

VOLUNTEERS IN RESEARCH

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Applies to:

Any individual, aged 16 or older, who wishes to observe or assist in research (in a capacity other than a research subject) at the University of Virginia School of Medicine.

Policy Statement

Qualified volunteers can provide meaningful assistance in laboratory, clinical, or translational research. This policy outlines the conditions that must be met in order to ensure that both the individual and the institution are protected in this situation.

Anyone observing or assisting in research, without receiving credit or pay for these activities, is considered to be a volunteer. Individuals are permitted to perform volunteer research provided that they have authorization from the University. That authorization can be requested by completing a form (see links under "Related Documents"). Visiting professionals also should be appointed as non-paid faculty by the responsible department for the durations of their stays.

Documentation of permission is important in the event that something occurs, such as a claim or lawsuit brought against the volunteer and/or the University. For the Commonwealth to provide legal defense and insurance protection for our volunteers there needs to be clear documentation indicating their status as agents working on behalf of the University.

Our goal should always be to protect volunteers from injury or illness while serving the University. It is important to realize that volunteers are not employees of the University, and, therefore, normally would not have the benefit of workers'

compensation if they were injured while working on behalf of the University. A volunteer could bring a claim or lawsuit against the University and/or faculty member if he or she suffers an injury alleged to be the result of negligence by the University or its employees.

Individuals who have pending employment may not volunteer for work. This includes someone who is awaiting final visa approval or who wishes to work prior to his or her official start date. Having an employee work without compensation is a violation of the Department of Labor's Wage and Hour regulations, for which the University may be fined.

The items below correspond to the information required on the "Form for Volunteers Participating in School of Medicine Research Activities," which must be approved prior to the onset of work in University facilities:

1. Volunteer's complete legal name and complete address. If his or her permanent home and local address differ, both addresses and phone numbers should be listed.
2. Volunteers must carry personal health insurance to protect themselves against the cost of medical expenses due to injuries and illnesses that may occur. Attach a copy of the volunteer's health insurance card to the form.
3. Describe the status of the volunteer (age, citizenship, student status, etc.). If necessary, a copy of the individual's visa must be attached to the form.
4. The volunteer and department must affirm that the individual does not have employment pending at the University.
5. Provide the volunteer's emergency contact information.
6. Give the period that the individual is authorized to act on behalf of the University in a volunteer capacity. If this time frame changes for any reason, an updated form should be forwarded to the School of Medicine Finance Office.
7. A complete and accurate description of the volunteer's activities is important. There should be no confusion about what the volunteer will be authorized to do on behalf of the University. Document any restrictions or limitations on the volunteer's activities.
8. Consider any special needs the individual has due to disabilities, etc., that must be accommodated.

9. The volunteer's safety and health are important to the University. Supervising faculty must educate volunteers about any foreseen hazards they may encounter during their research activity. It is important, therefore, that volunteers be instructed in the appropriate departmental and institutional safety guidelines applicable to their activities. See "Overview of Research Safety Guidelines and Necessary Training & Certification."

10. There may be additional information or understandings that you want to document.

The volunteer form must be signed by the department head, the faculty member responsible for the volunteer's activities, and the volunteer. In the event that the volunteer is under 18 years of age, his or her parent or guardian must also sign. Documents should be kept on file for five (5) years from the time the volunteer activity ends.

Related Documents

Form for Volunteers Participating in School of Medicine Research Activities can be accessed at the Office for Research Web site

(<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/research/policies.cfm>; "SOM Volunteer Agreement") or the School of Medicine Policy Repository (https://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/opr/usr/entiremanual.cfm?man_id=14, item 2.300b).

Authorization of Volunteers in the Work Place

<https://etg07.itc.virginia.edu/policy/policydisplay?id=HRM-001>

Overview of Research Safety Guidelines and Necessary Training & Certification:

Any person conducting or participating in research at the University of Virginia must follow appropriate safety guidelines and obtain the necessary training and certification depending on the proposed research activities.

1. Life safety issues (i.e. location of fire exits, use of protective equipment, etc.)
2. Necessary training and certification:
 - Individuals conducting or participating in research involving vertebrate animals must have an animal research protocol approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC). See <http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/iacuc/>.
 - Persons working on a protocol having access to subjects or data with personal identifiers must take an online confidentiality and security training on human research. See <http://www.virginia.edu/vprgs/irb/>.
 - Persons conducting or participating in research involving radioactive material, infectious agents, human tissues, human fluids

or human blood must take the biosafety training and infection control training. Please refer to the following websites for more information: <http://keats.admin.virginia.edu/rad/home.html>
<http://www.healthsystem.virginia.edu/internet/research/training-compliance.cfm>

3. Other appropriate departmental safety issues

Next Scheduled Review: December 2009

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Implemented October 8, 2002; revised November 13, 2002; revised December 4, 2006