

Deep Griha Society Volunteer Policy & Agreement

Introduction

Deep Griha Society (DGS) has worked with volunteers since 1981, recognising the significant contribution that volunteers can make to the organisation's work and service objectives.

This document – the *Deep Griha Society Volunteer Policy & Agreement* – defines the term 'volunteer' and sets out the principles, practices and procedures to be followed for the appointment, management and guidance of volunteers from January 2008 onwards.

While volunteers often make valuable contributions towards the work of DGS, please note that volunteers are not intended to *replace* DGS project staff, but to *support and assist* them.

Definition

Volunteers may be described as individuals who put their experience, knowledge and skills at the disposal of an organisation, free of charge, with the primary aim of helping the organisation to achieve its service objectives and / or to bring some benefit to the local community. In this sense, volunteers are to be distinguished from students, other work placements, and interns, where the primary aim is usually for the student or intern to obtain certain work experience or to carry out work or research.

The definition of 'volunteer' will however continue to apply to INTERNATIONAL students and research fellows who come to DGS to undertake work experience projects, medical electives and research projects which go towards achieving the organisation's service objectives and to benefit our target communities.

In the context of research projects, DGS must be credited and all reports produced must be shared with DGS.

Volunteer Appointments

In appointing volunteers, DGS will adhere to the following principles:

- Volunteers will not be engaged in work which facilitates the loss of an existing employee's post. As a guideline, volunteers should not be deputed to tasks or projects that would normally be undertaken by paid employees.
- When applying, the prospective volunteer should send an up-to-date CV and a covering letter outlining their interest and intentions for working at DGS (a Statement of Purpose) and at least one written reference. This application will be considered by the Volunteer Coordinator, who will respond to the application with a decision within 7 days.
- Successful applicants will be forwarded a brief role description outlining the specific tasks, responsibilities and reporting lines anticipated, along with terms and conditions including the duration, hours, expenses, insurance, etc., relating to the placement.

Receiving and inducting the volunteer

Prior to commencing their placement at DGS, each successful volunteer shall be formally allocated to a particular employee (Team Leader or above) who will manage, supervise and mentor the volunteer throughout the duration of their placement. The manager's responsibilities will include ensuring that the volunteer receives the following:

- Planned induction to DGS.
- Regular supervision and support sessions.
- Positive, constructive feedback on their contribution.
- Adequate support and services to perform their tasks effectively.
- An exit interview.

Equal opportunities

DGS recognises that the activity of volunteering can provide a volunteer with experiences and opportunities for self and career development. In accordance with DGS equal opportunity policy, volunteer placements at the organisation will be therefore be open to individuals irrespective of race, religion, caste, gender, disability, sexuality, age or marital status. In addition, the role specification must set out the equal opportunity dimension and any specific equality requirements.

Discipline, Grievance & Volunteer Code of Conduct

Discipline and codes of conduct are meant for the safety and security of the volunteers, to avoid potential legal liabilities for DGS, and to maintain the dignity and reputation of DGS project centres and the residential centre for international volunteers – the *Deep Griha Cultural Centre* (DGCC).

Volunteers will be subjected to DGS disciplinary procedures in accordance with the Volunteer Code of Conduct. Volunteers will also be entitled to use the DGS complaints procedure. Grievances should be directly reported to the Volunteer Coordinator. The Volunteer Coordinator will report these to the Administrator and the Director.

Volunteers are expected to follow the Volunteer Code of Conduct while they are placed on DGS projects and during their stay at the DGCC. All volunteers should sign the Volunteer Code of Conduct after they are selected for volunteering with DGS.

Volunteer Code of Conduct

Dress Code

Please dress modestly as per Indian standards. For female volunteers, preferred dress is 'Salwar & Kameez'. Long trousers, long skirts (below knee length) and loose shirts or T-shirts are also permissible. For male volunteers, long trousers and T-shirts or shirts should be worn, except for certain projects (e.g. City of Child) where short trousers are permissible.

Time Code

All volunteers must keep their prescribed timings for leaving the centre for work and returning back to DGCC.

DGCC Rules

Volunteers residing at DGCC are expected to show respect to fellow volunteers and DGCC support staff by following a set simple guidelines drawn up to facilitate communal living:

- Keep rooms and common areas tidy.
- Indicate if you will be present for meals by ticking against your name on the blackboard provided in the kitchen.
- Wash up cutlery and crockery after use.
- Keep noise levels to a minimum after 11pm. Please remember DGCC is located in the heart of a residential area.
- Smoking is permitted only on the balconies and terrace. Please use ashtrays provided and DO NOT soil cups, plates etc.
- Alcohol and intoxicating substances are not permitted at DGCC. If a volunteer is found with alcohol or any intoxicating substance then their placement with DGS will be terminated.

Staying Out

Any volunteer who would like to stay out beyond the prescribed timing to return to DGCC (currently 11.30pm) must take **prior** permission from the relevant authority (currently the Director). Information about the intended location with detailed addresses and contact numbers should be provided. In case of insufficient information or any other reason for which management decides not to give permission to stay out, volunteers must abide by the decision of the management. Noncompliance to the instruction of timing given can evoke the termination policy.

NOTE: this policy is not designed to restrict the movement of volunteers, nor prevent socialising or 'nights out'. It is designed to ensure the safety of volunteers, maintain the dignity and reputation of DGCC within the local community, and demonstrate respect for DGCC staff members. *Please act responsibly and respect the rules.*

Behaviour Code

All volunteers are expected to be polite to their colleagues and DGS staff and beneficiaries. Volunteers are expected to demonstrate modesty in common places and not to show excess physical intimacy.

Visitors, friends and relatives are not permitted to be entertained in the rooms of volunteers. Entry of visitors, friends and relatives is restricted to the reception hall with prior permission from the Centre Supervisor.

In case of noncompliance to the Volunteer Code of Conduct, the disciplinary policy will be invoked – which could result in termination from the DGS placement.

Termination

Where appropriate, the role and placement of the volunteer may be terminated by the Director where behaviour equivalent to gross misconduct or violation of code of conduct has occurred. In all cases the volunteer will be entitled to an explanation of the decision and action taken. The Director will report any such terminations to the Chair of the Executive Committee.

Expenses

Volunteers will not be entitled to expenses such as travel, and will only receive reimbursement of expenses in cases where the cost has been agreed to be covered by their Team Leader / line manager in advance (using the expenses request form).

Insurance

Volunteers will be responsible for organising their own insurance for the duration of their placement at DGS.

Monitoring and review

It will be the responsibility of the Director to regularly review the operation of the DGS volunteer policy to ensure that it is relevant and in accordance with the DGS equal opportunity policy.

Agreement

I, _____ have read and fully comprehend the *Deep Griha Society Volunteer Policy* and hereby agree to abide by the Volunteer Code of Conduct as described above.

Volunteer:

Volunteer Coordinator

Date:

Date: