | * A volunteer group submitted a proposal to government to tackle the issue of youth homelessness. |
| * Social cohesion | * Each evening the owner of the local bar provides a free meal to provide emotional support to families threatened by bushfire. |
| * Civic benefits | * Since the bush regeneration project was completed, the locals have enjoyed swimming in the clean, fresh waterholes. |

3. Match each of the volunteering standards and codes of practice on the left with the example on the right.

- | | |
|---|---|
| * Workplace safety and wellbeing | * The HR department regularly reports on the level of volunteer involvement to its board of directors |
| * Recruitment and selection | * All volunteers are provided with a mentor and induction program that is relevant to their role. |
| * Volunteer roles | * All volunteers have access to the grievance procedures. |
| * Quality management & continuous improvement | * The VIO undertakes a regular review with volunteers about their volunteering roles. |
| * Support & development | * The VIO follows anti-discrimination principles when selecting volunteers to work at the organisation. |

4. Which of the following are principles of volunteering? Select all that apply.

- Volunteering should lead to permanent, secure and life-long employment.
- Volunteers do not replace paid workers or constitute a threat to the job security of paid workers.
- Volunteering is not always a matter of choice; sometimes you just have to help out.
- Volunteering should inspire and allow young people to demonstrate leadership through service.
- Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs.

5. Match each component related to volunteering on the left to its description.

- | | |
|--|---|
| * Background check | * The hierarchy indicates the authority lines and reporting lines. |
| * Organisational structure | * Volunteers may have to follow procedures for managing sensitive information that needs to be handled carefully and only be used for the purpose it was collected. |
| * Mandatory reporting | * Volunteers must not become involved in a romantic or intimate relationship with a client. |
| * Private and confidential information | * VIOs commonly ask for details of reference checks for volunteer candidates. |
| * Boundary violation | * Volunteers should check with their supervisor about the legal obligations for reporting suspected child abuse and neglect. |

6. Which of the following are reasons for people becoming volunteers? Select all that apply.

- For a sense of personal satisfaction and to contribute to the community
- To receive staff discounts and other benefits
- For social contact and to meet new people
- To take action and have an impact on an issue that they value
- To understand how organisations work

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Farid is taking up a volunteer role as an assistant softball coach for children aged between 13 and 15 years. His supervisor is the head coach of the club.

Farid is spending several weeknights and most of the weekend at the club, training groups of children, supervising matches and packing up the clubrooms. He is feeling stressed and doesn't feel he has time to manage his home life and see his friends.

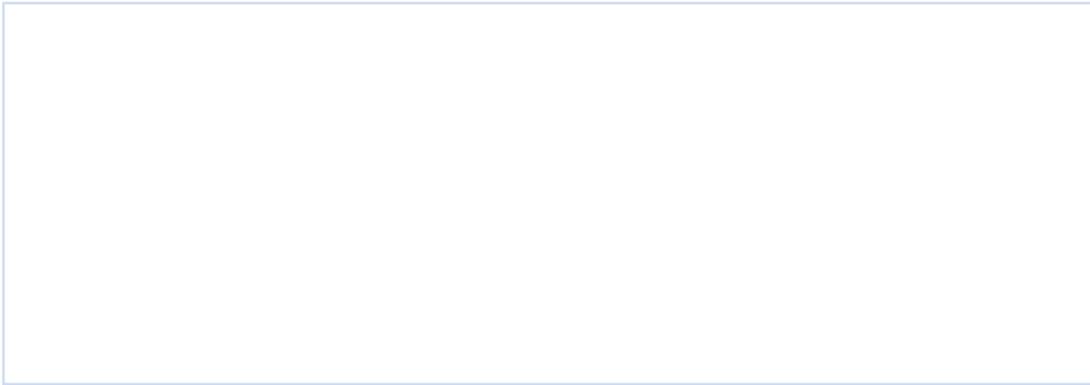
1. Which of the following outlines Farid's rights and responsibilities? Select all that apply.

- Farid should have discussed his expectations for the role with the head coach before agreeing to take on the role.
- Farid should read the rules and guidelines of the organisation, including WHS requirements.
- Farid must be loyal to the club and not offer training to any other club.
- Farid should be prepared to undertake some training for the role.
- Farid can choose whether or not to show up for coaching sessions.
- Farid can make fun of the opposition in front of the children he coaches.
- Farid can expect free soccer gear as a thank you for volunteering.

2. Which of the following outlines the club's rights and responsibilities towards Farid? Select all that apply.

- Farid is free to tell the parents about things he doesn't like about the club and what he thinks should change.
- Farid should be expected to arrive on time, be reliable and do his best.
- The club can move Farid to another team if they think this would work better for the children.
- The club can engage Farid as the canteen manager on days when it is raining.
- The club can ask Farid not to continue as a volunteer if they believe him to be unsuitable for the position.

3. What **two** things can Farid do to help him manage his time and avoid spending too much time volunteering at the club?





Topic 2

In this topic you will learn about:

2A Managing and organising yourself

2B Working as part of a team

2C Communication and positive relationships

Work effectively as a volunteer

To be an effective volunteer, you need strategies to manage your time and tasks.

One of the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your role as a volunteer is to work as part of a team. You need to understand how your team contributes to the organisation's overall objectives, and how your role as a volunteer contributes to the team.

2A Managing and organising yourself

Managing your time efficiently helps to improve your performance at work.

Daily work involves balancing:

- ▶ the tasks to be completed
- ▶ your team’s requirements
- ▶ your organisation’s requirements
- ▶ other unplanned tasks that may occur.

Learning ways to plan your time and prioritise tasks is essential to becoming a productive and efficient member of a team. Planning and prioritising tasks means considering all the competing demands and managing them within a given time frame. This includes considering how your activities influence and affect other team members.



Prioritising tasks

Plan your work and start your day efficiently.

To prioritise effectively, determine the tasks that need to be completed to meet certain goals. Some tasks need to be done first because they are urgent or affect other tasks. If these are not completed as soon as possible, it could affect your workflow and the work of others. For example, you might need to get a list of email addresses from a staff member before you can send out newsletters.

Prioritise urgent tasks, particularly if they are important. You can determine which tasks are urgent based on their deadline. Important tasks should also be prioritised, but only after urgent tasks have been completed.

One way to prioritise tasks is to construct a simple grid or matrix that identifies the urgency and importance of each task. Dealing with tasks in order of urgency and importance is a good way to tick off difficult jobs that you might be tempted to put off until another time.

An example of a priority matrix is provided here.

Important and urgent	Important but not urgent
These are tasks that must be done now. For example: Writing the agenda for the meeting scheduled for this afternoon.	Tasks that need to be completed, but do not require immediate attention. For example: Filing or updating a database of contacts.
Urgent but not important	Not urgent and not important
Tasks in this category have a degree of urgency, but if the deadline is missed it will not be critical. For example: A staff memo that should have gone out yesterday but could be postponed until tomorrow.	Everyday housekeeping jobs fall into this category. For example: Replacing stock in storage cabinets can be done when there is spare time. Note that work health and safety (WHS) housekeeping tasks do not fall into this category. For example, picking up papers on the floor near a desk ensures other staff are not at risk of tripping or slipping.

The following actions can assist you to prioritise your work:

- ▶ Keep your workspace organised. This gives you a sense of control.
- ▶ Check your emails at the beginning of the day and then only at set times throughout the day to minimise interruptions. This may involve turning off email notifications.
- ▶ Work according to your most productive period. For example, if mornings are your most productive time, complete complex tasks in the morning and plan to do easier tasks in the afternoon.
- ▶ Take breaks to recharge your mind and have your meals away from your work area. Try not to work at the same time as eating; you need time to reset.
- ▶ Review your list of things to do if anything changes, such as being assigned an urgent task.
- ▶ At the end of each day:
 - review your to-do list
 - tidy up your work area
 - check how the day went with your teammates
 - draft a to-do list for the next day.

Scheduling time efficiently

Managing time effectively is a skill that is key to the success of any task or project.

Developing a work schedule is an important component of assessing and keeping track of your work tasks. A work schedule lets you see at a glance the tasks you are required to do over a specific period. You can use a diary or a wall planning calendar to keep track of these tasks and their completion dates. Some workplaces have a set procedure or template for recording work tasks and tracking people's schedules. This can be useful if you volunteer on irregular days and can use a schedule to see what has happened on the days you were not at work.

Make use of software tools on your computer, such as a calendar, reminders and notes to check appointments and organise your tasks. Some file-sharing programs save time and allow multiple team members to work in a document at the same time. Scheduling software can be used to help you set up appointments and view your tasks. Some organisations use software programs to share information and coordinate tasks in a team. This enables a team leader to identify which tasks have been completed at any one time.

Example

Using a work schedule to develop a work plan

Louise volunteers as a marketing assistant at Pinetree Community House. Her supervisor has given her a work schedule that lists all the tasks her team has been assigned for the next two months. This allows Louise and her supervisor to assess each task regularly so they can alter the schedule as needed.

Goal	Task	Key result	Deadline
Provide ongoing support to business operations	Organise weekly staff meetings	Meetings organised successfully and follow-up completed	Ongoing
	Maintain files	Organisation's documents filed accurately and on time	Ongoing
	Prepare correspondence	All correspondence completed accurately and in accordance with requirements	Ongoing
	Maintain customer database	Customer database is accurate and up to date	Ongoing
	Design promotional flyer	Marketing flyer prepared on time	2 Sept
	Organise mail-out for flyer	Marketing flyer distributed on time	4 Sept

Example

From this schedule, Louise plans the requirements for each task. She develops the following work plan for the task of designing a promotional flyer.

Area	Team goal	My goal	Tasks	Deadline	Result
Marketing	Increase customer awareness	Design promotional flyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Liaise with team leader to identify key points of content ▶ Design format ▶ Prepare draft and submit for approval ▶ Make amendments and submit ▶ Arrange printing at Speedy Print 	2 Sept	Marketing flyer prepared on time

Time management

Time management is the process of planning and managing the time you spend on specific tasks.

With experience, you will become better at estimating the time it takes to complete a task. You will need to allow for interruptions to your work schedule, and for unforeseen events. For example, your supervisor may ask you to leave what you are doing and complete another task.

To allocate a suitable time frame, consider:

- ▶ the complexity of the task
- ▶ whether you can update an existing document or use a template, or whether you need to develop a document from scratch
- ▶ if you can get assistance or advice from another team member
- ▶ if the task is automated, such as a report that can be generated by a software program
- ▶ if you have to wait on the work of someone else before you can complete the task
- ▶ if you need approval before you can continue or finalise the task.

Estimating how long each task will take to be complete will help you plan and prioritise tasks. Remember to be realistic about how much work you can complete each day. Your supervisor is there to tell you what to do, but also to mentor and coach you on how to do it.

By effectively managing your time, you can increase your efficiency and productivity, and enhance the contribution you make as a volunteer.

Some ways to improve your time management skills include:

- ▶ Focus on one thing at the time.
- ▶ Always schedule a buffer (time between tasks) to allow for unexpected delays.
- ▶ Get things done right the first time to avoid having to rework them.
- ▶ Work as part of a team, not in isolation.
- ▶ Remember why you volunteered in the first place – understand what motivates you and use that to inspire you.
- ▶ Reflect on what makes you procrastinate and try to eliminate or manage the causes.
- ▶ Ask a more experienced team member or your supervisor for advice on how they prioritise their workload.

Example**Managing time and prioritising tasks**

Kim has just started volunteering at a soup kitchen. Part of her role is to ensure the meals and tables are ready when the kitchen opens, and to ensure everything is clean and packed away when the kitchen closes.

When Kim starts her shift at 10am, she makes a list of all the things she needs to complete during her shift. She then prioritises those tasks, being mindful of which are most important to her goals and ordering them according to which are dependent on the other.

Halfway through Kim's shift, the kitchen dishwasher breaks down and all the volunteers pitch in to wash the dishes by hand to ensure the soup kitchen customers get their lunch on time. Kim puts aside the tasks she identified as urgent but not important and not urgent and not important to ensure the most important and urgent tasks are completed first.





Practice task 5

Read the case study and answer the questions that follow.

Case study

You are working as a volunteer receptionist at a toy library and have been given the following tasks for the day:

- ▶ Open and respond to emails at intervals throughout the day.
- ▶ Greet families at reception and assist them.
- ▶ Edit the family newsletter and send it to the committee president by 2pm.
- ▶ Review and submit a stationery order for the month.
- ▶ Prepare the meeting room for the 10am committee meeting.
- ▶ Attend and take minutes of the committee meeting.

Question 1

Match each task based on whether it is urgent, important or both.

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| * Edit the newsletter for the committee president by 2pm. | * Urgent |
| * Prepare the meeting room by 10am. | * Important |
| * Open and respond to emails at intervals across the day. | * Urgent and important |

Question 2

Number each task from 1 to 6 from highest to lowest priority.

- Open and respond to emails at intervals throughout the day.
- Greet families at reception and assist them.
- Edit a report and send it to the committee president before 2pm.
- Review and submit a stationery order for the month.
- Prepare the meeting room for 10am.
- Attend and take the minutes of the committee meeting.

Question 3

If an unforeseen event occurs that requires you to undertake an additional task you had not planned for, which of the following would be reasonable steps to take? Select all that apply.

- Tell your supervisor you cannot do that task because you already have a plan for your work day.
- Put aside the tasks that are urgent but not important.
- Put aside all the tasks you had planned for that day.
- Revise your work plan.
- Put aside the tasks that are not urgent and not important.

2B Working as part of a team

A team is a unit of two or more people who work together towards a common goal.

In order to function effectively, team members must commit to the overall goals of the team and accept mutual accountability.

Organisations arrange for people to work in teams so they:

- ▶ can complete a project and accomplish specific objectives
- ▶ have a mix of skills and knowledge in the organisation, such as providing input and ideas to help make decisions
- ▶ share the workloads among multiple people
- ▶ distribute tasks according to the skills and capacities of each team member
- ▶ obtain feedback and improve on work practices.

Organisational requirements impact the way the team operates. When you begin as a volunteer in an organisation, you are expected to become familiar with its requirements to perform your work and contribute to an effective team.



Types of teams

There are many different structures and types of teams.

Functional team	Permanent team in the organisation that reports to a supervisor (team leader, coordinator or manager), usually in a specific department of the organisation.
Self-managed team	Team without a manager that determines its own rules and expectations to achieve the objectives set by the organisation.
Cross-functional team	Composed of team members from different teams in the organisation who work together for a portion of their time to deal with a specific task or activity requiring a diverse range of skills and knowledge.
Task force team	This is a team that is assembled to complete a specific task, usually at a time of emergency.
Project team	Formed for an arranged period to complete a project. Projects have a start and end date with a set of clear goals to achieve within an agreed budget.
Virtual team	Team members work from different locations, making use of technology to connect and share tasks.
Outsourced team	This is a team that has been contracted by the organisation to perform a specific task, but it is not formally part of the organisation.

Characteristics of teams

Regardless of the type of team, several characteristics will define what a team is and how it operates.

Size	<p>Team performance peaks when it is made up of five to 12 members. A team should be large enough to have the necessary skills and knowledge needed to perform the work task, but also small enough to be manageable. If the team is too large, performance and cohesiveness can suffer.</p>
Diversity	<p>Teams can be made of a diverse group of people. Team members may differ in age, gender, skills, experience, social and cultural background, physical abilities and work arrangements, such as volunteers and people who work remotely.</p> <p>Diversity can enrich the strengths in a team, but the group must be managed in a way that is equitable and fair to all members.</p>
Team norms	<p>Teams need to agree on a set of behavioural standards (team norms) that all team members must follow. This can be done formally, using a team charter, or informally where the norms are not written, but are known to all team members.</p> <p>Norms may vary in content and scope. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Lunch is not be consumed at the work desk. ▶ The team respects the diversity of its members. ▶ Team members do not interrupt the work of other team members at certain times of the day. ▶ Team members are accountable for their own mistakes.
Cohesiveness	<p>Team cohesiveness is reflected in the mutual commitment to the group. A high level of cohesiveness influences work behaviours of the team, such as support, sharing, trust and coordination.</p> <p>Cohesiveness is usually a positive factor in a team. However, it may also lead to ‘groupthink’, which happens when all team members think the same or stop challenging each other. Groupthink impairs creativity and innovation in a team.</p>
Leadership	<p>Most teams will have a formal leader that has been appointed by the organisation to coordinate, manage or lead the team. However, teams may have informal leaders. This may be an experienced team member who becomes an opinion leader, or a team member with a dominant personality who can shift team behaviours or stimulate ideas.</p>

Role structure

When you join a team, you join a group of people who work together to achieve common goals set by the organisation.

The way team members interact with each other is often determined by the leadership and influenced by team dynamics, such as different personalities.

Some of the key roles include:

- ▶ Team leader or supervisor – Person in charge of supervising and coordinating the team.
- ▶ Team member – Person who performs work tasks set by the leader or supervisor.

Each team member may perform one or more of the following formal or informal roles:

- ▶ coordination
- ▶ leadership
- ▶ task specialist
- ▶ interfacing with other teams, i.e. communicating with others outside the team
- ▶ socio-emotional, i.e. supporting the emotional needs in the team.

In many cases, team members take on informal roles based on their personal attributes. For example:

- ▶ An innovator/initiator comes up with new ideas.
- ▶ An information seeker/contributor researches data and information needed to improve team performance.
- ▶ A challenger questions or challenges the status quo.
- ▶ An energiser brings positive energy and motivation to the team.
- ▶ A harmoniser helps to reconcile conflict.
- ▶ A feedback giver provides key feedback to improve the work in the team.
- ▶ A doer gets things done.
- ▶ A leader inspires the rest of team, even if their official role is not team leader or coordinator.

The ‘enacted role’ refers to how you actually perform your role. This is the result of the following.

Expected role	The role that has been formally laid out in the position description and is expected by the organisation.
Sent role	How the role is communicated to you by the team leader or manager and the rest of the team.
Perceived role	The role that you feel you should perform that builds on the expected role, but also takes into consideration the team dynamics.

Understanding your team

Every organisation has objectives and every team has goals. In a well-run organisation, the goals of each team align with organisational objectives.

Organisations use teams in different ways depending on the objectives they want the team to achieve. No matter how a team is structured, responsibilities and roles will differ across various departments in the organisation. Teams must always operate in line with the organisational requirements of the company, and this will impact on and drive the work of the team.

As a volunteer, it is important that you understand your role in the team and how your team contributes to organisational goals and objectives.

Understanding these relationships can increase motivation because it shows how your actions as an individual contribute to the overall needs of the organisation. It also provides a sense of belonging because it shows you and others where you fit in the team and organisation.

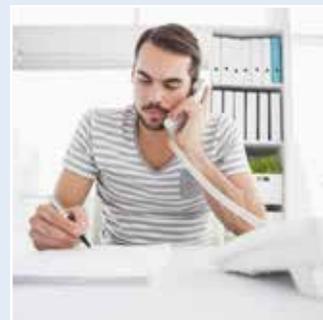
Some questions you can ask to clarify your role in the team and the team’s role in the organisation include:

- ▶ What are the goals and objectives of the organisation?
- ▶ How does the team contribute to those goals and objectives?
- ▶ How do the other teams in the organisation contribute to organisational goals and objectives?
- ▶ What is the team’s relationship with other teams in the organisation?

Example

Work as part of a team to meet organisational objectives

Duke has just started volunteering at a wildlife rescue organisation. He is working in the response team, which takes calls from members of the public about injured wildlife. Duke asks his supervisor about his role in the team and the team’s role in the organisation. His supervisor explains that his role is to help answer calls from the public so the team can respond to the reports of distressed wildlife.



The response team works closely with members of the field team, who collect and facilitate care for wildlife. The response team also collects data about the information they receive from the public and report this to the government.



Practice task 6

Question 1

Which of the following statements about teams are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. ‘Groupthink’ is a phenomenon that leads to stifling new ideas and innovations. | * Yes | * No |
| b. The size of a team has no impact on team performance. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Teams are beneficial to organisations because they create support mechanisms for staff. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Teams will only function effectively if they have a designated leader or manager. | * Yes | * No |

Question 2

Habib has just started volunteering as a peer mentor at a service for recently arrived humanitarian migrants. He wants to better understand how teams operate in the organisation. What would be useful questions for Habib to ask his supervisor? Select all that apply.

- What are the goals of this team?
- Who is the most difficult person to work with on the team?
- How does this team help the organisation meet its objectives?
- How does my role contribute to team goals?
- How long has the organisation been operating for?

Question 3

Match each type of team to its definition.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| * Functional team | * A team without a manager that determines its own rules and expectations to achieve the objectives set by the business. |
| * Cross-functional team | * Team members work from different locations, making use of technology to connect and share tasks. |
| * Project team | * Composed of team members from different teams in the organisation who work together for a time to deal with a specific task or activity. |
| * Self-managed team | * A permanent team in the organisation that reports to a supervisor, usually in a specific department of the organisation. |
| * Virtual team | * A team that is formed for an arranged period with a start and end date, and a set of clear goals to achieve within an agreed budget. |

Question 4

Match each informal role of a team member with the description of their behaviour.

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| * Challenger | * Luis knows how to make the team feel good about the work they're doing and uses his energy to motivate the team. |
| * Harmoniser | * Mark often comes up with ideas that other team members haven't thought of. |
| * Energiser | * Melati likes to help team members resolve their conflicts with each other. |
| * Doer | * Paul regularly raises questions in team meetings, asking why tasks are being done in a specific way. |
| * Innovator | * Shani is extremely reliable and the person who gets tasks done. |

2C Communication and positive relationships

Maintaining appropriate communication with your teammates is essential to your effectiveness as a volunteer.

Every organisation has established methods and processes for communication. Finding out what these are will help you feel more confident and purposeful in your role.

Maintaining relationships with others at work is part of contributing to a strong and supportive team culture. On the other hand, poor relationships between paid staff and volunteers can lead to conflict. Volunteers need to be clear about their role and the role of paid staff.



Effective communication

Participating in various work activities can help you establish yourself as a valuable team member.

You need to make an effort to maintain good communication and develop positive working relationships with staff and other volunteers. For example, communication between team members may occur in:

- ▶ weekly team meetings
- ▶ debriefing sessions at the end of a project
- ▶ team-building activities
- ▶ regular scheduled meetings with supervisors and mentors.

Building stronger relationships with your team can also happen at social activities, such as during lunch breaks and fundraising events.

In all interactions, try to have open, easy and honest communication. Other ways to promote positive communication include:

- ▶ having a relaxed, open body posture – this lets people know that you're interested in what they have to say
- ▶ using a calm, relaxed voice
- ▶ making eye contact
- ▶ letting people finish speaking before you respond
- ▶ repeating what the person has said in your own words.

You can read more about positive communication here: <http://aspirelr.link/communication-skills>.

Responding to problems and incidents

Issues can arise that undermine the progress of a project, your performance or the performance of your team.

The range of personalities and relationships in teams and workplaces makes them a complex and dynamic environment. It is important that you know how to respond to problems and incidents appropriately.

Here are some examples of problems you might encounter in your role as a volunteer.

Unexpected incidents	These are incidents that are not planned and impact on project progress and the performance of team members. These include technical malfunctions, the absence of staff and volunteers due to illness or a personal crisis, or an external unavoidable incident, such as a natural disaster.
Failing processes	Processes that have been put in place to help accomplish tasks may be weak and ineffectual. This can lead to miscommunication, conflict and delays in task and project completion.
Personality clashes and conflicts	The most complex aspect of any team is the human component. Differing personalities in a team can lead to conflict, which can undermine the team's effectiveness.
Client complaints	Whether you provide a product or service to another company or to individual customers, complaints are always going to be part of your day-to-day operations. You need to know how to manage and respond to complaints if and when they arise.
Poor communication	Communication may be impaired by many issues in the workplace, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ lack of adequate communication processes or technology ▶ lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities ▶ conflicts within the team.
Excessive workloads	Excessive workloads can affect organisations during times of change, or due to poor planning. Excessive workloads cause stress and may lead to increased absenteeism and greater levels of conflict in a team.

Example

Responding to problems and incidents

Cesar volunteers for an organisation that trains guide dogs. When Cesar arrives for his fortnightly shift, he logs onto the organisation's server and finds that it has been compromised by ransomware. The ransomware is demanding payment from the organisation to release the information they have stored on the server.

Cesar immediately contacts his supervisor, Gloria, and informs her of the problem. Gloria instructs Cesar to shut down the computer immediately and not to take any further action until she has spoken with her manager. Cesar shuts down the computer and waits for further instructions from Gloria.



Relationships between volunteers and staff

It is usually best to avoid discussions with staff about office politics and sensitive interpersonal issues.

It is not appropriate for staff to engage you in those conversations or for you to participate in them. Engaging in these types of conversations may put you in a difficult or compromising position.

On the other hand, there may be times when staff share information with you about the difficulties the organisation is facing, such as funding shortages or poor staff morale. This type of information may be important to share because it affects your role as a volunteer. These conversations are appropriate as long as they are general in nature and do not relate to specific individuals and relationships.

Another common source of conflict between volunteers and staff can occur when volunteers overstep their role or resist support or supervision from a staff member. If you are not clear about the scope or boundaries of your role, check with your supervisor. Make sure you are not overstepping your role by getting a clear understanding of your responsibilities and the limits of your role before you begin.

Example

Maintaining role boundaries

Andrew is working as a volunteer field worker with an organisation that monitors the health of endangered birds. He works alongside his supervisor, Jerome, a paid field worker and qualified ornithologist. Paid staff such as Jerome are responsible for handling wild birds. Volunteers such as Andrew are responsible for recording the information paid staff provide about the birds they are handling, such as their height, weight and general condition.



During an especially busy field trip, Jerome asks Andrew to check a few of the traps on his own and report back on whether any birds have been caught. Jerome reminds Andrew that in no circumstances should he handle any of the birds that he finds. Andrew finds numerous traps where birds have been caught. Although he believes the work could be done more efficiently if he handled the birds himself and recorded the relevant information, he understands that task is not within the scope of his role and he must follow Jerome's instruction.

Responding to bullying

Appropriate relationships in the workplace are characterised by respect, trust and common courtesy.

Unfortunately, not all workplace relationships reflect these characteristics, and bullying is a relatively common experience among volunteers in Australia. According to a literature review published by the NSW government, one-third of volunteers had been bullied in a volunteering role. Volunteers can also engage in bullying.

Bullying occurs when a person or group acts unreasonably towards another person or group and their behaviour poses a risk to health and safety. Examples of bullying include aggressive behaviour, teasing or practical jokes and unreasonable workplace demands. Volunteers and paid staff are protected by national anti-bullying laws. If you think you are being bullied, you can talk to:

- ▶ your supervisor
- ▶ a health and safety representative at your workplace
- ▶ the Fair Work Commission
- ▶ the health and safety regulator for your state or territory.

You can read more about workplace bullying here: <http://aspirelr.link/bullying-and-harassment>.

Responding to conflict

People respond to conflict in different ways, and this may be influenced by the type of conflict that is occurring.

When team members have opposing ideas or opinions, this can generally be handled productively by the organisation and a resolution can be found. When conflict is due to a personality clash, this can be more difficult to resolve. Both types of conflict can lead to work-related stress and can have a negative effect on others in the team.

Some of the most common responses to conflict are outlined below.

Conflict response	Description of response	Likely result
Confronting/ collaborating	Both people take a collaborative, problem-solving approach to the conflict, aiming to bring about a positive outcome for themselves and the other person.	Both parties' interests are met.
Avoiding/ withdrawing	One or both people avoid the conflict or each other.	The problem is not addressed.
Forcing/ competing	One or both people see the conflict as a competition that is either 'won' or 'lost'.	Only one party gets their way.
Smoothing/ accommodating	One person accommodates the other.	Only one party gets their way.
Compromising	Both people find acceptable solutions that address some of their interests.	Parties meet in the middle.

In situations where conflicts cannot be resolved, a human resource (HR) representative or workplace mediator may become involved. However, people usually prefer to address the conflict directly with the other parties involved and try to resolve it in an amicable way.

If you are experiencing conflict with another person in your VIO, speak to your supervisor.

Here are some tips for appropriately responding to conflict.

Be respectful and non-competitive	Approach the person in an open and non-threatening way and keep the conversation private. Try to avoid seeing the situation as a competition that is either won or lost.
Try to understand the other person's perspective	Before trying to work out a solution, hear the person out and do your best to understand their point of view. If you know what the other person wants from the situation, you can better understand what is contributing to the conflict and how to resolve it.

Reflect on your own interests, feelings and actions

Conflict is rarely due to a single person. Think about your role in the conflict and how your behaviour might be perceived by others.

Brainstorm options that focus on the mutual interests of all parties

A collaborative, problem-solving approach that aims to achieve positive outcomes for all parties is the ideal way to deal with conflict. Brainstorming options collaboratively may lead to more creative ways of resolving the problem and avoid the potential for the conflict to happen again.

If you are having difficulty communicating with someone because you are angry, upset or frustrated, take a break from the conversation and do something that helps you calm down, such as deep breathing, going for a walk or distracting yourself with an activity. If appropriate, suggest another time to resume the conversation.

For more information on dealing with workplace conflict, go to:

- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/managing-workplace-conflict>
- ▶ <http://aspirelr.link/workplace-conflict>

Identifying and accessing support

For your own health and wellbeing, you need to know how to access supports.

Volunteer work often involves roles that are physically and emotionally demanding. For example, you may work in emergency services and disaster relief, and may witness distressing events and experience life-threatening situations.

Many VIOs have workplace supports available, such as volunteer assistance programs and post-incident support. You might need workplace support if you:

- ▶ have dealt with or witnessed a distressing or upsetting event in the course of your work
- ▶ are feeling overwhelmed by your workload
- ▶ are finding it hard to switch off from work
- ▶ are having difficulty with your supervisor or a staff member
- ▶ have come back to your role after a serious physical illness, mental health difficulty, accident or the death of a close family member or friend
- ▶ are experiencing a personal issue outside of work that is impacting on your ability to perform or enjoy your volunteer role.



Work-based supports for staff and volunteers can benefit organisations in the following ways:

- ▶ increased productivity, communication and team functioning
- ▶ reduced impact of stress and conflict on workplace processes and outputs
- ▶ reduced hidden costs of absenteeism.

If you participate in a volunteer induction program, you may receive information about the workplace supports available to you and how to access them. Otherwise, check with your supervisor. It's best to be proactive and find out as soon as you can what supports are available to you. That way, if a problem does arise, you will know how to get the support you need.

Here are some examples of common workplace supports offered by VIOs.

<p>Mediation services</p>	<p>These services provide a confidential discussion between workers involved in a conflict. They are usually facilitated by an impartial mediator and designed to help participants resolve a dispute. The mediator could be from the organisation, or may be an external professional mediator.</p>
<p>Getting back to work supports</p>	<p>These are work-based programs that support people to reintegrate into the workplace after a serious illness or injury. For example, the program may help the worker develop plans and goals, make decisions and solve problems.</p>
<p>Volunteer assistance programs (VAPs)</p>	<p>These are short-term, solutions-based counselling provided by qualified counsellors to address issues such as workplace bullying and stress. They may also address personal issues such as relationship difficulties, drug and alcohol use, and legal issues.</p>
<p>Post-incident debriefing and support</p>	<p>These are group discussions, individual counselling and/or training facilitated by qualified professionals to support staff affected by critical incidents in the workplace, such as assaults, threats and accidents. They are usually delivered soon after the incident occurs.</p>

Example

Accessing available support

Xavier volunteers as a helpline counsellor. He regularly speaks with people who are on the brink of suicide. Xavier has received extensive training on how to respond to these calls and regularly participates in debriefing sessions with his colleagues and supervisor. However, a recent call has left Xavier feeling upset and vulnerable. Even though he has debriefed with his supervisor, he is still thinking a lot about the call – and the caller – and is finding it hard to sleep.



The organisation where Xavier volunteers offers an external assistance program for volunteers who are struggling with any aspect of their work. Xavier knows that he needs some support, so he calls the assistance program and schedules a counselling session with them.



Practice task 7

Question 1

Which of the following statements are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. Conflict between volunteers and paid staff can occur when volunteers overstep their roles. | * Yes | * No |
| b. As a volunteer, it is best to avoid discussions about the organisation. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Volunteer assistance programs are usually only for people having personal conflicts outside of the workplace. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Mediation involves a confidential discussion between the workers involved in a conflict. | * Yes | * No |
| e. Gossip is a good way to strengthen team bonds because it creates a sense of camaraderie. | * Yes | * No |
| f. Suggesting to a team member that they seek support for a problem is generally inappropriate. | * Yes | * No |

Question 2

A charity that supports homeless youth relies on volunteers to deliver services.

Which of the following actions are effective ways for volunteers to support and communicate in the workplace? Select all that apply.

- Attend social events to celebrate team achievements.
- Encourage quieter members of the team to speak up in team meetings and share their ideas.
- Listen to colleagues when they complain about each other and repeat what they have said to others.
- Offer to share the workload of teammates who are overloaded.
- Offer teammates advice and assistance.
- Immediately inform the supervisor if a team member is not happy with their role.

Question 3

Which of the following are ways to seek a resolution to a conflict in the workplace? Select all that apply.

- Approach the person in a non-threatening way.
- Listen to the other person.
- Tell the person how you think the problem can be solved.
- Try to understand the other person's perspective.
- Ask a colleague to mediate the conversation.
- Brainstorm options for resolving the conflict.



Summary

- ▶ There are a number of strategies you can use to manage your time and tasks, such as prioritising tasks according to their urgency and importance.
- ▶ You need to know how your team contributes to the overall objectives of the organisation and how your role contributes to the goals of the team.
- ▶ Organisations have rules and processes about appropriate communication, such as how to report and who to communicate with in a team.
- ▶ Conflicts can be avoided if you are clear about the scope of your role.
- ▶ VIOs typically have support structures in place to help volunteers and staff.
- ▶ Identify support early and access it when you need it.



Learning checkpoint 2

Work effectively as a volunteer

Part A

1. Number each step from 1 to 5 in the order you would follow to make most effective use of your time.

Make a to-do list for the day.

Prioritise your tasks.

Tidy your workspace.

Ensure you are clear about your role.

Write your tasks in a diary.

2. Sophie and Dharma are volunteers on a university ethics committee. Both have very different ideas on how to respond to a potential ethical breach by a student.

Match the responses to this conflict on the left with the most likely outcome on the right.

* Sophie views the conflict as something she must win, which means Dharma has to lose.

* Both Sophie and Dharma's interests are met.

* Sophie and Dharma find a solution to the conflict that addresses some of both their interests.

* The conflict between Sophie and Dharma is not addressed.

* Sophie avoids Dharma as much as possible.

* Only Sophie gets her way.

* Sophie gives in to Dharma's point of view because she is tired of the conflict.

* Only Dharma gets her way.

* Both people take a collaborative, problem-solving approach to the conflict.

* Sophie and Dharma meet in the middle.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Violet volunteers as an events coordinator for an arts festival. The festival is run by a not-for-profit organisation called the Funky Vibes Arts Festival. Violet's team is comprised of paid staff and volunteers. There are several different types of teams in the Funky Vibes Arts Festival organisation. These include a functional team, a project team, a self-managed team and a virtual team.

Recently it has become clear that the paid staff are not cooperating with her by keeping important information about changes to the events schedule to themselves. This is affecting her ability to perform well in her role and causing her emotional upset.

1. Match each team type with its description.

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| * Functional team | * The media and communication team does not have a manager and determines its own rules and objectives. |
| * Project team | * The IT team mainly work from home and use online resources to connect and collaborate. |
| * Self-managed team | * The youth engagement team has been set up to establish youth involvement in the festival and will disband at the end of the financial year. |
| * Virtual team | * The fundraising team have a permanent role at the organisation and all team members report to a single supervisor. |

2. Which of the following statements about workplace conflict are correct? Select all that apply.

- Violet is not covered by national anti-bullying laws.
- If Violet feels she is being bullied, she should contact the Fair Work Commission.
- Violet and her fellow volunteers are unlikely to experience conflict with paid staff.
- Being clear about the scope of her role will prevent Violet from being in conflict with paid staff.

3. After a few months of volunteering, Violet has got to know some of her team members quite well. One of her team members, Percy, is having relationship difficulties and is missing important task deadlines.

What should Violet do in this situation? Select all that apply.

- She should contact Percy's partner to offer her help.
- She should seek out support for herself if she needs it.
- She should be available whenever Percy needs her.
- She should let her supervisor know if her work is being negatively affected.



Topic 3

In this topic you will learn about:

3A Requesting advice and assistance

3B Reporting issues and completing documentation

Check and complete work in consultation with your supervisor

You may need to consult with your supervisor to seek feedback and report any unresolved issues.

Feedback is a useful way to discover what you are doing well and what could be improved on. Regularly seek feedback from your supervisor and team members, and reflect on any feedback you receive.

You may also need to ask your supervisor and others for advice, particularly in relation to any unresolved issues. Do not be afraid to ask for help when you need it, and ensure your supervisor is aware of any issues you are having. These may need to be formally documented and reported so that follow-up action can be taken.

3A Requesting advice and assistance

Even if you are confident in your volunteering role, there will be times when you need advice or assistance from others.

Receiving advice and feedback on your performance as a volunteer will help to enhance your knowledge and skills. Always try to view feedback as a learning opportunity. Use it to discover what you are doing well and how you could improve.

Seeking advice or assistance

It is difficult to know when to try to address an issue yourself, and when to ask for assistance.

If you are new to a role, you will most likely need to ask for advice and assistance on a regular basis. As you become more confident, you will need less regular clarification and explanation. However, there will always be times when you benefit from the experience of other team members or your supervisor.

Determining when to ask for advice or assistance depends on the following factors.

Importance and urgency of the task	If the task is urgent or important, it may be necessary to ask for advice or assistance as soon as possible to get it done on time. You may be able to spend a bit more time sorting out a less important task on your own.
Surrounding circumstances	If your supervisor or teammates are focused on other, more urgent or important tasks or if the workplace is especially busy, it may be best to wait for a quieter period to ask for help.
Policies, procedures and expectations	Some teams and organisations have a culture in which workers are encouraged to regularly ask their teammates and supervisors for advice or assistance. Others have stricter rules and expectations around when and how workers ask for advice and assistance.

You may need to seek advice or clarification if:

- ▶ you have tried to resolve the issue yourself and it hasn't worked
- ▶ the progress of a project or task is being held up by an issue
- ▶ you are feeling overwhelmed by a task or a project
- ▶ you are unsure of how to complete a task safely or correctly, or you haven't received adequate instructions on how to carry it out
- ▶ you feel that the task or project would significantly benefit from another person's insight or knowledge.

You may also need to seek advice and assistance when you are unclear about your legal or ethical obligations, such as when to provide sensitive information to another person. When your health or safety is at risk, it may be urgent that you seek help and clarification.

You can read more about WHS and the issues faced by volunteers here: <http://aspirelr.link/whs-for-vios>.

Benefits of seeking advice

Although there are many benefits of seeking advice or assistance, some people are reluctant to ask for help.

Reasons people may be reluctant to ask for advice or assistance

- ▶ It is seen as a sign of weakness. Some people believe they should be able to complete tasks on their own and if they can't, they will be negatively judged or viewed as incompetent.
- ▶ If they let someone else help with a task, they think they will lose control or ownership of it.
- ▶ If they receive assistance from someone, they believe there will be an obligation to assist that person in the future.
- ▶ They might think the other person is too busy to help and doesn't have time to answer their questions.
- ▶ They believe it will be quicker and easier to do the task without the input of others.

However, you should always keep in mind the benefits of receiving advice and assistance, which include:

- ▶ It can make the task easier.
- ▶ It can help you maintain your focus and energy.
- ▶ It demonstrates that you trust the other person, which will help to strengthen relationships.
- ▶ You are acknowledging that you're not perfect. This makes it easier for other people to relate to you because it shows them that you're only human.
- ▶ You are acknowledging the knowledge and skills of the other person.

Example

Seeking advice and assistance

Shea is a volunteer visitor at an aged care service. For an hour every week, Shea visits Gladys – a 91-year-old who is lonely and socially isolated. Shea has noticed that Gladys especially enjoys conversations about the garden she had when she was living independently.

Shea would like to take Gladys to an upcoming flower festival for her birthday, but she knows that the facility will be reluctant to let her take Gladys outside the service. Shea would like some advice on what she can do to prepare the paperwork to explain the benefits to Gladys and planning the excursion. She speaks to an experienced volunteer, Roni, who is happy to help. Together they work out a schedule and complete the documentation that Shea can present to her supervisor.



Seeking feedback

Asking for feedback helps you to better understand what is expected of you.

It demonstrates your interest and commitment to your team and organisation.

Seeking feedback shows that you are open to constructive criticism and allows you to make changes to improve your performance. It also creates a more comfortable and open space for communication with the other members of your team.

Usually, the most appropriate person to provide feedback will be your supervisor. Some organisations use a peer approach where team members provide feedback to each other. When you start your role, clarify how feedback will be given.

Tips for seeking feedback on performance

- ▶ Inform the person you would like to receive feedback.
- ▶ Be specific about what you want feedback on, e.g. 'I was wondering if I could get your feedback on how I handed that issue with Jocelyn last week?'
- ▶ Ask open questions that provide you with in-depth answers, such as questions that begin with 'Why' or 'How'. Open questions may include:
 - 'How do you think I could communicate better?'
 - 'How would you approach this if you were me?'
 - 'Why do you think I struggle with this task?'
 - 'What aspects of my work do you think I could improve on?'

Formal and informal feedback

Informal feedback may be provided on the spot. For formal feedback, it may be more appropriate to set up a meeting time to go through things in more detail.

Informal feedback may include verbal comments on a task you have completed or are currently working on. More formal feedback may be an in-depth discussion about your performance and what areas you could improve on.

You may be given feedback without directly asking for it. For example, your supervisor might praise you for the way you handled a difficult conversation with a client, or a colleague might give you some tips about how to save time by doing a task differently.

Formal feedback processes include a performance management meeting where a supervisor meets with you one-on-one to discuss areas for improvement, training needs and future goals. Many formal processes occur on a half-yearly or yearly basis.

Obtaining feedback on a more regular basis will help you feel more in control of your work, especially when you are new to a role.

Benefits of feedback

Feedback should be treated as an opportunity to improve, not a criticism.

Feedback is one of the cheapest, yet most powerful and under-utilised tools at your disposal. It can help you and your team members remain focused and assist you to know how others perceive your performance.

Getting feedback on your performance can help your work as a volunteer in the following ways.

Increases motivation	Positive feedback provides validation of your efforts. Constructive criticism can give you something to work towards.
Increases understanding	Feedback will help you better understand what is expected of you.
Builds trust	Receiving positive and constructive feedback on your performance can help to develop stronger relationships.
Identifies training needs	Feedback indicating an area for improvement will help you and your supervisor identify your training needs.

Giving feedback

At times you may be asked to provide feedback to others.

Think about the way you would like to receive feedback and consider this when providing feedback to others.

Tips for giving feedback

- ▶ Be specific and timely.
- ▶ Give praise when it is due.
- ▶ Be honest and sincere.
- ▶ Show understanding and reinforce positive behaviour.
- ▶ Provide factual information about a situation or task, not the individual.
- ▶ Focus on the message you are trying to convey, identifying what you want to achieve.
- ▶ Avoid criticising. Withhold any negative judgments and empathise with the other person.
- ▶ Ensure feedback is clear and logical, and avoid abstract or vague statements.
- ▶ Respect the other person's right to respond and take the time to listen to their view.
- ▶ Give feedback at an appropriate time and place, such as in a private meeting room.

Receiving feedback

You may go through three separate stages when receiving feedback.

Be mindful of these stages and try to recognise how you are feeling.

Reaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be aware of how you are feeling and manage your emotional responses appropriately. ▶ Concentrate on listening to the feedback (rather than responding to it) and, if necessary, ask questions to clarify the other person's perspective. ▶ You may want to take some time out before you respond to the feedback, rather than responding immediately, especially if you have a strong emotional reaction to what you have heard.
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Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Be honest with yourself about your performance. ▶ Be open-minded about what the other person has said. ▶ Ask for specific examples if you need help understanding the feedback, e.g. 'What were you expecting of me in that situation?', 'What do you think I should do differently if the same thing happens again?'
Reflection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Even if you don't agree with it, thank the person for taking the time to give you feedback and let them know you appreciate it. ▶ If you don't agree with the feedback, say so (respectfully) and support what you are saying by providing facts about why you believe the feedback is inaccurate. ▶ When areas for improvement are raised during feedback, discuss some options for how to deal with it, and agree to next steps.

Example

Seeking feedback

Sienna has been working as a volunteer receptionist at an Aboriginal community-controlled health centre for several months. Her probation period will soon be over, at which time she will meet with her supervisor to discuss her role. In the weeks leading up to her review, Sienna would like some feedback on her performance, particularly on her interactions with a challenging client, Bill, who regularly attends the clinic and is often agitated and aggressive.



Sienna approaches her supervisor, Melody, and they schedule a meeting for the following day. During the meeting, Sienna talks about her interactions with Bill and asks open-ended questions so Melody can provide full answers and give Sienna lots of feedback.



Practice task 8

Question 1

Which of the following are benefits of feedback? Select all that apply.

- Positive feedback provides validation and increases motivation.
- Feedback will help you better understand what is expected of you.
- Feedback gives you an opportunity to tell your supervisor how you think they are performing in their role.
- Feedback provides opportunities to develop stronger relationships with your supervisor and team.
- Feedback enhances everyone's mental and physical wellbeing.

Question 2

Which of the following are appropriate ways to seek feedback? Select all that apply.

- Be specific about what you want feedback on.
- Identify who is likely to give you positive feedback.
- Ask open questions to obtain in-depth answers.
- Let the person know that you would like feedback on your performance.
- Ask for immediate feedback so you can take actions to improve as soon as possible.

Question 3

Which of the following statements about requesting advice or assistance are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a. When you ask someone for advice or assistance, you are acknowledging their skills and knowledge. | * Yes | * No |
| b. You must ask for help if you don't know how to use a piece of equipment safely. | * Yes | * No |
| c. Asking for assistance from others helps to build trust. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Assumptions about seeking assistance can make it difficult to ask for help. | * Yes | * No |
| e. Most supervisors expect you to seek assistance and advice at least once a day. | * Yes | * No |

Question 4

Which of the following statements are examples of reasons why people may be hesitant to ask for advice from others? Select all that apply.

- 'If Ari helps me, I'll have to help him at some point in the future, and I really don't have time.'
- 'Luca would probably appreciate the chance to share his knowledge about this issue.'
- 'I can get this task done quicker if I do it on my own.'
- 'If I ask Joe to help me with this task, he'll take over and I'll lose ownership of it.'
- 'I don't know Gwyneth very well, so if I ask her how to complete this task, it will give me an opportunity to get to know her a bit better.'

3B Reporting issues and completing documentation

Understand where and how issues might be generated, and report them according to policies and procedures.

A team or workplace is a complex structure where issues are likely to arise. There are processes and procedures to follow, personalities and relationships to manage, and equipment to use and maintain. Any one of these can falter or break down unexpectedly.

Purposes of reporting issues

Identify and help to resolve issues as early as possible to avoid escalation and minimise impact on the team.

Problems that arise in a workplace have the potential to upset the progress of a project, your performance and that of your team.

Reporting is not simply the act of notifying someone that something is wrong. A good report should be a comprehensive and informative assessment of the issue, which can help the team leader or supervisor to find a solution themselves or appoint the task to someone else.

Reports may be:

- ▶ written, such as in an email or hard copy
- ▶ made via phone or video conferencing
- ▶ given face to face to a supervisor or team leader
- ▶ communicated in team or staff meetings.

If an issue is brought up in a meeting or with your team leader, a follow-up report can be prepared to make sure all team members are aware of the issue and agree on what was discussed. Informal conversations about issues usually mean there are no actions taken. If an issue arises during an informal conversation, make a note of it and address it in a more formal way afterwards. Remember that some issues might not be directly related to your work, but may have an overall impact on the performance and functioning of your team.

Example

Reporting issues to a supervisor

Dani works for a small not-for-profit organisation that fosters and rehomes abandoned domestic animals. It's a very hot day and Dani goes on her regular rounds to check on the welfare of the animals. The animals are housed inside with air conditioning, but Dani notices that one of the air-conditioning units isn't working. Dani checks the unit and notices the power light is not on, even though the unit is plugged in. She checks the roster and sees that Vince, one of the volunteers who is responsible for checking the units, has been absent all week.

Dani immediately reports the problem to her supervisor. She states that the air-conditioning unit is not working. She explains that she has checked the setting and can see the power light is not on.



Reporting processes

Organisations are required to have a procedure for reporting workplace hazards, incidents and injuries.

Urgent issues should be reported immediately to minimise their impact, such as work health and safety issues. This may require a phone call or immediate face-to-face meeting and can be followed up with a written report. Always follow the organisational policies and procedures for reporting issues. Your VIO should explain your responsibilities for reporting problems and issues.

Reporting lines may be clear, but the processes and ways people communicate between departments can be more subtle. Questions you may need to ask are outlined here.

Who am I required to report to?

You can ask your supervisor directly who to report to. You might be required to report to the team leader, who may ask for daily updates on your progress.

What are the reporting methods?

You might need to report certain issues to a staff member who is based in another location. In this case, online video calls (such as Skype or Microsoft Teams) may be the best method of communication.

How should I communicate issues, problems or conflicts?

Most organisations have a set procedure for dealing with the grievances of staff and volunteers. A process may involve an initial discussion with a supervisor, followed by a meeting with a HR representative if the issue cannot be resolved. Other organisations will have specialist staff who advise staff and volunteers on how to address specific issues, such as discriminatory practices, bullying and harassment.

Even if you never need to follow a certain procedure, such as handling a customer complaint, it helps to know where you can access information about the process. This will help you feel more confident and comfortable in your role.

Example

Clarifying reporting processes

Maryam has started volunteering as a community liaison worker at a community legal service. She attends the volunteer orientation session, but at the end of the session she is still unclear about the appropriate methods and processes of communication for her role.

When the facilitator asks if anyone has questions, Maryam asks how she should report to her supervisor and how information should be shared in her team. The facilitator explains that different teams in the organisation have different methods and processes, which will be clarified when she starts her first shift as a volunteer.



Completing workplace documentation

The documents you are required to complete in your volunteering role will depend on the type of organisation you are working for and your role in it.

Some examples of workplace documents are listed below, along with a brief description of their purpose.

Timesheets	Used to record the amount of time spent at work and/or time spent on specific tasks.
Progress reports	Used to inform and update managers, supervisors and other relevant stakeholders (e.g. funding bodies) about the progress of a project or activity.
Data collection documents	<p>These help to evaluate activities or services and/or fulfil funding or legislative requirements. These documents record information such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ the number of clients attending an activity or using a service (e.g. the number of parents attending a playgroup or the number of people calling a helpline) ▶ the outcome of an activity (e.g. the number of clients who completed a course or the number of birds tagged during a field trip).
Expense claims	These allow workers to claim out-of-pocket expenses.
Incident reports	These are used to report accidents and injuries in the workplace.
Satisfaction surveys	These measure the satisfaction of staff and/or volunteers in an organisation, monitor workplace morale and gain insight into any improvements that could be made to enhance staff/volunteer satisfaction.
Complaint forms	These are a record of customer complaints.
Grievance forms	These allow staff and volunteers to record their grievances or complaints as part of the organisation's grievance policy.
Performance management forms	<p>These are used by workers to outline goals and objectives for their performance and report on their progress towards meeting these.</p> <p>Managers and supervisors may also comment on worker performance, such as successes and areas in need of improvement.</p>

Documentation processes

A failure to complete documentation properly can have serious ramifications for an organisation.

It is important to follow any instructions, policies or processes you are given in your organisation for completing relevant documentation. Each organisation will have standards that must be followed for note-keeping, storage and security of personal information. For example, all personal information should be kept in an area that is not accessible to individuals and members of the public. This is because documentation is often used to fulfil an organisation's legal, ethical and professional responsibilities.

Many of the requirements for record-keeping are the same in various VIOs:

- ▶ It must be factual, consistent and accurate.
- ▶ Recording of dates, times and events must be precise.
- ▶ No abbreviations, jargon or slang should be used.
- ▶ Information should be current.
- ▶ Documents must be stored correctly, in keeping with relevant legislation and organisational policy.

Some documents will be completed in a hard copy, while others may be completed electronically, such as an online database. It is good practice to record important information as soon as possible so that it is accurate.

Example

Completing relevant workplace documents

Mel works as a volunteer playgroup coordinator. As part of her role, she is required to complete a weekly evaluation document that records the number of children who attend the playgroup, the number of parents that accompany the children, the activities undertaken during the playgroup and the number of staff in attendance.

Mel records the information on a hard-copy form by hand, and enters the information into an online database after the playgroup has finished. The information that Mel and her teammates put into the database is used to help the organisation secure funding, as it demonstrates how many families are benefiting from the playgroup.



Practice task 9

Question 1

Which of the following statements in relation to reporting issues to a supervisor are correct? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|---|-------|------|
| a. Resolving issues needs to be done according to organisational policies, procedures and processes. | * Yes | * No |
| b. Issues and problems can be useful in indicating the team's weak points. | * Yes | * No |
| c. It is ultimately the supervisor's problem to find the solution themselves. | * Yes | * No |
| d. Problems should be reported as soon as possible to prevent them from escalating and minimise the impact on the team. | * Yes | * No |
| e. It is important to provide your version of events, such as what you think might be the cause of the problem. | * Yes | * No |

Question 2

Which of the following are common processes for documentation? Select all that apply.

- Include abbreviations, jargon and slang in reports to make them accessible to everyone.
- Reports should be creative and inspiring to the whole team.
- Ensure documents are signed by the entire team.
- Store documents securely according to legislation and organisational policy.
- Only provide up-to-date information.
- Ensure reports are factual, consistent and accurate.



Summary

- ▶ View feedback as a learning opportunity: discovering what you are doing well and how you could improve.
- ▶ Obtaining feedback on a regular basis will help you feel more in control of your work, especially when you're new to a role.
- ▶ Asking for feedback helps you to better understand what is expected of you. It demonstrates your interest and commitment to your team and organisation.
- ▶ Many people are reluctant to seek advice because they believe they will be judged by others.
- ▶ You are likely to benefit from the experience of teammates and your supervisor.
- ▶ Issues and conflicts can be useful for indicating weak points in a team or organisation.
- ▶ A good report should be a comprehensive and informative assessment of the issue.
- ▶ When reporting problems to a supervisor, focus on the facts and do not provide your opinion about the cause of the problem.
- ▶ Be factual, accurate and consistent when completing documentation.



Learning checkpoint 3

Check and complete work in consultation with your supervisor

Part A

1. Which of the following are good reasons to seek advice and assistance at work? Select all that apply.

- It can make the task easier.
- It makes you look competent.
- It demonstrates that you trust the other person.
- It makes it easier for other people to relate to you.

2. Which of the following are ways to request advice or clarification? Select all that apply.

- Requesting specific advice or assistance
- Explaining why you need advice or help with something
- Outlining the history of the problem
- Explaining why you want that person to give you advice
- Requesting the advice be given to you immediately

3. Which of the following actions are correct ways to report a problem or issue to your supervisor? Select all that apply.

- Be as comprehensive as possible.
- Use the template from your previous workplace to save time.
- State the facts.
- Describe what you believe to be the cause of the problem.

Part B

Read the case study, then answer the questions that follow.

Case study

Matt is a volunteer driver for a charity that sells second-hand clothes. Last week, Matt had a disagreement with the office manager, Miranda.

Matt would like to get some feedback from his supervisor, Pete, about how to deal with similar situations in the future.

1. Which of the following should Matt consider when approaching Pete for feedback?
Select all that apply.

- Let Pete know that he'd like feedback.
- Ask Pete to give him feedback in writing.
- Tell Pete the specific issue he'd like to get feedback on.
- Ask Pete to invite Miranda to a meeting to discuss the issue.
- Suggest to Pete that they set up a meeting to discuss the issue.

2. Which of the following questions are likely to give Matt the most detailed feedback?
Select all that apply.

- Do you know about what happened between me and Miranda last week?
- How do you think I could have handled that situation with Miranda better?
- Did I deal with the situation with Miranda properly?
- How would you have approached the situation with Miranda if you were me?

3. Pete asks Matt to write up an account of the incident with the office manager. He provides Matt with a template to complete.

What should Matt consider when preparing his report? Select yes or no for each one.

- | | | |
|--|-------|------|
| a. He should provide an account of the facts without emotion or personal opinions about Miranda. | * Yes | * No |
| b. He should write his account of events in an email because he can express himself better this way. | * Yes | * No |
| c. He should wait until he is not so busy and has time to sit and think about the details of the incident. | * Yes | * No |
| d. He should leave his finished report in the staffroom for Pete to collect when he has time. | * Yes | * No |