



Genetic Support Network of Victoria

Murdoch Children's Research Institute

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GSNV VOLUNTEER PROGRAM GUIDELINES 2022

This document including all appendices forms the GSNV Volunteer Program Kit provided to volunteers and volunteer hosts participating in the GSNV Volunteer Program.

Purpose:

The GSNV Volunteer Program kit outlines the GSNV process and expectations for all aspects of our program.

It provides clarity and reference for all participants.

This document provides the program guidelines including definitions and responsibilities of all parties and operational guidelines.

All guidelines are set out in accordance with the National Volunteering Standards (Volunteering Australia) and the Murdoch Children's Research Institute Non-Employee Policy and Procedures (MCRI1010). Copies of relevant MCRI policies are available upon request from the GSNV Group Leader and/or the GSNV Volunteer Coordinator.

Appendices:

- 1) Volunteering Australia Definition of a Volunteer
- 2) GSNV Volunteer Program Flowchart
- 3) General Guidelines
- 4) Volunteer Program Summary of Skills and Commitment Form
- 5) GSNV Timesheet Template
- 6) Volunteer Model Code of Practice
- 7) Volunteer Position Description Template
- 8) Volunteer Host Process Flowchart
- 9) Volunteer Rights
- 10) Feedback Form – Volunteers
- 11) Feedback Form – Volunteer Host Organisations
- 12) Volunteer Undertaking
- 13) Volunteer Host Organisation Declaration

Volunteers and Volunteer Host organisations will be required to sign and return to the GSNV the relevant declaration included at Appendix 13 or Appendix 14 prior to the commencement of a volunteer experience.

1. Definition of a volunteer in the GSNV Program

1.1. The volunteers in this program will be current students in the Masters of Genetic Counselling program, students interested in applying for the Masters or individuals seeking hands-on experience in the genetic community

1.2. The GSNV uses the definition of formal volunteering outlined in the National Standards (Volunteering Australia, Appendix 1)

2. Duties of each party

2.1. GSNV Key Areas of Responsibility

- Administer the GSNV Volunteer program in accordance with the current GSNV Volunteer Program Guidelines, Flowchart at Appendix 2 and in accordance with the General Guidelines at Appendix 3.
- Determine the skill, interest base and commitment flexibility of potential volunteers – Appendix 4
- Reviewing, revising and providing policies and procedures to support volunteers and volunteer hosts
- Manage the GSNV Volunteer Program in accordance with the Volunteering Australia *National Standards of Involving Volunteers in Not-for Profit Organisations* 2nd edition.
- Collecting appropriate documents (WWC, Police Checks, Student ID etc.) in accordance with MCRI Pre-Employment Screening Policy (MCRI1005)
- Maintaining program documents including database regarding volunteer participation, time allocations (via timesheets provided at Appendix 5), arrangements with volunteer hosts, details of tasks submitted by volunteer hosts, volunteer personal information in a confidential manner in accordance with MCRI Privacy Policy (MCRI6003)
- Ensure volunteer hosts are clear in describing their requirements
- Matching volunteers in mutually beneficial activities and monitoring progress.
- Ensure projects are worthwhile and appropriate for both volunteers and volunteer host
- Provide volunteers with an orientation to the GSNV and the current genetic health community environment
- Promote communication between volunteer host, volunteers and the GSNV
- Promote the recognition of volunteers (see section 11)
- Dealing with grievances (see section 8)
- Offering debriefing services to volunteers

- Reviewing tasks at their completion with volunteer host and volunteers

2.2. Volunteer Key Areas of Responsibility

- Act professionally, be courteous, punctual and respectful at all times
- Attend an orientation session with the GSNV
- Sign and adhere to the GSNV Undertaking at Appendix 13 as per MCRI Confidentiality Policy (MCRI6004)
- Provide copies of Working With Children, police check and Student ID in accordance with MCRI Non-Employee Screening Policy (MCRI1005)
- Document time spent volunteering using a GSNV timesheet
- Notify and discuss any issues with volunteer host supervisors or the GSNV
- Notify the GSNV if you are no longer able to volunteer your time
- Give verbal feedback to the GSNV about the program, the GSNV and volunteer hosts and to complete a feedback form (Template – Appendix 10)
- Communicate openly with the GSNV and volunteer hosts (eg. by CC'ing emails)
- (For Students of the Master of Genetic Counselling: the intention of this program is *not* for students to act in a genetic counselling capacity but to gain hands on experience in the genetic community)

2.2.1. Requirements of Volunteers

- Must be at least 18 years of age
- Enjoy providing a service and working with others in a challenging environment
- Open to various cultural and religious beliefs
- Be willing and capable of demonstrating a high level of responsibility
- Be dedicated and show commitment
- Must have effective written and verbal communication
- Have knowledge of and demonstrate ethical practice

2.2.2. Examples of Volunteer duties

- Assist volunteer host leaders in their activities
- Support and develop projects with the GSNV
- Fundraising activities – coordinators and helpers
- Administration activities

- Speakers group – coordinators and speakers
- Newsletter – packers and proof-readers
- Seminars – coordinators, speakers and helpers

2.3 Volunteer Host Key Areas of Responsibility

- Operate within the code of practice at all times – Appendix 6
- To communicate with volunteers and the GSNV
- Ensure projects are worthwhile and appropriate
- Be specific about tasks; completion dates, locations, time requirements, what the task will involve, what is expected of the volunteer – Complete Volunteer Position Description Template – Appendix 7
- Operate in accordance with the Volunteer Host Process outlined at Appendix 8.
- Provide volunteers with an orientation to your group including providing volunteers with a supervisor/contact person within the volunteer host as a volunteer's first point of call with any questions or issues they would like to discuss
- Respect privacy and confidentiality in the storage of personal information
- Volunteer hosts are encouraged to review tasks at their completion and give verbal feedback to volunteers and to complete a feedback form which can be passed on to GSNV and volunteers (Template Appendix 11)
- Make contact with GSNV to discuss any constructive criticism
- Volunteer hosts may suggest publications/research that may enhance or assist their volunteer's experience when working on their task/project.
- Be considerate of the health, wellbeing and safety of the volunteer, working within legislative requirements (WHS Act 2011) and with consideration to the physical and cultural environment.
- The recognition of volunteers through 'thank you notes', volunteer host newsletters or through certificates
- Understanding and adhering to the rights of the volunteer (Appendix 9) and responsibilities of hosting a volunteer as outlined in this document.
- Reimbursing any reasonable and prior agreed out-of-pocket expenses incurred by a volunteer whilst working on a task/project.
- Sign and return the Volunteer Host Declaration to GSNV

3. Recruitment of Volunteers

- 3.1.** All potential volunteers will undergo an interview, assessment and reference check and police clearance check. A Working with Children Check is also essential (refer to MCRI Pre-Employment Screening Policy MCRI1005)
- 3.2.** Volunteer contact details and personnel files will be maintained confidentially
- 3.3.** Volunteers will be given a clear statement of their rights and responsibilities (refer to Volunteer Rights, Appendix 9,)
- 3.4.** Volunteers will undergo orientation and necessary training
- 3.5.** Volunteers may work with staff, other volunteers or on their own and will be given clear instructions relating to the tasks they are asked to perform
- 3.6.** Staff members will be adequately resourced to ensure that are able to carry out their responsibilities when working with volunteers
- 3.7.** The volunteers will be current students in the Masters of Genetic Counselling program, students interested in applying for the Masters or individuals who have contacted the GSNV seeking some hands-on experience in the genetic community
- 3.8.** Information regarding volunteer recruitment will be posted on the GSNV website, in newsletters, at Universities, through communication with co-ordinators of the Master of Genetic Counselling program and on the Master of Genetic Counselling webpage

4. Claiming of Expenses for Volunteers

Procedures for volunteers to claim expenses are located in the Volunteer Deployment and Expenses Policy (Appendix 12) and Vehicle Usage for MCRI Policy (MCRI2012)

5. Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) for Volunteers

- 5.1.** Volunteers will be asked to advise the Group Leader or nominated GSNV supervisor of any existing medical condition that may hinder their ability to undertake volunteer tasks safely
- 5.2.** Volunteers will work within the legislative environment as outlined by the *Work Health and Safety Act 2011*.

- 5.3.** To ensure their personal safety, all volunteers are advised and encouraged to follow safe lifting procedures and other general occupational safety and health guidelines
- 5.4.** Volunteers will not be asked to perform duties or tasks that they feel may result in harm to themselves and others
- 5.5.** Volunteers who work from home are responsible for abiding by the WHS requirements as they would in any other workplace.
- 5.6.** Refer to MCRI Fieldwork Risk Management Policy, Procedure & Guideline (MCRI1117)

6. Insurance and Legal Liability

- 6.1.** All volunteers are covered by Murdoch Children's Research Institute's (MCRI) professional indemnity & public liability insurance, regardless if based at GSNV office or visiting an external volunteer host (see MCRI Non-Employee Policy & Procedures MCRI1010 section 12.4.1)

7. Privacy

- 7.1.** Volunteers may, during the course of their duty, become aware of or possess information disclosed by third parties that is not generally known and is of value to the person who disclosed it. Volunteers are asked to respect the confidentiality and privacy rights of volunteer host members and GSNV members (refer to MCRI Confidentiality Policy MCRI6004)
- 7.2.** All parties will manage confidential records and always act in accordance with requirements as outlined by the Commonwealth *Privacy Act* 1988 and the Victorian *Information Privacy Act* 2000.
- 7.3.** The GSNV will also act in accordance with the MCRI Privacy Policy (MCRI6003) when dealing with personal information
- 7.4.** Volunteers must sign an undertaking as per MCRI Confidentiality Policy MCRI6004 – Appendix 12.

8. Dealing with grievances

- 8.1.** Grievances may be discussed informally with the Group Leader or a nominated GSNV representative
- 8.2.** Grievances may be raised by; the volunteer, the volunteer host organisation, GSNV volunteer coordinator or otherwise aggrieved party.
- 8.3.** If an informal resolution process is not appropriate/suitable or if the issue remains unresolved then a formal grievance may be registered by submitting a grievance letter to the President, GSNV Inc, which will be handled appropriately and with support from MCRI Human Resources (refer to MCRI Staff Grievance Policy & Procedure MCRI1014) if required.
- 8.4.** Each grievance will be dealt with in a professional and discrete manner that respects the volunteer's and volunteer host's right to fair and equitable treatment

9. Incident reporting

- 9.1.** In the event of an incident, volunteers and/or volunteer hosts must contact the Group Leader of GSNV by telephone as soon as practical
- 9.2.** The GSNV Group Leader will file an incident report on 'I-Manage' (internal MCRI computer-based management system) when necessary (refer to MCRI Incident Investigation & Reporting Procedure MCRI1103)

10. Managing Volunteer Performance

- 10.1.** It is the aim of the GSNV to select the best volunteer to perform the necessary duties, and to provide volunteers with the orientation, support and training they need to perform their job competently
- 10.2.** The GSNV will also support volunteer hosts (with prior agreement) for initial training for staff and volunteers if required
- 10.3.** As some volunteers may need more time than others to learn to perform their job competently the planning of training and supervision for each volunteer will consider the learning needs of each individual as much as is possible

10.4. If a volunteer is found to be unsuited to an area of work, or is not performing the work competently, the following procedure applies:

- -discussions take place involving the volunteer, the Group Leader to raise and resolve the issue;
- -if the issue remains unresolved the Group Leader will try to place the volunteer in a different area of role to which he/she may be better suited;
- -in the new area or role the volunteer will be supported, monitored and reviewed to ensure that performance is maintained to the required level.

10.5. Termination of a volunteer's arrangement with the GSNV will be in accordance with MCRI Non-Employee Policy and Procedures MCRI 1010

11. Recognition of Volunteer Contribution

11.1. The GSNV will recognise the contribution made by volunteers by providing regular support from staff and Committee members, and acknowledgement in the quarterly communications/ Annual General Meeting report.

11.2. The GSNV will provide a certificate of recognition to the volunteer for the duty completed

APPENDIX 1

VOLUNTEERING AUSTRALIA DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEERING - 2015

Volunteering is time willingly given for the common good and without financial gain.

PRINCIPLES OF VOLUNTEERING

Volunteering benefits the community and the volunteer

Volunteer work is unpaid

Volunteering is always a matter of choice

Volunteering is not compulsorily undertaken to receive pensions or government allowances

Volunteering is a legitimate way in which citizens can participate in the activities of their community

Volunteering is a vehicle for individuals or groups to address human, environmental and social needs

Volunteering should not be exploitative or used to replace paid employment.

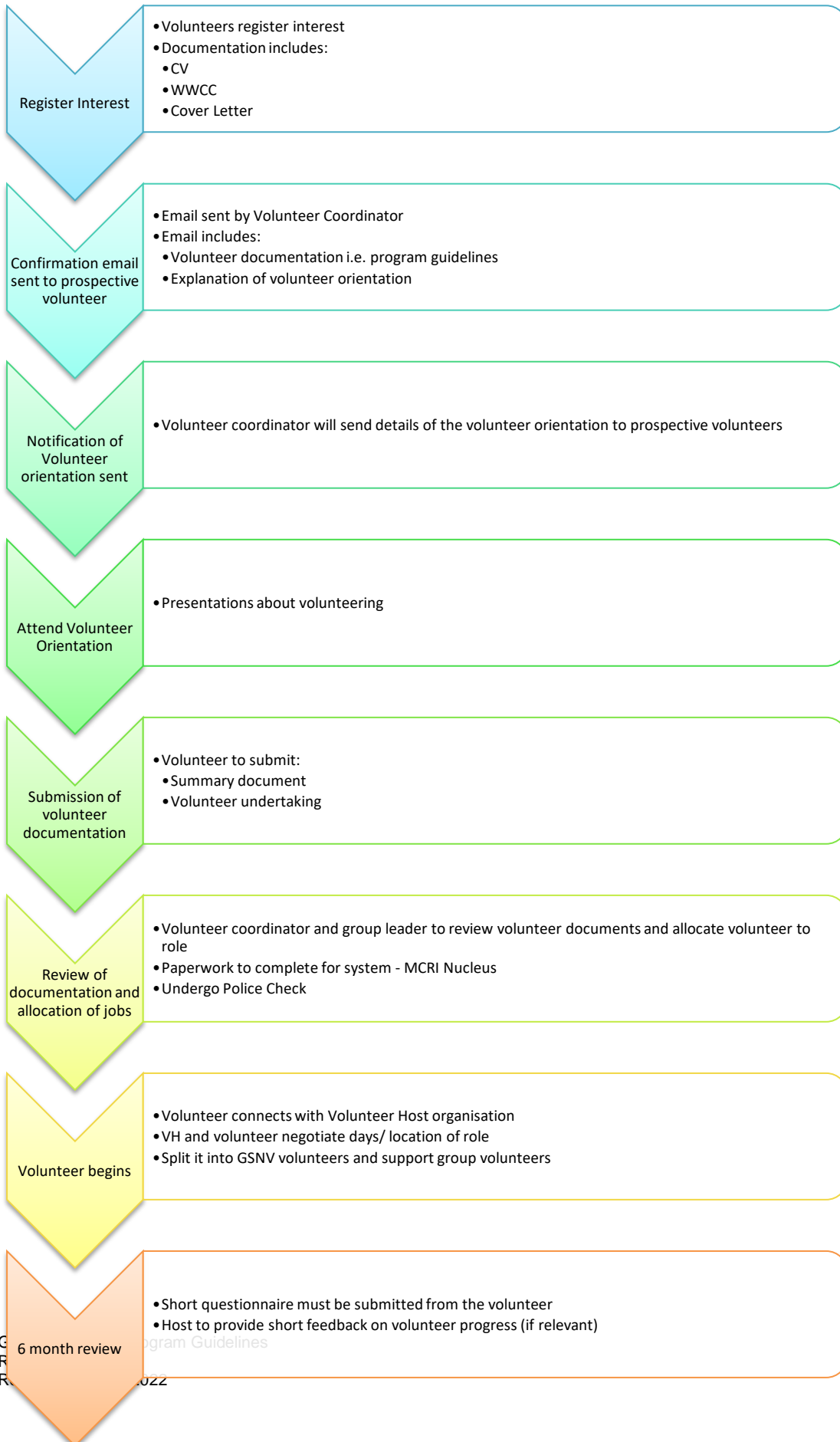
Volunteering respects the rights, dignity and culture of others

Volunteering promotes human rights and equality



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APPENDIX 3

GENETIC SUPPORT NETWORK OF VICTORIA VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Philosophy on volunteer involvement and objectives for involving volunteers

As an organisation committed to the rights of everyone to flourish we empower people through education, advocacy and support.

- We empower people to make decisions about their health and wellbeing
- We collaborate for equity and cultural change
- We provide an interface between people with genetic and rare conditions and health professionals to improve the general patient experience

Our purpose is to provide access to the practical and pathways to the possible.

Connection is a key success strategy for the GSNV to deliver on our vision, mission and purpose.

Our aim with the GSNV Volunteer program is to connect those who need help with those who are able to offer it.

The GSNV understands that many Volunteer Hosts may find it difficult to source volunteers and run their organisations on limited time and resources. The GSNV also recognises that there is a population of people seeking to volunteer and those who would greatly benefit from interaction with Volunteer Hosts and the community. The GSNV Volunteer Program hopes that all parties will benefit from this interaction.

Tasks/projects completed by volunteers will benefit both volunteers and Volunteer Hosts as each jointly gain experience and knowledge in contributing to the community sector. With the help of volunteers, the interests and wellbeing of people affected by genetic and rare conditions will be promoted through volunteer host activities, programs, publications and facilitation of education, advocacy and support.

Managing and Implementing the Quality System

The GSNV adheres to the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement in Not for Profit Organisations, the Model Code of Practice for Involving Volunteers and complies with the Australian definition and principles of volunteering. We will promote and protect the rights of our volunteers accordingly. As part of our Volunteer Program Guidelines, we outline the rights of all volunteers.



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As Project Coordinator of the GSNV, Kari Klein, with the assistance of all GSNV staff will be responsible for managing the volunteer program. Each volunteer host will nominate a person to be responsible for supervising volunteers under their watch.

Policies and procedures will be reviewed and revised accordingly by the GSNV annually to reflect feedback and effectiveness. Upon review, any updated documentation will be disseminated appropriately.

Policies and procedures will be made available to volunteer hosts on the GSNV website. The GNSV Volunteer Program Guidelines will be provided to all volunteers and volunteer hosts on their engagement in the program.

Source: Volunteering Australia *Start Smart toolkit: a toolkit developed for developing effective volunteer policies and procedures in not for profit organisations*: Volunteering Australia Inc.

APPENDIX 4

VOLUNTEER PROGRAM SUMMARY OF SKILLS AND COMMITMENT FORM

Name:
Address:
Email:
Phone:

INTERESTS:

eg. Working with families, web design, scientific writing, etc

-

SKILLS AND KNOWLEGDE:

eg. Computer skills, interpersonal skills, etc

-

QUALIFICATIONS / CURRENTLY STUDYING:

eg. BSc majoring in genetics

-

TIME COMMITMENT:

eg. 1 day per week for 6 months, preferably on weekends.

APPENDIX 6

MODEL CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ORGANISATIONS INVOLVING VOLUNTEERS

In order to enhance the volunteer's experience and comply with legislation and duty of care – all Volunteer Host organisations agree to comply with the model code of practice.

Volunteer Host organisations will:

- Interview and employ volunteer staff in accordance with anti-discrimination and equal opportunity legislation
- Provide volunteer staff with orientation and training where required
- Provide volunteer staff with a healthy, safe and legislatively compliant workplace
- Provide appropriate and adequate insurance coverage for volunteer staff
- Not place volunteer staff in roles that were previously held by paid staff or have been identified as paid jobs
- Differentiate between paid and unpaid roles
- Define volunteer roles and develop clear position descriptions
- Provide appropriate levels of support and management for volunteer staff
- Ensure volunteers are not required to take additional work during industrial disputes or paid staff shortages
- Provide volunteers with a copy or access to all policies pertaining to volunteer staff
- Provide all staff with information on grievance and disciplinary policies and procedures
- Acknowledge the rights of volunteer staff
- Ensure that the work of volunteer staff complements but does not undermine the work of paid staff
- Offer volunteer staff the opportunity for professional development
- Reimburse volunteer staff for pre-approved out-of pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation
- Treat volunteer staff as valuable team members and invite them to participate as appropriate in decision making.
- Acknowledge the contribution of volunteers



APPENDIX 7

Volunteer Position Description	
Name of support group	
Reports to	
Contact person	
Task title	
Support Group Summary: <i>One paragraph summary about the support group requesting assistance</i>	
Role description	
Role details	
Start date:	
Task deadline:	
Location:	



Skills and background knowledge required

Knowledge of any specific computer programs or software required, knowledge of the relevant genetics condition. Any suggested references/readings?

Documentation required

For example Working with Children Check, Police Check or references

Other information

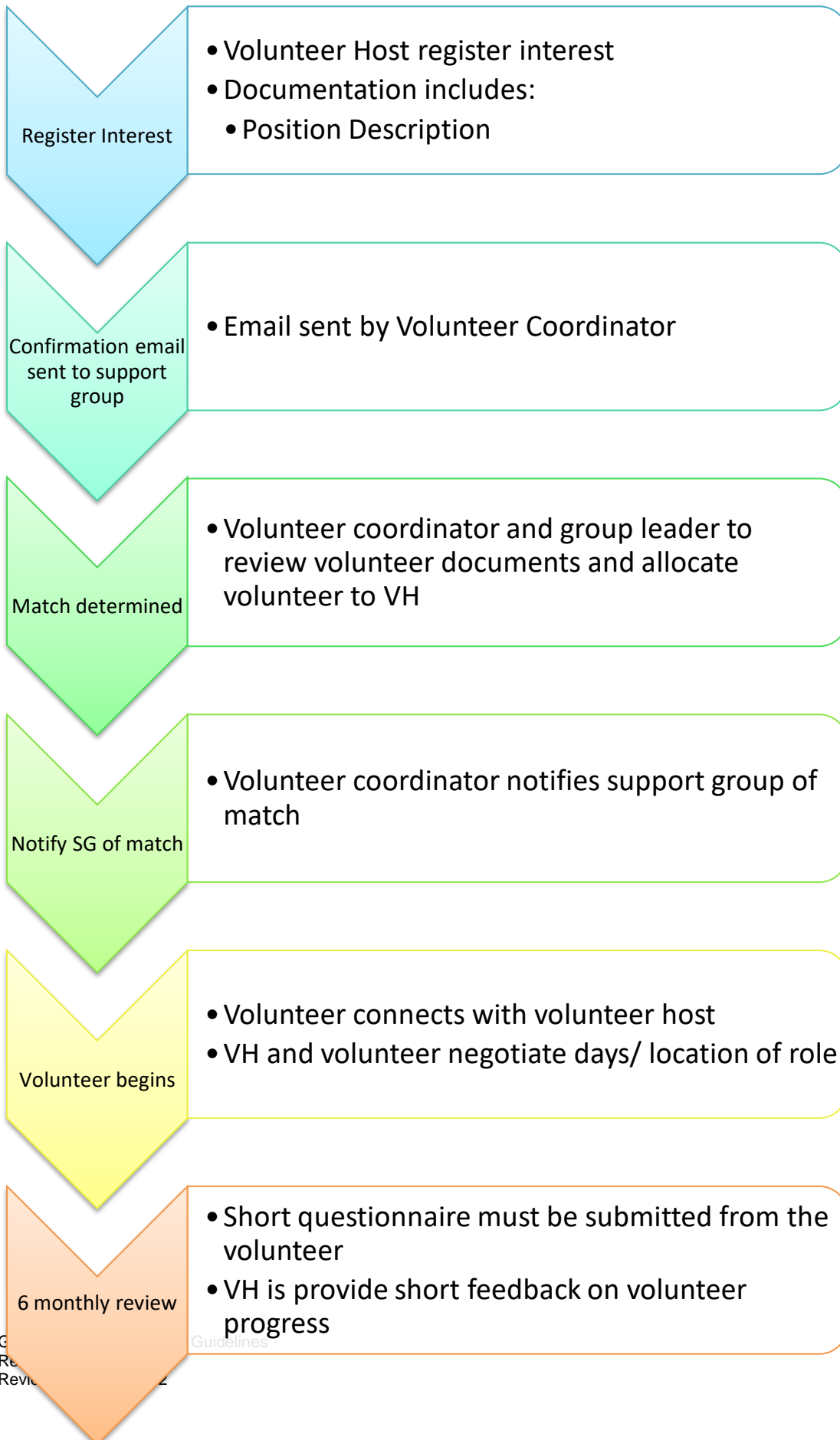
Authorisation

Name:

Title:

Signature:

Date:



APPENDIX 9

VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

Unlike paid staff, volunteers are not covered by award conditions or workplace agreements. Volunteers however, do have rights, some of which are enshrined in legislation and some of which are the moral obligations of an organisation involving volunteers.

The following list is the basis of your rights as a volunteer:

As a volunteer, you have the right:

- To work in a healthy and safe environment (as outlined under the C'wealth WHS Act 2011) and the MCRI Fieldwork Risk Management Policy, Procedure and Guidelines MCRI1117)
- To be interviewed and employed in accordance with equal opportunity and anti-discrimination legislation
- To be adequately covered by insurance
- To be given accurate and truthful information about the organisation for which you are working
- To be reimbursed for agreed out-of-pocket expenses incurred on behalf of the organisation for which you are working.
- To be given a copy of the organisation's volunteer policy and any other policy that affects your work
- To have a job description and agreed working hours
- To be provided with an orientation to the organisation
- To have access to a grievance procedure and process
- To have your confidential and personal information dealt with in accordance with the C'wealth Privacy Act 1988
- To be provided with sufficient training for you to successfully do your job
- To fill a position that has not previously been filled by a paid employee
- To not do the work of a paid employee during an industrial dispute

Source: Volunteering Australia (2001) Appendix 2: Volunteer Rights, National Standards for involving volunteers in not-for-profit organisations, 2nd edition, Volunteering Australia Inc.

In addition to the above, the GSNV will strive to provide volunteers with the following:

- Access to supervision/the ability to contact a person in a supervisory position
- Access to debriefing services
- Access to a GSNV staff member with any concerns or queries



APPENDIX 10

GSNV VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FEEDBACK FORM VOLUNTEER

Please help us to improve our services and future experiences for volunteers by providing your feedback about the time you spent with your host organisation

Please provide a brief summary of the tasks/project completed:

What did you find most valuable about your volunteer experience

Describe any challenges/opportunities for improvement you recognised during your volunteer experience



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Would you recommend this volunteer experience to others? Why/why not

Please note by completing this form, you are also providing permission for this feedback to be used to inform improvement and to develop public testimonial.

The Genetic Support Network of Victoria (GSNV), thanks you for your valuable feedback.



APPENDIX 11

GSNV VOLUNTEER PROGRAM FEEDBACK FORM VOLUNTEER HOST ORGANISATION

Please help us to improve our services and future experiences for volunteers by providing your feedback about the time you spent with GSNV Volunteer(s)

Please provide a brief summary of the tasks/project your volunteer was assigned:

What did you find most valuable about your volunteer experience

Describe any challenges/opportunities for improvement you recognised during your volunteer experience



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Would you participate in future volunteer programs managed by the GSNV. Why/Why Not?

Would you recommend this volunteer to others? Why/why not

Please note by completing this form, you are also providing permission for this feedback to be used to inform improvement and to develop public testimonial.

The Genetic Support Network of Victoria (GSNV), thanks you for your valuable feedback.

APPENDIX 12

VOLUNTEER UNDERTAKING 2021

As part of my role as a volunteer in the GSNV Volunteer Program,

I, _____, understand and agree to my roles and responsibilities as outlined in the GSNV Volunteer Program Guidelines and the Position Description provided by my host organisation. In addition, I understand and agree to the following:

Confidentiality:

1. I WILL ONLY access information I need to perform my work as a volunteer.
2. I WILL NOT remove, disclose, copy, release, sell, alter or destroy any confidential information unless it is part of my role as a volunteer and under the direction of an appropriately authorised supervisor.
3. I WILL NOT misuse or be careless with private or confidential information and the devices which may store them.
4. I WILL ONLY use shared computer passwords when authorised to do so.

Working Environment

5. I WILL maintain professional, courteous and considerate behaviour standards when I am involved in all GSNV or host organisation activities.
6. I WILL familiarise myself and comply with all appropriate policies and procedures including: code of conduct, bullying and harassment policies, Workplace, health and safety policies.
7. I ACKNOWLEDGE that if I create or develop any intellectual property while I am engaged as a volunteer within the auspice of the GSNV, such intellectual property is and will remain the property of the GSNV unless a different arrangement is agreed in writing.

SIGNED _____

DATE:

APPENDIX 13

VOLUNTEER HOST DECLARATION 2021

As part of my role as a volunteer supervisor in the GSNV Volunteer Program,

I, _____, on behalf of _____ understand and agree to the roles and responsibilities of volunteer host organisations as outlined in the GSNV Volunteer Program Guidelines 2017. In addition, I understand and agree to the following:

General

1. I acknowledge that any performance issues with the volunteer will be jointly managed by the GSNV and our organisation.
2. I acknowledge that any intellectual property created or developed by the volunteer while engaged as a volunteer within the auspice of the GSNV, such intellectual property is and will remain the property of the GSNV unless a different arrangement is agreed in writing

Confidentiality:

3. I will ensure all volunteer information and disclosures will be treated in confidence.
4. I will ensure that our volunteer has access only to private and confidential information, as it is essential to their work.
5. We will only use shared computer passwords when authorised to do so.

Working Environment

6. We will maintain professional, courteous and considerate behaviour standards when I am involved in all interactions with the volunteer.
7. We will familiarise ourselves and comply with all appropriate policies and procedures including: code of conduct, bullying and harassment policies, Workplace, health and safety policies and ensure access for our volunteer.
8. We will ensure that our volunteer has all resources available that are required to successfully complete their task/activity.

SIGNED _____

DATE: