



Volunteer **HANDBOOK**





“

Service beyond self.
Quality volunteerism,
building better, together.

”

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Part I: Foundational Information

INTRODUCTION

This handbook was developed by the Office of the University Extension Service – Volunteerism Management Department (OUES–VMD) to guide volunteers and program coordinators in ethical, effective, and meaningful service. It outlines protocols, roles, expectations, and standards that govern volunteer engagement at Tarlac State University (TSU).

Volunteerism complements the university's extension mandate by fostering civic responsibility, social engagement, and community empowerment among students, faculty, staff, and alumni (PNVSCA, 2015; Republic Act No. 9418, 2007).

LEGAL AND POLICY BASIS

Volunteerism at TSU is guided by the following national policies and frameworks:

Republic Act No. 9418 or the Volunteer Act of 2007 This act institutionalizes volunteerism as a strategy for national development and international cooperation. It encourages all sectors to participate in volunteer programs, affirming that volunteers are partners in development and transformation. It also mandates the creation of a comprehensive national volunteer service program and promotes standards for volunteer management (Congress of the Philippines, 2007).

Philippine National Volunteerism Framework (PNVSCA, 2015) This framework defines volunteerism as acts of service done freely for the benefit of others and society, without financial gain. It aligns with RA 9418 and provides guidance on documentation, ethics, and reporting mechanisms for volunteer service.

CHED and DBM Guidelines on Extension These outline the standards for university-based extension programs, which may intersect with volunteerism when performed beyond mandated academic or service requirements (Cabrera & Martinez, 2022).



PRINCIPLES OF UNIVERSITY VOLUNTEERISM

Volunteerism at TSU is guided by the following core principles:

Voluntariness: Acts of service are performed freely and without coercion (RA 9418, Sec. 3b).

Ethical Engagement: Volunteers respect the dignity, values, and customs of communities served.

Partnership: Collaboration among university units, civil society, and local communities.

Accountability and Transparency: Volunteers are accountable to the institutions and people they serve.

Sustainability: Volunteer efforts are designed to contribute to lasting positive impact.

VOLUNTEERISM FRAMEWORK

TSU implements the UNISERVE Framework (UNiversity SERVE: Unifying Extension and Volunteerism for Responsive Engagement), a model that aligns university volunteerism and extension into one strategic approach to community engagement.

CATEGORIES OF VOLUNTEER WORK

TSU recognizes two key categories under volunteerism:

CATEGORY	DEFINITION	REPORTING
Volunteer Work Only (VWO)	Service rendered freely without compensation and outside formal academic or work requirements; often led by student orgs, NGOs, or civic groups (PNVSCA, 2015).	PNVSCA
Volunteer Extension Work (Overlap/Combination)	Activities that are part of approved extension programs but are performed voluntarily beyond curriculum or workload requirements. These are reportable under extension and volunteerism agencies (RA 9418; Cabrera & Martinez, 2022).	CHED, DBM, PNVSCA

Such recognition supports Section 4 of RA 9418, which encourages government and academic institutions to develop programs where volunteerism is promoted alongside professional and civic duties.

Part II: Volunteer Engagement Protocols & Guidelines

VOLUNTEER PROTOCOLS

All volunteers at Tarlac State University (TSU) must comply with the following protocols to ensure that all volunteer efforts are properly documented, organized, and aligned with institutional and national standards for volunteer service. These steps also fulfill the requirements of Republic Act No. 9418, which calls for "organized and properly managed volunteer service programs" (Sec. 6).

REQUIRED FORMS AND DOCUMENTATION

To facilitate smooth volunteer engagement, TSU—through the Office of the University Extension Service – Volunteerism Management Department (UES–VMD)—requires volunteers and program organizers to accomplish the following existing official forms at the appropriate stages:

Volunteer Sign-Up Form

The Volunteer Sign-Up Form is completed by individuals who wish to register as part of the university's pool of volunteers. This form collects basic information, skills, areas of interest, and availability to enable UES–VMD to identify and match volunteers to appropriate opportunities.

When to accomplish: Prior to participating in any university-sanctioned volunteer activity.

Purpose: To create and maintain an official roster of TSU volunteers and ensure that volunteers are included in official documentation and recognition.

Request for Volunteer Support Form

The Request for Volunteer Support Form is completed by faculty, staff, student organizations, or units organizing an activity that requires volunteers. This form outlines the activity details, including objectives, date, location, number and qualifications of volunteers needed.

When to accomplish: At least two weeks before the planned activity.

Purpose: To allow UES–VMD to evaluate the request, endorse the activity, and mobilize volunteers accordingly.

Volunteer Commitment and Consent Form

The Volunteer Commitment and Consent Form is signed by individual volunteers after they have been assigned to a specific approved activity. This form documents the volunteer's informed consent to participate, their acknowledgment of their roles and responsibilities, and agreement to abide by safety protocols and university policies.

When to accomplish: After assignment to a specific activity but before actual deployment.

Purpose: To formalize each volunteer's commitment to the activity and safeguard both volunteer and institutional accountability.

Note: Copies of these forms are available at the OUES–VMD office and may also be downloaded from the official university website or PMERS.

Volunteer Exit Form

This form is completed by individual volunteers upon the conclusion of their volunteer service or a specific project. It gathers essential feedback about their overall experience, including suggestions for improvement and reasons for departure.

When to accomplish: Upon completion of a volunteer project or the end of your volunteer service with TSU.

Purpose: To provide valuable insights for the continuous improvement of TSU's volunteer programs and to acknowledge the completion of service.



GENERAL OPERATIONAL PROTOCOLS

To ensure an organized, effective, and compliant volunteer experience, all individuals participating in Tarlac State University (TSU) activities are required to observe the following general operational protocols, designed to promote ethical, effective, and responsive volunteer service.



Attend Mandatory Orientation and Safety Briefings as Scheduled: Alongside submitting your forms, it is imperative that you attend all scheduled mandatory orientation and safety briefings. These sessions are crucial for familiarizing you with:

- TSU's mission, vision, and the specific objectives of the project you are involved in.
- Your roles, responsibilities, and the scope of your tasks.
- The Code of Conduct, ensuring you understand the ethical standards expected.
- Comprehensive safety protocols specific to your activity and location within Tarlac City or other project sites. This includes emergency procedures, hazard identification, and appropriate conduct to ensure the well-being of yourself and others.
- Logistical details and practical information vital for effective participation.
- This is an opportunity to ask questions and clarify any uncertainties before deployment.

Understanding Protocols from Project Leads: All project leads and designated TSU staff are responsible for clearly explaining all relevant protocols, guidelines, and expectations to volunteers. As a volunteer, you are expected to actively listen, seek clarification when needed, and fully understand these protocols before commencing your duties. This ensures a shared understanding and contributes to the safe and effective execution of all activities.

Follow the Designated Coordinators and the Established Chain of Command During Activities: During all volunteer activities, you must adhere strictly to the instructions and guidance provided by your designated TSU volunteer coordinator(s) or team leaders. Respecting the established chain of command ensures efficient coordination, problem-solving, and consistency in project execution. If you have concerns, questions, or encounter issues, always report them through the designated channels.

Accurately Record Volunteer Hours and Submit Any Post-Activity Reports Requested: Your contributions are valuable and need to be properly documented. It is your responsibility to accurately record all volunteer hours as per the instructions provided by your coordinator. Additionally, you may be requested to submit various post-activity reports, feedback forms, or brief summaries of your work. These reports are vital for project evaluation, accountability, and securing future resources. Please complete and submit them diligently and on time.

Participate in Post-Activity Evaluation and Reflection Sessions: Upon completion of a project or at specific milestones, you may be invited or required to participate in evaluation and reflection sessions. Your insights and feedback from these sessions are incredibly valuable. They help TSU assess the effectiveness of its programs, identify areas for improvement, recognize achievements, and enhance future volunteer experiences. Your honest and constructive input contributes directly to the continuous improvement of our community engagement efforts.





FORCE MAJEURE AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

TSU is committed to the safety and well-being of all its volunteers. However, volunteer activities may sometimes be affected by unforeseen and unavoidable circumstances beyond the reasonable control of the university or the volunteers themselves. These events are often referred to as "Force Majeure."

Definition of Force Majeure: For the purpose of this handbook, "Force Majeure" includes, but is not limited to, acts of God (e.g., typhoons, earthquakes, floods, volcanic eruptions, landslides, or other natural disasters common in the Philippines), epidemics, pandemics, government declarations of emergency or states of calamity, civil unrest, war, strikes, or any other event that makes it impossible, unsafe, or impractical to continue volunteer activities as planned.

Impact on Volunteer Activities: In the event of a Force Majeure, TSU reserves the right to:

- Immediately suspend or postpone scheduled volunteer activities.
- Modify existing project plans or operational procedures.
- Relocate volunteers to safer areas, if necessary and feasible.
- Terminate volunteer engagement for the affected period if the safety or feasibility of activities cannot be ensured.

Volunteer Responsibilities During Force Majeure:

- **Prioritize Personal Safety:** Your personal safety is paramount. Follow all emergency instructions from local authorities, TSU staff, and your volunteer coordinator.
- **Stay Informed:** Monitor official announcements from TSU and relevant local government units (LGUs) in Tarlac City and Central Luzon regarding the situation.
- **Await Instructions:** Do not attempt to proceed with activities or travel to project sites if a Force Majeure event is declared or imminent. Await clear instructions from your TSU volunteer coordinator or designated project lead.
- **Communicate:** If possible and safe to do so, inform your volunteer coordinator of your status and location.
- **Cooperate:** Cooperate fully with TSU staff and emergency responders in any evacuation or safety measures.

TSU's Commitment During Force Majeure:

- TSU will prioritize the safety of all volunteers and will endeavor to communicate promptly and clearly regarding any changes to volunteer activities due to Force Majeure.
- Communication will be disseminated through official TSU channels (e.g., project leads, text messages, official social media pages, university website).
- TSU will provide guidance and support to volunteers to the best of its ability during such events.

By understanding these provisions, volunteers can be better prepared for unexpected disruptions and contribute to a safer environment for everyone involved.

CODE OF CONDUCT

As a volunteer supporting Tarlac State University (TSU) activities, you are an invaluable part of our mission and a representative of our efforts. This Code of Conduct outlines the fundamental principles and expectations that guide all volunteer activities. Adhering to these standards ensures a positive, safe, and productive environment for everyone involved – fellow volunteers, beneficiaries, university staff, and the wider community.

Core Principles

Integrity, Honesty, and Humility: We expect all volunteers to act with the highest level of integrity and honesty in all their dealings. This means being truthful, transparent, and accountable for your actions. Approach your work with humility, recognizing that you are here to serve and contribute positively to the community.

Punctuality, Reliability, and Respect for Cultural Sensitivities: Your commitment is vital to our operations. Please be punctual for all scheduled activities and reliable in fulfilling your responsibilities. TSU activities often serve diverse communities; therefore, it is crucial to demonstrate respect for cultural sensitivities at all times. This includes being mindful of local customs, traditions, beliefs, and communication styles prevalent in Tarlac City and Central Luzon.

Upholding Community Dignity, Safety, and Confidentiality: Your actions directly impact the dignity and well-being of the communities we serve. Always strive to uphold community dignity by treating everyone with respect and empathy. Safety is paramount, and you are expected to prioritize your own safety and the safety of others. Many volunteer roles involve access to sensitive information. Maintaining confidentiality of all personal data, stories, and internal discussions is non-negotiable. Do not share any private information outside of authorized channels.

Prohibited Conduct

Avoid Misconduct Including Harassment, Discrimination, and Negligence: TSU has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of misconduct. This includes, but is not limited to:

Harassment: Any unwelcome conduct, verbal or physical, that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. This includes sexual harassment.

Discrimination: Treating individuals unfairly based on characteristics such as age, gender, race, religion, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, or any other protected status.

Negligence: Failure to exercise the care that a reasonably prudent person would exercise in like circumstances, resulting in harm, damage, or compromise to safety. This includes neglecting your duties, failing to follow established procedures, or disregarding safety protocols.

Taking Photos of Minors Without Consent: It is strictly prohibited to take photographs or videos of minors (individuals under 18 years old) without explicit, informed consent from their parent or legal guardian. Even with consent, ensure the child's privacy and dignity are respected. Always prioritize the well-being of the children.

"Saviorism" or "Poverty Pornography": Avoid actions that portray beneficiaries in a way that exploits their vulnerability, romanticizes their struggles, or seeks to highlight your role as a "savior". This includes taking photos or sharing stories that sensationalize poverty, suffering, or hardship for personal gain, social media likes, or to elicit pity. Focus on genuine engagement, empowerment, and respect for their agency and resilience, rather than creating a narrative that undermines their dignity.

Bullying, intimidation, theft, misuse of university resources, or any activity that compromises the safety or well-being of others.



CODE OF CONDUCT



Representing the University Professionally and Following All Institutional Policies:

As a volunteer supporting TSU activities, you are an ambassador for the university. Conduct yourself professionally at all times, both during official volunteer activities and in your personal conduct when it reflects upon the university. This includes adhering to appropriate dress codes, language, and behavior. You are required to follow all institutional policies and guidelines set forth by TSU, including those related to safety, technology use, social media, and conflict resolution. If you are unsure about a policy, please seek clarification from your volunteer coordinator.

Photography and Social Media Sharing:

Use Project-Approved Photos Only: If the project has already processed necessary consent for photography, please share photos directly from the official project page or provided media channels instead of taking and posting your own.

Why This is Important: This practice ensures that all shared images comply with TSU's strict consent policies, especially concerning the privacy and protection of beneficiaries, including minors. It prevents the unintentional sharing of sensitive information or images that have not been properly vetted and approved. Using official photos helps maintain a consistent, ethical, and respectful public representation of the project and its participants. When in doubt, always refrain from taking or posting personal photos.



Consequences of Violating the Code

Any volunteer found to be in violation of this Code of Conduct will be subject to the university's disciplinary processes. This may include, but is not limited to, verbal or written warnings, suspension of volunteer duties, or immediate termination of your volunteer engagement with TSU. Serious violations may also lead to legal action if deemed necessary by the university.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Your safety and the safety of those around you are of utmost importance. Please adhere to the following guidelines:

- 1. Be Aware of Your Surroundings:** Pay attention to your environment, especially when working in unfamiliar areas within Tarlac City or other project sites. Report any suspicious activities or individuals to your volunteer coordinator immediately.
- 2. Follow Instructions:** Always follow the instructions provided by TSU staff, volunteer coordinators, or designated team leaders, especially concerning safety procedures, task execution, and emergency protocols.
- 3. Use Equipment Properly:** If your role involves using tools or equipment, ensure you have received proper training. Use all equipment as instructed and report any malfunctions or damage immediately. Do not attempt to use equipment you are not trained for.
- 4. Personal Health and Well-being:**
 - a. Inform your volunteer coordinator of any pre-existing medical conditions or allergies that might affect your participation or require emergency attention.
 - b. Stay hydrated, especially in the tropical climate of Tarlac. Drink plenty of water throughout the day.
 - c. Protect yourself from the sun by wearing appropriate clothing, hats, and sunscreen.
 - d. Get adequate rest to maintain your physical and mental well-being.
- 5. Emergency Procedures:** Familiarize yourself with emergency exits, first-aid locations, and communication procedures at your volunteer site. In case of an emergency (e.g., fire, medical emergency, natural disaster), remain calm, follow instructions, and assist others as directed by trained personnel.
- 6. Reporting Incidents:** Report all accidents, injuries, near-misses, or unsafe conditions, no matter how minor, to your volunteer coordinator promptly. This helps TSU address potential hazards and improve safety measures.
- 7. Transportation Safety:** If transportation is provided or arranged by TSU, follow all safety guidelines for travel. If using personal transportation, ensure it is in good working condition and adhere to all traffic laws applicable in the Philippines.
- 8. Respect Local Conditions:** Be mindful of specific safety considerations related to the local environment in Tarlac City and Central Luzon, such as weather conditions, road conditions, or specific community protocols.



RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF VOLUNTEERS RIGHTS

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RIGHT TO:

A safe, inclusive, and respectful environment.
Clear roles, orientation, and supervision.
Recognition of volunteer service.

VOLUNTEERS HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO:

Perform duties conscientiously.
Adhere to ethical standards and TSU policies.
Communicate issues or concerns proactively.



RECOGNITION AND INCENTIVES

VOLUNTEERS WILL RECEIVE:

Certificates of appreciation.
Acknowledgment in official records and university events.
Eligibility for awards.
Possible inclusion in official volunteer rosters submitted to PNVSCA.

INCIDENT AND GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Volunteers must immediately report any incident, injury, or misconduct to the OUES-VMD. Use the Post Activity Report Form. Grievances will be handled confidentially, in accordance with TSU rules and RA 9418's stipulations on volunteer protection.

REFERENCES

- Cabrera, J., & Martinez, L. (2022). Volunteerism in higher education: Balancing academic extension and civic duty. *Philippine Journal of Community Engagement*, 5(1), 1–12.
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Volunteerism Management Department (TSU OUES-VMD)