



**VOLUNTEERS WORKING IN THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SCOTLAND  
POLICY DOCUMENT**

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## **1. Introduction**

Volunteers add value, support and diversity to the work of the National Archives of Scotland (NAS). Voluntary placements provide learning and citizenship opportunities and promote the NAS through engagement with the wider community. In addition, the NAS aims to support vocational volunteers wishing to pursue a career in archives and records management and professional development in general. We expect volunteers to possess qualifications or experience that enable them to make a successful contribution to the activities of the NAS.

## **2. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to define the relationship between the NAS and its volunteers. Volunteers are people who undertake agreed activities on behalf of the NAS without expectation of financial remuneration or a contract of employment. This policy is intended to provide volunteers, staff and other stakeholders with an understanding of voluntary placements, to clarify expectations and to ensure good practice, quality and fairness.

## **3. Policy Statement**

In line with Scottish Government policy, NAS aims to encourage and support the involvement of volunteers to provide new skills and perspectives and increase our contact with the communities we serve. The core Civil Service values of integrity and honesty, objectivity, political impartiality and fairness underpin our volunteer policy. NAS is committed to following good practice in the involvement, management and development of volunteers.

## **4. Status**

The NAS is both an associated department and an Executive Agency of the Scottish Government. The NAS was designated one of Scotland's five National Collections in 2006. Following the 2007 election, ministerial responsibility for NAS rests with the Minister for Europe, External Affairs and Culture.

The NAS is headed by the Keeper of the Records of Scotland, who is responsible to Scottish Ministers for its management, performance and future development, within the terms of the Framework Document. The Keeper is also responsible to the Lord President of the Court of Session for the efficient management of the court and other legal records in Scotland.

## **5. Relationship between volunteers and employees**

Volunteers complement the paid workforce but are not a substitute for employees. They are a valued addition to the organisation, extending its range of ages, cultures, skills and experience. The roles of paid staff and volunteers will be clearly defined and mutually supportive. Volunteers will usually assist records branches with projects or legacy cataloguing that adds to but does not replace the work of our employees.

## **6. Conduct and Confidentiality**

NAS staff are Civil Servants employed by the Scottish Government. Although volunteers are not employees of the Scottish Government, they are expected to comply with the Scottish Government's codes of conduct and to behave with respect towards staff, visitors and other volunteers.

Security and confidentiality are paramount for the Scottish Government and volunteers must comply with all policies, procedures and requirements relating to the security of information they may have access to during their time with the NAS.

The Scottish Government, including the NAS, operates with certain standards of conduct that ensure that Civil Servants are, and are seen to be, honest and impartial in the exercise of their duties. While not Civil Servants, volunteers with the NAS, will be expected to act in accordance with these standards.

## **7. Equality**

As a public body, NAS is subject to Equality legislation and has published Gender, Race and Disability Equality Schemes. The NAS's policy on equality opportunities is that all staff should be treated equally irrespective of their sex, marital or civil partnership status, age, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, disability, religion or belief, working pattern, employment status, gender identity, caring responsibility, or trade union membership. The same approach is extended to people engaged in volunteer placements at NAS.

## **8. Insurance**

Volunteers within the NAS buildings are covered by the Scottish Government's corporate insurance policy.

## **9. Copyright**

NAS corporate records are Crown copyright. This applies to all documents created by an officer or servant of the crown in the course of his or her duties, including catalogue data. Volunteers are required to sign a form assigning to

the NAS on behalf of the Crown all copyright in all work produced while working in The NAS.

Depending on the nature of the volunteer placement, arrangements can be made whereby the volunteer provides NAS a copy of their work which they also intend to use themselves. A form granting NAS license to use such data will be signed in these circumstances.

In addition, volunteers must not download, copy or transmit to third parties the works of others without their permission as this may infringe copyright.

## **10. Supervision**

A supervisor will be assigned to all volunteers. The supervisor will be responsible for making all necessary induction arrangements for the volunteer, covering topics such as:

- Health and safety;
- Security;
- Copyright;
- Codes of Conduct;
- Role/remit;
- ICT systems;
- Document handling.

Volunteers will also be introduced to other colleagues and sources of support. At the end of a placement, the supervisor will conduct an Exit Interview and complete the Record of Volunteer Placement.

## **11. Record of Volunteer Placement**

For administrative reasons, NAS keeps records of volunteer applications and placements. All personal details provided will be held in compliance with the Data Protection Act, 1998. This means that personal information is collected and used fairly, stored safely and not disclosed to any person unlawfully.

Many people volunteer in order to gain work experience in pursuit of a career in archives. It is Scottish Government policy not to provide personal references that comment on a person's abilities and performance. People who have completed a volunteer placement with NAS will be provided with a copy of their Record of Volunteer Placement which includes a description of their role and remit given at the outset as well as a summary of their work completed by the supervisor at completion. This document includes a checklist indicating whether the elements specified by the Society of Archivists FARMER guidelines have been met during the placement.

## **12. Application process**

Prospective volunteers should complete an application form (provided upon request) and supply the names of two referees prepared to offer character references. Applicants will be invited for an informal interview to discuss potential placements. Telephone interviews may be held if an applicant is unable to attend in person.

## **13. Security**

All volunteers are required to present a Disclosure Scotland certificate before their placement may commence. Disclosure Scotland was established in January 2003 within the Scottish Criminal Record Office for the purposes of issuing certificates under Part V of the Police Act 1997. The level of Disclosure required is *Basic*, which means that the certificate will detail any unspent criminal convictions. NAS is unable to reimburse the cost of obtaining Disclosure Scotland certificates.

The Scottish Government considers Disclosure Scotland certificates to have a validity of one year, at which time, application for further certification must be made. A copy of Disclosure Scotland certificates will be retained by NAS.

All staff, including volunteers, are required to wear and display a security pass at all times while in NAS buildings. For placements up to one month, volunteers will be issued with day passes. For placements lasting more than one week, volunteers will be issued with a photographic identity pass.

Security passes are official documents and as such must be treated with care and handed in at the conclusion of a placement.

## **14. Document security**

If a volunteer placement involves working with original documents (archives), the volunteer must conform to good practice in document handling and preservation. Advice and training will be provided by supervisors.

## **15. Expenses**

Expenses are not normally payable to volunteer workers, but each case will be considered on its merits.

## **16. Dismissal Process**

The NAS reserves the right to terminate a voluntary placement at any time for whatever reason. All volunteers will be required to sign a Volunteers

Agreement at the beginning of a placement. Breaches of this agreement will be considered as justification for terminating the placement.

### **17. Institutional Placements**

Where institutional training placements are arranged (e.g. Glasgow University Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute, Institute du Nationale Patrimoine, Paris), application forms, character references and interviews are not required. If based in the UK, student volunteers are still required to present a Disclosure Scotland certificate. All volunteers are required to sign the Volunteer Agreement before commencing a placement.

### **18. School Work Experience Placements**

NAS accommodates some school work experience placements. These are coordinated by the Education Officer, Collections Development Branch and usually last for one week. Each pupil will receive a Welcome pack, confirmation letter and information booklet at the start of their work experience, and will be asked to complete a Pupils Work Experience Evaluation Form at the end. Work experience pupils are required to sign in each morning to obtain a day security pass and to wear this at all times within NAS buildings.

### **19. Non UK Residents**

For security reasons, we are not able to offer volunteer placements to individuals who have not been resident in the United Kingdom for at least 12 months. This restriction does not apply to institutional placements.